
**Underdevelopment,
Development
and the
Future of Africa**



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“Let My People Go!” A Contextual Reading of the Book of Exodus in Light of Political and Economic Crisis in Post-independent Zimbabwe

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“What stops Zimbabwe’s President Robert Mugabe from retiring? Why will he not join the increasing number of his peers in undertaking worthy activities around Africa and elsewhere? Could he be excused his past misdemeanours and he whisked away to a large villa from where he would emerge occasionally to dispense the wisdom he is assured to have gained from his youthful exercises? If he has been offered this option, why has he refused? How has he remained in power for more than a quarter of a century?” (David Moore. 2006. *When I am a century old: Why Robert Mugabe won't Go?*)

Introduction

The catchy statement above was adopted from David Moore’s article which speaks volume on the political dilemma in post-independent Zimbabwe. This is the inspiration behind the adoption of the title of the book chapter here considered. The chapter examines the political and economic crises in Zimbabwe from the ‘glory’ early years of independence up to the ‘Zimbabwe Crisis’ in the 21st century. Why should a country suffer from such crises after the transition from “white” rule to “black” rule? Should Zimbabwe wait for a century for the change of leadership in the country? Why should the people of Zimbabwe rely on a personality who believes in himself as being the only one entitled to rule the country till death? Is Mugabe’s philosophy progressive or retrogressive in terms of the development of the country? This dilemma in terms of leadership has created a very shambolic state of the once glorious but now doomed

Zimbabwe. The country has suffered from social, economic, political and humanitarian crises commonly referred to as the “Zimbabwe Crisis” (Raftopoulos 2009; Todd 2010). Socially, the people of Zimbabwe have suffered from abject poverty where the gap between the rich and the poor remain astronomically huge and gaping. The rich are living in flamboyancy whilst the poor are living in stinking poverty. Economically, the people have experienced cataclysmic doom instead of an economic boom. Politically, the people of Zimbabwe have experienced the worst moments of the country’s leadership characterised by a multiple of political disasters, political violence and political murders (Sachikonye, 2011; Madzokere & Machingura 2016). Religiously, various religious groups in Zimbabwe have taken an ambivalent stance to try to address the crises. Some of the groups are supporting the leadership of the state whilst others are in strong opposition (Chitando & Togarasei 2010). The “Zimbabwe Crisis” was a result of an artificialized political paralysis bred and catapulted by a long serving power hungry dictator, Robert Gabriel Mugabe. This book chapter is not there to overshadow Robert Mugabe’s achievements from 1980 to 1985 but to show how he has gradually tarnished the ‘jewel of Africa’ (Matanda & Madzokere forthcoming).

This chapter adopts the recurring topos statement: “Let my people go!” in the book of Exodus which was an imperative and powerful statement uttered by Yahweh to mark the liberation of the Hebrews from Egypt—the house of bondage. The liberation of the dominated people confirms God’s preferential option for the oppressed and marginalised bunchy of Israelites slaves from the diabolic Pharaoh’s oppressive rule. This recurring thematic statement in the book of Exodus is adopted as a point of departure in this chapter. The chapter takes a contextual reading of the book of Exodus in the light of political and economic crises in the post-independent Zimbabwe. The chapter argues that Robert Mugabe who is a true ardent Christian (Roman Catholic) should utilise the message of the book of Exodus to draw lessons on the dangers of dictatorship. As a leader of Zimbabwe—a country whose approximately eighty percent population claims to be adherents of

Christianity should read the Bible to draw useful insights and lessons on good leadership.

Through the liberation-hermeneutical and reconstruction approach the chapter exposes and challenges Robert Mugabe's political rigidity, political acidity, and political aridity which serve as an impediment to the wholesome development of the nation. Firstly, the chapter defines key terms for the cultivation of a better understanding of the topic under study. Secondly, the chapter discusses the topos (thematic message) of the book of Exodus as a point of departure. Thirdly, the political and economic crises in Zimbabwe are examined focussing specifically on what this chapter refers to as, "Gabriel power tricks-political rigidity, political acidity, and political aridity". Fourthly, the liberation and reconstruction paradigm is suggested to serve as a precursor for the development of the nation. Fifthly and final, a conclusion and recommendation charter a way forward for Zimbabwe.

