



Universiteit
Leiden

Explaining Post-Transition Instability in Zimbabwe after the Coup in 2017

Bachelor Thesis by Denise Dijkhuizen

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Abstract

Many countries in Africa underwent a transition since the 1980s. After some of these transitions, there was instability. A current example of a transition that led to instability is the case of Zimbabwe. After the transitional coup in 2017, there was an unstable situation. This research aims to explain the post-transition instability in Zimbabwe by looking if the instability that the country faces can be explained by the coup itself or if other factors played a role. This research will be a typical case study. A qualitative research method, namely process tracing, will be used and the research will rely on secondary sources. This research concludes that other factors that were already present before the coup, can explain the post-transition instability. Especially economic factors play a vital role in the instability. I do not conclude that the coup had no effect on the post-transition instability in Zimbabwe, considering that the policy of the new president did cause instability and the fact that the government is still lacking legitimacy. It is too soon to state that the coup did not lead to democratic gain.

Explaining Post-Transition Instability in Zimbabwe after the Coup in 2017

Introduction

On November 14th of 2017 the people of Zimbabwe were shocked to hear that tanks were moving on the outskirts of the capital. This military action happened after army chief Constantino Chiwenga denounced Mugabe's firing of vice president Emmerson Mnangagwa. Later that day gunfire was heard near Mugabe's house in Harare. By the 15th of November, military vehicles had taken control of the streets of Harare controlling access to parliament, ruling party headquarters and the Supreme Court. Mugabe formally resigned his position as president of Zimbabwe on the 21st of November. The position as president was taken over by Emmerson Mnangagwa on the 24th of November. As of May 2019, the transition has not brought peace and democracy to Zimbabwe nor has economic recovery taken place. After the coup there were disturbances in the elections. Zimbabwe is also facing economic hardship since the coup.

African countries have often experienced regime transitions since becoming independent. These transitions can be caused by coups as in the case of Zimbabwe, civil wars, or widespread pressure for democratization. The way regimes transition can have implications for post-transition stability. There are three main trajectories through which a country can transform, namely: from above, 'stalemate' and from below. A country can transform within the 'stalemate' form of transition in four possible ways. According to Cheeseman (2015), the way a regime transitions has implications for its post-transition economic and political development. He associates coups with the outcome that there is no immediate gain but that there is a good chance to reform. This chance depends on the will of the new ruling junta to reform (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 96).

Coups are commonly associated with a lack of fundamental societal changes, which can breed instability. This is indeed captured in the following definition of a coup. "Coup d'état, also called Coup, the sudden, violent overthrow of an existing government by a small group. The chief prerequisite for a coup is control of all or part of the armed forces, the police, and other military elements. A coup is a change in power from the top that merely results in the abrupt replacement of leading government personnel. A coup rarely alters a nation's fundamental

social and economic policies, nor does it significantly redistribute power among competing political groups'' (Coup d'état, 2019).

After the coup in Sudan, there was a lot of instability. After months of protests and dozens of deaths long-term president Omar Hassan Al-Bashir was finally unseated by the army (Walsh & Goldstein, 2019). However, the joy of the people disappeared quickly when they learned who his replacement was. The replacement was Awad Mohamed Ahmed Ibn Auf. He was the defence minister and confidant of former president Al-Bashir (Walsh & Goldstein, 2019). People in Sudan continued their protests for a civilian led transition and the situation is still unstable (Walsh & Goldstein, 2019).

However, coups do not erupt suddenly, but are themselves often caused by factors such as economic decline. It is the government's responsibility to ensure good economic performance. It is poor performance of the economy that leads to accusations of incompetence or corruption which precede coups or are later used to justify them (O'kane, 1981, p. 289). This raises the question whether the coup itself breeds instability or rather the factors preceding a coup which continue to linger on. In this paper I will hence investigate the causal connections between a coup and post-transition stability as well as whether other factors can explain instability.

In this research the case of the 21 November 2017 coup in Zimbabwe will be analysed. The research question that this article aims to answer is: Did the course of the coup d'état in Zimbabwe in 2017 have an impact on post-transition instability in Zimbabwe? We will look into the different modes of transition trajectories. This research will be a typical case study which will use a qualitative research method, namely process tracing, by relying on secondary sources.

This research paper will consist of five sections. In the first section I will give a theoretical framework in which the theory about transition trajectories will be explained. In the second section, the methodology of the research will be stated. In the third section I will provide a historical context of Zimbabwe in order to get an understanding of the development of the country. In the fourth and final part the actual analyses of the coup and current situation in

Zimbabwe will be performed. Section five concludes that other factors that were already present before the coup, can explain the post-transition instability. Especially economic factors and legitimacy problems cause instability. I do not conclude that the coup had no effect on the post-transition instability in Zimbabwe, considering that the policy of the new president did cause instability. It is too soon to state that the coup did not lead to gain.

1. Theoretical framework

Regime transitions in Africa

Politics in Africa changed since the late 1980s as multiparty politics replaced one-party states, personal dictatorship and military rule. Becoming independent was the first step in the liberation process. A lot of people see the events in the 1990s as the second step in the liberation process (Cheeseman, 2015, P. 86). In the short period between 1989 and 1994 no more than thirty-five sub-Saharan African countries had multiparty politics. Democracy was established by the work of domestic opposition groups and the input of the civilians as well as international actors (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 86).

