

Delineating the Western Orders of Rights and Reason in Post-Colonial Africa

An Appraisal of the Zimbabwean Variant Under and After Mugabe

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Abstract

Adherence to the fundamental tenets of Human Rights and advocacy of Democracy are the two traditionally entwined Western expressions of rights and reason that any state must comply with to be treated as an egalitarian state. The degree of democratization in any state is to be gauged by its ability to give its citizens an acceptable form of governance and a slew of natural rights and legal safeguards against human rights abuses, from which the idea of justice is to flow. Many of the African and Asian countries, that became sovereign states through the 1980s and 1990s and consequently came to be hailed as formal democracies have only had a very perfunctory degree of democratization. In such circumstances, human rights, without the existence of a real democratic structure to uphold and sustain it, does not effectively translate into a charter of rights but would merely be retained as a set of flexible norms. It is in this context that the proposed paper intends to address the impact of globalization of the principles and values associated with the concepts of democracy and human rights in post-colonial African states. It also aspires to inquire into the need for an element of universality in the dialogues on human rights and democratization, so that they do not get reduced to mere synonyms for Westernization. Further, the reality and ambivalence surrounding the consolidation of democratic virtues along with the observance of human rights are best reflected in the exemplification of how the Sub-Saharan African country of Zimbabwe operated its “democracy”; both under its longest-serving President Robert Mugabe and post his unceremonious ouster following the coup *d’etat* on 14 November 2017. It would be interesting to study the political economy of transition in a country like Zimbabwe that, during and after its leading figure Mugabe, continues to pledge allegiance to a nationalist, post-colonial, and populist anomaly of being principally antithetical to imperialism in all its forms while also being an anathema to the precepts of democracy, justice and human rights in practice.

Keywords: Democratization, Human Rights, Globalization, Universality, Justice.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36615/ajpsr.asp.v10i1.1140>

Introduction

The identification of an ideal state most often rests both on the notions of political freedom, frequently summarized as democracy, and on the guarantee of civil liberties and human rights to all its citizens on a day-to-day basis and in activities relating to their political participation. Zimbabwe since its independence in 1980 has presented itself as a classical example of how the stability of political institutions and the sustainability of economic reforms are organically linked to the multiple parameters of political freedom. The swearing-in of the first post-independence government committed to radical social transformation of society, under the leadership of a liberation leader like Robert Mugabe, was expected to pave the way towards a new democratic revolution in Zimbabwe. The standardized democratic ethos was to eventually give birth to well-founded political institutions

in the country. However, the semi-democracy state that Zimbabwe descended in to, in due course of time post-independence, not just made its political institutions fragile but it also soon became an arena for fierce political conflicts; the adverse spillover effect of which was rampant human rights violations on the downtrodden (Gwenhamo, Fedderke & Kadt, 2012).

The political transition of Zimbabwe was, and to this date continues to be, marred by intense polarization and surging violence. However, interestingly neither the polarization of the Zimbabwean electorate was an imminent repercussion of the democratization process nor was the mobilization of the electorate carried out along the lines of pre-existing ethnic chasms. Rather, the two prominent political parties in Zimbabwe, namely the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) politicized their respective constituencies and boosted their mobilizing faculties through combative maneuvering that essentially divided the electorate into two antagonistic factions, fiercely opposed to arbitrations with the rival camp. The exclusionary tactics employed by the political parties in “democratizing” countries like Zimbabwe not just spawned rampant disintegration, displacement, and state violence but also became the focal point of the political craft that Zimbabwe eventually adapted for itself. Such a scheme of political craft, built-in resistances and rebellions, further enables one to understand the intertwined relationship between spiraling electoral contests (in other words democratization) and state-sponsored violence (read as human rights violations) in post-colonial states like Zimbabwe (LeBas, 2006).

In Zimbabwe’s political transition from a heavily militarized liberation movement, rooted in the ideals of socialism and left-wing nationalism, to a democratic government that eventually conformed to the neo-liberal designs, what shot through the most was how the politics of command emerged as the chief precursor to the centralization of control. Even with the acceptance of neo-liberal policies like Essential Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAP) in the early 90s, the opponents of the Zimbabwean government, under Robert Mugabe, continued to be attacked as agents of the West, foot-soldiers of the imperialists, and thereby anti-Zimbabwean. Furthermore, the anti-colonial/imperial rhetoric and the cautiously popularized patriotic history of the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe served as the legitimizing factors for crushing democratic dissents in the country (Ranger, 2005).

