Volume 20 Issue 17
Originally issued as F2



Global Journal of human-social science: F
Political Science
Volume 20 Issue 2 Version 1.0 Year 2020
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Military Intervention as a Means of Dealing with Dictatorship: The Zimbabwean Experience

By Anna Rudo Motsi & Jeffrey Kurebwa
Bindura University of Science Education

Abstract- The purpose of the study was to understand the effectiveness of a military intervention in dealing with dictatorship. Qualitative methodology was used. A case study approach was used to explore findings in Zimbabwe. Key informant interviews and semi-structured interviews were used as data collection methods. The results showed that there was a degree of democracy that is currently enjoyed after the ousting of the late former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe. Harmonized elections held on 31 July 2018 were less violent, international observers were invited to observe and the opposition parties campaigned in areas traditionally regarded as ZANU PF strongholds. Results also showed that the military intervention was indeed constitutional as it was carried out observing the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Findings of the study also showed the link between democracy and military intervention. Recommendations proffered include formulating legislations that limit Presidential powers and for the President to account to Parliament. There is need to effect laws that govern the role of the military in civilian matters, so as to avoid another military intervention.

Keywords: coup d'état, military intervention, constitution, stability, zimbabwe, elections, robert gabriel mugabe, emmerson dambudzo mnangagwa.

GJHSS-F Classification: FOR Code: 160699p



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



© 2020. Anna Rudo Motsi & Jeffrey Kurebwa. This is a research/review paper, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 Unported License http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/), permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Military Intervention as a Means of Dealing with Dictatorship: The Zimbabwean Experience

Anna Rudo Motsi [α] & Jeffrey Kurebwa [σ]

Abstract- The purpose of the study was to understand the effectiveness of a military intervention in dealing with dictatorship. Qualitative methodology was used. A case study approach was used to explore findings in Zimbabwe. Key informant interviews and semi-structured interviews were used as data collection methods. The results showed that there was a degree of democracy that is currently enjoyed after the ousting of the late former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe. Harmonized elections held on 31 July 2018 were less violent, international observers were invited to observe and the opposition parties campaigned in areas traditionally regarded as ZANU PF strongholds. Results also showed that the military intervention was indeed constitutional as it was carried out observing the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Findings of the study also showed the link between democracy and military intervention. Recommendations proffered include formulating legislations that limit Presidential powers and for the President to account to Parliament. There is need to effect laws that govern the role of the military in civilian matters, so as to avoid another military intervention. The international community is recommended to denounce military incursions in politics as soon as possible to stop the trend from erupting again.

Keywords: coup d'état, military intervention, constitution, stability, zimbabwe, elections, robert gabriel mugabe, emmerson dambudzo mnangagwa.

I. Introduction

Military interventions are usually marked with violence, instability, illegitimacy, and loss of lives. In some cases, military interventions are used to grab power for personal gains. However, recent military interventions have shown a positive trajectory that has made them more acceptable by both citizens and the international community. Due to the dictatorial tendencies of most African governments, the military has been viewed as the savior that releases citizens from the bondage of dictators. In a society where dictators have no place, military interventions justify for dealing with dictatorship and authoritarianism.

According to Kasza (2013), dictatorship is a system of government characterized by the rule of a single person or a group of people who maintain all power. It is viewed as dangerous by non-dictators because of the way citizens are treated. A military dictatorship (known as a military junta) is defined by Bull (2015) as a form of government where the military force applies complete control over political authority. Despotic, absolutist, or tyrannies are some of the words used to describe dictatorial governments. Friedrich (2012), indicated that dictators often call their governments democratic. He further argues that dictatorship is seen as the adaptation of autocracy to twenty-first century industrial society.

Global studies have revealed Africa as the most coup d'état prone region, with West Africa being singled out (Kemence, 2012). McGowan (2004) provides that since the independence period, between 1960 and 2004, there were forty successful military interventions and eighty unsuccessful military coup d'états. Such a situation is a clear indication that military coup d'états have placed themselves in African culture, bringing out the importance of studying the subject. However, due to the democratic wave in the 1990s, military coups were banned as African countries joined regional and international groups, for instance the African Union (AU), Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

There are various reasons put forth to justify the possession of power by the military. Wiking (1983) states that factors such as corruption, economic failure, price hikes and inflation, and government lack of ability to deal with opposition political parties, including political instability and chaos, are all reasons why the military can stage a coup d'état. These conditions create opportunities for the military to legitimize their intervention. Wiking goes on to say that the military uses public disorder, demonstrations and performance failures to legitimize their intervention. Citizens display their displeasure over government inadequacies and therefore leading to the welcome of a military takeover by citizens, regional groupings and international organizations. Nordlinger (1977) pointed out that the military is very much unwilling to intervene against a regime which cannot be regarded to be faced by a legitimacy crisis. These reasons show how military coup d'états have found a place in a society, making them more acceptable as compared to dictator governments.

On the evening of 14 November 2017, members of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) gathered around Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, and seized control of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and other strategic areas of the city. On the 15th of November 2017, the ZDF issued a statement saying that it was not a coup d'état and that

Author α σ: Department of Peace and Governance, Bindura University of Science Education, Bindura, Zimbabwe.
e-mail: jeffkurebwa2015@gmail.com

© 2020 Global Journals

President Robert Mugabe was safe, although the situation would return to normal only after the ZDF had dealt with the 'criminals' around Mugabe responsible for the socio-economic problems of Zimbabwe (The Guardian, 2017). The military intervention took place amid tensions in the ruling ZANU–PF party. between former First Vice-President Emmerson Mnangagwa (who was backed by the ZDF) and First Lady Grace Mugabe (who was backed by the younger G40 faction) over who would succeed the then 93-year-old Robert Gabriel Mugabe. A week after Mnangagwa was fired and forced to flee the country, and a day before troops moved into Harare, Commander ZDF Constantino Chiwenga issued a statement that purging of senior ZANU–PF officials like Mnangagwa had to stop (The Guardian, 2017).