The explanation for the changes in the African political landscape can be found in events that happened before the 1980s. The collapse of authoritarian rule was caused by the failure of the government to provide revenue to satisfy the incumbents. The consequence was that the governments faced a lot of criticism from domestic as well as international actors (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 87). In the 1980s an economic crisis took place. Because of the crisis, African governments sought the help of the World Bank and the IMF. The World Bank and the IMF attached conditions to their financial help (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 88). These conditions implied that the countries needed to reform and they became economically dependent. The African countries had a hard time repaying their debt and the World Bank argued that this was caused by the African politics. Their new strategy was to scale back the state (Cheeseman, 2015, pp. 88-90). The new strategy was integrated in the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS) from the World Bank (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 90). The number of SAPS helps to explain the political unrest in Africa (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997, p. 139). The programme promoted a reduction in government spending, the privatization of important assets and the removal of subsidies and tariffs. The SAPS failed and this contributed to the weakening of state capacity (Cheeseman, 2015, pp. 90-91).

The democratic unrest, largely caused by economic factors and international criticism, made that there was not much of a choice for African leaders but to reform. This was a general trend on the continent but the process and outcome of the trend varied (Cheeseman, 2015, pp. 93-94). It happened often that a country would reform when countries around them recently experienced a regime transition (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997, p. 138). Yet it also happened a lot that attempts to promote democracy were unsuccessful because people had an incentive to help the authoritarian regime exist. Leaders in the African countries would use international engagement for their own advance (Cheeseman, 2015, pp. 130-131). If political leaders find the cost of reform better than the cost of repression, they will strive for political liberalization. The costs of repression are formed by the strength of the opposition and if the leaders have the financial needs and authority to have their regimes remain in power through coercion (Cheeseman, 2015, pp. 5-7). Even if the cost of repression gets higher, leaders are only willing to democratize when they find the costs of repression less acceptable than the costs of reform (Cheeseman, 2005, p. 10). Leaders are least likely to reform in countries where there are a lot of natural resources, an institutional landscape that is weak, and a society that is deeply divided (Cheeseman, 2005, p. 13).

The global survey about the freedom in the world in 2003, stated that 11 out of 48 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are democratic or 'free'. According to Freedom House, 23 % of African countries today are considered democracies and 33% of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are considered as not free (Windsor, 2003).

Type of transitions and outcomes

As said above, the way countries transition varies. There are a few distinct ways, namely: from above, state mate and from below (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 96). They will be explained and discussed one by one.

One of the three forms of transitioning is a transition from above. When this happens, there is not much reform and the reform is regulated by the ruling elite. The outcome of this transition form is often victory for the elite, limited openings and a state dominated by a party (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 96). The ruling elite, in countries where there is transition from above, led the process of top-down democratization. This process was not driven by groups opposed

to the incumbents. but by the ruling party itself. The reason they did this is that they have a high extent of control over the political environment and that they do not have a lot to lose from encouraging greater competition (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 97). They realised that through reform, the democratic rights and liberties of the people could be improved and this would in return create more legitimacy for the elite (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 96).

The second form of transition is a transition that is 'stalemate'. With the mode of transition 'stalemate' there are 4 categories that are possible. These 4 categories are: 'externally managed', 'externally triggered', 'domestic triggered' and 'negotiated' (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 96). The main characteristics of the 'externally managed' is that stalemate between competing parties are broken by a peace process and elections that are managed internally. The typical effect of this transition is extremely delicate democratic gains which depend on continued international commitment (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 96). When the stalemate is externally triggered, international actors performed pressure which caused the break between the government and the opposition. The most common outcome is democratic gains which are fragile and often electoral authoritarian regimes emerge (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 96). When the mode of stalemate is domestically triggered, the stalemate between government and opposition is broken by a 'corrective coup'. This coup can cause the emergence of multipartyism (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 96). The typical result is that there is no immediate gain but that there is a good chance to reform. This chance depends on the will of the new ruling junta to reform. The final form of a stalemate mode of transition is the negotiated stalemate (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 96). Here the stalemate between government and opposition leaders is broken by a compromise by the elite between people from the government and the opposition. The typical outcome is that the main interests of the parties are protected and that there is a stable democratic regime (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 96).

The third and final form of transition, is the mode of transition from below. This mode of transition entails that there is a domestic protest movement which performs overwhelming pressure for change on the ruling elite. The typical outcome is that the rulers are defeated and that there is now a potential for democratic consolidation (Cheeseman, 2015, p. 96).

The transition by a coup has an uncertain outcome. The outcome could be a gain for democracy. But the outcome is uncertain and depends of the willingness of the junta. The coup can cause a period of instability. However, before deciding that coups themselves cause instability, it is important to take into account the factors that cause a coup in the first place.

Factors predicting a coup

In almost 90 percent of the Black African states who were independent between 1960 and 1982, a coup occurred (Jenkins & Kposowa, 1990, p. 861). Since the 1990s, coups have still been used. There are different motivations for military intervention in the form of a coup. Some explanations are economic, others more political.

