

HOW AND WHY ZANU-PF WON THE 2013 ZIMBABWE ELECTIONS

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1. Introduction

In the March 2008 'harmonised' elections in Zimbabwe,¹⁾ the Movement for Democratic Change (Tsvangirai) (MDC-T) scored the narrowest of victories over the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) in the race for the House of Assembly, by 100 seats to 99, with the splinter Movement for Democratic Change (Mutumbara) (MDC-M) winning another 10 constituencies, with one more taken by an independent.²⁾ In the Presidential race, MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai outpaced incumbent Robert Mugabe, by officially taking 47.9 per cent of the poll compared to the latter's 43.2 per cent. However, the long delay of five weeks between the close of polls and the official announcement of the result implied strongly that the margin of difference between the two front-runners had actually been larger. Nonetheless, official denial that the challenger had won more than 50 per cent of the poll (plus one vote) meant that the two leading candidates were forced into a presidential run-off, and as is well known, the level of violence subsequently orchestrated by the ruling party was so great that Tsvangirai ultimately pulled out of the contest to save his supporters' skins. But now the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) decreed that his withdrawal had happened too late, and that the election would continue, and with MDC supporters cowed, Mugabe officially went on to record a 90.2 per cent victory. ZANU-PF had bludgeoned its way to a win in the election that really mattered (the executive long having subordinated the legislature to its will in Mugabe's Zimbabwe), and the scene was set for the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

to negotiate a Global Political Agreement (GPA), signed in September 2008, which installed a coalition government, with Tsvangirai serving as Prime Minister but Mugabe retaining the presidency.

How different things were in 2013! The elections, held on 31 July, saw Mugabe trouncing Tsvangirai by 61.1 per cent to 33.9 per cent in the first round presidential poll. This was matched in the Assembly elections, ZANU-PF securing a landslide in the Assembly elections, winning 160 constituencies to the MDC-T's 49 (with a further seat won by an independent). In addition, ZANU-PF won 37 out of 60 extra seats which, with the promulgation of a new constitution in January 2013, were reserved for women, each of the country's ten provinces electing six candidates according to the proportion of the total votes won by parties' constituency candidates. Overall, therefore, in a National Assembly comprising 270 seats, ZANU-PF secured a total of 197, compared to 70 for the MDC-T, 2 for the MDC-M, and the one independent. Likewise, in the elections to the Senate, elected proportionately in the same way as proportional representation seats for women in the Assembly, ZANU-PF trounced the MDC by 37 to 21. In sum, this meant that ZANU-PF had won more than the two-thirds majority required for amending the recently agreed constitution.³⁾ ZANU-PF thereupon claimed that voters' had 'come home' to the party of liberation, and that Zimbabwe was back on course after the confusions and compromises of the GPA coalition period.

Both wings of the MDC cried foul. Local monitoring groups, such as the Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN), (as well as a report by the SADC lawyers' association)⁴⁾ supported them, their principal complaint being that ZANU-PF had grossly manipulated the voters' roll and had used its longstanding control of government to subvert the entire electoral machinery in order to secure its victory. Western commentators, including the United States (US) and the British government, together with the European Union (EU), largely agreed with them, although they had been officially barred from sending official monitoring and observer groups. However, despite stating that they had their reservations about the conduct of the poll, the observer groups sent by the African Union (AU) and SADC, declared the elections as credible and fair. President Jacob Zuma, of South Africa, sent his 'profuse congratulations' to Mugabe, and declared that the result reflected the 'will of the people'.

In the aftermath, Tsvangirai and the MDC-T complained bitterly

that the contest had been rigged. As will be indicated below, they had substantial grounds for doing so. Yet ZANU-PF also had substantial grounds for claiming that it had won — even if by means that were as foul as they were fair. In what follows, I shall argue that ZANU-PF's grip over the electoral machinery had ensured the party's victory in advance. Nonetheless, I shall propose that ZANU-PF secured victory in part because it put forward a programmatic message, whereas the MDC-T's campaign was lacking strategy and lackluster. Finally, I shall conclude that ZANU-PF was correctly confident that — whatever the reluctance by western powers — it would face no undue obstacles in getting the international community to accept the result.

