



Dynamics of Political Entrepreneurship among the Elites in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The political arena is now abounding with people who either live 'off' or 'for' politics. The ferocious competition for people's votes is akin to economic competition, and as this study submits, the politicians are just like business people. Both productive and predatory profit opportunities have pervaded the Zimbabwean political arena, where politics is a type of business. Political positions have afforded some people access to economic resources, making politics the quickest way to untold and unending riches. As a result, the political landscape has invited abuse of power, thereby decimating not the physical being but the entire moral fibre of the nation. This study shows how Zimbabwean political leaders have become the primary controllers and distributors of power and resources with the capacity to penetrate society politically and secure their hegemony. Reference is made to politicians belonging to the ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), where politicians from either party have exhibited, though not uniformly, patterns of misconduct characteristic of political entrepreneurship. This paper applies the entrepreneur's theory to political behaviour to identify political entrepreneurs and analytically distinguish them from other government agents.

1. Introduction

Like people of other pursuits, politicians are also drawn to politics by their success's prestige to them. As Harold (1948: 20) put it, their desire for 'power for power's sake thrives on a very complicated set of motives which usually involves the feeling of prestige which the exercise of power bestows.' Zimbabwe has seen different kinds of political institutions and, hence, different politicians. The majority are party politicians whose working career is spent inside a specific kind of political organisation. Some political professionals will have worked in the administrative areas of Government and will have become 'political' to the extent that they navigate their way into the policy-making levels. Interestingly, not all people who are in politics are professional politicians, either in the party sense or in the bureaucratic sense. There are also political outsiders who, according to Mills (1978: 228), 'are people who have spent the major part of their working life outside strictly political organisations but are brought into them or force their way into the political order.' However, the political outsiders are occupationally formed by non-political experience. These capitalise upon their intimate access to an official who wields power to weave their way into an inner circle. Studying political entrepreneurs' behaviour implies scrutinising their strategies to secure power and retain it. Zimbabwe attained independence following a bitter war of liberation against the colonial Government. As a function of history, the liberation war credentials or lack of them have determined access to power and resources hence the creation of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Jo-Ansie van Wyk 2007: 6). The war of liberation's gun-fashioned relations created a socio-political environment that manufactured its own elite, while the post-war period created positions for those lucky enough to benefit. This study demonstrates how war credentials within ZANU-PF became instrumental in catapulting people to positions of authority and the penultimate access to resources. Even though political parties (ruling or opposition) might be factionalised and consumed by internal succession disputes at whatever political level, the tendency among politicians would be to create a political space in which themselves and party loyalists are rewarded politically and economically. A closer look at the nexus between business and politics makes it abundantly clear that 'politicians and businesspeople constantly draw resources from their economic activities to finance political activities and maintain social prestige and vice versa' (Daloz 2002: 62). Zimbabwe has manufactured its own

political entrepreneurs who have become more mercenaries fighting for power and money than servants of the people who voted them into their esteemed political positions.

2. Unpacking Political Entrepreneurship

McCaffrey and Salemo (2011: 555) refer to political entrepreneurship as 'an outgrowth of the theory of the market entrepreneur which derives from extending entrepreneurial theory from the market into the political sphere of action.' The term political entrepreneur also embraces business people seeking to gain profit through subsidies, protectionism, government contracts, or other favourable arrangements with Government through political influence. In business, entrepreneurship involves taking a risk to create new business ventures and gaining an advantage over a competitor to maximise profits. In politics, a political player would seek to gain certain political and social benefits to provide the common goods shared by an unorganised general public (Taewook 2004). Since the political entrepreneur is always on the hunt for resources, obtaining a position of power or authority would catalyse access to wealth to remunerate followers to preserve and perpetuate one's power. Such people would invest their own financial means (drawn from a business activity or corruption) and control a certain number of votes to win an election.

Thus, political entrepreneurs perform the same or similar functions in the political sphere as entrepreneurs perform in the free market economy. Consequently, the political entrepreneur can yield profits and losses, too, based upon one's ability to anticipate future market conditions or political landscape correctly. Politicians are subject to electoral success or failure, and success can be forfeited if the politician does not allocate resources to suit the supporters' needs. In order to maintain a certain level of fame or prestige, politicians, like market entrepreneurs, are engaged in the constant arrangement of the production process through the direction of resources. The end product for a political entrepreneur could be the satisfaction of consumer wants (the imitation of market entrepreneurship) or the wants of interest groups or political associates. The judgment in allocating resources employed by political entrepreneurs potentially yields a previously identified revenue stream that may also be subject to uncertainty.

While there are professional politicians and professional musicians or actors in politics, one does not need to be an expert in a particular domain. To a large measure, they are general practitioners like the general physician. Political entrepreneurship, therefore, defines itself most precisely by considering the various stages of one's career before election into a political position and after the end of the last mandate. Questions arise as to whether a parliamentarian, as an example, intends to return to one's original profession, fight for a new political position, or be re-elected upon defeat. The absence of 'political cushions' for defeated politicians breeds political entrepreneurs where one has to live 'off' politics or 'for' politics (Dogan 2002; Compagnon 2012; van Wyk 2007).