Conceptualisation of key terms

Key terms to be defined in this study are: political rigidity, political acidity, political aridity, development, underdevelopment, sustainable development and *TaNak*. These terms, have various meanings, thus in this study, out of the various definitions given, working definitions would be developed to champion the focus of the topic. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2016), the term, 'rigidity' means the inability to be bent or to be forced out of shape. In this instance then, the word means unbending. It is the inability to be changed or adapt to a given situation. It can also mean an emotional inflexibility and resistance to change. The word 'rigidity' is etymologically derived from the Latin word, '*rigidus*' which means to 'be stiff'. The rhymes of the word 'rigidity' include: acidity, aridity, flaccidity, humidity, fluidity and liquidity. The synonyms of the word "rigidity" are: hardness, harshness, inflexibility, severity and rigidness (Merriam Webster Dictionary 2016). In this study, political rigidity shall be used to refer to the inability to be changed or resistance to change displayed by the political leadership of any institution in any given situation. In this case, therefore, political rigidity refers to

various ways the leadership of Zimbabwe (Robert Mugabe and his cronies) display resistance tactics to positive political change which would bring about meaningful social, political and economic development of the country. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2016), the term, 'acidity' means the level of acid in substances such as water, soil or wine. It also means the bitterness or sharpness in a person's remarks or tone. The rhymes of the word 'acidity' are: aridity, rigidity, liquidity, humidity and flaccidity. An acid is something that has some destructive qualities. If an acid gets on some clothes they are worn out or instantly torn into pieces. In this book chapter, political acidity refers to various ways the leadership of Zimbabwe (Robert Mugabe and his apologists) apply destructive tactics to weaken their opponents in the political game in the country. The leadership is so corrosive like an acid to tear apart members of the opposition parties and their adherents, so in this case we can generally speak about political acidity. This political acidity is very detrimental to the social, economic and political development of the nation for it becomes a stumbling block to any meaningful desirable change that the country of Zimbabwe is yelling for.

The combination of political rigidity and political acidity is a thorn in the flesh of the opposition parties who are fighting for political space against Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF party who have been in power since 1980 when the country got its independence from the former colonial masters-the British (Todd 2010). According to the Oxford Dictionary (2016), the word 'aridity' means being without moisture; extremely dry; parched: arid land and arid climate. It means deficiency of moisture (especially) when resulting from a permanent absence of rainfall. On another note, it means barren or unproductive because of the lack of moisture; and farmland. In short, the word points to lack of productivity of the land because of the inadequacy of water which on its own is pivotal for any farm produce to be realised. The rhymes of the word, 'aridity' is: rigidity, acidity, humidity, liquidity, fluidity and flaccidity. An arid place is a dry place where vegetation hardly survives the dryness of the land. The condition of the atmosphere of such a place hinders trees, grass, crops or any vegetation to grow favourably. People who

stay in such places suffer from drought and famine because they would be struggling to produce crops to sustain their lives.

In this study, political aridity refers to the cluelessness of the leadership of the country in the governance of Zimbabwe that transforms the nation from its failed status (underdeveloped) to a developed one. Robert Mugabe at ninety-two years of age has ruled the country for thirty-six years and he still vows to remain on the helm of the country's leadership as the catchy statement of David Moore above. The leadership of Zimbabwe has brought about the political, social and economic mess that the nation is suffering from at the moment. The glory years of 1980 were turned to be the gloom years of the moment in the history of Zimbabwe (Madzokere & Matanda 2015). This unproductive state of the nation's leadership of our country brings about social, economic and political oppression of the people of our 'beloved' country. The combination of the three 'Gabriel power tricks'-political rigidity, political acidity, and political aridity is enabling the long serving statesman to rule till a century but this has a long term effects to the development of the country and freedom of the people of Zimbabwe. This brings retrogression rather than progression of Zimbabwe economically, politically and socially: This is why Zhou & Makahamadze (2012) argues that Robert Mugabe should be regarded as a liability rather than an asset as he had ruined our nation.

According to Merriam Webster Dictionary (2016), the term, 'development' means the process of developing or being developed. It means an act or process of growing or causing something to grow or becoming larger or more advanced. As a working definition it means the capability of a nation to provide the holistic needs of its citizens, be it political, social, economic, physical, spiritual and psychological (Matanda & Madzokere 2015). The failure of a nation to provide its citizens with requisite needs then is underdevelopment. In economics, underdevelopment is when resources are not used to their full socio-economic potential, with the result that local or regional development is slower in most cases than it should be, and specifically compared with the investment and innovation in countries that surrounds it. An underdeveloped nation is the one that lags behind most others in industrialisation, education, standard of

living, health care, life expectancy and other technological and cultural norms (Merriam Webster dictionary 2016). An underdeveloped nation is not able to sustain its citizens and in most cases citizens are deprived of their rights. The abuse of human rights is a common phenomenon in an underdeveloped nation. The citizens do not enjoy political, social, and economic freedom, hence they are underdeveloped. The term 'sustainable development' means economic development that is conducted without depletion of natural resources. This kind of development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs (Matanda & Madzokere 2015). It is development which is both realised and futuristic in nature.