On 19 November, ZANU-PF removed Mugabe as party leader, replacing him with Mnangagwa, and issued a deadline of 20 November for Mugabe to resign or face impeachment. Mugabe did not resign. On 21 November 2017 a joint session of Parliament and Senate met at Rainbow Towers Hotel to impeach him. While the impeachment session was in motion, Mugabe sent a resignation letter to the Speaker of Parliament indicating that he was now resigning as President of the Republic of Zimbabwe. (www.bbc.co.uk).

Huntington (1991) sees the military as the solution to severe political and social instability. The military possesses the strength to seize power and the capacity to facilitate a transition of power. He further argues that the military establishment stands as the only institution, serve for politicians that can rule as the clergy, students, and workers do not have the capacity. While these groups affect politics in several ways, which include strikes and demonstrations, they do not have the strength to gain power. Hence, a military coup d'état as a means of dealing with dictatorship becomes ideal.

II. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This study relies on the democratic coup theory and the democratic backsliding theory.

a) The Democratic Coup Theory

The Democratic Coup Theory proposed by Varol (2012) argues that democracy may be achieved through a military coup. He argues that even though coups have anti-democratic attributes, some coups are more democracy-promoting as compared to others since they respond to resistance against dictatorial or totalitarian regimes; they overthrow those regimes and facilitate democratic elections. Military interventions are justified by the fact that the army responds to resistance against an authoritarian regime. In explaining how a military intervention brings about democratic attributes and remove an authoritarian regime, Varol (2012) states seven features of a democratic coup. These are:

(a) A coup is staged by the military against a dictatorial or authoritarian regime,
(b) The military answers to popular resistance against that government,
(c) The dictator fails to resign in reaction to the popular resistance,
(d) A strongly regarded military stages a coup within its country,
(e) The military performs a coup to remove the authoritarian regime,
(f) The military enables the conduct of free and fair elections in a short time and finally,
(g) The coup d'état finalizes with a power transfer to leaders who are elected through a democratic process.

Zimbabwe went through all the seven traits of a democratic coup d'état. The Mugabe-led government was disposed of through a militarily-assisted intervention. The support given to the army by the many citizens who marched against Mugabe on 18 November 2017 eventually led him to resign, thereby handing over power to the former Vice President, Emmerson Mnangagwa. The existence of a prominent opposition against a dictator is necessary in establishing a democratic coup. According to Varol (2012), that opposition naturally assumes the form of an uprising which is a gathering of citizens from varied societal backgrounds united by a single political cause. People usually gather in a symbolic place. In Zimbabwe, citizens gathered at Africa Unity Square and Zimbabwe Grounds in Harare. These gatherings were considered a call to resign to the incumbent president and the institutionalization of democracy. The gathering of citizens indicated a shared will for democratic processes, a will that was denied to citizens during the electoral process. After a democratic coup, elections must be held within a reasonable time. Varol (2012) argued that the military is determined to transfer power to democratically elected leaders so that it escapes from the unknown business of governing a country and return to what it knows best - defending the country from external threats. For instance, the Turkish and Portuguese military, which staged coups in 1960 and 1974, both returned the country to civilian rule within two decades.

The critique of the Democratic coup theory was propounded by Ackermans (1992), who claimed that by giving undemocratic institutions a part in constitution-making, these States are sacrificing fundamental legitimacy. He argued that a new ministry could not live as the new democratic charter when it is riddled with provisions that are supposed to guarantee the survival of regime players. This line of thinking refutes, allowing the army to meddle in politics as it remains an undemocratic institution in addressing dictatorship. Ackermans (1992) goes further to state that elections or

© 2020 Global Journals

impeachment of the sitting president are constitutional means of removing dictatorial power.

Collier (2008) justified the involvement of the army in politics. He argued that a country's power (the military) is the genuine opposition to dictatorial power. The military is the only structure that has the strength and capacity to unseat an elected official. Coups are often swifter and bloodless events, as compared to civil wars that negatively affect a country's foreign investment and infrastructure (Powell, 2014). Hence, a military coup is a necessary means of dealing with dictatorship. Scholars such as (Miller, 2012; Marinov & Goemans, 2014) argued that types of regime change lead to democratic gains. They further indicated that coups are more likely to be followed by elections. Varol (2012) goes on to state that in democratic coups, the people and the army strike a 'Faustian bargain,' where the army extracts a cost in the kind of constitutional entrenchment in exchange for deposing a dictator and thereby retaining the power to civilians. A recurrent feature of a democratic coup is that it brings not only political change but structural change.