Mugabe’s regime under his ZANU-PF sought to position itself as the sole savior of the post-colonial nation of Zimbabwe. In fact, the process of democratization of the Zimbabwean society was largely equated with absolute compliance to Mugabe’s call for national unity and complete subservience to the historical discourses of nationalism appropriated by his ZANU-PF (Hammett, 2011). However, conditions of political instability and perceived vulnerabilities soon forced the ruling elites to sacrifice liberation and democracy for the sake of retaining and tightening control over the nation-state. The resultant slump in the development of the democratic institutions, thereby, became a smokescreen for the exclusivist and authoritarian policies of the Mugabe government (Tomaselli, 2009).

The replacement of Mugabe with his erstwhile crony, Emmerson Mnangagwa did not in any way signal the end of the constellation of political ideas, political behavior, rhetoric, actions, policies, or even political controversies that formed the bulwark of Mugabe’s notion of governance and political life. The regime change, if any, only solidified the possibility of an inevitable perpetuation of Mugabe-ism by the new government in Zimbabwe, centered on personality cults and reinforcement of one’s own constituent territories around ethnic indicators strategem. The replacement of Mugabe by Mnangagwa, in fact, was less to take charge of and counter the wave of despair and distrust that had crippled Zimbabwe for long and was more of an effort to preserve the sanctity and respectability of the glorious Zimbabwean liberation struggle and its stalwarts. In fact, even to this day, the Mugabean legacy of sustaining the authority of the “supreme leader” works as the fundamental

institutional code in the country, that in turn both systematizes and legitimizes the use of any kind of power in Zimbabwe to curb dissensions and resistances (Parsons, 1963).

While Robert Mugabe was an ardent critic of the neo-imperialist imposition of ideas and cultural norms on his countrymen and argued for a separation of human rights discourses from the West-sponsored notions of democracy and democratization, the reality remains that Zimbabwe under and after Mugabe has successively diluted the integrity and probity of human rights as a set of natural rights that are universal in nature. Such dilution of the universality of human rights further paved the way for a shrinking of democratic spaces in Zimbabwe, as democracy ceased to be the principal legitimizing touchstone in Zimbabwean politics. However, along with recognizing the lack of democratic ethos and respect for human rights in Zimbabwe, it is also equally important to not turn a blind eye to the cultural imperialism foisted on post-colonial societies like those of Zimbabwe by the new and old colonial masters. Correspondingly important is to be vigilant against the misrepresentation of the interrelation between democracy and human rights, mostly by the West, so that the ambiguities surrounding the democratic credentials of states like Zimbabwe do not serve as an alibi for them to not formally recognize the internationalism of human rights laws.

The Crisis of Democratization and the End of Human Rights Discourse in Zimbabwe

The liberal notion of the idea of democracy encompasses a variety of characteristic features ranging from regard for the rule of law, a vibrant civil society, transparent and inclusive elections, a guarantee of constitutional and political liberties to citizens, and respect and recognition of human rights. Although the evolution and stability of political, social, and economic institutions in a state are fundamental to the development and deepening of democratic ethos, it can also be stated that these two conditions are closely associated with each other; just as how institutions establish democracy, democracy too promotes institutions. The important thing to note here is that no country begins its democratization process on a clean canvas as any effort towards the rebuilding of a nation-state on democratic principles must acknowledge that certain components of the erstwhile society, like its institutions, would remain as they are and hence, the process of rebuilding must be receptive to the existence of such still surviving institutions (Eve, 2009).

The West has always assumed the mantle of being the pioneer of democracy and has particularly positioned itself as the benefactor of democracy in African countries. The Western idea of a New World Order is for them the only democratic framework that can secure peace and development in the entire world. The West also sets the benchmark for democratization in almost all the erstwhile colonies, and this includes framing of a constitution, the introduction of a multi-party state, fair and free elections, forging of dynamic civil society groups, and most importantly a blind allegiance to capitalism. Any country fulfilling the above-mentioned criteria would then be hailed a democracy. However, what the West conveniently forgets is the fundamental oversight in superimposing their ideas of democracy on these erstwhile colonies, specifically those in Africa, that have completely antithetical lived experiences.