2. ZANU-PF's control of the electoral machinery

ZANU-PF has acquired extensive experience in the running — and skewing — of elections. Prior to 2004, electoral management was shared between four bodies (the Electoral Supervisory Commission, the Registrar-General (RG), the Election Directorate and the Delimitation Commission with confusingly overlapping responsibilities. However, the near loss of the 2000 Assembly and 2002 Presidential elections, prompted the government to reform the electoral institutions in such a way as to enable it to stage 'credible, but heavily manipulated' parliamentary elections in 2005. At the opening of parliament in July 2004, Mugabe announced electoral reforms and later endorsed electoral principles adopted by SADC. The public debate that followed argued for a reform of political conditions which constrained free and fair elections, but the government restricted its reforms to much narrower electoral concerns. These led to the appointment of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) as the sole electoral management body, with the RG continuing to be responsible for electoral registration, supposedly under the ZEC's supervision. Meanwhile, Mugabe appointed Justice George Chiweshe, a High Court judge, as chair of the ZEC, — but by this time the judiciary had already become packed with ZANU-PF sympathisers. Furthermore, the electoral reform act provided for state employees (inclusive of the defence, police, and prison forces) to be seconded to the Commission during elections.

The ZEC and the RG remained the two bodies responsible for

conducting the poll for the harmonised elections of 2013. Both were notionally independent, but deeply suspect. The RG was Tobaiwa Mudede, who had held the position since 1980, and had long been charged by human rights organisations of manipulating the electoral register to keep ZANU-PF in power. The ZEC was headed by Justice Rita Makarau. She had been appointed earlier in the year, and was widely respected as a lawyer and judge. Nonetheless, she had risen swiftly through the ranks (from law lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe to Judge President) during the period that ZANU-PF was assaulting the independence of the judiciary and promoting its favoured appointees to the bench. In any case, her deputy was Joyce Kazembe, who had been in effective charge of the ZEC for some years. She was a known ZANU-PF loyalist, and almost embarrassingly and openly, the power behind the throne. Although Tsvangirai was to speak out in favour of Makarau's appointment, many in his party decreed his support as incomprehensible, and accused him of having been railroaded by Mugabe. Meanwhile, although Makarau's formal elevation above Kazembe was designed to render the ZEC respectable, in practice the ZEC was closely tied to the interests of ZANU-PF. A policy brief by the Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (undated, but 2012), claimed that all but two of the eight Commissioners had a long history of working under ZANU-PF in the previously discredited electoral institutions, whilst numerous employees in the body's secretariat enjoyed close links with the security forces.

The key to the ZANU-PF victory in 2013 lay in its *de facto* control of the voter's roll via the RG and ZEC. Indeed, since its electoral shocks in the referendum of 2000 and the elections of 2002, the regime has systematically skewed the electoral landscape to its advantage. First, the regime has distorted the electoral delimitation of constituencies to its advantage. Prior to the 2008 election, for instance, when the number of constituencies was increased from 120 to 210, areas supportive of ZANU-PF were disproportionately favoured in the allocation of new constituencies. In turn, this bias was compounded by manipulation of the number of polling stations, increasing them in rural areas (where voter's preferences are more easily controlled, not least by chiefly authority) and restricting their number in urban areas (which are more likely to lean towards the opposition).

Second, the Mugabe government has disenfranchised categories of voters deemed likely to be supportive of the MDC. One of its major

moves was the passage of the Citizenship of Zimbabwe Amendment Act of 2001, which outlawed dual citizenship, and compelled millions of naturalised Zimbabweans to reapply for citizenship or lose it. Apart from whites (many who had clung to their British passports), the most affected category were families of migrants from Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, many of which had been resident in Zimbabwe for years. Subsequently, in 2002, the government restricted postal voting to just three categories of people: those belonging to the defence, police and prisons services, and election officials who would not be able to be in their home constituencies on voting day; Zimbabwean government officials out of the country on voting day; and the spouses of these two groupings. The failure of a challenge to this restriction by the Diaspora Vote Action Group in court meant an effective block from voting by the 3.5 million Zimbabwean exiles, few of whom would be likely to return to their constituencies especially to vote, and the majority of whom were reckoned to be MDC supporters. Further restrictions introduced in 2005 led to the disenfranchisement of thousands of people in urban areas, while those residing in rural areas (ZANU-PF's principal strongholds, especially in the eastern half of the country) needed to have only their village chief or farm employer to vouch for them.⁵⁾