Baumann (2018) criticized Varol's justification for a coup. He indicated that a coup does not lead to stable everlasting democracy, especially if measured by Western standards. Acceptance of coup can perhaps lend legitimacy to undemocratic coups. Baumann's argument makes sense and is explained by how the Zimbabwean army did not refer to the coup as a coup but a 'military-assisted transition.' The argument put forth hence is, by definition, a 'coup' is fundamentally flawed as it uses or threatens to use force. But an underlying feature of a successful one is that some coups are democracy-promoting as they seek to dispose of dictatorship.

b) The Democratic Backsliding Theory

The democratic backsliding theory by Mounk & Kyle (2018) posits that noteworthy changes were made in political institutions and informal political practices that reduced the capacity of citizens to create claims upon the government. Backsliding can often occur in both authoritarian and democratic governments-degrading the rights of citizens and their interaction with the state. The democratic backsliding theory further argues that a democratic breakdown can exist due to political leaders making poor tactical decisions that fail to side-line extremists who can take advantage of electoral competition to gain strength but remain committed to overthrowing democracy. The theory goes on to say that political elites who adopt extremist and anti-democratic positions, and naturally demonstrates a normative commitment to democracy as a political system are more likely to draw the state into democratic backslide. This theory goes in line with a dictatorship as both have tendencies of pursuing unpopular policies that cripple the voice of the people in pursuit of radical notions.

According to Lust & Waldner (2018), the concept of democratic backsliding entails corrosion of qualities with democratic governance within any regime. Essentially, it is a decrease of democracy and its quality. There are two views of thought within the theory. The minimalists strictly focus on elections whilst maximalists need "highly informed" citizens to take part in near continuous deliberation to make policies which maximize social, economic and cultural equality.

c) Justification of a Military Coup

Kposowa & Jenkins (1993), defined a military coup d'état as the irregular seizure of the state's central executive by the armed forces or the internal security forces through the use or the threat of the use of force. It is also defined as the sudden, extrajudicial deposition of a government, usually by a small group of the existing state institution, typically the army, to replace the deposed government with another body, either military or civil. A coup d'état succeeds if the usurpers set their dominance once the incumbent government neglects to prevent or successfully resist their thought of power (Webster, 2013).

Boniface (2007) argued that coup d'états had become effectively banned as a means of change that was national. A study by Simcic (2013), showed that coup attempts were most likely to lead to democracy when they occurred in strongly authoritarian states or states with leaders who remained in power for a long time. Collier (2008), indicated that coups are an efficient way of taking out a dictator, and a military coup may be a last resort to rid a state of an authoritarian ruler. Several military interventions in Africa led to competitive multi-party elections, and created a necessary condition for successful democratization (Simcic, 2013). Some of the coups that had been experienced in Africa include Mali 1991 and 2012; Lesotho, 1991; Nigeria, 1999 and 2000; and Burkina Faso 2014.

This research argues that military interventions are not the ideal way of dealing with dictatorship. Military interventions must be carried out by a professional army as a means of correcting the wrongs committed under dictatorship. This is possible if elections are carried out in a democratic, transparent manner, and power is transferred to civilian rule. According to Marinov & Geoman (2014), economic transformation and the development of political organizations are the main reasons why the army intervenes in politics. While economic modernization transfigures rural and urban communities, governments face enormous pressures to meet the demands of new classes of politically modernized citizens. Upon failure to deliver, instability erupts, and lawlessness follows, thereby forcing the army out of the barracks and into the position of retaining sanity. The above is a perfect example of the

© 2020 Global Journals

Zimbabwean case, whereby upon failing to deliver election promises which made the living conditions unbearable, chaos followed with the army ultimately siding with citizens in removing an authoritarian government.

Cheibub (2006), noted that the military holds a special force in society. For instance due to events surrounding the origin of the state, the incursion of the army in politics is easily justified and welcomed. Hence, if an army that initially fought to liberate a state is to stage a military coup d'état, given this background, that army will likely receive less resistance. Kandeh (2004), observed that the relations of civilians and the army in most African states are also a determinant in the uprising of coups. He attributes coups to low levels of professionalism and political institutionalization, citing the lack of schooling of the military with reference to the subalterns. For instance, military intervention in Guinea Bissau showed a lack of sound civil-military relations as the military controlled every single move of the civil rulers- who happened to be dummies.

Kunzru (2017) argues that corruption is another factor that leads to a military coup. He indicated that the sudden departure of most colonialists from Africa left a lot of African governments under-developed and the political systems weak, causing stagnation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), growth rate and mismanaged economies that led to corruption. He claimed that Zimbabwe was losing $100 million to corruption every year. Under such a situation, the military feels obliged to intervene to stop corruption from plummeting the country into chaos.

Simpson & Hawkin (2018) agree with the above scholars that corruption and deteriorating conditions of the economy are a condition for the army to intervene in politics. They go on to add that the cutting of army spending is also another cause for a military coup d'état. In Zimbabwe's case, Simpson & Hawkin (2018) stated that army commanders showed their disappointment on the 2018 budget submissions after their allocation was reduced from US$965 million to US$77 million.

d) Effectiveness of Coups in Dealing with Dictatorship

Very few scholars agree that coups act as catalysts for democratization. The existing literature pre-Cold War season does not acknowledge the army as a tool in dealing with dictatorship. However, scholars like Huntington point to coups as a catalyst in democratization and credits the third wave concept to the capability of coups in democratic efforts. Powell (2014) claims that multivariate analysis from 1952 to 2012 showed that coups statistically advance a country's democratization prospects. He further states that coups are likely to be precursors for democratization in authoritarian regimes. Their positive effect has reinforced since the end of the Cold War. States that experienced coups after 2012 had been projected to be four times more likely to witness a democratic transition than those which remained coup-free. As compared to civil wars in removing dictators, coup d'états are often bloodless events. Coup d'états preserve infrastructure and promote foreign investment, as witnessed by the spike in interests to invest in Zimbabwe's economy after the 2017 coup.