Corruption and its other active arm nepotism are considered in this study as ingredients that lubricate competencies that nourish political entrepreneurship. Let me hasten to point out that the Western criticism directed at African examples of corruption and bribery can sometimes be hypocritical. As Bretton (1973: 122) has argued, some westerners whose countries have grown rich and powerful partly by corrupt means 'prefer to point out the mote in Africa's eye instead of extracting the beam from their own' (Bretton (1973: 122)). However, as in many other debates, the outcome hinges on definitions. Kurotwi (2014: 105) defines corruption as 'the misuse of entrusted power for private gain whether this power is inherited or through education, marriage, election or appointment'. With corruption being a shifting amoeba, it may turn out that what a European or an American may describe as thrift, foresight, enterprise, shrewd business acumen, or even ruthless ambition is corruption or bribery. In Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular, corruption has been defended by referring to a theory of beneficial corruption, which provides that what really matters is the social end objective that a corrupt official has in mind. The theory offers a yardstick to measure the social value of corruption. However, this study explores whether destructive or beneficial, the incidence of corrupt practices and the birth of political entrepreneurship are at the very root of power and influence.

3. Contours of Debate

According to Compagnon (2012: 47), politics is a domain in which 'actors strive for power...in order to enjoy the riches and prestige-feeling that power gives'. Politics, therefore, becomes more of a business organisation whose source of

capital is getting votes and winning elections. It is competition over resources and the electoral market that breed political party confrontations or factionalism. Compagnon (2012) has argued that drawing a line between virtuous politicians and crooks is largely pointless given that the pragmatic rules of the competition are the same for all players in a given society. Schumpeter (1972: 347) highlighted how 'political leaders use propaganda and other tricks similar to commercial advertisements.' As the politicians try to mobilise resources, they resort to corruption and embezzlement to succeed. In light of the above, Medard (1992: 172) observed that 'while it is necessary to have political power in order to be rich, it is also necessary to be rich in order to retain political power.'

Holcombe (2002: 152) argues that for political entrepreneurs to be successful in politics, 'they need political support hence the need to convert economic resources into political authority for purposes of gaining support from the constituents.' Thus the ability of the political entrepreneur to command a following largely depends on one's informal abilities to assist people privately through availing access to new resources. In pursuit of victory, competing entrepreneurs would engage in cheating, lying, nepotism and corruption, which can deliver success. When politics is an extension of business and interests of political entrepreneurs who dominate state structures, then predation and plunder become strategies towards maintaining their grasp on socio-economic and political power. Mats Utas (2012) discusses how political entrepreneurs, among them warlords, regularly enter into conflicts and peace processes due to personal socio-economic opportunities and prospects for personal advantage.

As this study shows, Zimbabwe's liberation struggle history and a chequered post-colonial socio-political disorder have seen the growth of variegated political entrepreneurs. Weiss (1994) articulates how following independence in 1980, the political elite used its power to build up patron-client networks to foster private business. Weiss's work touches on some aspects of how top jobs went to the colonial era's political elite, which had been instrumental in achieving independence. Wild (1997) also considered how veteran nationalists who, after independence, occupied leading political and military positions, used their considerable power to enrich themselves in the ostentatious quest for status which they fancied. Chung (2006: 259) does not hide that 'one of the changes taking place in ZANU-PF was that it was rapidly transforming itself from a liberation movement into a business conglomerate where economic

opportunities were available to those who identified with the ruling party and denied to those who opposed the ruling party? She has no illusions about the regime's corrupt nature, having stated that 'patronage from the political elite was now the key to success' (Chung 2006: 269). Alexander and McGregor (2014: 758) argue that control over land and mineral resources has been the source of immense political capital for ZANU (PF), as partisan access has been used to win votes in the countryside and towns and to undercut the MDC-T, which has had little or nothing in terms of material reward to offer its supporters. Accustomed to arbitrary authority and moneymaking opportunities, ruling political parties often systematically appropriate the state's financial power, employ relatives and cronies, and bend public policy toward partisan ends. While Zimbabwe's war of liberation manufactured its own political entrepreneurs, of interest is unveiling how war credentials became instrumental in catapulting people to positions of authority in society. As Bratton (2014: 28) has put it, 'the top leaders have used the sacrifices of the guerrilla fighters – 'we died for this country – as the ultimate justification for their own political and economic entitlement' (Bratton 2014: 28). Liberation struggle credentials (or lack of them) determined access to power and resources and divided the political elites into 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Jo-Ansie van Wyk 2007: 6). Kriger (2003: 6) also established that veterans of the liberation struggle who fought under the banner of state transformation often 'used war credentials for legitimacy and drew on the history as well as symbols of the struggle to construct their power base with privileged access to state resources'. According to Kurotwi (2017: 12), politics in Zimbabwe 'has been industrialised and the only qualification which matters is being politically connected to political entrepreneurs. These 'industrialists' fund politicians by meeting the high cost of election campaigns. This ultimately leads to these financiers seeking personal favour once the candidate they backed gets into power. Thus, the control over resources catalyses patronage networks and satisfies the ambitions of the political entrepreneur.