In short, what happened during the 2013 election was nothing new. Rather, it was a more vigorous and systematic implementation of all the numerous dubious measures which had been devised to skew the vote before. A (doubtless incomplete) summary of how the overwhelmingly favourable vote for ZANU-PF was concocted is as follows:⁶⁾

- Officially, the pre-electoral voter registration process lasted for three weeks. However, in many urban areas, registration was deliberately made difficult. One technique, reported to this author, was that registration teams would set up shop in a particular ward for only three days, before moving on to another ward for a further three days, demanding that would-be voters follow them if they wanted to register.
- According to electoral law and pre-election multi-party agreements, the RG was required to make the Voters' Roll available to all political parties in good time before the election, allowing them adequate time to inspect it and, if need be, to register objections. However, the RG only made it available to the MDC two days before the election, and then only in paper form (in the back of

lorries) rather than in electronic form. The AU Monitoring team was later to accept that this was "rather late for meaningful inspection and verification by voters, parties and candidates to take place", although its head, former Nigerian President Olesegun Obasanjo, was to accept the official explanation that electronic copies had not been made available due to "financial and time constraints".

- As in previous elections, the registration of voters was carried out far more extensively in rural than in urban areas. The ZESN, one of the most prominent local monitoring bodies, has claimed that over 99 per cent of eligible voters in rural areas were registered, while only 68 per cent were registered in urban areas. According to Eddie Cross, a former Member of Parliament (MP) in Bulawayo, ZANU-PF were handing registration forms out freely in rural areas, while registration in urban areas was made a difficult and time consuming process. Obasanjo, on behalf of the AU, rejected such allegations, saying that objections to the voter's roll should have been made before polling. However, given the later delivery of the roll to political parties, this was clearly impossible.
- The AU mission said that the late publication of the final list of polling stations, "barely 48 hours to the opening of polls" (sic), may have "contributed significantly to the high number of voters who were turned away for being at the wrong polling stations".
- As in previous elections, the voters' roll had numerous flaws, inaccuracies and discrepancies. The figure for 'special voters' (those who allowed to vote early because of their official positions) was artificially high. For instance, although there are officially only 33 000 police, some 60 000 were registered to vote.⁷⁾ The discrepancy may be partially explained by the calling up of police reserves for the elections, but note that such reserves were largely recruited from the ranks of ZANU-PF militias. After the election, the MDC was to state that it had found 838 000 entries with the same name, address and date of birth but different identity document (ID) numbers (implying that they could vote twice). Furthermore, in a country where average life expectancy has fallen to just 53, there were 350 000 people registered to vote who were more than 85 years old, and over 109 000 aged over 100, including a 135 year old army officer!

- Zimbabwe correctly boasts that it continues to have one of the highest literacy rates (over 90 per cent) in Africa. Nonetheless, there were a large number of voters who were 'assisted' to vote in polling stations. The AU noted that the number was worryingly 'high'. Its mission gave the example of Muzarabani district in Mashonaland Central, where it observed 97 voters being assisted out of 370 at one station, 77 out of 374 at a second, and 85 out of 374 at a third. Similarly, the ZESN has indicated that assisted voting was more marked in rural areas. The substance of the complaint is that such voters were overwhelmingly 'assisted' by polling officials to vote for ZANU-PF.
- A large number of would be voters were turned away from the polls on the grounds that they were not registered (many claiming that they had voted in previous elections, and that there was no reason why their names should have been removed). Some women, who had married but retained their maiden names, found that their names on the electoral roll had been changed to those of their husbands, without their permission, and hence did not match those contained in their IDs.⁸⁾ Overall, the ZEC stated after the election that the number of voters turned away was 305 000 (64 483 in Harare), but other sources place it as nearer a million. The ZESN stated that over 750 000 voters were turned away from urban polling stations alone.
- People in possession of registration slips, indicating that they had registered to vote, but whose names did not appear on the final voters' roll, were allowed to vote. However, the issue was clouded by the arrest by police of some 20 people in the Hatfield area of Harare who were distributing fake registration slips. The MDC claimed that the practice was widespread, arguing further that because it was impossible to confirm whether a voter was a resident in a particular constituency when presenting a registration slip, it was possible for those who possessed them to vote in any area. The MDC further claimed that this had enabled ZANU-PF to direct fake votes to MDC held seats.
- ZANU-PF is also accused of bussing people in from rural areas to register and vote in MDC areas. It is alleged, for instance, that voters were imported from Mozambique to vote in MDC areas across the border.

