

**Representation of Political Conflict in the Zimbabwean Press: The Case of *The Herald*,  
*The Sunday Mail*, *Daily News* and *The Standard*, 1999-2016**

by

TEDDY MUNGWARI

submitted in accordance with the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

in the subject

COMMUNICATION SCIENCE

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF K B KHAN

NOVEMBER 2017

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the representation of political conflict in the Zimbabwean press with a specific focus on the *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Daily News* and *The Standard*. The thesis sought to unpack the representation of political conflict in the four selected newspapers and to compare and contrast state-owned and privately-owned press representation of power, succession struggles and factionalism in ZANU PF and opposition MDC. The theory is undergirded by the framing theory and data was analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis. The thesis contends that the representation of political conflict in Zimbabwe was sensational and polarized. With clearly separate agendas, the government controlled press, *The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail*; and the privately owned *Daily News* and *The Standard*, have drawn upon different framing practices to represent political conflict in Zimbabwe. By selecting to report on a particular issue and silencing another, through choice of certain headlines, and vocabulary employed, they have produced a construction of events in political parties that satisfy their political agendas in an increasingly polarized political environment. The newspapers became associated with diverging political opinions, showing political parties they support. On the one hand, the state-funded media represented ZANU PF in positive light while the opposition, particularly the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was represented negatively, mainly depicting the party as harbouring a regime change agenda. On the other hand, the privately-owned press was critical of the ruling party, ZANU PF and blamed the party for economic problems, corruption, mis-rule, and abuse of human rights. As a result of this partisan representation of political reality by the two press camps, they became directly implicated in the conflicts thereby ceasing to be credible sources of information. This clearly illustrates the enormity of challenges faced by the press in political conflicts in politically polarised environments such as Zimbabwe. The thesis argues that when reporting political conflicts ideological considerations of the press take precedents at the expense of the informational and educational mandate of the press as ethics and professional interests of the press are pushed to the back stage. Contrary to the view that the press is a neutral and impersonal purveyor of information, it is an active participant in the framing of political conflicts and its framing is ideological. The study has broadened the body of knowledge on the framing of political conflicts in polarised political environments.

**KEY WORDS:** Framing, factionalism, conflict, elections, succession, media, referendum, representation.

## DECLARATION

I, Teddy Mungwari, declare that **Representation of Political Conflict in the Zimbabwean Press: The Case of *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Daily News* and *The Standard*, 1999-2016** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Mr. T Mungwari

DATE

**Student number: 55770681**

## **DEDICATION**

To my late parents, Taurai Enock and Constancia Mungwari, my family, children and almighty God for their support and patience while undertaking this research.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost I give thanks to Almighty God for his guidance, protection and grace during the course of this academic journey. I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof KB Khan for her support and supervision. The indefatigable academic mentoring given by her made this study an insightful quest. I would like to extend special thanks to Dr. Ephraim Vhutuza, for the emotional support, wisdom and generosity especially for linking me to Prof KB Khan. Thank you for always understanding the difficulties I went through in this study. Times came when I needed insight from people who had firsthand experience of the situation in Zimbabwe and Prof Jonathan Moyo and George Charamba were really welcoming, particularly during the first stages of my studies. Thank you for your support.

Special thanks to Prof S. Sondering and Prof Maurice T.Vambe, who were my PhD proposal readers, for their wonderful contribution in the early stages of my PhD proposal development. I would like to thank the content and language editors for generously and professionally editing the work. During the advanced stages of my PhD, I networked with many people who actually enriched the value of my study. I would like to extend special thanks to Dr.Tendai Marima of Aljazeera, particularly for her advice that I analyse gender issues and for linking me to the Conflict Studies Website as well as suggesting key authors on gender issues. Of course, a PhD comes with financial and emotional demands, this study materialised because of the generous support I got from UNISA Financial Aid Bureau.

To the editors of *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Daily News* and *The Standard*, you are all amazing. Thank you for giving me access to your libraries. Special thanks go to Kuda Mazuru, the Zimbabwe Newspapers Librarian for untiring support while analyzing the newspaper articles. I would also like to thank the entire personnel at Zimbabwe National Archives for allowing me easy access to newspaper articles I needed. To my family: Sharon, Natasha, Natalia, Karen, Michelle, Takudzwa and Teresa. Thank you all. Special thanks go to Pastor Lanslot Mpamba of Celebration Church Westgate for his encouragement.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front

ZAPU : Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZUM : Zimbabwe Unity Movement

MDC : Movement for Democratic Change

ZIPRA : Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

ZIPA : Zimbabwe People's Army

ZIMPF : Zimbabwe People First

GNU : Government of National Unity

GPA : Global Political Agreement

CDA : Critical Discourse Analysis

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# **CHAPTER 1: Introduction and Background to Study**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The press is regarded as a critical cog of the liberal democratic system while elections are regarded as the barometer of democratic commitment, the principal means through which citizens influence their leaders by selecting and deposing them routinely (Moyo, 1992). Moyo contends that elections formalise the character of popular elections and influence governments, thereby enabling and rendering independent at least, in theory the citizens' capacity to influence the conduct of politicians. The press is therefore the conduit through which citizens participate in democratic processes by providing information which the citizens need to make informed choices. Thus, the role of the media in elections has been summarised as that of:

- Educating voters on strategies to exercise their democratic rights.
- Reporting on developments and issues related to the election campaigns.
- Providing a platform for the political parties to communicate their messages to their electorate.
- Reporting results and monitoring vote counting.
- Scrutinising the electoral process itself in order to evaluate its fairness, efficiency and probity (Esipisn and Khaguli, 2009 cited by Nduhura, 2010:3).