In Sierra Leone, the Foster Commission report revealed that millions of pounds were diverted from public use to directly serve the immediate tactical or strategic goals of political parties, factions, cliques or individuals. In Nkrumah's Ghana, substantial funds were extracted from private entrepreneurs, especially Europeans, Syrians and Lebanese, through kickbacks from contracts, donations, or outright deposits in foreign bank accounts of the group in power. 'An inquiry

into the assets of ministers, political party functionaries and other persons associated with the former regime of Nkrumah revealed that the practice of charging commissions on contracts became a vast loophole through which numerous persons were able to enrich themselves' (Bretton 1976: 127).

4. War of Liberation, Politics and Business

During Zimbabwe's war of liberation, businesspeople had divided their time between family businesses and the demands of the struggle. Oblivious to the risks and costs involved, business people used the family businesses to provide transport, food, clothing, money and other resources required by freedom fighters to support the war effort. Before his departure to join the liberation struggle in Mozambique, Crispin Mandizvidza provided his Bhasera Chivaraidze Restaurant as a venue for high profile political meetings. George Simbi, Elias Madondo, Auxilia Mandizvidza and Piniel Mkushi provided food and clothing to the guerrillas from their family stores within Gutu District (Tarugarira 2016: 191). Established business people like Madondo and Mkushi weathered the storm into independence because some of their businesses at Gutu-Mpandawana growth point never ceased to operate even at the height of the war while the small rural business people closed shop. During the war, the business community found itself trapped between the violence and demands of both the Rhodesian security forces and guerrillas. Such a fragile environment created fertile ground for the emergence of criminal networks, which later facilitated the rise of political entrepreneurs. Thus politics, theft and war converged frequently in the manufacturing of political entrepreneurs. Therefore, some businessmen came from the war bruised while others gained business stamina to face new challenges. Some businesses collapsed because people lacked creativity and innovativeness to diversify lines of businesses, while others scored tremendous success through political patronage and clientelism.

The end of the war and the coming of independence and majority democratic rule ushered in a period of euphoria and great optimism. ZANU (PF) claimed to be a Marxist-Leninist party, promised the people socialism, and assumed leadership of this struggle. Given the official blessing that socialism got from the Government, many non-socialists became socialists. However, within the party, real democracy was fragile from the beginning, and signs were there that

'government socialists' had no heart for socialism at all. The then Minister of Home Affairs Enos Nkala retorted, 'Not all people in ZANU-PF are socialists' (Prize Africa, 1985). Saunders (2000: 21) also observed that the culture of 'chefs' and military structures, necessary for undertaking an armed struggle was very powerful, adding that 'ZANU-PF was ill-prepared to implement the scientifically conceived development strategy which required strict discipline among planners, implementers and government institutions' (Saunders 2000: 21). Instead, the party's bad habits, including corruption, abuse of power, anti-worker attitudes, and lack of internal democracy, gave socialism a bad name.

After independence, the demobilisation of ex-combatants witnessed money being paid to 'undeserving relatives and friends of senior commanders who amassed financial wealth at unprecedented levels, many becoming millionaires' (Sadomba 2011: 69). Barely two years after independence, the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) commander General Mujuru was said to have amassed such wealth that he 'literally bought Shamva and Bindura towns' (Sadomba 2011: 69). According to Kriger (2003: 70), demobilisation was 'corruptly and unfairly handled as groups of relatives and concubines of senior commanders, and politicians benefitted at the expense of deserving ex-combatants.' Politicians' embezzlement, outright and open diversion of funds for illicit purposes fostered the development of a dimension of political entrepreneurship. If one had connections with those in the echelons of the ruling class, survival was guaranteed. Later on, this translated into that to get a job, piece of land, money, and a contract, one needed to be connected to some political 'godfather'.

The controversial Leadership Code that ZANU-PF adopted in 1984 urged leaders to disclose their financial affairs or other assets to a properly constituted party or government body investigating corruption. Sections of the code dealing with the acquisition of property provided that a 'leader would not own or have a beneficial interest in more than 50 acres of land, not become company directors or use relatives as fronts for business ventures' (Parade Staff Writer 1989: 19). At the time, ZANU-PF's President Robert Mugabe had sounded a warning that acquisitive leaders would face a choice, either to quit their posts or to relinquish their property. By 1986, corruption had already raised its ugly head, with politicians accusing each other of malpractices. The then Minister of Transport, Hebert Ushewokunze, lost his seat on the politburo, and Byron Hove lost his parliamentary seat after being asked to resign by the ZANU-PF Central

Committee for personal attacks on politicians over accusations of corruption and nepotism. Edgar Tekere, then Secretary-General of ZANU-PF, questioned how some politicians had acquired lots of property and yet they had just 'come out of the bush'. He lamented the failure of the leadership who authored the Leadership Code to observe its statutes or code of conduct (Prize Africa 1986: 15). The Prevention of Corruption Act 34 of 1985 was enacted to curb corruption. The Government was very aware of the long-term costs of corruption, so it created this Act of Parliament in 1985. With its many additions and amendments which followed, it laid down penalties to be imposed on a guilty party.