- ZANU-PF dispensed patronage to good effect in MDC urban areas. Such efforts included the allocation of plots of vacant land to homeless people (used to good effect in, notably Harare), and promises to some urban inhabitants that they would have their rates annulled (despite the financial crisis of local government).

The ZEC and the RG were themselves to admit that the voters' roll was less than perfect, ascribing its flaws to a lack of time, finance and capacity. The AU and SADC missions, whilst noting various concerns, were to largely endorse this explanation, proclaiming that the outcome was credible, acceptable and reflective of the will of the electorate.⁹⁾ In large measure, they appear to have been influenced by the peaceful manner in which the election occurred on voting day. Certainly, there were some reports of intimidation of voters in some rural areas, yet the AU and SADC were correct in that there was absolutely no comparison with the widespread violence which occurred in, notably, the 2008 election, and even casual observation suggested that, in the run up to the elections, opposition parties were, on the whole, able to campaign relatively freely. Nonetheless, although opposition claims need to be combed through and verified, it is manifestly clear that ZANU-PF went into this election knowing full well that thorough preparations had been made by both the RG and the ZEC (most particularly its secretariat) to secure its victory, and to do so in a manner that would not delegitimise the result because of the deployment of explicit violence on the ground. In any case, as usual, ZANU-PF dominated the airwaves via public TV and radio (the major sources of news, information and opinion for the majority of the population), and was massively backed by financial and official logistical resources.¹⁰⁾

MDC-T hopes of a democratic breakthrough were boosted by the 60 000 or more enthusiastic supporters it drew to its last rally in Harare, the weekend before the election.¹¹⁾ But ZANU-PF was unmoved, remaining supremely confident of victory, its sycophantic media correctly predicting a landslide. Mugabe, following the same script, similarly expected ZANU-PF to rebound from its setback in 2008, whilst making much of his willingness to accept an unlikely defeat.¹²⁾ Yet was Zimbabwe 2013 simply another case of an election rigged? Well, yes it was — for ZANU-PF had ensured that the electoral cards were more strongly stacked in its favour than ever before. Despite Mugabe's assurances that he would abide by the people's will, it is unlikely that the

politico-militariat would have accepted a clear cut ZANU-PF defeat.¹³⁾ However, all that said, it is also arguable that the ZANU-PF did win a genuine majority of those who were enabled to vote. If this was so, then it was because ZANU-PF won the electoral campaign as well as the result on the day.

3. ZANU-PF's message

In 2013, ZANU-PF demonstrated a masterly capacity for transforming disaster into triumph through a truly Orwellian interpretation of history and a Manichean interpretation of the present. First, there was always the factor of fear. ZANU-PF might have publicly preached peace, yet since 2000 (if not before) elections in Zimbabwe have come to be associated with regime driven violence. Even internal party critics have a habit of having serious accidents.¹⁴⁾ For many, especially those in rural areas far away from the attention of the international media, voting ZANU-PF may have been as the most viable strategy of maintaining the peace.