Hence, while African countries can take inspiration from the West in their democratic transitions, it would also be highly unworkable and counterproductive for these former colonies to blindly mimic the Western models of governance and economic growth in their transition phases (Udogu, 1997). For instance, the concept of free and fair elections is one of the bulwarks of the Western notion of liberal democracy. While it is true that transparent elections are critical to the sustenance of democracy in any country and is also the foundation on which all the other facets of democracy would derive, it must also be known that the outward bogey of periodical elections cannot serve as the sole determinant of the survival of democratic ethos and culture in a country (Abbink & Hesselning, 2000).

Further, while African countries have had much less experience of contemporary democracy due to colonisation for centuries, it also remains a fact that African societies have always placed greater emphasis on community living and have given precedence to community rights over the rights of individuals. Zimbabwe, like many other African countries, began its democratization process in the early 90s and wished to move forward through a socialist setup under the aegis of democracy. Yet in the words of Fomunyoh (2005), democracy for African countries, like Zimbabwe, largely remained “*a mixed bag of accomplishments, challenges and largely unmet aspirations*”. As democracy most often takes the flavour of the society it emanates from, Zimbabwe too had its own unique democratization process. This process, however, neither checked the political competition between the ruling elites at the national level nor did it expand the social basis for productive political interactions. It must also nevertheless be pointed out that many a time African leader, like Mugabe or his successor Mnangagwa, are elected not just to political power but are also elected into challenging circumstances such as acute economic debts and bankruptcy, natural calamities like famines and epidemics, and man-made catastrophes like ethnic cleansing. Hence, it becomes the responsibility of the colonizers, with claims of democratic credentials, to assist these newly independent countries in their capacity-building enterprises (Campbell & Carroll, 2005).

In the specific instance of Zimbabwe, the West talks about how the country would only proceed towards real democracy with the abolition of the one-party state of ZANU-PF that wields definitive control and authority over a wide range of institutions, economic sectors, and resources. In fact, the rise of Robert Mugabe's successor Mnangagwa, to Presidency, is nothing short of an extension of the fundamentals of Mugabe-ism as the latter too is equally guilty of ethnic cleansing, electoral malpractices, widespread corruption, and brutal suppression of people's rights, much like his political godfather. However, what the West overlooks is the deep-seated antagonism that they fostered amongst the native black communities in countries like Zimbabwe, during their colonial rule, for the White settler minorities. The era of European imperialism in Zimbabwe, just as it did in several other African countries, pushed the native black population into an epoch of social marginalization. While the Europeans took pride in them being a glorious nation-state, Africans remained the mere “uncivilized tribes” and hence, lesser mortals.

Consequently, post-independence, Zimbabwe, and many of its counterparts were primarily preoccupied with correcting the historic mistakes of the Whites that had by then become laws of the land in these former colonies. Thus, if South Africa was engaged in quashing the legal sanction accorded to apartheid, Mugabe in Zimbabwe sought to give back the blacks their traditional landholdings which were taken away from them over the course of the occupation. Mugabe also took it upon himself to accord entry to the blacks to those sectors like agriculture, finance, and industry, from where they were barred through white mandated laws and provisions. Under such circumstances, the West could not have anticipated the newly elected black majority government in Zimbabwe to treat both whites and blacks as equals for the greater good of the nation, regardless of their race and class positions (Eve, 2009).

Also, while it is true that Zimbabwe has to be provided with a level-playing field for establishing a political framework governed by rule of law and respect for human rights, it must be noted that Zimbabweans must be able to solve their own dilemmas as that is indispensable to drive the country towards a healthy state of democratic governance. The new president Mnangagwa in fact managed to instil the confidence of being a “practical businessman committed to prioritizing agriculture to revive the moribund economy” (The New Age, 2017) amongst the white settler farmers by emphasizing the need to adequately compensate the evicted white farmers, along with sustainable economic recovery, in his inaugural address to the nation in 2017 (The New Age, 2017).

It is a fact that the advent of the 90s brought with it a liberal democratic critique of human rights violations in Zimbabwe. Along with discussions on the electoral malpractices, an accusation that still holds weight in the case of Zimbabwe, this new wave of political liberalization was also quite vocal about the human rights abuses perpetuated by the Mugabe regime in the guise of exerting absolute control over its citizenry. There was a massive plea from the civil society groups to re-evaluate the legacies of the liberation struggle and to place more attention on the movements for civic and human rights that were gaining traction in the post-colonial state. While the land reform movements of the ruling party were largely appreciated as efforts towards reparation of the colonial legacy, the authoritarian nationalist politics of the Mugabe regime, that many a time ended up facilitating massacres posed, and continues to pose through the current regime, both theoretical and political hitches towards the influx of an alternative politics in Zimbabwe (McCandless, 2005).