Pfeiffer (2017) noted that military coups are useful circuit-breakers and sometimes, they even set countries on a different developmental path. He argued that countries such as Chile, Taiwan, and Korea experienced more efficient and successful civilian administrations after military coups. Luzer (2013) provides that the unacceptably unopposed powers of military dictators can only be suppressed by military pressure. Since tyrants can shield themselves from economic sanctions, there is only one credible counter to dictatorial power- the country's military. Luzer (2013) goes on to say coup d'états are one of the most common ways of transferring power in countries that do not have stable democracies. Since dictators often stay in power indefinitely, most likely until death, coups pose as the primary way that tyrants can be removed from power. Hence, the army is an effective tool in dealing with dictatorship. Luzer (2013), indicated that the original generation of coups had been less harmful to democracy than their historical predecessors.

e) The Portuguese Coup of 1944

The Portuguese coup of 1944 disposed Estado Novo, whose regime denied the political voice to all but a minor part of the population and preserved the existing socio-economic structures. Marinov & Geoman (2014) claim that the coup d'état had been organized by a group of soldiers belonging to the Armed Forces Movement. The military coup was followed by unanticipated civilian resistance in the form of demonstrations. The military coup marked the end of Novo's 48-year dictatorship rule. Reasons for staging the coup varied from the repression of liberties, the outlaw of political parties, the suppression of voter registration, and under-development. The coup led to elections and civilian rule which ushered in social, economic, territorial, and political changes. A new Constitution was drafted which did away with the repression of basic human rights, release of all political prisoners, and guaranteeing of freedom of speech. The new regime ended colonial wars and started negotiations with African liberation movements which. In 1975, these negotiations led to the independence of Mozambique, Principe, and Angola which were under Portuguese rule (Marinov & Geoman, 2014). The military coup was not a traditional coup marked with violence though four civilians were killed. The coup was marked with unity between soldiers and the civilians.

© 2020 Global Journals

f) The 1960 Turkish Coup

The Turkish coup of 1960 is a perfect example of a linkage between democracy and military coup d'états. According to Marinov & (Geoman, 2014), the Turkish militia initiated a coup d'état against the totalitarian Democratic Party regime in response to resistance against the command. The coup was carried out under socio-political turmoil and economic depression. While Colonel Alparslan Turkes, the leader of the coup did not outline the reasons for the coup, the move was welcomed as it brought the end of an era in Turkish history that ushered in a new wave of democracy. Upon assuming power, the military came up with a timeframe of independent elections and eventually renounced its power to the popularly elected leaders within two years. Marinov & Geoman (2014) posits that the army also came up with various reforms. Two hundred and thirty five generals, Three hundred Commissioned Officers, Five hundred Judges and Prosecutors, and more than One thousand university staff were forced into early retirement. The army also arrested the President, the Chief of the General Staff, and the Prime Minister and additional significant members of the administration. Trials were also commissioned and supervised by the military. While the Minister of Interior, Namik Gedik, committed suicide in detention, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, President Celal Bayar, and various significant members of the former administration were charged with high treachery, misappropriation of public funds and abrogation of the Constitution. They were later executed on 16 September 1961. A referendum for a new Constitution was held on 9 July 1961 with 61.7% voting in favour. The new Constitution paved the way for elections on 15 October 1961. Power was smoothly transferred to civilians even though the army has sustained its hold on the politics of the country since 1965.

III. Research Design and Methodology

The study relied on qualitative methodology using the 2017 military intervention as a case study. Data was collected using participants drawn from the military, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), ZANU PF, and Movement for Democratic Alliance (MDC-A) party members. Documentary searches were conducted using journal articles, books, Constitution of Zimbabwe and newspaper articles that captured the 2017 military intervention as it unfolded.

IV. Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are based on both primary and documentary searches.

a) Effectiveness of Military Intervention in Dealing with Dictatorship

The effectiveness of using a military coup d'état is brought out by how the military intervention was carried out and the target. Military interventions are known to be violent, and are illegal in nature. Contemporary military interventions have changed, and have ushered in democratic trajectories.

A member of the military argued that:

> "We will always stand guided by the army. The army is not only meant to fight wars outside of Zimbabwe but elements that question the liberation war gains and putting the country in disarray can only be corrected by the army. It was time for Mugabe to go anyway, and there is no better way we could have done this but by means of a coup. From time and again, we tried using elections, but it was not working. So we support what the ZNA did for the country."

The above views show that a military intervention was the only option for Zimbabwe to remove its dictator. The military representative indicated that they still support what the ZDF did to ensure a new dispensation for Zimbabwe. Politicians interviewed from political parties indicated that Mugabe would not have stepped down under normal circumstances as the ruling party had already endorsed his candidature for the 2018 harmonized elections. An MDC Alliance representative mentioned that:

> "While we might regret having been used by the army to achieve its agenda, I will say that it was time for Mugabe to go. His 37-year-old rule was long overdue. On 18 November 2017, we fully supported the stance taken by the army to remove their Commander-in Chief and had the coup not been successful, I can assure you that Zimbabwe would have been under Grace and Mugabe's rule till now."