The *TaNak* is the body of literature found in the Bible with numerous designations, such as Old Testament, Hebrew Scriptures, Hebrew Bible and First Testament. The Hebrew Bible is called the Old Testament by the Christians and adherents of other religions apart from Judaism. For the Jews, it is referred to as the *TaNak* which stands for the three-fold division of the Hebrew Bible- *Torah* (Law or Pentateuch); *Nebiim* (Prophets) and *Kethubim* (Wisdom writings/literature/books). The *Torah* which is the first division of the Hebrew Bible refers to the first five books of the Old Testament which are accredited to Moses as author namely: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. This study would rely on the second book of the *Torah* (Pentateuch) which has a record of the story of the liberation of the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage by Moses-an agent of Yahweh (God). The message of the book inspired the writer of this book chapter to utilise it as he reflects on applicability of such a message to the Zimbabwean context where the political leadership employ almost the similar leaderships tactics as those employed by the Pharaohs of Egypt (dynasty leaders). The study makes reference to the Bible because it is a valuable document of religious importance in Zimbabwe influencing the political, social and economic well-being of the people of Zimbabwe (Chitando et.al 2013). For Gunda (2011), the Bible is utilised by both public and private institutions in Zimbabwe, so it remains a life manual for most of the citizens of the nation. After defining the key terms, the book chapter now examines the message of the book of Exodus.

“Let my people go!” The Topos of the book of Exodus

The book of Exodus as the second book of the Torah has a powerful message which can serve as an eye-opener to the contemporary leadership of any nation in Africa even beyond especially those who confess to be Christians. Zimbabwe as a country has approximately eighty percent Christians who are followers of Christianity with its diverse groupings—Mainline, Evangelicals, Pentecostals and African Initiated ones (Sibanda & Madzokere 2013). It is vital to say that most of the powerful members (opposition party members, members of Parliament, ministers, vice-Presidents, President) in the politics of Zimbabwe are Christians who profess to be followers of Christ. They adhere to the teachings of the Bible and they are ardent readers of the Bible. Even the constitution of Zimbabwe draws a lot of inspiration from the Bible as most of the laws of the nation are typically biblical. The President of the country was baptised in the Roman Catholic, educated at a Roman Catholic school, and still confesses to be a devout Catholic who values the Bible in his life (Madzokere forthcoming). This is why the message of the book of Exodus should be reflected on in this book chapter.

From the etymological meaning of the word, ‘Exodus’ we draw much about the book is all about. The word comes from the two Greek words namely: ‘*ek*’ and ‘*odos*’ which means in short ‘out of the way’. It refers to the coming out of the children of Israel from Egypt—the house of bondage where they were slaves for four hundred and thirty years (Madzokere 2010). In the book of Exodus there is a recurring rubric phrase, ‘let my people go!’ (Exodus 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:4) which was said by Yahweh to Moses to go and say that to Pharaoh—the king of Egypt. Yahweh wanted the Hebrews to be freed from Egyptian slavery which was tormenting the lives of Yahweh’s elect people. From the book of Exodus, we can deduce that Yahweh takes sides with those who suffer from political, social, economic and religious domination. He expects humanity to experience political, social, economic and religious freedom which would enable a holistic living. The fundamental confession of faith of the Hebrews reads:

Yahweh heard our voices, and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression, and in a never-to-be-forgotten demonstration of grace, brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders (Deuteronomy 26:5-9).

The Hebrews suffered from social, political, economic and religious oppression in Egypt hence, Yahweh liberated them for them to enjoy social, political, economic and religious liberty in Canaan-the Promised Land.