Operation *Murambatsvina* of June 2005 was perhaps the most brutal episode of a systemic far-flung attack on a poor, defenceless population that took the form of an epidemic of organized violence and torture in Zimbabwe. Operation *Murambatsvina* marked a defining moment in the political economy of conflict in Zimbabwe as it represented the best prototype of Mugabe's idea of decimating political opposition and establishing a *de facto* one-party state. The nation-wide unsparing onslaught on the residential settings, the trading markets, and stalls in the informal sector bore testimony to the fact that even after two decades of political liberation the ruling ZANU-PF, which had perched itself at the heart of the liberation movement, had not made any significant transformation to a civilian, democratic party that was in effect receptive to the needs of the new millennium. In fact, the resistance of a section of the population against the cleanout operation could not match up to the repressive paraphernalia of the state, that had by then accrued an abysmal track record of human rights violations and excelled in the absurdities of breach of rule of law, implementation of draconian legislation and curbing of voices of dissent (The ZHRNF Report, 2005).

When the role of the state as the central force of development and transformation went uncontested both within the socialist ZANU-PF and the early left-intelligentsia, in the first decade after independence, the abuses of state power remained unquestioned. All concerns surrounding human rights excesses and shrinking of democratic spaces, which once constituted the bulwark of the Zimbabwean national movement, were systematically wiped out from the selective history of nationalism popularized by the ruling ZANU-PF. However, what is most disturbing is the manner in which the Mugabe regime found a refuge for its human rights violations, necessitated by a coercive nationalist politics, under the broad umbrella of an anti-imperialist, Pan-African clique. Mugabe and his cronies were successful in employing the complexities of racial inequalities as the perfect justification for the 'war against the historical wrongs' while attempting to cover up the very structures that furthered inequality in post-independence Zimbabwe (Raftopoulos, 2006).

In short, it can be stated that while the successive ZANU-PF governments led by Mugabe and now by Mnangagwa have been pandering to the pretext of an anti-imperialist ideological offensive internationally, back home they oversaw a very precise and autocratic class project. Further, it is a fact that the language of anti-imperialism did help the ZANU-PF leaders in accumulating a collective idea of a nation; a nationalist pattern of the politics of globalization that worked towards camouflaging resource accumulation by the political elites and employed mass mobilizations to obfuscate the critiques of authoritarian politics. The nationalist bogey of Mugabe was no doubt one of the repressive varieties, that revived in the face of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 thereby leading to the end of international solidarity of socialists. Hence as clearly stated by Raftopoulos (2006), "notwithstanding the impressive achievements of the anti-globalization movement, the broadness of the diverse agendas of the nationalist projects of the likes of Mugabe could also accommodate the authoritarian anti-imperialism of the Zimbabwe regime". The real challenge for

the post-colonial African states like Zimbabwe is, therefore, to evolve an anti-imperialist critique and praxis that is both democratic in spirit and anti-capitalist in its principles; one that would ensure more space for democratic political participation while also confronting the remnants of the New Imperialist Order (Raftopoulos, 2006).

The Tragedy of Globalization of Human Rights without Democracy in Zimbabwe

It is now common knowledge that the globalisation of the ideas of democracy and human rights has been met with several criticisms from all around the world, wherein the most notable has been the one linking the process of globalization to the neo-imperialist hegemony over the cultural practices, religious traditions and ways of living of the erstwhile colonized by the former colonial masters. As the power differential here is clearly tilted in favour of the latter, as per Langlois (2003), it is imperative that a non-separation of human rights and democracy would culminate eventually into a clash of civilizations, which would essentially be a by-product of cultural imperialism. In fact, it could be assumed that the globalization process, instead of diminishing the cultural differentiation between the West and the rest, would indeed bolster them, thereby activating culturally conservative pandemonium in less developed countries. Such anarchist uproars, far from institutionalizing the global discourse around human rights, would instead very well obscure the process of the evolvment of a global culture of respecting and recognizing the principles of human rights (Langlois, 2003). In the words of Monshipouri and Welch (2001), “one way to promote an international human rights regime is to separate respect for human rights from the Western-centric notion of democratization and treat such respect as the international norm”.

