

Military Orchestrated Leadership Change in Zimbabwe and the Quest for Political Transition

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Abstract : This chapter discusses the military-orchestrated leadership change in Zimbabwe that transpired in November 2017. Fundamentally, the chapter provides a critical examination of military interference in the country's politics and its implications for a political transition in the post-Mugabe dispensation. This chapter offers insight into Zimbabwe's political crises propelled by the lack of a succession plan. It emerged that the succession battle within ZANU-PF got complicated by the militarisation of factionalism. The chapter builds from an extensive review of primary and secondary data sources on political developments before and post-Mugabe era. Vilfredo Pareto's (1848-18923) theory on elite circulation is deployed herein to explain the absence of a succession mechanism within ZANU-PF and the militarisation of socio-politics life Zimbabwe. The chapter argues that what transpired in Zimbabwe's power wrangle within the ZANU-PF political elites was triggered by a lack of a clear succession policy. Building from insights offered by Pareto's theory of elite circulation, it is averred that the removal of Mugabe by the military did not herald any form of political transition but rather a mere power play of one elite replacing another. In addition, it is argued that the lack of political reform by the Mnangagwa government affirms the position that political elites seek power for personal self-actualisation and not the public good. The chapter concludes that Mnangagwa's rise to power is nothing but a new elite displacing the old elite structure and does not herald a positive transition and transformation in the politics of Zimbabwe.

Keywords : military, politics, zimbabwe, governance, political transition

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