There are multiple economic reasons why coups occur. Income inequality and economic crises are among these reasons. These will be explained more in depth.

When there is a democratic transition, the groups in society who have a low income are pro redistribution, because this benefits them, and they move against the authoritarian institution that maintain the inequality (Haggard & Kaufman, 2012, p. 497). Income inequality explains here why coups happen. When a democracy is established, this is not per se a permanent status because there is always the possibility that the elite mount a coup. When the society has an unequal distribution, there is a large change that this country will transition in and out of democracy (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2001, p. 939).

The vulnerable state of democracy is a consequence of the weaknesses that come forth from economic crises. When there is a high risk of a coup in Africa, the governments react to this by expanding their spending on the military (Collier & Hoeffler, 2007, p. 20). A lot of coups occur at the time of a recessions or when the country faces economic difficulties. The reason why coups happen during the time of economic crisis is that during this time the costs of political riots are lower for both the rich and the poor (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2001, p. 939).

There are specific economic factors that cause economic instability and uncertainty in the economy. This can lead to accusations of the people about the corruptness and incompetence of the government. The specific economic factors are the general underlying reasons for the

occurrence of a coup (O'kane, 1981, p. 289). These economic conditions are present in countries that produce primary goods for export on the world market. The conditions prior to coups are a combination of causes which stimulate the occurrence of large fluctuations and increase the possibility that the effects of these fluctuations will be to encourage instability in the local economy (O'kane, 1981, pp. 289-290).

In societies that are more developed, we see no coups occurring (Collier & Hoeffler, 2007, p. 4). Low income and slow growth are both factors that increase the change of a coup happening (Collier & Hoeffler, 2007, p. 11). When the per capita income doubles, the risk of a coup happening falls by about 27%. But this also works the other way around. When the per capita income is halved, the risk of a coup increases by 35% (Collier & Hoeffler, 2007, p. 12). This leads to the implication that a higher per capita income reduces the change of a coup happening (Collier & Hoeffler, 2007, p. 4).

Another economic explanation refers to the position and status of the army itself. For example, the military may aspire better conditions and higher salaries. It is also possible that people within the military have personal aspirations for power. When there is a high risk of a coup in Africa, the governments react to this by expanding their spending on the military (Collier & Hoeffler, 2007, p. 20).

There are also political explanations for the occurrence of coups. These reasons will be stated below. Among the political explanations are coups because of the fact that the elites are under treat and another political explanation is that the coup attempters do not agree with the political colour of the government.

There are multiple political reasons that can lead to a coup. It can be that a government has progressive plans for their country. These plans can lead to resistance. These coup attempts are of a conservative nature and they want to prevent possible leftist moves (Jenkins & Kposowa, 1990, p. 873). Another coup form is a reformative coup which will make way for neo-populist programs (Jenkins & Kposowa, 1990, p. 873).

The threat of removal from power may lead to a coup. When the elites are under threat of being removed from power by force, they estimate the amount of the net cost of repression vs. concession. When the levels of inequality are very high, the threats that will emerge by democratization are too high and they will choose for the option to repress. But when the levels of inequality are medium, redistributive demands can be handled by making a compromise between classes over institutions and policy that will allow democratic transitions (Haggard & Kaufman, 2012, p. 497). The elite in a democracy have the possibility to attempt a coup (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2001, p. 942).

Political protests can play a role in the coup process. Regimes with one political party and old electoral traditions have high levels of political protest. The people want more political competition and this in turn leads to alternative channels of participation outside of elections. One of these alternative channels was protesting (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997, pp. 141-142).

There are political as well as economic reasons that lead to the occurrence of coups. It is important to take the reason for the coup into account. The reason for the coup can still be present in society after the coup happened. If this factor is still present, this still can lead to instability after the coup.

2. Research method

The research method that will be used is a qualitative research method. The method is called process tracing. This is a method that involves in-depth analysis of a single case. The single case that will be analysed is a country, namely Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is what we call a typical case in terms of the relationship between a coup and post-transition stability. After a coup from above, Zimbabwe experienced political as well as economic instability. In the single case study, I will analyse to what extent the coup itself, and the fact that the same elites maintain power, explain post-transition instability in Zimbabwe, or whether other factors explain this. The type of process tracing that will be used is hence theory testing process tracing. The goal is to fully understand why the coup happened and the effect it had on post transition stability in Zimbabwe. I will focus on the main actors involved in the coup and the transition process and analyse their behaviour and motivations. I will also look into what other factors, such as economic ones, have contributed to post-transition instability.

In short, a coup is the change of the government by a violent overthrow of armed forces. This is what happened in Zimbabwe in 2017. You can conclude this when you apply this definition to the coup in Zimbabwe. There was a sudden overthrow of the government. Emmerson Mnangagwa replaced the sitting president Mugabe. The armed forces played a vital role in the Coup.

A few key actors are linked to the coup. Each one of these figures will be discussed and analysed. The key figures that will be analysed are: Mugabe, Mugabe's wife Grace and Emmerson Mnangagwa.