Politically, the Hebrews in Egypt were political slaves, so they were ruled by the Egyptian aristocracy. The Hebrews were theocratic people but because of slavery they were forced to abandon theocracy to be governed by the Egyptian Pharaoh (dynastic leadership). They were governed by Pharaoh who manipulated them to work under harsh conditions to build Egypt to be a country of splendour and great civilisation with great cities of beauty like Pithom and Raamses (Madzokere 2010). The Hebrews were political slaves who worked as farm labourers to implement irrigation projects under the Egyptian *shaduf* irrigation system. The Hebrew slaves boosted agricultural production in Egypt and that on its own brought about economic development to this nation. The Hebrews lacked political freedom hence the message of liberation was a welcome development to the elect people of Yahweh. Political freedom meant that the Hebrews would be free to govern themselves and to worship God in Canaan, the Promised Land without any political interference from other aliens. They could now pursue theocracy freely without foreign domination.

Socially, the Hebrews were dominated by the Egyptians. They worked in the various sectors of Egyptian economy but they were not benefitting from the fruits of their labour at all. They suffered from *corvee* labour but they never enjoyed the resources of their sweat (Madzokere: *ibid*). In a stratified Egyptian society, the Hebrews were the least class in a pyramidal structure of the upper, middle and lower class. The aristocracy of Egypt formed the upper class, the merchants and traders were belonging to the middle class, whilst the poor slaves (Hebrews) were in the lowest class of the society. The poor slaves

were living in stinking poverty whilst the rich aristocracy and the merchants/traders were living in flamboyancy and plenty. The Hebrews needed social emancipation for them to enjoy social and religious freedom which was a prerequisite for their development as people. Economically, the Hebrews were economic slaves for they toiled to produce food they were deprived of and never enjoyed. They brought about economic boom to Egypt through them working as slaves in various sectors of the economy of Egypt yet, they were in their economic doldrums. They were downtrodden poor yet; they were behind all production which was taking place in the country of splendour (Madzokere 2010).

Religiously, the Hebrews were deprived of their worship of Yahweh-one God (Exodus 20:1ff). They were monotheistic (worship of one God) but now in Egypt they were forced to abandon their form of worship for polytheism (worship of many gods). The Egyptians worshipped the Pharaohs and also gods of the Nile called Osiris and Horus. This is why Yahweh was angered by the Pharaoh who forced the Hebrews to abandon their God to be adherents of polytheistic gods which were false and misleading. For Yahweh that was an abomination hence, the message: 'let my people go!' They were to be liberated from the worship of this nature which was a mockery to Yahweh who chanted, 'liberation to the slaves!' Religious liberation of the Hebrews meant that they were now free to serve and worship without force or fear – freedom of worship (Madzokere 2010). The emancipation of the Hebrews meant that they were to enjoy religious, political and socio-economic freedom in Canaan rather than suffering from religious, political, and socio-economic domination as was in Egypt. The combination of social, political, economic and religious oppression of the Hebrews was detrimental to their social, political, economic and religious liberty which transforms lives for the total development of humanity.

'Gabriel Power Tricks': An impediment to development

This book chapter now examines Gabriel power tricks under the three 'dities'—political rigidity, political acidity and political aridity as President Robert Gabriel Mugabe's political power tactics that

enables him to retain power in spite of a vigilant-vigorous and most popular opposition in Zimbabwe dominated by the Movement of Democratic Change under the swift leadership of Richard Morgan Tsvangirai (Moore 2006; Hill 2003; Meredith 2002). A critical reflection of each of these power techniques employed by this powerful long-serving political luminary shows that his political rigidity, political acidity, and political aridity serves as a catalyst to the underdevelopment of Zimbabwe—an impediment to the development of the nation. Each of these would be examined taking cognisance of the complex political matrix of Zimbabwe in the 21st century characterised by worst polarisation of the political atmosphere of the deeply turbulent nation. Through his power tricks, the long serving statesman committed many political, social and economic disasters which are a stumbling block to the development of Zimbabwe—a once socially, politically and economically envied country in Southern Africa (Good 2002).