CSOs interviewed indicated that the military intervention was a necessary tool in dismantling authoritarian rule as there were improvements noted after the 'New Dispensation' in the conduct of elections. It must be noted that Zimbabwe's elections were often marred with political violence. The post-Mugabe elections held on 30 July 2018 saw some improvements in terms of reduced political violence. The European Union Election Observer Mission (EU EOM) Report (2018) indicated that while the elections had flaws, the political environment, media freedom, and political tolerance had improved during the 2018 harmonized elections. The Report went on to say that the invitation extended to observers by the government of Zimbabwe was a step in the right direction. This was premised on the fact that Zimbabwe had not allowed international observers since their ban in 2002 by Mugabe.

A CSO member indicated that:

> "The 30 July 2018 harmonized elections were probably the most peaceful elections Zimbabwe has ever held since 2002. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) was very accommodating to CSOs, the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) was

© 2020 Global Journals

always on standby, international observers could observe, few electoral, and political reforms were recorded. The new dispensation was a bit lenient as compared to the Mugabe government."

This goes in line with the Democratic Theory proposed by Varol (2012). He argued that democratic elections are a prerogative and should take place within a year or two after the military takeover. Marinov & Geoman (2014) also stated that coups are mostly to be followed with democratic elections as those who would have gotten in power through a military intervention want to be internationally recognized. The trend in Africa already shows that elections are messy and controversial, hence the step taken by Mugabe to ban international observers. However, after the military intervention, improvements were noted pre, during and post elections, thereby showing that a military intervention is indeed necessary for dealing with dictatorship.

It should however, be noted that popular opinion changed after the 30 July 2018 election period. While citizens and opposition parties welcomed the military intervention of November 2017, post-election period was comprised of heavy handedness by the military. One participant from the CSOs indicated that:

"We were used by the army. They needed us more than we needed them. They only wanted to show the world that they had support, but the coup did not benefit anyone but them. The two governments are just the same and the fact that Mugabe committed so many atrocities with Mnangagwa as his lieutenant can never be wrong. We replaced one dictator with another."

Baumann (2018) indicated that most of the military interventions do not necessarily lead to everlasting democracy. He argued that the acceptance of coup d'états can perhaps lend legitimacy to undemocratic coups. This holds substance to some extent as the army in Zimbabwe is involved in the politics of the nation. For instance, on 01 August 2018, seven people were killed by soldiers after opposition supporters demanded election results. The involvement of the military is not acceptable according to the internationally accepted standards. Hence, most participants argued that the military was the necessary tool for dealing with dictatorship as this created a favorable electoral environment compared to the previous dispensation. The holding of elections alone can be viewed as a democratic trajectory if the military is successful in transferring power to civilian rule.

b) Reasons for the Military Intervention

Different reasons were given as to why the military intervened in Zimbabwe. A participant from the military argued that:

"If the voters are not happy and their grievances are not being addressed through the ballot, a military coup d'état is the next best option, especially against a dictator. A military coup d'état has the potential to address such issues."

A member of a CSO mentioned the economic decline as one of the major reasons for the coup. He indicated that:

"The economy was one of the most important reasons for the coup. Shortage of basic commodities, rising prices, a decline in the economy, and a general lack of confidence in the economy were the major reasons. The Mugabe-led government was no longer able to control the course of events that were being caused by economic frustration. The economy was at the center of the coup d'état, the country was corrupt, economic decline was increasing, demonstrations after demonstrations and the political wars happening were not helping. Mugabe was old and frail; he was physically and mentally not capable of controlling the state."

Another respondent from CSOs interviewed noted that the rising of the wife of the former President, Grace Mugabe was also another significant reason for the coup. Grace Mugabe had grown too strong in the ruling party and her utterances during public gatherings were mainly aimed at former Vice President, Mnangagwa and the military. The participant indicated that:

"Grace Mugabe had grown too big for her shoes and she had to be stopped. She was going around the country insulting everyone who had stood by Mugabe's Presidency during difficult times. The same army that she was insulting was the same that was holding Mugabe's reign intact. It was either a military coup or the Mugabe's had to die. Grace Mugabe was the root cause of the coup. She had become too powerful and Zimbabwe was not ready for a female President. USA was not ready for a female president in the form of Hilary Clinton, what about Africa, let alone Zimbabwe?"

Another reason noted for military involvement was the fragility the Mugabe-led government had become. It was noted that power was slowly moving away from the core, which is Mugabe and the executive due to political fragmentations. According to an NGO participant:

"The firing of Mnangagwa was ill-timed. It was a direct call for the military to step in. The G40 (faction aligned to Grace Mugabe) had taken over and won. Their efforts would have been paid off by posts in government and tenders. For the military, it was now or never, Mugabe had to be crippled."

© 2020 Global Journals

E. D. MNANGAGWA'S DISMISSAL LETTER

6th November, *2017.*

VICE PRESIDENT EMMERSON DAMBUDZO MNANGAGWA
PRESS STATEMENT

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT AS VICE PRESIDENT

In accordance with the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Number 20 Act of 2013, Section 329, 6th Schedule, Paragraph 14, Sub-paragraph (2), His Excellency the President, Comrade R.G. Mugabe, has exercised his Powers to relieve Honourable Vice President E.D. Mnangagwa, of his position as Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe with immediate effect. It had become evident that his conduct in the discharge of his duties had become inconsistent with his official responsibilities. The Vice President has consistently and persistently exhibited traits of disloyalty, disrespect, deceitfulness and unreliability. He has also demonstrated little probity in the execution of his duties.

Hon. S.K. Moyo (Sen.)