Besides the key figures, there were also a few key events. I will discuss the important events in a chronological order throughout the research. There were a few important events that are linked to the coup. A very important event was the dismissal of vice president Emmerson Mnangagwa on the 6th of November (Thomas-Greenfield & Wharton, 2019, p. 12). This was also the direct cause for the coup. Another very important event was the sanctification of the high court of Zimbabwe. They ruled the military's actions as constitutionally permissible and lawful. Another significant event was the rebirth of the Joint Operations Command (JOC) (Thomas-Greenfield & Wharton, 2019, pp. 7-9).

There are also other factors that might have played a role. Zimbabwe has always been a highly unequal economy, with high levels of poverty. The people in Zimbabwe don't have basic commodities and suffer from food insecurity, fuel shortages, really high rates of unemployment, and hyperinflation (Bradley, Ingham & Sanger, 2019). This will also be taken into the analysis to see if the economic conditions played a vital role in the transition of Zimbabwe.

3. The history of Zimbabwe

Before we start the analysis of the post-coup instability in Zimbabwe and its causes, we need to understand the history of Zimbabwe. We will give a brief overview of the most important events since the colonisation of the country that is now called Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has

known a couple of names during its colonial history, namely: Southern Rhodesia, Rhodesia, and Zimbabwe-Rhodesia (Openshaw & Terry, 2015, p. 43).

Colonial times

Zimbabwe was colonized during the second wave of European imperialism. The Pioneer Column occupied Zimbabwe in 1890 in the name of the British (Mlambo, 2013, p. 30). The Pioneer Column was a group of adventurers who were supported by the British arch-imperialist Cecil Rhodes, a resident of South Africa. Rhodes believed that the British culture was superior to other cultures and because of this he believed that the world needed to be under British rule (Mlambo, 2013, p. 36). Before he could colonize the country now known as Zimbabwe, he needed legal authorisation from the British government. Rhodes would get this authorisation when he could show the government that he had a treaty of friendship with the people that were in power in what was to become Southern Rhodesia. To make sure this agreement would be reached, Rhodes used deceit (Mlambo, 2013, p. 38). Ndebele King Lobengula, who was the successor to the founding leader of the Ndebele nation, signed the document Rudd Concession. In this document he signed away his territory and sovereignty and placed his territory and its people in the hands of the British (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 38-40). Despite allegations from Lobengula about the deceptiveness of the Rudd Concession, the British government still saw the concession as binding and they granted Cecil Rhodes the authority to colonise Zimbabwe in the name of the British government (Mlambo, 2013, p. 42).

Way to independency

During colonization many white settlers migrated to Southern Rhodesia in search of fertile farmlands. In the years leading up to independence, Britain considered the transfer of a number of their colonies to a black majority rule. This did not go well with the white settlers who ruled Southern Rhodesia relatively autonomous from Britain (Openshaw & Terry, 2015, p. 43). It led to the issuing of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from the United Kingdom in 1965 by the Rhodesian Front government of Ian Smith. The UDI caused a long war of liberation against the white-minority rulers in the country on behalf of the two main opposition parties. These parties were the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) (Openshaw & Terry, 2015, pp. 43-44). The war led to the collapse of the Smith regime. In 1979 the Rhodesian government agreed to negotiations

with ZANU and ZAPU at a constitutional conference with the goal to bring the war to an end. They agreed on the basis of the independence of Zimbabwe and they reached an agreement on the terms of the new state's constitution, together with arrangements for the pre-independence period which included a ceasefire (Openshaw & Terry, 2015, p. 44). In the year 1980 Zimbabwe became independent (Mlambo, 2013, p. 194). Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party was the winning party in the first elections that were fully democratic. Mugabe was appointed as the prime minister (Openshaw & Terry, 2015, p. 44).

Independency 1980-2000

In the first decade there was great optimism in Zimbabwe. The government put in place many pro-people policies that made a significant difference in the life of the people. However, there came a turning point by the mid-1990s when a deepening sense of despair arrived because of economic downfall and increasing authoritarianism (Mlambo, 2013, p. 194).

When Zimbabwe became independent, there was a highly developed and diverse economy. Yet this economy was based on severe inequalities based on race, which was in favour of the white minority (Mlambo, 2013, p. 206). The ownership of land was in the hands of the white minority. Companies which were owned by the white population controlled a lot of Zimbabwe's mining, manufacturing and commercial industries. Inequalities based on race were also present in the social services sector (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 206-208). It was a huge challenge for the government to restore these inequalities. During the first years of independence, major changes were accomplished. The government invested in education and health with the goal to improve the quality of life of the previously marginalized part of the population (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 208-209). During these early years the country experienced an economic boom. This was the result of a couple of factors including the removal of sanctions, which brought foreign investment to the country. This made it possible for the country to market their products worldwide. Yet by 1982, the economy faced an economic downturn as the consequence of the effects of a drought and because of the world recession (Mlambo, 2013, p. 212). Overall, the economic gains of the 1980s were still unequal, benefiting the white farmers most. In 1990 Zimbabwe started an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme. The effects of this programme were harmful (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 214- 215). In the manufacturing sector there was a case of de-industrialisation. The people

were worse off after the programme than before. Because of the de-industrialisation and unemployment, the informal sector of the economy grew (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 216-219).