Second, as noted above, ZANU-PF versions of events dominate the media where it matters most, its thrust repeatedly relayed by figures of authority (such as traditional leaders). Third, Zimbabwean society has been depleted by the out-migration of over three million people, escaping ZANU-PF's political authoritarianism and the dire consequences of the economic meltdown. It may be assumed that these include not only many highly educated Zimbabweans, but many of the most entrepreneurial and physically able, with the implication that many of those left behind are those more vulnerable to party pressures and propaganda. Fourth, ZANU-PF has used the land seizures to install an extensive patronage system, constructed around the widespread hunger for land, laced with the assertion that a vote for the MDC constitutes a vote for returning the land to its former white owners. Furthermore, the party was promising that the scope for patronage would be extended via its policies of indigenisation, a thrust which was designed to appeal, in particular, to younger and first time voters — 'the youth'.

These various elements were very skilfully woven together in the ruling party's manifesto, and then hammered home in the party-aligned media, at party rallies, and via party paraphernalia (such as T shirts) across the country. 'The People's Manifesto 2013', presented to

the nation by 'Team ZANU-PF', was subtitled 'Taking Back the Economy: Indigenise, Empower, Develop and Create Employment'. Fronted by the chosen portrait of Mugabe (much younger in the photo than in the 89 year old flesh), the Manifesto put forward a relentlessly patriotic message identifying the past and future of the nation with ZANU-PF and the miseries of the present with the MDC. Key themes included the following:

- ZANU-PF's monopoly claim to have liberated Zimbabwe from colonialism and imperialism.
- ZANU-PF was the guardian of national sovereignty and identity.
- ZANU-PF was the guarantor of freedom, democracy, non-violence and peace.
- ZANU-PF had taken back the land from 3 500 white minority colonial settlers during the 'third *chimurenga*'.
- ZANU-PF was credited with the positive reforms brought about by the GPA
- ZANU-PF's indigenisation and empowerment programme would "take back the economy" and "unlock value" to promote growth, employment and development.

There is little point in dwelling upon ZANU-PF's rewriting of inconvenient histories to shore up its liberation credentials; its pinning of responsibility for the country's economic woes upon treacherous local forces, sanctions and malevolent imperialist countries such as Britain and the US; its claiming of credit for the modest economic recovery and the greater political freedoms under the GPA; its re-interpretation of the highly chequered land programme as an unblemished success; and last, but not least, its dangerously simplistic equation of indigenisation of companies with the 'unlocking' of value, as if this would have no consequences for future investment and growth. More to the point is that the messages that ZANU-PF had formalised in its manifesto were hammered home relentlessly throughout the campaign. It is doubtful whether the mass of the voting population believed the extravagant promises made by ZANU-PF. Most would have heard its bombastic messages many times before. However, what may be ventured is that, while land beneficiaries were indeed likely to cling to ZANU-PF, the sloganising of "indigenisation and empowerment" and "taking back

the economy" appealed to key segments of the population, most notably a youthful population seared by poverty, unemployment and lack of hope. Above all, it was a programme to which the MDC had no adequate answer.

4. The MDC: All dressed up but nowhere to go

The MDC-T was placed on the defensive from the beginning. Since at least 2011, Mugabe had been gunning for an early election, demonstrating his confidence in ZANU-PF's control over the electoral process. In response, MDC-T had resisted the call for early elections, complaining that key aspects of the GPA had not been implemented, notably with regard to reforms of the security services. So when Mugabe unilaterally declared the election day as 31 July, without the reforms having been made and without consulting the opposition parties (as was also required under the GPA), the MDC-T had appealed to SADC, citing the lack of preparedness of the responsible bodies for an immediate election. SADC, in turn, duly requested Mugabe to postpone the election to 14 August; Mugabe responded that, the election having been already been declared, a postponement would need to be approved by the Constitutional Court; the latter in turn rejected a subsequent lukewarm appeal by the ZANU-PF for a postponement, and the MDC-T's appeal against that appeal, and decreed that the election should go ahead.¹⁵⁾ SADC thereafter indicated that there was nothing further to be done, and that the order of the Constitutional Court should be obeyed (ignoring the fact that the bench had been stuffed with ZANU-PF zealots).