However, the leadership's scramble for wealth was confirmed by the Willowgate scandal of 1988, which involved the purchase and resale at inflated prices of cars produced at the Willowvale plant. The Commission of Enquiry under Justice Sandura, which President Mugabe had appointed, found substantial evidence of corruption among many senior officials. In all, five cabinet Ministers lost their jobs after being forced to admit wrongdoing. One ZANU-PF stalwart Maurice Nyagumbo later committed suicide. While Minister of Higher Education Dzingai Mutumbuka was convicted in court of profiting from a car deal, senior party official Frederick Shava was granted a presidential pardon for a far more serious perjury conviction. Following this, Attorney-General Patrick Chinamasa suddenly dropped related charges pending against several other ruling party officials (Saunders 2000). The prerogative to institute or not institute inquiries and legal proceedings against shrewd political manipulators became obscured. By the 1989 ZANU-PF-ZAPU Unity Congress, visible evidence of the code had all but disappeared, and it died a natural death.

5. The Nexus between Politics and Business

After the expiry of the Lancaster House Constitution, provincial land identification committees, with representatives from Agritex, ZANU-PF and the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU), were established to identify land for acquisition. In 1995, the ZANU-PF dominated National Land Task Force was established, marking an important movement in the locus of decision-making beyond the reach of ministerial structures. Arguably a privileged group of veterans, politicians and business people immensely benefitted from the Fast Track Land Development Programme. The militarised redistributive nationalist projects characterised by

the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) and the Indigenization and Empowerment policies were designed to benefit the politicians first. Official records indicated that ‘the ruling elite are now proud owners of multiple farms expropriated from the former white commercial farmers between 2000 and 2008’ (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition 2012). In the Gutu district of Masvingo province, the then Vice President Simon Muzenda and the former Minister of Finance, ZANU-PF legislators for Gutu Central, Gutu West and Gutu South went on a rampage for farms. According to Bratton (2014: 12), ‘the ‘chefs’ succumbed to predatory temptations, in the process transforming themselves into wealthy political barons’ (Bratton 2014: 12).

Almost all members of Parliament and Senators have graced the Gutu district constituencies; for example, Ransome Makamure, Empire Makamure, Ephraim Marwizi, Shuvai Mahofa, Josiah Tungamirai, Vitalis Zvinavashe and Simon Muzenda were into business. Within such an environment where political, economic and social fields were not very differentiated, elite circulation from politics to business and vice versa was eminent. The argument is that ‘elites used a first position to obtain another one or strengthen the original one’ (Daloz 2002: 62). Since independence, the broadening of the political arena of the Gutu electorate led to the steady, considerable turnover of leadership and the entry into the political process of those who were hitherto excluded. These were largely people of high standing drawn from high civil servants like school heads and business people. This process culminated in high profile figures in rural society, particularly the teachers- cum-businessmen and farmers to positions in the local ZANU-PF hierarchy as councillors. Political entrepreneurship is featured in the osmosis between high administration and high politics.

The introduction of village and ward committees in February 1984 further strengthened these local ZANU-PF functionaries. Decentralising power within the growing state apparatus through the Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) and Ward Development Committees (WADCOs) provided a means for rebuilding and reinvigorating clientelistic networks that tied politically strategic social groups to the regime. In some cases, power was transferred to a virtually hand-picked and barely literate group of people who were trusted to further the long-term interests of the local politicians. Thus, party politics became the typical channel for new entries into elite positions and the penultimate political predation associated with the ruling elite. Besides running some businesses, the

school teachers who were regarded as the intellectuals of the peasantry found political activity as one of the few roads of promotion. Political pickings gave them a potent incentive to protect ZANU-PF from defeat in elections. However, former teachers dismissed by the electorate found it unpalatable to return to their original jobs. Notwithstanding the financial assistance offered by the political parties during election campaigns, as candidates, they were also obliged to raise campaign funds. Economic capacity was transformed into political power by financing campaigns and determining public opinion by buying votes and officials.