Land ownership continued to be a major source of tension in Zimbabwe and early promises of land distribution have largely been unmet. Land redistribution happened under the 'willing seller, willing buyer' principle (Thomas, 2003, p. 691). This principle made certain that the white population only sold lands that had been abandoned during the War of Liberation, or else was not of good quality, thereby denying black farmers the opportunity to establish a successful economic sector (Thomas, 2003, p. 697). The majority of Africans saw independence as the beginning of the process of restoring the land to the African people. The government did not push as hard on the land reform programme. They regularly made an issue of it during election times, but after the elections they did not do a lot about it (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 221-224). The gradual tempo of land redistribution led to illegal farm invasions in the early 1980s by black farmers, conquering 'white farms'. These invasions led to the fast-track land reform programme (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 224-226).

On the political level, the ZANU-PF, led by Robert Mugabe, wanted to have a one-party government system in Zimbabwe. ZANU-PF showed their intolerance of any political opposition with the use of force. Constitutional changes in the 1980s made the one-party state stronger (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 202-203). The party wanted to establish a one-party Marxist-Leninist state. But after the collapse of the Soviet Union this idea became contested. There was a rise of a few short-lived political parties, however none of these parties were strong enough to be a threat to the ZANU-PF (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 203-205). By the early 1990s the idea of a one-party state was abolished. Opposition parties were still weak in the 1990s, but there was a rise of several civil society organisations that became increasingly critical of the ZANU-PF (Mlambo, 2013, p. 205).

The crisis years 2000-2008

2000 was the starting year of a turbulent time in Zimbabwe. Land invasions occurred frequently, some veterans of Zimbabwe's liberation war and other government supporters began forcing white farmers off the land with the approval of the government. By the end of

2002 Zimbabwe was in an economic meltdown with domestic and external debts soaring, crippling exchange rates, and an escalating inflation (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 236-238).

MDC and electoral violence 2008

The worsening of economic conditions and growing political discontent and the increasing longing for a new political dispensation led to the creation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999. The MDC would promote 'social democratic, human centred development policies, pursued in an environment of political pluralism, participatory democracy, accountable and transparent governance' as well as non-racialism and non-sexism (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 231-233). There was, however, a disagreement between the government and the opposition forces over the new constitution. MDC had stated that they wanted a real people's constitution. The government made a new constitution and the nation could decide on it through a referendum in 2000 (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 233-234). The people rejected the constitution. The MDC conquered 57 out of the 120 seats even when there was widespread violence in the pre-election period. After a period of conflict, an agreement was reached between ZANU-PF and the MDC (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 234-235). They signed a Global Political Agreement agreeing to come together in a power-sharing agreement as a step towards transition, pending the implementation of a couple of important political reforms, including a constitutional review and credible elections (Mlambo, 2013, pp. 234-235).

In March 2008 there were combined presidential, parliamentary, senatorial and local council elections. On the 27th of June there was a broadly contested presidential re-run. In this period there was politically motivated violence and displacements (Hammar, 2008, p. 31). The ruling party militias started a war in the countryside and in urban areas against people who voted 'incorrectly' in March. During this war houses were burned down, close to 200 people were murdered, people were abducted without trace, thousands were brutalised through beatings, rape or torture, and hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans were forced to leave their homes. Illegal arrests and imprisonment of the opposition increased in frequency (Hammar, 2008, pp. 31-32). As a result, the European Union widened sanctions against Zimbabwe's leaders in July 2008 (BBC, 2019). The intention of the sanctions is to pressure Mugabe into sharing the power with the opposition. As a reaction to this, the ZANU-PF and the opposition

Movement for Democratic Change started negotiations on a power-sharing deal with the intention to end the political crisis in Zimbabwe (The New York Times, 2008).

The economic crises and the elections of 2013

In 2008 the inflation rate reached 231,000,000%. At least 80% of the people living in Zimbabwe were living on less than 1 dollar a day and close to half of the population is malnourished. This led to the acceptance of the US dollar as an acceptable currency (McGreal, 2008). Among the economic problems is a really high unemployment rate. A lot of Zimbabweans left Zimbabwe looking for a job elsewhere. The people in Zimbabwe do not have basic commodities and suffer from food insecurity, fuel shortages, high rates of unemployment and hyperinflation (Bradley et al, 2019). Mugabe was the winner of the elections in 2013 and was still in power, Zimbabwe remained an authoritarian state. After the elections, there were accusations of postelection violence (Bradley et al., 2019).

4. The 2017 Zimbabwean coup and its aftermath

Events before the coup

In 2017 Zimbabwe was still facing economic problems. The government of Zimbabwe has been struggling economically. They blame this on external powers and drought. However, the truth is that the economic problems are caused by economic misrule (Clemens & Moss, 2005). In order to develop, economic growth is necessary. Economic growth comes with huge benefits. A growing economy is good for resources, opportunities and incentives for bettering other indicators for welfare (Clemens & Moss, 2005). Zimbabwe is a case in which there is a rapid economic collapse. In the period from 2000-2005 inflation was really high, the local currency had lost 99% of its value, and almost half of the country had to deal with food shortages. Donors have withdrawn a lot of their investment in Zimbabwe and this could be part of the reason for the economic crisis (Clemens & Moss, 2005). The drought does have a role in the economic decline, but it does not sufficiently explain the economic collapse. When the ruling party started to use political violence and repression against the opposition, the economy also declined. This could also be an explanation for the economic problems in Zimbabwe (Clemens & Moss, 2005).