It was at this critical juncture, perhaps, that the MDC should have pulled out of the election, thereby propelling SADC into a quandary. Fatefully, however, both wings of the MDC opted to participate, albeit on the most unequal of terms, and proceeded along the road to a massive defeat. For all that it continued to complain about the likelihood of the election being rigged, by participating it was declaring its belief in the poll's legitimacy and that, despite the odds being stacked against it, it could win.¹⁶⁾ This was reflected in the widespread beliefs within the ranks of the party's supporters, and much of civil society, that — despite everything — the party could triumph. However, as we know now, this was so much hubris. So where *did* the MDCs (and the larger MDC-T in particular) go wrong?

In the first place, the MDC had to a considerable extent lost its lustre, as both wings of the party had been affected by a progressive decline in the organisational strength while participating in the GPA, this in significant measure a result of their intra-party and inter-party squabbling, as well as the acrimonious relations between the two leaders.¹⁷⁾ This was to have an enervating impact upon their electoral campaigns, not least because they proved unable to reach a strategic compromise so as to ensure they did not split the vote in ZANU-PF's favour in key constituencies. Second, Tsvangirai was unduly complacent, arrogant enough to believe that his first round victory in the presidential election decreed a similar if not better result in 2013. This reflected a long held view within the MDC-T that Mugabe was an election liability, disregarding his acute political instincts and capacity to package himself domestically and internationally as a Lion of liberation. In reality, the truth was that Tsvangirai had continuously been out-strategised by Mugabe, from before the time the MDC-T had entered the coalition government. Even so, despite tensions within the MDC-T leading up to the election (notably Biti *versus* Tsvangirai), there was never any serious consideration as to whether there might be a stronger candidate to lead the party. Nor indeed had there been sufficient attention paid to organising MDC-T structures on the ground, especially in ZANU-PF held areas.

Ironically, too, although the MDC should have been able to lay claim to having 'saved' the country by having steered the economy away from final collapse, it managed to render its participation in the coalition government a liability. From the moment Tsvangirai had become Prime Minister, Mugabe's had driven roughshod over key terms of the GPA without serious challenge from the MDC-T, which naively rested most of its hopes upon SADC for enforcement. Furthermore, Tsvangirai himself set the tone for too many MDC ministers by becoming comfortable in office, and enjoying the perquisites of power (houses, cars, fancy clothes and so on), becoming like their counterparts in ZANU-PF for their own good. Often, such behaviour was replicated by MDC officeholders at local level, with the suggestion being widespread that they had proved just as eager to 'eat' as their rivals. Then again, Tsvangirai rendered himself particularly vulnerable to ZANU-PF by his sexual peccadilloes, exciting public ridicule and allowing Mugabe to present himself as an icon of marital faithfulness and stability. Yet the most fundamental strategic cost of the MDCs'

participation in the GPA was that it allowed ZANU-PF to claim credit for the various improvements which had occurred since 2008 whilst blaming continuing setbacks upon the opposition's collusion with Western imperialism!

Finally, the MDC's strategy lacked punch. At one level, it failed to sufficiently differentiate the core of its programme from that of ZANU-PF. Even though versed in far more sober language, and fully of worthy commitments via its JUICE strategy (Jobs, Upliftment, Investment Capital, Environment),¹⁸⁾ many of its policies, such as the creation of a Sovereign Wealth Fund, sounded remarkably like those of its rival. At another — more important — level, it was overwhelmingly defensive. The MDC could scarcely claim that it was *against* empowerment, development and jobs, nor "taking back the economy", nor did it really have any answer to the populist appeal of the gospel of "indigenisation". Meanwhile, although promising "a fair and equitable land policy", it was mealy-mouthed about whether it accepted the *de facto* outcome of the post-2000 land seizures, rendering it vulnerable to attack that it would hand farms back to the "whites".¹⁹⁾ At the end of the day, the MDC simply failed to take the battle to ZANU-PF.