The former Vice President Simon Muzenda, who was also the Member of Parliament (MP) for Gutu North from 1996 till his death in 2003, was one of the district's successful politicians and entrepreneurs. Muzenda owned Paradise Park Motel and a wholesale complex formerly owned by Merkiek at Gutu-Mpandawana growth point. Murefu Investments at Zvavahera Township dealt with hardware and agricultural supplies, Chekesai transport and a filling station, among other business interests under the holding company-Murefu Investments. He inherited the Chekesai Pig and Diary Company from his mother, who ran an irrigation scheme and multiple agro-ventures. According to Jemias Sibenge, councillor of Ward 4 and Chairman of the Gutu-Mpandawana District Council, Muzenda was the hardest working MP to have graced the constituency after forming the Gutu Development Committee and assisting villagers to engage in income-generating projects knitting, poultry, pigs and cattle. However, contrary to Sibenge's remarks, Muzenda is said to have visited the constituency 'not to serve the people primarily but to monitor his businesses because his company's headquarters was in the constituency, at Zvavahera Town/ship' (Zava 1996: 13). At the Companies' Registry in Harare, Muzenda (who was identified as Simon Murefu, a manager) had not submitted the legal documents required by the Companies Registry. Missing in his company files were CR14 forms which should have been submitted a month after the company's registration. 'The annual tax returns forms which are required initially 18 months after registration and every 15 months after that were not submitted' (Zava 1996: 13).

Since Muzenda's companies were first registered in September 1991, several tax returns should have been submitted. Muzenda would not face the wrath of the law because of the political muscle he wielded. In pursuit of the indigenisation and black economic empowerment policies, predatory behaviour

and unorthodox means of wresting wealth from the white community at Gutu-Mpandawana were used by marauding politicians. Thus further enrichment of businesspeople sometimes took illegal paths.

Gutu's veteran businessmen Elias Madondo and Piniel Mkushi have used their influence in the Gutu Rural District Council's Projects Planning Office and business protectionism to approve crucial decisions on the business development Gutu-Mpandawana. In his capacity as the Councillor of Ward 33, Madondo thwarted efforts by OK Zimbabwe to open a shop at Gutu (Tarugarira 2016). It is also alleged that Piniel Mkushi took advantage of his Gutu Rural District Council Chairmanship position to acquire business stands. The probability was high that Madondo and Mkushi's ability to influence committees' decisions might have enabled them to manipulate certain by-laws to realise personal gains. Although their roles during the liberation struggle should not be underestimated, the above cases stand out as clear testimonies where the political and financial muscles were flexed to protect personal business interests. Business was politics, and politics was business.

When high profile corruption thrives on economic pursuits unrestrained by moral or ethical commitment, politics turns out to be business. For politicians, the most lucrative opportunities for quick and substantial gain arise mainly during election campaigns, from foreign investment, awarding of contracts, diversion of donor funding and non-payment for locally provided goods and services. The former Lonrho boss Tiny Rowland 'gave ZANU-PF a whopping \$14 million (one million pounds) from his private fortune to go towards 2000 Presidential election campaigns' (Horizon Reporter, August 1996: 27). Rowland would also write off huge bills for chefs who travelled abroad and stayed in Lonrho's metropole hotels. Even in the United States of America, big industrialists also fund politicians to meet the high costs of election campaigns (Mills 1978). In the end, the lobbyists or financiers of political campaigns seek personal favour once the candidate they backed gets into power. In order to get elected, the politician bribes the electorate. Large sums are diverted to private companies set up either by or for politicians, members of their families, companies willing to include them or members of their families on their boards of directors. Only an exceedingly narrow concept of human motivation and behaviour could support the belief that 'men of enterprise and proven business success can completely disassociate themselves from politics and political control' (Bretton 1973: 179).

In some instances, politicians would divert donor funds for personal use. The Gutu South MP, Shuvai Mahofa, successfully negotiated for aid money for Cheziya Co-operative from the American Friends Service Committee. With the help of the Ford Foundation, the organisation donated money and sewing machines. When an audit was carried out, 'it was discovered that Cheziya Co-operative the major beneficiary was, in fact, Mahofa's private business' (Parade 1989). In 1998, Mahofa's political career hit a snag after she was fingered in the diversion of maize grain from the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) to her supporters in the constituency, segregating perceived opponents. In 2004 the controversial politician was implicated in a bicycle grab scam where she grabbed bicycles meant for the outreach programme to fight HIV and AIDS by the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and shared them among her supporters' (Chingawo 2015). ZANU-PF Chivi South MP Paradza Mandebvu appeared in court on three counts of theft by conversion involving \$29 000, which the German Embassy had donated to assist in constructing a craft village at Ngundu Halt (Staff Correspondent, *Horizon*, 1996: 8). The former Higher Education and Tertiary Minister Professor Jonathan Moyo allegedly pilfered Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (ZIMDEF) proceeds and bought bicycles distributed in his Tsholotsho constituency largely to fulfil a selfish political agenda (Mambo 2016).