Political rigidity

From the definition of terms, the working definition of the word, 'political rigidity' refers to the inability to be changed or resistance to change displayed by the political leadership of any institution in any given situation. In this case, therefore, political rigidity refers to various power tricks which the leadership of Zimbabwe (Robert Mugabe and his adherents) used to retain power through evil means. Robert Mugabe's political rigidity was displayed in many various ways and through many various political landmines. Most scholars have looked on them though they could not develop the language of speaking about 'political rigidity' referring to Robert Mugabe's tactics of breeding the political disasters implemented by this political luminary (Good 2002; Kagoro 2008; Mbeki 2009; Sachikonye 2011; Zhou & Makahamadze 2012; Madzokere & Machingura 2016). The political disasters which were masterminded by Robert Mugabe from the attainment of independence to date are as follows:

(1) *Gukurabundi*: 'The rain that washes away the chaff': interpreted politically was a war of political enemies not dissidents which resulted in the massacre of civilians (approximately 20000) than the so-called

dissidents. This was a war against Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU party. To call it a war against dissidents was a political gimmick and political scapegoating by Robert Mugabe and his apologists. This was a true sign of political rigidity. This was cancerous to the political atmosphere of the country (Good 2002; Mbeki 2009; Sachikonye 2011).

(2) *Jambanja: 'The Fast-Track Land Reform Programme'*: interpreted politically was a political war against perceived perennial enemies—the white commercial farmers who lost their land and most of them were killed in cold blood during this campaign. To say it was a redress of colonial injustices instigated by the whites was a political gimmick and political scapegoating. The most powerful indigenous Zimbabwe benefitted at the expense of the peasants and this worked to the advantage of Robert Mugabe to retain power against the challenge of a swift opposition-MDC. This is a sign of political rigidity. It was detrimental to economy of the country (Machingura 2012; Madzokere & Machingura 2016).

(3) *Murambatsvina: 'Operation clear off Filthy'*: interpreted politically was a political gimmick and scapegoating to punish the urbanites who had voted overwhelmingly for the opposition party-MDC. It was operation clear-off the people not dirty. The destruction of shanty dwellings was a scapegoat tactic. The general urban dwellers were seriously affected which resulted to an urban-rural drift which would give an advantage to Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF party for the boosting of voter percentages in their rural strongholds. This is just a sign of political rigidity (Sachikonye 2011; Madzokere & Machingura: 2016).

(4) *Kubira sarudzo kune udzamu: 'Series of rigged elections-2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2013'*: a series of elections in Zimbabwe took place from 2000-2013 but they were marred by violence, murders, rape, abductions, torture, and destruction of property. They were militarised and bloody to avoid a fair result which could have given an advantage to the opposition parties. The rigging of these elections was a sign of political rigidity by those in the country's leadership (Masunungure 2009; Madzokere & Machingura: 2016).

(5) *Kudzvinga Teurai Ropa Mujuru pachigaro: 'Relinquish Teurai Mujuru of a Vice-President post'*: Factionalism rocked the powerful ruling party-

ZANU-PF in the bid to succeed President Robert Mugabe from the time the woman (Teurai Ropa Mujuru) was appointed to the Presidium by Robert Mugabe in 2004. Two factions dominated in the bid-Mujuru faction and Mnangagwa. In the battle for survival, the Mnangagwa outclassed the Mujuru one by scapegoating and political gimmick. Mujuru was implicated as though she wanted to unceremoniously succeed Robert Mugabe through non-constitutional means of consulting traditional practitioners. This led to the kicking out of Mujuru from the party. The end of Mujuru was solely caused by the political rigidity of Robert Mugabe who feels threatened to lose power not only from opposition parties but also from his own cadres. The factional wars continued even after the expulsion of Joice Mujuru now being Team Lacoste of Mnangagwa versus Generation 40(G40) of First Lady-Grace Mugabe. These factional wars are tearing the ZANU-PF party apart from inside which would also negatively impact on the long serving statesman-Robert Mugabe (BBC News 2014; SABC News 2016).

(6) *Kutosvororana nevaimbova varwi verusununguko*: 'Being at loggerheads with war veteran leaders': interpreted politically, the war veterans have been supporting the incumbent leader from 1980 till the recent fall-out. The fall out resulted from the realisation by the war veterans that they were being used as wash out rugs in fighting the opposition parties yet they benefitted nothing in return. After such and realisation and rebellion against the Robert Mugabe, this led to the nefarious punishment of the leaders of the war veteran crew-sacking of Mutsvangwa as leader, Mahiya's arrest and the recent violent occupation of Mutemadanda's farm. The punishment of the leadership of the war veteran fraternity shows that Robert Mugabe does not welcome anyone who champions the regime change agenda. This is typically political rigidity by the long serving statesman (The Standard 2016, Newsday 2016).