5. Rendering ZANU-PF respectable

Following its defeat, a thoroughly chastened Morgan Tsvangirai declared that the MDC-T would appeal for the nullification of the election results, on grounds of the political bias and mismanagement of the poll by the electoral authorities, to the Constitutional Court. Given that the Court had turned down the earlier bid to have the election postponed, it was now extremely unlikely to declare the result as invalid, however much convincing evidence the MDC-T might put to it. Indeed, a further rebuff by the Court might add a further shine to the election's claim to legitimacy. Within a short space of time, this was to be recognised by Tsvangirai, who now indicated that he was withdrawing the appeal, as the Court was politically biased — an abrupt change which did nothing to enhance his reputation for strategic thinking. Meanwhile, he had also indicated his intention to appeal for support to SADC, yet with electoral monitoring missions of both the AU and SADC having declared the elections as credible and fair, this was as likely to be as barren an approach as any appeal to the Court (however much President Ian Khama of Botswana, the one likely dissentient, was disposed

to complain).²⁰⁾ Meanwhile, for all that Western governments, notably those of the US and the United Kingdom (UK), might add to the Western cacophony of outrage about the rigging of the election, there was little that they would be prepared to do that would be different from before: extending financial and moral support to the MDC, and hoping for better things to come. Nor, in the short term, could they logically relax their sanctions against ZANU-PF related companies, for this would be construed as appeasement of a dictatorship. Although there had been signs before the election that the West was eager to reduce its differences with Zimbabwe (the EU having stated that it would be guided in its post-election policies by the outcome of the SADC electoral monitoring process),²¹⁾ Western strategy would now seem to rest upon the certainty that even Mugabe could not go on forever, and hopes that — the election now over — ZANU-PF will moderate its indigenisation policies and continue along the path of recovery established under the coalition government.

A spat between Mugabe and South Africa before polling had indicated concerns within SADC whether the election would bring any sort of resolution to the Zimbabwean crisis. President Zuma had deputised his role as SADC mediator on a day-to-day basis to Lindiwe Zulu, who earned widespread praise for her assertive posture regarding the need for implementation of the requirements for a free and fair election if the poll were to go ahead, only to be publicly slapped down as "a street woman" by Mugabe at a major ZANU-PF rally. Despite clear reservations about the likely fairness of the poll, Zuma had backed down, giving his minister no open support, and humiliating Zulu in the process.²²⁾ Subsequently, as noted, Zuma congratulated Mugabe on the result, and SADC rushed forward to endorse his victory.

For SADC, the outcome of the election was broadly satisfactory. The government of Botswana apart, there was no eagerness amongst SADC members for ZANU-PF to be displaced. On the one hand, liberation movement solidarity dictated support for a ZANU-PF victory; on the other, the overwhelming desire of SADC members was for political stability rather than democracy. ZANU-PF's orchestration of a peaceful election, and the MDC's post-election demoralisation, suggested that the Zimbabwean crisis was losing steam, and would hopefully go away.²³⁾ Above all, the comprehensiveness of ZANU-PF's victory provided a basis for asserting that Mugabe and his party ruled by right and not by might, however hollow that claim might ring in opposi-

tion ears. Like it or not, election 2013 has provided a foundation for ZANU-PF to come in from the global cold, and for its African supporters to insist upon its legitimacy.

Endnotes

1. The 'harmonisation' refers to the simultaneous holding of elections for president, legislature and local government. In this article, I will be dealing solely with the presidential and legislative elections.
2. The MDC split in 2005. In what follows, I refer mainly to the MDC-T, by far the larger and more significant wing of the party.
3. The constitution, Section 328, sections 5 and 6, requires amendments secure two-thirds majorities in both Houses of parliament (Assembly and Senate), following which they need to secure a popular majority in a referendum. See COPAC (Constitution Select Committee, *The Final Draft Constitution of Zimbabwe, January 31, 2013*).
4. Makonese, Mapara, M E and M Kondowe, *An Analysis of the Electoral Legal Environment for the 2013 Zimbabwean Harmonised Elections*. SADC Lawyers' Association.
5. For more extensive treatment, see Southall, R (2013), *Liberation Movements in Power: Party and State in Southern Africa*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: James Currey; Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press. Chapter 5.
6. The summary is drawn from diverse sources, including: "Zimbabwe elections: A guide to election rigging", *BBC News Africa*, 7 August 2013 (Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23591941>); "Preliminary (ZESN) report on 2013 election", *Daily News*, 2 August 2013; Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, *The Legal Monitor*, 29 July 2013; and not least, conversations and interviews with political and civil rights activists before and after the elections.
7. In the event, some 26 000 members of the uniformed forces were unable to vote because of a shortage of ballot papers at their polling stations. The ZEC approached the Constitutional Court to allow those so disenfranchised to be able to vote on 31 July, although many observers suggested that their disenfranchisement had been deliberate, given fears of discontent with ZANU-PF amongst junior ranks of the services.
8. Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, *The Legal Monitor*, 29 July 2013.
9. Zimbabwe: African Union Election Observation Mission to the Harmonised Elections of 31 July 2013 in the Republic of Zimbabwe. (Available at: all.africa.com/stories/201308020831.html; SADC REPORT?)
10. For the manner in which resources have been diverted into the hands of CIO and ZANU-PF, see notably, *Global Witness* (2012), "Financing a Parallel Government? The Involvement of the Secret Police and Military in Zimbabwe's Diamond, Cotton and Property Sectors". According to reports