In the illegal VIP Housing Scheme scandal of 1997, cabinet ministers and other ZANU-PF bigwigs benefitted from money that should have been made available to provide housing for the lower-paid members of the public and the homeless. Millions of dollars were siphoned from the Housing and Guarantee Fund upon approval of loans by the Minister of Housing and Local Government to construct luxury houses for political connections (*Horizon*, 1997: 14-15). The Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Company (ZISCO) scandal, which had all the ingredients of the 1987 Willowgate scandal, witnessed the steel company's systematic plunder by politicians fighting to outdo each other in looting. A parliamentary portfolio committee tasked with ZISCO investigations found that cabinet ministers were responsible for the company's collapse (MOTO Dec 2006/ Jan 2007: 4-5). Cabinet ministers were also the force behind the informal sector operations in Zimbabwe. For instance, illegal gold panners in the Midlands Province were protected by Emmerson Mnangagwa and Constantine Chiwenga, who could lobby the cabinet to legalise gold panning (Moyo 2014: 77). Thus the

main beneficiaries of the informal trading sector are the political barons who use their influence to manipulate policy measures to their advantage.

The Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) and several municipal councils have fallen victim to senior politicians with a tendency of not even honouring their electricity and water bills, running into millions of dollars in multiple properties they owned. In 1998, the Roger Boka owned United Merchant Bank (UMB) collapsed like a deck of cards, never to recover. Boka lamented how he had assisted many politicians in starting businesses by giving them loans that they never repaid. Some names of senior government officials were even found to have been clandestinely struck off from the list of debtors (Zimbabwe Independent, 9 April 1999). Failing to honour debts seems to be a common practice among political entrepreneurs.

When the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) introduced the Basic Commodities Supply-Side Intervention Facility (BACOSSSI) to thwart continued hiking costs for goods and services by formal businesses, some legislators and unscrupulous business people abused the facility. Instead of sourcing supplies from neighbouring countries, they used their political links to acquire stock (especially salt) from local Grain Marketing Board depots at subsidised prices, then sold the same stock at the parallel market at exorbitant prices in hard currency (Tarugarira 2016). Political muscles were flexed to access the resources. In 2003, the RBZ introduced the Productive Sector Finance Facility (PSF) to boost companies' production in all but the informal sector. The PSF was widened to cover agriculture, financing inputs, and fuel and farm mechanisation through the Agriculture Sector Productivity Enhancement Facility (ASPEF) programme. Between 2000 and March 2008, tractors and other farming equipment (planters, disc harrows, scotch carts, cultivators, ploughs, chains, knapsack sprayers, etc.) were distributed to farmers through various government schemes. One had to be politically connected to ZANU-PF to secure any of these items. The ZANU-PF political commissar for Gutu East, the ZANU PF Councillor for Gutu Central Ward 15; the ZANU PF Member of Parliament for Gutu Central and Chief Gadzingo were among those who received tractors. In a way, the ruling elite created a buffer layer, using land reforms and related schemes to bestow privileges on new elites who were politicians-cum-businessmen. Of interest is that all these socio-economic and political machinations easily accommodated opportunists into the restructured party leadership and provided access to

state-mediated accumulation. Motivated by altruistic or selfish concerns to try to 'improve' the condition of the poor, they largely defended the new status quo of asset redistribution that directly benefitted them. A national pattern characteristic of 'crisis accumulation' found expression in the highly informal and unregulated system of wealth accumulation that dominated Zimbabwe. This mode of wealth accrual relied on the peculiarities of selective and discretionary enforcement of laws by the state. The ZANU-PF led governments during and after Mugabe's rule continued to provide predatory commercial opportunities for military officials. The militarisation of state enterprises and parastatals, as Moyo (2014: 74) established, was a ploy 'to increase their wealth and as a reward for their loyalty in ensuring regime survival in the face of mounting challenge from the opposition political society'.

An analysis of the behaviour of politicians belonging to democratic political institutions shows that while there are entrepreneurial opportunities that can lead toward an equitable allocation of resources, the institutions of democracy tend to pull political entrepreneurs toward predatory opportunities rather than productive ones. The potential profits are greater through predation, and the gains are more appropriable. As Zimbabwe's Minister of Local Government between 2000 and 2015, Ignatius Chombo 'amassed vast tracts of prime land across the country by grabbing the 20% commonage land which the Local Government Act mandates developers to reserve for the construction of government premises like police stations, schools and offices' (Mambo 2017: 8). Zimbabwe's former Minister of Mines, Obert Mpofu, is believed to have acquired enormous wealth through 'vulture capitalism' which involves zero payment towards the appropriation of profitable business and or assets that are later 'legitimised' through normal business activity. The minister acquired the then Zimbabwe Allied Banking Group (ZABG), which became the Allied Bank before it collapsed (Daily News 2018).

The biggest financier of ZANU-PF congresses, the minister was also fingered by 'Core Mining and Minerals for demanding a \$10 million bribe from the company so that he could process a license for the company to mine in the Chiadzwa diamond fields' (Kurotwi 2017: 23).