(7) *Kuimba handiendi chero ruzhinji rwajamuka*: 'Resisting change in spite of overwhelming uprising': interpreted politically Robert Mugabe would not accept any agenda which disturbs his stay on power. There are series of protests (Tajamuka, Nera &Your flag cadres) going at the moment in Harare- the capital city of Zimbabwe with the recurring theme-'Mugabe should quit!' but the repressive response coming

from Robert Mugabe and his apologists-intelligence officers, police, youths and perennial supporters shows that Robert Mugabe wants to die in office. This is a leader who has managed to display seriousness in political rigidity to retain power even if it means 'ruling on a wheel chair' as utterances of his wife to her husband's prospective successors (Tinhu 2016; Chikowore 2016).

Political acidity

From the definition of terms, the working definition of the word, 'political acidity' refers to various ways the leadership of Zimbabwe (Robert Mugabe and his apologists) apply destructive tactics to weaken their opponents in the political game in the country. The leadership was very acidic and corrosive in nature for it had developed various survival tactics from 1980 till now to destroy any threatening opposition parties (Sithole 1999). The typical example of these opposition parties are: Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) led by Joshua Nkomo, Zimbabwe African National Union-Ndonga led by Ndabaningi Sithole, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Morgan Tsvangirai and Zimbabwe Unity Movement led by Edgar Tekere (Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009).

Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU did not survive Robert Mugabe's political acidic tactics hence he decided to give in to Canaan Banana's Unity Accord between ZAPU and ZANU-PF which bred a combined unity party called ZANU-PF. This marked the political burial of Joshua Nkomo's party-ZAPU and its leader. Although the spirit of ZAPU is still surviving through Dumiso Dabengwa and others, the damage had already taken its toll. Ndabaningi Sithole and his party-ZANU-Ndonga was politically wounded by Robert Mugabe through unscrupulous treason accusations against him as a way of political survival (Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2009). Edgar Tekere and ZUM party was very powerful on its inception in 1995 when the political, social and economic power house of ZANU-PF began to crumble but it never survived Robert Mugabe's political acidity. One of ZUM's powerful luminaries-Patrick Kombayi escaped death by a whisker when he was shot contesting in Gweru urban against Simon Vengayi Muzenda-the then Vice-President of ZANU-PF and the

country. For Morgan Tsvangirai and his party-MDC the struggle continues from 2000 up to now characterised by abductions, torture, arson, political violence and treason accusations.

Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF generally called, 'militarized and bloody party' (Masunungure 2009; Sachikonye 2011). The implementation of most of the political disasters examined above on 'political rigidity' was characterised by the shedding of blood of whoever was opposing the wishes of the ruling party. *Gukurahundi* claimed approximately twenty thousand people (Good 2002; Zhou & Makahamadze 2012). This genocide displayed how acidic a dictator can be to quell opposition forces. The Zimbabwean society was wounded because of the massacre of such people and the wounds are still licking for no meaningful efforts of reconciliation have been realised so far. Mbeki (2009:192) commented the acidic nature of *Gukurahundi*:

One of the most tragic impacts of 5 Brigade on Matabeleland was the resulting perception among those civilians who suffered that they had become victims of an 'ethnic' and political war, with an attack on the Ndebele considered to be an attack on ZAPU seen as an attack on the Ndebele. The incidence of rape under 5 Brigade also became loaded with political overtones for those in Matabeleland, with rapes committed by members of the brigade perceived as a means of creating a generation of Shona babies.

Though there are elements of exaggeration in the above statement, this shows how detrimental such genocide was to the psychological well-being of the people of Matabeleland and most of the political analysts in the country and beyond.

Jambanja- 'Fast Track Land Reform Programme' claimed approximately over forty-eight people (Human Rights Watch 2002). Operation Murambatsvina left thousands of people homeless (Madzokere & Machingura 2016). The Operation clear-off the Rubbish (*Murambatsvina*) had devastating social, political, economic, psychological and emotional long-term effects. Robert Mugabe and his cronies have the political tricks of causing mayhem among political opposition parties. The statesman has degrees of creating

fake opposition parties to pretend as though Zimbabwe observes multi-party democracy (BBC News 2016). Machingura (2010) and Madzokere & Machingura (2016) observed that the series of rigged elections in Zimbabwe characterised by the worst violence had serious negative effects to the lives of the victims namely: physical, sexual, spiritual, psychological, economic and social. The sacking of Joice Teurai Ropa Mujuru from the Presidium in 2014 was an acidic political move by the President to whoever tries to challenge his hold onto power. He does not tolerate any opposition within and outside his party because he wants to rule the country till death. This move by political expect was a calculated ploy to destroy Joice Mujuru's political career forever. If that was not enough, Emmerson Mnangagwa (Vice President) who replaced Joice is facing the same hell as that of her predecessor to date. The ruling party faction of Generation 40(G40) led by Grace Mugabe is busy championing the sacking agenda of Emmerson from ZANU-PF.

