



**Zimbabwe Election
Support Network**
Promoting Democratic
Elections In Zimbabwe



University of Zimbabwe (UZ) and the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN)

TITLE: AN OVERVIEW OF ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE: 1980 TO PRESENT

Since 1980, several elections have been conducted in Zimbabwe. Scholars like Sithole and Makumbe (1997) begin their prognosis of electoral politics in Zimbabwe in 1979 following the ‘internal settlement’ elections which saw the creation of the transitional government which for the first time included moderate black nationalists in the executive council, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, Ndabaningi Sithole and Jeremiah Chirau. Ian Smith retained his position as the Prime Minister. Following the short-lived internal settlement government, Southern Rhodesia transitioned to become Zimbabwe, a state that joined others in the international community with justiciable rights under international law after the conduct of the 1980 elections. During this historic election, voter turnout was relatively high reflecting the enthusiasm and hope for a new dawn. The turnout could also possibly highlight the need from the warring parties for an immediate ceasefire. Voter turnout during the 1980 elections was 94% (Chikwanha-Dzenga et al.), a percentage that has never been reached again in the subsequent elections in the country four decades later. The proportional representation (PR) system was used during this election and later abandoned during the 1985 elections onwards (Sachikonye 2001). Since then, the single member district (SMD) or first-past-the-post is the dominant electoral system used in the country. The PR system was reintroduced following the adoption of the women’s quota in the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No. 20 in 2013.

The significance of the 1980 elections to Zimbabwean politics should not be understated. Several key institutional and legal set up in the country’s present electoral architecture find their origins from this election. For instance, the use of indelible ink remains a fundamental feature to the Zimbabwean elections. Although Zimbabwe has consistently held elections since independence, the quality of those elections has been questioned on several points. The

persistent culture of violence, reliance of the military arm and personnel during elections and intimidation are recurrent features affecting the conduct of elections. The emergence of dominant opposition in the country's politics during the period around 1999 and 2000 resulted in the increased reliance on violence and intimidation. Although the opposition fared well during the 2008 elections, the anticipated transfer of power did not take place due to the failure of the opposition presidential candidate to garner the 50% plus one vote requirement. Several critique of the scenario and ensuing incessant violence towards the re-run to the presidential election left an unforgettable mark on the country's electoral politics.

Several administrative changes have also been witnessed along the country's electoral expedition since 1980. There has been the harmonization of the conduct of local council, parliamentary and presidential elections. This harmonization was done in 2008 and subsequently all the three different elections are being done at once. There has been also some changes and reforms of the electoral laws. Again, the adoption of the 2013 constitution resulted in the adoption of some elements which had a bearing on the conduct of elections in the country. For instance, the adoption of the quota system. This has a direct impact on the participation of women in politics. The adoption again of the youth quota through Constitutional Amendment number 2 saw the government of Zimbabwe's commitment to the inclusion of youth into national parliament. Another important fundamental element has been the adoption of a Biometric voter registration process which replaced the manual voter registration process in 2017. The book project shall be centered on the following key themes:

1. Historical Background (The liberation struggle, land issue, socio-economic factors, debt cancellation)
2. Elections and Legal Frameworks
3. Delimitation
4. Election Dispute Resolution: Electoral Justice
5. Local Government Elections in Zimbabwe
6. The voting patterns in Zimbabwe: The Rural/Urban divide.
7. Elections, Peace and Security
8. Civic and Voter Education
9. Election Observation: Local, Regional and International Observation
10. Political Parties Regulation and Financing in Zimbabwe.
11. Inclusion: Special Groups and Minorities (Women, Youth and People with Disabilities)

12. CSOs and Elections in Zimbabwe: The Role of CSOs, CBOs, religious groups, traditional leaders, war veterans)
13. The Media and Elections
14. Technology and Elections in Zimbabwe.

Please Note: Authors should submit original contributions on any of the themes outlined above or any other related to electoral politics in Zimbabwe since 1980. Papers submitted should not be under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Chapter layout

The complete book chapters should have the following format:

1. Topic
2. Abstract
3. Introduction (Background, Overview and Objectives)
4. Methodology
5. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework
6. Discussion of Findings
7. Conclusion and Recommendations (the recommendations should be relevant to government policies and practitioners)
8. References

Writing Style

1. Harvard reference style. Authors are requested to apply the in-text referencing style and should put the bibliography at the end of the chapter.
2. Font size 12
3. Times New Roman
4. One and Half Spacing
5. Length- 5000-7000 words

Remuneration of Authors

The partnering institutions undertake to pay a fee of US\$250 for each chapter upon publication of the Author's chapter in the Book.

Deadline: complete book chapters should be submitted before end of day on the 20th of December 2023 to democracyjobs2017@gmail.com