MINISTER OF INFORMATION, MEDIA AND BROADCASTING SERVICES

c) Measures to Avoid Future Military Interventions

Since military interventions are most prevalent in Africa, there are a few procedures that can be taken to stop their intervention. According to De Bruin (2014) separating existing units from the military chain of command makes it different for any one force to seize power. A successful coup d'état requires coordination between coup plotters and all other important institutions. Hence, if multiple security forces take orders from different bosses, the task of formulating a successful solid coup d'état becomes difficult. He goes on to say that having a strong democratic system in place also acts as a precautionary measure to military coup d'états. In most Western countries, civilians practice good democratic tenets by constantly changing their leaders through holding of free, fair, acceptable and uncontested elections. Democratization of key state institutions is also another way of coup proofing states against military coup d'états. According to the representative from the military:

> "While the civilians can never fully control the army's actions, a culture of democracy and upholding of the Constitution goes a long way in ensuring that coups don't erupt. If a country does not adhere to its own Constitution, it is very easy for the army to turn rogue at any time and for any reason. Democracy is key."

d) The Role of Citizens during a Military Intervention

Interviews carried out indicated that the citizens were in full support of the move taken by the army. Zimbabwean citizens endorsed and approved the military coup d'état as evidenced by the numbers of people who marched in partnership with the army, taking pictures with the military and embracing them. The fact that the army was not shooting on civilians showed that the move was welcomed. He mentioned that:

> "The army did an impressive job and everyone approved it. If Zimbabweans did not approve, why were the streets flooded with people carrying placards that embraced the army generals? Why then were people taking pictures with the army?"

The media also showed that citizens were in support of the military. The internet was flooded with pictures of citizens embracing the military, taking pictures and greeting army personnel. Some of the placards read:

> "Mugabe must go."

© 2020 Global Journals

"Chiwenga: the voice of the people."

The representative from the Ministry of Defense also indicated that the fact that no one came forward to challenge the coup also shows that the coup d'état was welcomed by all. He said;

> "Not only did the High Court sanitize the coup but not one person came forward to question the military stance. Not even the opposition. That alone should tell you something."

High Court judge Justice George Chiweshe ruled that "Operation Restore Legacy" which was mounted by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces and resulted in a military takeover of power was constitutionally permissible and lawful. The military takeover of power ultimately resulted in the resignation of former President Robert Mugabe. Mugabe stepped down to make way for his former deputy, now President Emmerson Mnangagwa. In passing judgement, Justice Chiweshe ruled that the military takeover was necessary to prevent unauthorised people from exercising executive function and to stop former president Robert Mugabe's abdication of his functions. The ruling was made in a case which was brought by Joseph Evurath Sibanda and Leonard Chikomba. Then-President Robert Mugabe, the Minister of Defence, Commander Defence Forces of Zimbabwe, and the Attorney General were the First, Second, Third and Fourth Respondents respectively.

Justice Chiweshe in his ruling said:

1. *The actions of the Defence Forces (Zimbabwe Defence Forces of Zimbabwe) in intervening to stop the take-over of first respondent's (Mugabe's) constitutional functions by those around him are constitutionally permissible and lawful in terms of Section 212 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe in that:*

a. *They arrest first respondent's abdication of constitutional function, and*

b. *They ensured that non-elected individuals do not exercise executive functions which can only be exercised by elected constitutional functionaries.*

2. *The actions of the Defence Forces being constitutionally valid, the second respondent has the right to take all such measures and undertake all such acts as will bring the desired end to its intervention.*

The High Court sanitized the coup. No one challenged the legitimacy of the proceedings is a clear indication that shows that the citizens were in support of the coup. However, this is in contrast with Murenje (2018) who indicated that all state institutions in Zimbabwe are captured and this explained why no one questioned or opposed the ruling by the High Court. He argued that there was a mistaken view that all Zimbabweans supported the coup that brought to an abrupt end former President Robert Mugabe's tyrannical regime. The departure of Mugabe was only done by coup perpetrators so as to replace and entrench dictatorial rule in Zimbabwe. It is not everyone who welcomed the move by the army as this was done through the bullet and not through the ballot.

e) "Coup or not a Coup"

The military intervention in Zimbabwean sparked a lot of debate as to whether to call it a coup or not a coup. This is because while it had obvious coup tenets, there were other characteristics which made it indifferent to a traditional coup d'état. The fact that no violence was recorded indicated the huge success rate of the military incursion. A participant from the military indicated that the army had not carried out a "military coup", but a military intervention to ensure the transition of power.

> "Zimbabwe has never undergone a military coup. The military did not remove Mugabe through a coup. The ZNA simply helped with the smooth transfer of power. You cannot call that a coup."

The above sentiments were buttressed by the fact that during the news on the 14th of November 2017, Retired General Sibusiso Moyo indicated that the army was carrying out 'Operation Restore legacy', targeting 'criminals' surrounding President Mugabe.

f) Full statement from Zimbabwe military on situation in Zimbabwe

Fellow Zimbabweans following the address we made on 13 November 2017, which we believe our main broadcasterZimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation and the Herald were directed not to publicise, the situation in our country has moved to another level. Firstly we wish to assure our nation, His Excellency, the president of the republic of Zimbabwe and Commander in Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, Comrade R. G Mugabe and his family, are safe and sound and their security is guaranteed. We are only targeting criminals around him who are committing crimes that are causing social and economic suffering in the country in order to bring them to justice.