The elimination and substitution game by Robert Mugabe in the political game is a ploy to stay on power through hook and crook. His present collision with his long- time allies-the war veterans' leadership of Mutswangwa is a turning point in the history of Zimbabwe politics. The war veterans enjoyed a joyous relationship with the President of the country during the implementation of all the political disasters examined above but hell broke loose when they suggested a successor to him in the likes of Emmerson Mnangagwa to takeover power. The war veterans' leadership trod on hell ground by putting forward such a view to the incumbent-Robert Mugabe who felt threatened to his stay on power and his 2018 Presidential candidature. In the midst of political turmoil of massive uprisings in the capital city-Harare in recent days, Robert Mugabe-the President of the country instigated a ban on demonstrations by a statutory instrument 101A of the Constitution as a way of silencing the rebellion but that would never stop the winds of change from blowing (Tinhu 2016& Chikowore 2016).The political acidic nature of Robert Mugabe and his adherents have long-term effects to the social, economic and humanitarian freedom of the people which serve as an impediment to the development of the nation. This is the worst effects of political acidity.

Political aridity

From the definition of terms above, the working definition of the word, 'political aridity' means refers to the cluelessness the leadership of the country in the governance of Zimbabwe that transforms the nation from its failed status (underdeveloped) to a developed one. Robert Mugabe at ninety-two years of age has ruled the country for thirty-six years and he still vows to remain on the helm of the country's leadership as the catchy statement of David Moore above. The leadership of Zimbabwe has brought about the political, social and economic mess that the nation is suffering from at the moment. Through the implementation of various political disasters noted above, the President of the country did not only show political rigidity and political acidity but political aridity. At ninety-two years as a leader of nation, what miracles might be expected to be performed by Robert Mugabe to transform, revive or renew the country bedevilled by a myriad challenges. Robert Mugabe is now politically bankrupt to bring new ideas which would champion meaningful development to the country.

Politically, the people of Zimbabwe are suffering from the effects of many political disasters noted above which depicts Zimbabwe as a country experiencing a war-a physical one but not it is a war of political disasters that haunt the nation. The most citizens of Zimbabwe are political destitute in their own country because they can hardly claim political freedom where they are restricted from exercising their own political rights. They have the freedom to vote for their political parties but at the end the results of elections are rigged so their will is not realised at the end. There is no political change at all and that also mean no stagnation in terms of political development. The opposition forces and some radical ones within ZANU-PF party are blaming Robert Mugabe's overstay on power and his political aridity for the ruinous state that Zimbabwe had plunged into. The long serving tyrant-Robert Mugabe has now been described as, 'clueless, hopeless and retarded' leader who should leave office to pave way for young, energetic and progressive

luminaries who would rescue the country from further decay and ruin.

Economically, the country is not managing to sustain its citizens because the resources of the country are exploited by a few rich powerful connected ones at the detriment of the majority poor who languish in abject poverty. The country is in its worst economic doldrums characterised by a ballooned Parliament of two hundred and ten legislators who boggle millions of dollars from the tax-payer's money. The civil service alone takes ninety-seven percent of the country's budget but the government is on the massive drive to recruit more in the uniformed forces. Socially, the gap between the rich elites and the poor peasants is escalating daily, weekly, monthly and yearly. This is perpetrated by the aristocracy of the nation which should be on the fore front to address that anomaly. The leaders of the nation are the champions in the impoverishment of Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is now known for a collapsed education and health system. A ruined industrial base gives a sorry sight of the country's cosmopolitan atmosphere. Looking at political, social and economic failures of Zimbabwe one can safely refer the nation to as, a 'failed state' (Madzokere & Matanda 2015). The failure by the country leadership to address the social, political and economic injustices in Zimbabwe shows the arid nature of incumbency-Robert Mugabe. The 'Zimbabwe Crisis' points to failure of Zimbabwe's political leadership to champion social, economic and political emancipation of its citizens from the worst era of social, economic, political and religious quagmire.