6. Opposition Politics and Dimensions of Entrepreneurship

Karenga (1993: 312) defines politics as ‘the art and process of gaining, maintaining and using power’. The duty of managing a thriving democracy is that the ruling party and the opposition parties jointly share. It is the duty of the opposition to keep Government on its toes by probing and questioning its conduct of public affairs. Government accounts and methods of implementing policy must be examined and criticised where necessary. The opposition in a democracy must be loyal to the constitution and the people. However, loyalty does not mean you cannot advocate for change in the constitution. Loyalty means a commitment to change through democratic means. The opposition has to go out and put some resources in investigating the operations of the machinery of the state and the Government’s administration of this machinery and then educating the people on how the Government can be run more honestly, efficiently and economically. The opposition has to be taken seriously as a government party-in-waiting.

In the early years of Zimbabwe’s independence, the ZANU-PF leadership worked determinedly towards realising a one-party state. The preparations of a one-party state involved the marginalisation- if not eradication- of opposition parties, which were seen as the chief obstacle to realising this goal. However, at the end of the 1980s, the international, regional and domestic political environment unexpectedly shifted, diminishing the prospects for a one-party state. The formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 posed a serious threat to ZANU-PF rule because it emerged from the widespread disaffection, protests, apathy and disillusionment from within trade union, intellectual, church and student circles (Saunders 2000; Alexander and McGregor 2014). It is beyond doubt that the MDC’s broad representation of civic, labour, business leaders and former commercial farmers also created fertile ground for the growth and development of political entrepreneurs in shades of professionals, opportunists or outsiders.

Legislators’ primary goal is to gain and maintain power. This explains why incumbents cooperate against challengers to gain majority support in the legislature to pass legislation they favour. While an election that pits an incumbent of one party against a challenger of another at first appears to be primarily a competition among individuals of different parties (Holcombe 2002: 555) argues that upon closer examination, ‘the party affiliation is secondary, and

the competition is primarily between an incumbent who wants to retain political power and a challenger who wants to take it away.' As such, party competition is analogous to economic competition in the marketplace. Competition for the right to monopoly power leads incumbents to erect barriers to entry for challengers. This explains why Zimbabwe's closed and controlled politics could not easily shift to accommodate a credible multi-party system. With the ruling party (ZANU-PF)'s domination of national politics, multi-party democracy remained idealistic. The uneven political playing field further undermined the credibility and effectiveness of parliament as a democratic, representative institution of Government.

The political and economic crisis of 2008 and the ultimate entry of the MDC into a power-sharing pact signalled the loosening of ZANU-PF's grip. However, the new political settlement creating the Government of National Unity (GNU) was based on compromise had both advantages and disadvantages. To all appearances, ZANU-PF's strategy was to frustrate the MDC leadership to the point that they would withdraw from the unity pledge, thus ensuring the failure of the GNU without ZANU-PF incurring blame. According to the World Bank (2010), ZANU-PF political appointees remained on the public payroll, and reformers found it difficult to restore a performance ethic to public administration. ZANU-PF retained exclusive control over the coercive instruments of the state, and its ministers were in charge of the security, intelligence, and judicial services. The expansion of official posts to accommodate political allies suggested that both sides (ZANU-PF and MDC) were willing to sacrifice the careful management of scarce public resources to distribute political spoils. MDC cadres who garnered positions in Government saw this as 'an opportunity to gain access to assets previously enjoyed by ZANU-PF, as reflected in the Members of Parliament's demands of state-of-the-art vehicles among other official benefits' (Bratton 2014: 132). A consideration of Zimbabwe's GNU has shown that even though the ruling elites might hail from different political parties and persuasions, they will meet to discuss the art and method of ruling. By so doing, they will tend to separate from the general populace and enjoy the lion's share of the national cake. Promoting coalition governments allows losers, whether from ruling or competing parties, to get into Government through the backdoor. Parties involved have the incentive to pursue those opportunities for their own political benefit.

The initial executive leadership of the MDC largely hailed from the labour movement. The number of lawyers among Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) executive members and legislators continued to increase, most probably because they possess many of the qualities required from politicians like the habit of speaking in public, oratory talent, knowledge of legal questions, among other qualities. It is not surprising that many politicians are recruited among professionals who know how to craft words. The talent to craft words is a meritocratic achievement. Admittedly, knowledge of legal techniques is a great advantage for those engaged in politics, where each action is translated into a legislative text. Lawyers comport themselves the same way in political life. The larger number of lawyers among legislators is also explained by the possibility for the legal profession to be temporarily abandoned and taken up again in case of electoral defeat. Political success also ‘improves the lawyers’ reputation at the bar’ (Dogan 2003: 281). A heated debate ensued over the position taken by MDC lawyers to defend ZANU-PF members in court.