- from intelligence documents obtained by the London *Sunday Times*, ZANU-PF received US\$800 million from two diamond companies controlled by Chinese investors and senior military commanders.
11. MDC supporting papers claimed a crowd of 100 000 but that seems excessive.
 12. "President confident of victory", *The Herald*, 31 July 2013.
 13. In an interview with the author, Rugare Gumbo, National Spokesperson for ZANU-PF, stated openly that he doubted that neither the army nor the war veterans would accept a defeat. Southall with Gumbo, ZANU PF headquarters, 28 July 2013.
 14. Fear also penetrates ZANU-PF, discouraging too vigorous criticism of party power holders. See "Outspoken Zanu-PF MP dies in car crash", *Star*, 20 June 2013; "Mystery car-crash deaths", *Mail & Guardian*, 28 June-4 August, 2013.
 15. The MDC had objected that the terms of the government's appeal, made by Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa, were deliberately designed to invite a rebuff by the Court. Chinamasa had indicated that the appeal was being made to accommodate SADC, although the government (he meant ZANU-PF) had no objection to continuing with the election on July 31.
 16. Ramjeni Munusamy put it nicely when she wrote that the MDC "went into the election like sheep into the slaughter-house". *Daily Maverick*, 5 August 2013. (Available at: <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-08-05-og-dear-morgan-its-about-the-election-strategy-stupid/#.Ug361tKmhCA>.)
 17. Muzondidya, J (2013), "The Opposition dilemma in Zimbabwe: A Critical Review of the Politics of the Movement for Democratic Change Parties under the GPA Government Framework, 2009-2012", in Raftapolous, B, *The Hard Road to Reform: The Politics of Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement*. Harare: Weaver Press, pp 39-70.
 18. It was open to attack on the grounds that it read uncannily like a donor-driven prescription for rescuing the Zimbabwean economy, which very possibly it was!
 19. The manifesto dealt with the land issue in a single paragraph, offering simultaneously the provision of security of tenure for all land owners, restoration of forms of title or title deeds, and full and adequate compensation for land acquisition. Quite how these policies balanced the interests of African beneficiaries of the land seizures against those of outgoing white farmers was left wholly unstated.
 20. At the SADC summit held in Lilongwe, a short time after the election, SADC was effusive. "Congratulations to comrade Robert Mugabe for conducting peaceful elections", said the incoming head of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), President Joyce Banda of Malawi. "We wish to offer you continued support as a member of the family", Banda said, to wild cheers from the audience at the start of the 15-nation summit.

A smiling Mugabe acknowledged the endorsement with his traditional clenched-fist salute. "SADC endorses Zimbabwe's elections", *News 24*. (Available at: <http://www.news24.com/Africa/Zimbabwe/SADC-endorses-Zimbabwes-elections-20130817>.)

21. "EU will let SADC judge Zimbabwean poll", *Business Day*, 15 July 2013.
22. "Mugabe ridicules SA at election rally", *Business Day*, 24 July 2013. Zuma reportedly dispatched the street woman off to Brazil during the election.
23. For a valuable discussion of the nuances and limitations of SADC interventions regarding Zimbabwe, see Pallotti, A (2013), "Human rights and regional cooperation: SADC and the crisis in Zimbabwe", *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, Vol 35, No 1, pp 17-40.