A big part of the economic problems follows from the high volume of external debt. Around 70 percent of Zimbabweans live in poverty (Openshaw & Terry, 2015, p. 41). The economy of Zimbabwe has known a downward trend for more than a decade with slow growth, low liquidity and high levels of unemployment. A lot of companies have closed their doors, reduced in size or moved to surrounding countries (African Research Bulletin, 2015).

There are a few key actors who play an important role in the coup that need to be discussed. Robert Mugabe was the president of Zimbabwe before the coup. Emmerson Mnangagwa was the vice-president. Within the ZANU-PF there was a fear that Grace Mugabe would become the next president. There was rivalry between Grace Mugabe and Emmerson Mnangagwa. Mnangagwa was eventually removed from his position. It is believed that this was arranged by Grace Mugabe (Breakfast, 2017).

First Robert Mugabe needs to be discussed, considering he was the person the coup was against. Mugabe was born in the year 1924 in Kutama Southern Rhodesia. Mugabe joined a movement and later became a leader in it. Robert Mugabe created the Zimbabwe African National Union (Bromwich, 2017). Mugabe was arrested in 1963 and spent his days here until 1975. In the time that he was in prison, Zimbabwe became independent. He became the voice of the guerrilla movement (Bromwich, 2017). After the British pact, Mugabe won the elections to become prime minister. He promised peace and unity. Between 1983 and 1985 Mugabe started a hunt down dissidents (Bromwich, 2017). About 10000 people died during this hunt down. In 1988 Mugabe became the president of Zimbabwe. In the first 12 years his power remained unchallenged (Bromwich, 2017). This changed in the 1990s and in 2000, when Mugabe had to deal with new opponents. He started supporting groups who seized white-owned farmers. Later he decreed that the government could seize farms without compensating the landowners (Bromwich, 2017). In the following years, food shortages became higher and the economy declined. In the elections of 2008, opposition supporters were beaten and killed which led to the withdrawal by his opponent from the elections (Bromwich, 2017).

The power of Mugabe was for a big part based on the military. This was largely executed by the Joint Operations Command (JOC). The JOC was mainly created to be in charge of the

overall national security and consisted of the defence minister, the chiefs of the army and air force, national police, and prisons; and the director of national intelligence. The JOC became the backer of Mugabe and ZANU'S long time rule (Thomas-Greenfield & Wharton, 2019, pp. 8-9). The JOC thought of strategies to influence the elections in favour of Mugabe. This led to intimidation of voters by the military (Thomas-Greenfield & Wharton, 2019, p. 9).

A second important person is Emmerson Mnangagwa. He stood by president Mugabe for a long time (Ramzy, 2017). He fulfilled different positions in the politics of Zimbabwe. He was Security Minister and Minister of Justice when Mugabe was in power. Mnangagwa also fought the war in the period before independence (Shaban, 2019). Mnangagwa was the vice-president of president Mugabe. When Mnangagwa was a minister of justice he helped to fight the opposition to keep Mugabe in power (Ramzy, 2017). In the elections of 2008 Mugabe had a victory. This can be explained by Emmerson Mnangagwa. He was promoted to deputy president by Mugabe (Breakfast, 2017). In the 1960s Mnangagwa founded the guerrilla group 'crocodile gang'. Because of this he got the nickname 'the crocodile', but later this was also related to his political shrewdness. He spent time in prison because he was accused of sabotage (Shaban, 2019).

A third important person is Grace Mugabe. She is the wife of former president Mugabe. She is the head of the women's wing of the ZANU-PF (Ramzy, 2017). She was not really political active at first, but she rose from obscurity and climbed to the top in the ZANU-PF. She became the most probable person to succeed Mugabe as president of Zimbabwe. Grace is the leader of the political G40 faction (Cropley, 2017). The G40 was composed of younger members of the ZANU-PF and they challenged the old guard. As time went by, the tensions between the old guard and the G40 got worse (Thomas-Greenfield & Wharton, 2019, p. 11). Grace expelled important people within the ZANU-PF since 2013. Grace campaigned for the firing of Mnangagwa. Before Grace became politically active, she was known for her excessive spending (Dendere, 2017). There were different views on the power of Grace. Some viewed her as a possible successor of Mugabe and others just saw her as the wife of the president without any real influence (Dendere, 2017). It was obvious that Grace wanted to have more power. She wanted to change the constitution of the ZANU-PF, so that one of the two vice

president has to be a woman. Because Grace was in control of the women's league and the youth department of the ZANU-PF, she had loyal followers (Dendere, 2017).

Before the coup happened, there was thus a power shift from Mnangagwa to Grace Mugabe. In the end Mnangagwa was fired and this was the direct cause of the coup in 2017 in Zimbabwe.