Soon after coming to power, President Mnangagwa expanded an anti-corruption crackdown on the country’s political elite, who faced allegations of money laundering, bribery, extortion and abuse of public office for personal gain. All those caught in the net were politicians with links to the vanquished Generation 40 (G40) faction of ZANU-PF, which was bracing for the accession of Grace Mugabe to power. The move by the estranged politicians to retain lawyers aligned to the opposition MDC as their lead counsel to argue their corruption cases in court attracted controversy. Walter Mzembe retained the MDC vice national chairperson Job Sikhala, the former Minister of Tourism, vice president Welshman Ncube represented former vice president Phelekezela Mphoko and Tendai Biti represented former Reserve Bank governor Gideon Gono (Staff Reporter Daily News, 27 August 2019). The MDC leadership was slammed for representing ZANU-PF members accused of being corrupt. Political entrepreneurs would normally have misplaced priorities because they hunt for money or related benefits. Those sympathetic to the legal fraternity argued that a lawyer’s representation of a client does not constitute an endorsement of the clients’ political, economic or moral views and activities. As lawyers, they argued that they must serve anyone in need of legal assistance, and only a sense of justice and professional responsibility was what they considered in deciding whether to take on a case or not.

In the same vein, people would still question the sincerity to defend people who collaborated with a rogue regime that arrested, tortured and detained them and their kith and kin on spurious charges. While the issue of professional responsibility sounds logical, underneath it lies an ugly veneer of a quest for power and greed for legal fees. The MDC has been fighting against corruption, looting of state resources, violation of human rights by the same ZANU-PF politicians who were now represented in courts of law by these MDC officials. Expressing concern over the development, a ZANU-PF minister questioned: 'Are they [MDC] really fighting corruption or they just fight for money?' (Staff Reporter Daily News, 27 August 2019). In such a case, the probability is very high that political entrepreneurship becomes a push factor for getting closer to ZANU-PF officials for purposes of striking deals and contracts and dining together at the corruption table. The MDC has always accused ZANU-PF of perpetrating political and state-sponsored violence against their supporters, vote-rigging and other heinous acts of grand corruption in Zimbabwe. It defies logic that the same people they are fighting in the political arena turn out to be direct clients in courts. It sounded queer and rather awkward that even MDC supporters questioned the sincerity of their leaders in the fight against corruption. The MDC leadership cared for and fed the goose that lays the golden egg for them.

The former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, alleged that all opposition parties whose agenda was his removal from office connived with western governments and NGOs for personal financial gains. He cited what he labelled the 'Madhuku Way' whereby the bankrupt leader of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), Lovemore Madhuku, would stage dramaturgical demonstrations to attract the attention and sympathy of donor agencies to get funding which he channelled towards personal ends (Mugabe 2012). What Mugabe insinuated was that politicking was Madhuku's primary source of income.

On 17 May 2019, President Emmerson Mnangagwa launched the Political Actors Dialogue (POLAD), a voluntary platform for presidential contestants in Zimbabwe's 2018 harmonised elections. According to President Mnangagwa, the platform was designed to proffer solutions to Zimbabwe's challenges through peaceful, open, and transparent discourse. While 18 political parties participated at the launch and subsequent meetings, the MDC Alliance, a major contender in the 2018 elections and a befitting protagonist in the dialogue, shunned

participation from the onset. It is logical to argue that POLAD as a platform lacks dignified men and women with a sense of responsibility and commitment for fostering unity among citizens. Some of the members deceptively embraced national dialogue to stay in power, while others joined to earn lucrative positions for personal aggrandisement. One of the hangers-on, outspoken members of POLAD and a member of the irrelevant grouping and lifetime National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) leader Lovemore Madhuku claimed that POLAD was a 'national' project. The members requested all-terrain vehicles and sitting allowances, and other perks from President Emmerson Mnangagwa. One can convincingly argue that POLAD members are political rejects in the dialogue for confidential material and financial benefit rather than correcting the Government's political rhetoric. Some members have withdrawn their participation, while Bryan Mteki has since rejoined ZANU-PF. According to the Zimbabwe Independent (10/01/2020), members of POLAD are truly shameful, greedy and pathetic political opportunists.

7. Conclusion

The study has shown that in some instances prior to independence but routinely after that, politicians have overtly and covertly taken advantage of the multitude of legal and illegal, legitimate and illegitimate socio-economic and political opportunities to enrich themselves. Strong connections developed between political and commercial elites have enabled big business easy access to the inner ear of Government and the other way around. The fading and highly porous boundaries that defined politicians and business conglomerates have widely enabled political leaders to gather resources and pre-eminence. The instinct to acquire wealth reigns supreme among Zimbabwe's political entrepreneurs not so much as a result of the history of poverty, landlessness and hunger, which for decades plagued those who are in leadership today, but sheer greed and selfishness. The mere fact that there is such heated competition for elected office and that people are willing to spend so much money to try to influence the outcomes of elections suggests that there are substantial profits to be gained by the victors. Access to the political sphere seems necessary because it is the quickest way of acquiring wealth. The roles of political parties as privileged greenhouses of elites, agencies of elite recruitment and channels of promotion through

patronage networks make it abundantly clear that most Zimbabwean politicians are political entrepreneurs who live 'off' politics. Like those in the market, political entrepreneurs discover and act on unexploited profit opportunities. In Zimbabwe, politics is a type of business, and business is politics.

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