As soon as we have accomplished our mission we expect that the situation will return to normalcy. To the civil servants, as you are aware there is a plan by the same individuals to influence the current purging which is taking place in the political sphere. To the civil Service, we are against that act of injustice and we intend to protect every one of you against that. To the judiciary, the measures underway are intended to ensure that as an independent arm of the state you are able to exercise your independent authority without fear of being obstructed as has been the case with his group of individuals. To our members of parliament,

© 2020 Global Journals

your legislative role is of paramount importance, of peace and stability in this country, and it is our desire that a dispensation is created that allows you to serve your respective political constituencies according to democratic tenants.

To the generality of the people of Zimbabwe, we urge you to remain calm and limit unnecessary movement. However, we encourage those who are employed and those with essential business in the city to continue their normal activities as usual. Our wish is that you will enjoy your rights and freedoms and that we return our country to a dispensation that allows for investment, development and prosperity that we all fought for and for which many of our citizens paid the supreme sacrifice. To political parties, we urge you to discourage your members from engaging in violent behaviour. To the youth, we call upon you to realise that the future of this country is yours. Do not be enticed with the dirty coins of silver, be disciplined and remain committed to the efforts and values of this great nation. To all churches and religious organisations in Zimbabwe we call upon your congregations to pray for our country and preach the gospel of love, peace and unity and development.

The ZANU PF representative interviewed agreed with the military in claiming that this was not a coup but military assistance. The representative from the ruling party indicated that as soon as the dictator was disposed, the army went back into their barracks and left the country in civilian hands, hence, it is not fair to call the stance taken by the army as a coup d'état. He indicated that:

"There was no coup d'état in Zimbabwe. You cannot possibly say simply because the military was in the streets and therefore that was a coup. No one was hurt, the army is no longer in the streets and the UN did not condemn what happened. There was no coup."

However, there are different views on the terminology used. Uganda writer Charles Onyango Obbo indicated that it was indeed a coup. In his words;

"If it looks like a coup, quacks like one, walks like a coup, then it's a coup."

This is backed up by Powell (2012) who posits that the military will provide a rhetorical justification to legitimize their actions. N. Singh, assistant Professor at the U.S Naval War College twitted that "The President is safe" is a classical coup catch phrase (Taylor, 2017).

The above submissions show that no matter what the military says, they will always try to justify their actions by firstly redeeming themselves by referring to the intervention as a "military mission." The above quotations also show that it was indeed a military coup d'état despite the terminology used. Taylor (2017) goes on to compare the Zimbabwean and the Egyptian coup and quotes former Secretary of State, John Kerry as he said that the Egyptian military were in effect restoring democracy. This greatly shows the international perspective on the subject that and their position was the military takeover was indeed a coup, however used to bring democracy.

The MDC Alliance representative indicated that Mugabe was ousted through a military coup d'état. He said that:

"Mugabe was removed through a military coup. There are no questions there. How do you explain tanks in the street, house arrest of him and his wife and the talks that were happening? The army generals had to see this through because if Mugabe had stayed in power, they knew their lives would be at stake. It was indeed a coup."

The circumstances mentioned above, shows that the army was in cahoots with Mnangagwa to topple the former President thereby qualifying it as a military coup d'état. The coup d'état followed all the steps articulated by Varol (2012) and hence, it was indeed a military coup d'état.

© 2020 Global Journals

g) President R. G. Mugabe's Resignation Letter

President Robert Mugabe's resignation letter was read out by Zimbabwe parliamentary Speaker Jacob Mudenda to lawmakers gathered at a conference centre in Harare to discuss an impeachment motion on Tuesday.

State House

Harare

Zimbabwe

21 November 2017

The Honourable Jacob Mudenda

Notice of resignation as President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

In terms of the provisions of section 96 (1) of the constitution of Zimbabwe, amendment number 20, 2013. Following my verbal communication with the Speaker of the National Assembly, Advocate Jacob Mudenda at 13:53 hours, 21st November, 2017 intimating my intention to resign as President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, I Robert Gabriel Mugabe in terms of section 96 (1) of the constitution of Zimbabwe hereby formally tender my resignation as the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe with immediate effect.

My decision to resign is voluntary on my part and arises from my concern for the welfare of the people of Zimbabwe and my desire to ensure a smooth, peaceful and non-violent transfer of power that underpins national security, peace and stability.

Kindly give public notice of my resignation as soon as possible as required by section 96 (1) of the constitution of Zimbabwe.

Yours faithfully,

Robert Gabriel Mugabe President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

V. Conclusions

The holding of elections after a military intervention is a good indication of its effectiveness in dealing with dictatorship. A military intervention is seen as the last chance the citizens have in choosing their own representation that fully represents them as opposed to leaders appointed by the dictator. To add on, results presented indicate that dictators only succumb to pressure; hence a reputable liberation army can remove a dictator. A correlation between results and literature was shown, in that military interventions can be used to ensure that new representation is chosen by use of conduction of free and fair elections. The holding of elections and the transfer of power from military to civilian rule is outlined as a basis of the effectiveness of military interventions in dealing with dictatorship.

The holding of elections just after a military intervention is a clear indication that there is a link between democracy and coups. The new dispensation had democratic gains that were previously unheard of under Mugabe for instance, the call for international observers to observe elections, political tolerance in campaigning, and less violent elections in general. While traditional literature proposes that coups have a democratic backsliding effect on polities, the current wave of coups show that there is a possibility of a democratic trajectory to be realised, if the coup plotters follow the attributes of a democratic coup 'd'état.