Enumerating on the need to disassociate the Western notions of human rights and democratization from each other, Nathan (1997), also explains that such segregation can combat the advent of reactive nationalism in erstwhile colonies of Asia and Africa. He further goes on to take the specific case of the United States of America and says, “the United States should separate human rights from democratization, focus on abuses that are illegal under international law and pre-empt the charge of cultural imperialism by framing the issues as one of compliance with international norms...it is important to separate human rights from democratization and treat it as the international idea that it is, not as a code word for Westernization” (Nathan, 1997).

Before getting into the specificities of Zimbabwe, it is important to understand that although the concepts of human rights and democracy are globally revered as the inalienable attributes of any civilized nation and their application all around the globe as pragmatic political projects, the truth remains that the statuses accorded to both these notions differ significantly; both in terms of the political and ideological functions they are to fulfil and also in terms of the institutions that bolster and shape the significance of human rights and democracy as objectives and action schemes. In comparison to democracy, human rights have a more powerful institutional standing in the international arena. This is specifically because of how the United Nations (UN) has engineered the progression of the human rights discourse as one of the cardinal principles of the statement of norms by which human beings are expected to co-exist with one another. While human rights are bestowed with international recognition, the fact remains that this recognition does not take into account the dynamics of power and politics at play and mistakes the value and implication of such a recognition to mean more than what it effectively does. Hence, it would be preposterous to think of its relevance and intensity to be identical to its prima facie claims and it would certainly be a misstep to take this international recognition at face value (Langlois, 2003).

Another important subject of concern is how international human rights laws are blindly applied to states all over the world. In other words, having a democratic setup is not a pre-condition to endorse and even be a signatory to the various conventions and instrumentalities of the UN, concerned

with human rights. The fact that a regime does not need to be a democratic one but could just be superficially seen as being committed to pursuing the human rights norms is quite alarming. The actual reasons for both democratic and non-democratic states for getting tangled with a particular UN treaty on human rights could be quite removed from the honest and prioritized interest in a particular issue of human rights at hand. Mostly, it is the pressure of international legitimacy, along with access and respect in international platforms that push world leaders and country heads to publicly recognize the need for institutionalization of human rights laws in their respective states.

Coming to Zimbabwe, it can be stated that this kind of a perfunctory commitment to certain human rights standards has been for long the basis of UN aid programmes in the country, which in turn bears testimony to how international cooperation is heavily determined by pledging allegiance to the human rights conventions. Even states like Zimbabwe that do not have a West-approved democratic domestic government thus become eligible for international assistance, provided they come under the purview of international human rights law. Hence, it is crucial to understand the real politics behind the propagation and mindless adoption of such human rights covenants and protocols (Langlois, 2003). In fact, it is the West that played a crucial role in overthrowing Mugabe in November 2017 by instigating his own party men to orchestrate a coup, as the former was proving too incommensurate for the Western interests.

Apodaca and Stohl (1999), in fact, argue that international aid is integrally linked to the adoption of human rights-respecting postures. Taking the specific example of the United States as one of the leading donor countries providing aid and assistance to the less developed countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, they argue that a state's human rights record is paramount to the United States when it comes to providing it with economic, if not military, aid. This is quite decisive when the self-proclaimed oldest democracy in the world has its own skeletons in the closet. That apart, the pre-condition of observance of human rights laws for delivery of aid in erstwhile colonies like Zimbabwe provide ample opportunities for the donor countries to justify the global recession in the amount of cooperation and services imparted to their domestic and international precincts over what is deemed as inappropriate and unjust by the donors who are by default the overseers of the right and the wrong. Therefore, the fact remains that the position and prominence accorded to the concept of human rights and its actual worthiness in a country are two different aspects and are hence to be treated as two separate political concepts.

As the political realities of human rights practices and their linkage to legitimacy are concepts that are very different from those that emanate from a democratic framework, it can be stated that the combination of the legitimacy and the political/economic impetus aspects of the human rights scheme provides the international community, in the words of Langlois (2003), "the wherewithal to demand that the state regimes change the way they govern without necessarily demanding that they change their governance regimes". Thus, the imperial masters devised a plan to acculturate the non-democratic states by pulling them out of the human rights abuse abyss without bothering to check on the progress of their domestic democratization performance before facilitating any form of colonizer-colonized collaborations (Langlois, 2003).