Events during the coup

On the 14th of November there were a few events that were important in relation to the coup. Moyo, who is the ZANU-PF information secretary, accused the ZDF chief Chiwenga of being a traitor for threatening to employ the military to end purges within the ZANU-PF. The youth league of the ZANU-PF gave a statement saying that they support Mugabe and his family. Images appeared on social media of armoured vehicles on the outskirts of Harare (Waddington, n.d.). The vehicles in the images on social media are the same as the vehicles that were in Harare on the 15th of November. The ambassador of Zimbabwe in South Africa stated to the press that the government was still in place and that the talk about a coup were only claims of the media (Waddington, n.d.).

On the 15th of November there were reports that there were sporadic gunfire's or explosions in Harare. It was clear that at least some part of the military had taken control of Harare, if not the government (Waddington, n.d.). The military of Zimbabwe said on Wednesday that they took Mugabe into custody. Officer Moyo said in a broadcast that the military was targeting criminals linked to Mugabe (Zimbabwe Independent, 2019).

There surfaced unconfirmed reports that key figures of the G40, the group that supports Grace Mugabe, had been arrested (Waddington, n.d.). The state broadcaster ZBC was taken over by the military (Ramzy, 2017). This happened at 4 AM (Waddington, n.d.). The chief of military said in the broadcast that Mugabe and his family were safe. An official statement from President Jacob Zuma from South Africa followed, in which he states that he spoke to Mugabe and that he was indeed safe. The general of the military stated that it was not a coup. The military actions implied otherwise (Ramzy, 2017). The military stated that it had moved to 'pacify a degenerating political, social and economic situation and the situation will return to

normalcy'. The general said that Mugabe was the commander in chief but his actions said otherwise. About half a dozen tanks were placed around government buildings in Harare (Ramzy, 2017).

On the 16th of November media reports stated that Mugabe is refusing negotiation efforts with the ZDF. Reports said that Mugabe and his family were in the presidential compound (Waddington, n.d.).

On the 17th of November Mugabe led a graduation ceremony at the University of Harare. The president of Botswana stated that Mugabe did not have diplomatic support in the region and that Mugabe should give up his power (Waddington, n.d.).

On the 18th of November people in Harare went to the streets to protest and they demanded that Mugabe would step down as president. The protest was organised by the #thisflag anti-government group (Waddington, n.d.). This group is described as 'terrorists' by officials in Zimbabwe (Burke & Enders, 2016). Also in Bulawayo protesters demanded that Mugabe would relinquish his power (Waddington, n.d.).

The 19th of November is an important date. On this date the central committee of the ZANU-PF decided to remove Mugabe as president and to replace him with Emerson Mnangagwa as interim party president. They gave Mugabe the deadline of 20 November to resign as president (Waddington, n.d.). This was the only option that they offered him. They also made the decision to expel a couple of G40 faction members, such as Grace Mugabe and Vice President Mphoko. In a live broadcast, president Mugabe talked about the hard times in the country and that he would preside over the ZANU-PF electoral conference (Waddington, n.d.).

On the 20th of November the commander of ZDF made a statement in which he called the military intervention on the 15th of November 'operation restore legacy'. President Mugabe hadn't resigned when the deadline had passed. The consequence was that the ZANU-PF stated that they would start an impeachment procedure to remove Mugabe from power (Waddington, n.d.).

On the 21th of November the Senate and the national Assembly sat together and they accepted a motion to hold a debate about the impeachment of President Mugabe. ZANU-PF and MDC-T decided to give support to the motion to impeach Mugabe (Waddington, n.d.). Negotiators were used to ensure a soft landing and soft exit for president Mugabe (Mpofu, 2017). The exist of Mugabe is considered as a soft exist. President Mugabe resigned following this event in a letter that was read in parliament (Waddington, n.d.).

On the 22th of November Emmerson Mnangagwa got back to Zimbabwe after he had fled to South Africa. On the 24th of November the High Court of Zimbabwe ruled that the actions of ZDF were legal. Emmerson Mnangagwa was inaugurated as Zimbabwe's new president on the 24th of November (Waddington, n.d.).

On the 27th of November Mnangagwa dissolved Mugabe's cabinet and he made the choice about the appointment of several interim ministers. On the 1st of December Mnangagwa made his first cabinet public (Waddington, n.d.). The new cabinet consists of ruling party loyalists and people that are connected to the military. There are no political figures of the opposition in this cabinet. Mugabe also did not have opposition politicians in his cabinet, and Mnangagwa did not change this (France24, 2017). The ruling party loyalists are regime insiders, and are probably not inclined to fundamental change.

Events after the coup

Economic hardship and protests

After President Mugabe was ousted, there was hope among Zimbabweans for economic reform. President Mnangagwa stated that the country was open for business, but not much has changed (Chan, 2019). Mnangagwa also said that Zimbabwe needs to modernize in order to succeed in the competitive world. Zimbabwe also needs to learn how to make 'finished products' to markets. Mnangagwa talked about a new are and he said that the rebuilding of Zimbabwe is a job for all the people (France24, 2017). He wanted to make a change and work on issues such as land reform, human rights, rule of law, improving the business climate, and reducing corruption. Unfortunately, there was little change. Some say this was because Mnangagwa was still controlled by the military leaders who put him in power and he needed

to listen to them until he had his own legitimate mandate (Thomas-Greenfield & Wharton, 2019, p. 14).