The fact that the military intervention was carried out against a dictator provides for its justification. The international community's endorsement of the military also serves as an indication that the intervention was justified. According to (Varol, 2012), If a coup is staged against a dictator, by a credible army with endorsement of the civilians, it is highly probable that the coup d'état will be justified. Hence, results and literature correlate on the justification of staging a coup d'état. The declining economy is one of the most important reasons why the military intervened. Coupled with rampant corruption and a growing opposition in the ZANU PF, Mugabe could no longer control the state. The rise of Grace Mugabe and the final dismissal of Mnangagwa was the push needed for the military to intervene in politics. The link between the reasons for a coup and a coup is brought up by the varied reasons of a coup that encompass, inflation, deteriorating economic conditions, and the abuse of human rights by the command. The march in significant places was deemed as a show of support for the military, thereby showing that the citizens and the army were one. However, results also indicated that there had since been a change of heart premised on the fact that the new dispensation and the old were just the same. Literature

© 2020 Global Journals

studied showed that if citizens approve of a military coup by way of siding with the army, the international community cannot do anything but endorse such a development. This is due to the fact that the masses would have shown support for such actions.

References Références Referencias

1. Boniface, E. (2007). *The OAS's mixed record in promoting democracy*. Florida: Johns Hopkins University Press
2. Bull, D. (2015). *What is a military regime?* Nottinghill: Vintage news.
3. Collier, P. (2008). *Wars, guns and voters. Democracy in dangerous places.* New York: Harper Collins.
4. Elischer, S. (2015). Taking stock of 'good coups' in Africa. Democracy dies in darkness. *The Washington Post*. P 4.
5. European Union. (2013). A comparative European Union policy analysis on Zimbabwe and Egypt. Retrieved from www.eu.int
6. Farcau, B. (1994). *The coup. Tactics in the seizure of power*. Praeger: Praeger Publishers.
7. Freeman, S. (2012). How dictators work. *How stuff works*. Retrieved from www.howstuffworks.com
8. Head, T. (2017, November 8). The Zimbabwe opposition leader says citizens would back a military coup. *The Standard Times*, p. 2.
9. Huntington, S. P. (1968). *Political order in changing societies*. Yale: Yale University Press.
10. Huntington, S. P. (1991). *The third wave. Democratization in the late twentieth century.* Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press.
11. Jenkins, J. C. and Kposowa, A. (1993). Explaining military coups d'état: Black Africa*, 1957-1984. American Sociological Review* (55), pp861-875.
12. Kasza, A. (2013). *What is dictatorship, their aims.* Bournemouth: Support Printers.
13. Kemence, K. (2012). *Understanding the root causes of military coups and governmental instability in West Africa.* Kansas. Advanced institute of Management.
14. Khalil, Z. (2014). *A tough transition: The post-coup election and its prospects for democracy.* Michigan: University of Michigan.
15. Kunzru, G. (2017, November 23). Why are military coups so frequent in Africa? *WTD News*, p. 3.
16. Kwaramba, F., & Tafirenyika, M. (2017, November 14). Chiwenga warns Mugabe, ZANU PF. p, 1.
17. Larcom, S., Sarr, M., & Willems, T. (2014). *What shall we do with the bad dictator?* University of Oxford: Oxford.
18. Lukic, M., & Mannheinner, E. (2014). *Egypt. Military vs revolution. Why structures are stronger than individuals*. Sannerstedt: Statsvetenkapliga Institutionen.
19. Luzer, D. (2013 July 8). The success of the military coups. *Pacific Standard,* p. 4.
20. Lust, E. and Waldner, D. (2018). Theories of democratic change. Phase 1: Theories of democratic backsliding. Vermont: Institute of International Education.
21. Machivenyika, F. (2017, November 6). VP Mnangagwa fired from government. *The Herald*, p. 1.
22. Mackintosh, E. (2017). Zimbabwe's military takeover was the world's strangest coup. African Voices. *CNN.* 21 November 2017.
23. Marinov, N., & Geomans, H. (2014). Coups and democracy. *British Journal of Political Science,* 5(1): 43-54.
24. Mashaya, B. (2017, November 10). Probe, arrest Mnangagwa. *Daily news*, p. 2.
25. Meijer, R. (2014). *The role of the military in political transitions. Egypt: A case study*. (Msc thesis: University of Egypt, Egypt). Retrieved from www.ue.ac.za
26. Miller, H. (2012). *Economic development, violent leader removal and democracy.* Wiley Online Library. 56(4), pp.1002-1020.
27. Makunike, E. (2017, 3 March) 'We must undo this disgrace', says Mugabe as he calls his ouster a 'coup d'état'. *Newsday.* P, 1.
28. Nordlinger, E. (1977). *Soldiers in politics. Military coups and governments.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
29. Powell, J. (2014). *An assessment of the democratic coup theory.* Routledge: African Security Review.
30. Szirmai, A. (2015). *Socio- economic Development.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
31. Tayana, P. (2017, November 6). Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa fired, the finer details. *Pindula News*, p 1.
32. Taylor, A. (2017). Zimbabwe: When a coup is not a coup. *The Washington Post*, p, 3.
33. Varol, O. (2012). *The democratic coup d'état.* Harvard: Harvard International Law Journal.
34. Vereranda, L. (2017, November 15). Airforce bemoans low budgetary allocation. *Newsday*, p. 2.
35. Wobig, J. (2013). *Regional regimes for the defence of democracy and coup d'état.* (PHD thesis. The Graduate College of the University of Nebraska, United States of America). Retrieved from www.uneb.ac.za
36. Zimbabwe Legal Information Institute, (2017). *Was the army intervention constitutional?* Harare: African ILI.

© 2020 Global Journals