While it is argued by some that democracy is not an immediate pre-condition for the expansion of human rights in less developed countries like Zimbabwe and that the complex process of democratization might actually defer the institutionalization of human rights norms in many states, the fact remains that the complete disconnection of democracy from human rights mostly ends up in the latter being reduced from a set of rights to a mere set of norms or covenants. As the concepts of both democracy and human rights are Western-sponsored concepts, the foundation of the two remains the same and the latter, if not operating under the auspices of democracy, would be no better than some basic standards of human behaviour or in worst cases charity (Langlois, 2003).

In the case of Zimbabwe, till the supposedly harmonized elections of 2013, Mugabe's ZANU-PF wove all of its electoral agendas around fighting the neo-imperialists, wherein, in the words of Ncube (2013), "the right to 'external self-determination' (against extant power relations in the global system) was prioritized over the right to 'internal self-determination' (referring to political and civic rights of citizens, including that of choosing one's own government)". It is a fact that Mugabe, in the name of countering Western hegemony, perpetuated and justified state-sponsored human rights violations in the country. The repression programmes were however most often a cover-up for the corruption and financial misappropriation charges against the Mugabe government.

However, the opposition forces in Zimbabwe, understandably backed by the West, always sought to prioritise the abuse of civil and political rights, which was indeed a reality, over the measures taken by the Mugabe regime to ensure social and economic justice through land reform programmes. While the latter was ridiculed as the politicization of the land question, the stated prominence for the deepening of political and civil rights became a potent weapon in the hands of the opposition to achieve their aim of bringing about a change of regime in the country. Interestingly, it was not just the opposition forces who were in an iniquitous alliance with the Western imperialists to bring down Mugabe, but there were the petty-bourgeois classes too (Ncube, 2013).

With the intent to thwart the socio-economic and cultural progression of Zimbabwe, the petty bourgeoisie too used and abused the human rights discourse. The white settler farmers who shared a common goal with the opposition, of ousting Mugabe and his ZANU-PF from political power, employed the human rights rhetoric to halt the forceful acquisition of their lands by the ZANU-PF government as part of the latter's land redistribution projects. Similarly, some of the black bourgeoisie too effectively employed the Western conception of human rights to promote self-aggrandizement (Ncube, 2013). It is in this context that scholars like Raftopoulos (2010) have talked about the need to raise consciousness about the uncritical usage of the human rights discourse in subaltern countries, mostly by playing into the hands of the West, as that could herald a new wave of neo-imperialism. What is to be in motion in Zimbabwe, even with the *coup d'etat* that dislodged Mugabe from power only to then make one of his former associates the new President, is the continuous struggle for social democracy which must include both rights-based claims to national self-determination as well as political and civil rights (Zhangaza, 2013).

Conclusion

While it is indeed necessary to promote and protect the basic human rights of citizens occupying any nation-state, the fact remains that in many of the relatively newly independent countries of Asia and Africa, where the process of democratization is still an ongoing event, the West-sponsored rights discourse has reduced the practice of democracy to evolving progressive legislation and paving the way for formal democratic processes. The lived experiences of African countries like Zimbabwe, rich in their incomparable traditional beliefs and practices, have vouched for the ineffectiveness of the Western idea of human rights to apply itself into lending support to the collective rights of the predominantly underprivileged communities inhabiting such regions or redressing their social grievances. Hence, the West, rather than super-imposing their ideas of liberal democracy and human rights on subaltern states, must understand the historical and cultural specificities of each of these regions so as to be able to create a space for both effectual democratization and respect for human rights. It is indeed a fact that human rights most often end up being the discretion of the sovereign under benevolent authoritarian regimes. Nevertheless, the doctrine of human rights cannot be the quintessential indicator of a truly democratic state. Zimbabwe, under Mugabe, became an increasingly unpopular regime over the years, from 1980 to 2017, as the people of Zimbabwe saw through the bogus claims of a permanent nationalist revolution against Western

imperialism. However, one cannot also take away from Mugabe the distinction for heralding an era of black sovereignty over the white settler communities in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe of today under Mnangagwa, while taking pride in its revolutionary history and liberation movement, must also prepare itself to work towards a political framework founded on the principles of inclusiveness, social security, communal harmony, tolerance, and plurality to take forward its commitment to the socialist discourse of development and the undeterred quintessence of African resistance to all forms of imperialist manifestations.

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