In January 2019 Mnangagwa announced that the gasoline prices would more than double. Mnangagwa did not take action, because he seemed oblivious to the problems this would cause for the people. This price rise was due to cause economic hardship for the ordinary Zimbabweans because of the currency shortages in the country and other economic difficulties (Chan, 2019). The President did not pay attention to this problem when he made the announcement. A consequence of the tax rise was that the cost for transportation increased what made looking for work and food a lot more difficult. This led to riots and the protests turned violent (Chan, 2019). The state security used force, shooting protesters, beating hundreds near dead and raping women. The vice president Constantino Chiwenga was in charge when Mnangagwa was away. They have a tough cooperation, because they have contrasting views (Chan, 2019). Chiwenga want security and control of political discourse. So in the absence of Mnangagwa, Chiwenga used force to control the political protests. Mnangagwa said that the security personnel who used the worst violence would be punished (Chan, 2019). However, this was not the first use of force of the government of Mnangagwa (Chan, 2019).

The government of Zimbabwe has no economic plan to secure the country's future. No major investors are willing to invest in Zimbabwe because of the high debt and unstable political situation. Zimbabwe financed itself through borrowing for 20 years (Chan, 2019). But now no one wants to lend the country money. The government of Mnangagwa managed to create new economic problems. An example is the tax imposing on cell phone financial transactions by the minister of finance (Chan, 2019). Because of the absence of hard currency, the people in Zimbabwe used virtual transactions on their cell phones to pay. But the new tax destroyed the confidence in the virtual economic sector. The majority of the population depends on the informal sector (Chan, 2019). Another example is the fuel price hikes, which was described earlier. There is no sufficient hard currency and the people hoped that virtual transactions would be seen by banks as hard currency (Chan, 2019).

Mnangagwa

President Emmerson Mnangagwa has been unable to resolve Zimbabwe's economic crisis. He also suffered a business fallout with a powerful faction of the military. The reason for the fall out is that the faction is rooting for the vice president Chiwenga to take over (Peter, 2019). They are now rooting for the vice president General Constantino Chiwenga. As a result, President Mnangagwa is reportedly due to tender his resignation as president in less than twelve months. In addition, a faction in the ZANU-Pf is opposed to Mnangagwa's rule, they have elevated plans to impeach him, and it is possible that they will sue him for the killing of innocent protesters in August 2018 and in early 2019 (Peter, 2019). Another source claimed that the real reason this faction is pushing away Mnangagwa is that China doesn't support him anymore (Peter, 2019).

Elections

On the 31st of July 2018 there were elections in Zimbabwe. Mnangagwa needed the elections to go in a peaceful, transparent and credible way. Only if this happened, the government of Mnangagwa would be certified as legitimate (Thomas-Greenfield & Wharton, 2019, p. 14). The elections were organized by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and the organisation did not look independent of the government and they did not show ambitions to be more transparent than necessary. In these elections, the opposition had more freedom for their campaign than in earlier elections. However, their access to the media was very limited which was in violation of the law (Thomas-Greenfield & Wharton, 2019, p. 14). The day of the elections went in a peaceful and orderly way. The ZANU-PF won the elections with the majority of seats in parliament. The elections are not considered to have proven the government's legitimacy (Thomas-Greenfield & Wharton, 2019, p. 14). This was not proven because of the lack of transparency by the ZEC and the trespassing of the electoral rules way (Thomas-Greenfield & Wharton, 2019, p. 14).

Conclusion

The question that I attempted to answer in this research is if the course of the coup in Zimbabwe in 2017 had an impact on post-transition instability. The typical outcome of a coup is that there is no immediate gain. There is however a good change of reforming. Zimbabwe experienced some turbulent times after the coup, largely because of economic problems.

The coup occurred because of the firing of Mnangagwa and the fear of Grace Mugabe becoming the next president. The consequence of the coup was a change in power. Mnangagwa is now the president. He was already active in the politics of Zimbabwe as the prime minister. He still has party loyalists and military people in his cabinet. There is not a lot of change since Mnangagwa became president, so the coup cannot be the only reason for instability. We do not see immediate gain in the economic policy of Mnangagwa. In order for Zimbabwe to develop, economic growth is necessary. Zimbabwe has a long history of ongoing economic problems. There need to be government measurements to resolve these economic issues. If this does not happen, the economic instability is still present after the coup and is thus still causing instability in Zimbabwe. The new government is still missing legitimacy. The elections in 2018 did go in a peaceful, transparent and credible way, with more freedom for the opposition in the elections. This is an improvement in comparison with the political situation before the coup.

I do not conclude that the coup had no effect on the post-transition instability in Zimbabwe, considering that the policy of the new president did cause instability and the fact that the government is still missing legitimacy. Other factors, such as economic ones, were already present before the coup and can explain the post-transition instability. A combination of lack of legitimacy and economic problems cause the instability. The coup happened in 2017 and is still a recent event. The gain from a transition often comes later in time. It is too soon to state that the coup did not lead to democratic gain.

There are a few implications about this research. At the time of writing, there is not a lot of academic research available about the coup in Zimbabwe in 2017. This is because the coup happened very recently. A suggestion for further research is to look at the situation in Zimbabwe in a couple of years from now to see if the coup did lead to reform.

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