'A Precursor to development': Forward with liberation and reconstruction

After an examination on the Gabriel tricks of political rigidity, political acidity and political aridity, the book chapter now takes a look on the liberation-cum-reconstruction paradigm which serves as a precursor to development. This according to this study should be embraced by Robert Mugabe and his apologists to bring about meaningful change to the social, political and economic status of Zimbabwe. By liberation-cum-reconstruction approach one mean

the embracing of liberation and reconstruction traits in the country's leadership which at the moment suffers from political rigidity, political acidity and political aridity. What Zimbabwe needs at the moment is the leadership that brings peace and take development of the country to its social, economic and political well-being. The liberation paradigm as derived from the book of Exodus already examined above champion social, economic and political liberation of those experiencing domination of any nature. From the story of the Hebrews, Yahweh took sides with those who were dominated socially, economically and politically to usher in a new era of liberation, salvation, and redemption. The reconstruction paradigm has been derived from three theologians of high repute namely-J.N.K Mugambi, Charles Villa-Vincencio and Ka Mana (Chitando 2009).For the three personalities, 'reconstruction' should be the way to go for Africa where the political elites created multiple crises of poverty, corruption, extreme violation of human rights, civil unrest and underdevelopment. Such a paradigm should be embraced by Robert Mugabe and his adherents to transform the Zimbabwean society to greater heights in terms of development. Such a message counters Gabriel tricks of political rigidity, political acidity and political aridity which are a detriment to the country's political, religious and socio-economic progress in the name of development. J.N.K Mugambi says this on reconstruction:

It is reconstructive rather than destructive, inclusive rather exclusive, proactive rather than reactive, complementary rather than competitive, integrative rather than disintegrative, programme driven rather than project driven, people centred rather than institution centred, participatory rather autocratic, regenerative rather degenerative (Chitando 2009:127-130).

Chitando (ibid) observes that reconstruction agenda is the way to go for Africa to shake the evils of society that deprive people of a holistic life that is desirable and worth living. For him, reconstruction entails the revamping of oppressive government systems, rebuilding of individuals, families and communities. It means bringing renewal, revival and transformation to African leadership with an evil history

of overstay on power, deprivation of people's rights, plunder of resources, corruption dictatorship and destruction of livelihoods. Robert Mugabe should adopt the liberation message in the book of Exodus to transform the situation of Zimbabweans who are in turbulence due to social, economic and political domination caused by his rigidity, acidity and aridity. The adoption of the liberation message would not be enough without embracing reconstruction drive which brings revival, renewal and transformation of the lives of the people. The reconstruction drive enables people to live life holistically as social, economic, political and religious beings.

Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, this book chapter meticulously dissected through the following areas: the introduction of the topic and definition of key terms. The working definitions were also developed to propel the study. The message of the book of Exodus was examined so that it could be contextualised to the Zimbabwe situation of political, social and economic domination. The Gabriel power tricks were discussed under the three sub-headings namely: political rigidity, political acidity and political aridity which were employed to enable the long serving statesman stay on power in spite of vigorous challenge from popular opposition parties. After an analysis of the weaknesses of Gabriel tricks in the political game in Zimbabwe, the chapter developed a point of departure which foster on liberation-cum-reconstruction paradigm which calls for African leadership's renewal, revival and transformation to the advantage of the people who would live a holistic life characterised by social, political and economic freedom-a precursor to the development of any nation.

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In view of the resilience of Africa's underdevelopment, what do Africans make of their determined aspirations for development? The continent of Africa has constantly drawn global attention, most especially for both human and natural evils. Underdevelopment, it appears, is one of the most eminent threatening evils. It has plunged and promises to maintain the majority of Africa in abject poverty, insecurity, and vulnerability. What perpetuates the ghost and gory of underdevelopment in Africa, despite a proliferation of development rhetoric and initiatives? How do ordinary Africans react to repeated talk and claims of development with little evidence of transformation for the better in their material circumstances? This book interrogates the tenacity of underdevelopment amid calls for Africa to rise from its slumber and reclaim its position in global affairs as the mother continent of humankind. It contributes to the ongoing debates on why Africa remains trapped in the clutch of underdevelopment many decades after the purported end of colonialism. The book comes at a critical time in human history; a time when the talk on Africa's [under-]development is louder due to the ravages of economic downturns and dysfunctional conflicts. It poses a challenge to development practitioners, civil society activists, statesmen, economists, political scientists and theorists to rethink and reconsider their role as technocrats, experts and ambassadors of positive change in Africa and the world beyond.

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