However, there is a growing concern that the mass media do not live up to these ideals as they are failing to fulfil these functions properly. Some critics argue that commercial mass media controlled by a few multinational conglomerates have become an anti-democratic force supporting the status quo. This thesis interrogates these assumptions through an analysis of private and state press representation of political conflict in Zimbabwe between 1999 and 2016. The idea is to gain deeper insights into the supposed and actual role of the press in society. The perspective of this thesis is that the news-making process is complex and circumscribed by wider commercial and political processes (Street, 2001:43). Thus, contrary to being dispassionate chroniclers of issues and events, the media are active participants who have very strong views and positions on certain matters. Thus media framing of issues is not an impersonal, dry, matter-of-fact exercise whereby the reporter is a mere cipher, but active participant.

Nyamnjoh, cited by Chuma (2007:26) observes how, during elections journalism becomes ‘an exercise in turning a blind eye to the shortcomings of political allies, while exaggerating the weakness of political opponents’.

It is widely acknowledged that in reporting political conflict, the media employ language and discourse. The way in which language is used shapes the attitudes, opinions and perceptions of the readers. By deciding to select certain issues and leave out others, emphasise some issues and downplay others the media play an agenda-setting role thereby impacting on political conflicts either positively or negatively. The real act of choosing what to include, what to emphasise and exclude or downplay in a frame through language is problematic. The press is the main source of information in political conflict; for campaigning, during an election and post-election events and it influences public opinion and perceptions. The press constructs reality by selecting relevant news, amplifying certain issues while downplaying or suppressing others. The representation of political conflict and elections demonstrates how conflicts and elections impose technical limitations on the press forcing it to operate at the service of hegemony and counter-hegemony while professional detachment is shunted to the margins as the press become participants in an asymmetrical war. It should be noted that representation of an issue at the expense of others culminates in unbalanced or subjective news products, among other things. This scenario, in other instances, can leave some if not most readers with little information when it comes to the issue of political conflict in Zimbabwe. Unbalanced news can culminate in polarised readers in most cases depending on which newspaper or newspapers a reader relies on. Thus the media construct and define reality and this process takes place inside and not outside media’s different forms of representations of reality (Vambe, 2014:4).

This thesis examines the representation of political conflict in Zimbabwe. It compares and contrasts the representation of political conflict between the state-owned and the privately-owned press in order to understand better how the press influences politics. The chapter introduces the topic of study, gives a background of the situation in order to situate it in a context. The chapter also outlines the study focus, the research goals, and the research problem. A brief discussion of the relevant literature and the theoretical framework is also done. The chapter concludes by outlining the research methodology employed in this thesis and its links with the literature and conceptual framework.

## 1.2 Context of Study

For the past three decades, Zimbabwe has been synonymous with political conflict and crises. At the onset of independence in 1980 until 1999, the country remained a *de facto* one-party state, although it was a *de jure* multi-party state. This is so because the country witnessed the formation of a plethora of small and ephemeral opposition political parties that often emerged before elections and disappeared thereafter. Soon after independence there was conflict between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU from 1981 to 1987 but the conflict was resolved by the Unity Accord of 1987. In 1989 there was yet another conflict between ZANU-PF and Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). Although opposition political parties existed before, the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 was the first time that Zimbabwe saw the emergence of a credible and strong opposition political party. The result was that ZANU-PF faced its first strong election challenge from the then MDC in the 2000 parliamentary elections, and led to conflict that has been ongoing in Zimbabwe to this day. This is the main focus of this thesis. The thesis critically examines the representation of political conflict before, during and after the formation of the Government of National Unity in 2009. In particular it analyses how the state-owned newspapers and privately-owned newspapers represented political conflicts between 1999 and 2016.

It needs to be pointed out that between 2000 and 2016 Zimbabwe experienced turbulent political times marked by increasing polarisation and divisions in political life. It is assumed that the print media played a critical role in influencing both the source and interpretation of events in Zimbabwe. The press has not only been critical in representing political conflict between the ruling ZANU-PF party and the opposition MDC, but also extensively covered internal conflict within political parties. The way conflict is reported is determined by the political affiliation of the newspapers. In Zimbabwe two types of press exist: the state controlled newspapers and privately owned press.

It can be argued that the state controlled press is mainly pro-government while the privately-owned is anti-government. The basic assumption of this research is that the press has political influence and can be instrumental in fuelling or exacerbating conflict and violence. In this regard, how newspapers represent conflict is critical.

Zimbabwe has since the turn of the millennium been a divided country in which the struggle for power has been key epicentre of political conflict. In the representation of conflict, it is apparent that the press in Zimbabwe has been fractured along the same fault lines as those dividing political parties. Zimbabwe became a polarised society and the press was polarised too.

### **1.3 Purpose of study**

The main focus of this study was to explore the different ways in which political conflict is represented by the press in Zimbabwe. For several decades, Zimbabwe has experienced various levels of conflict between the ruling party ZANU-PF and opposition MDC, and the press have been involved, either directly or indirectly, in this conflict. This study investigates newspaper representation of this conflict and its focus is to compare and contrast the representation of political conflict in the state-owned and the privately-owned press. The specific focus is the representation of power, succession struggles and factionalism within the ruling party ZANU PF and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The reason being that these are the main political parties that have made more impact on the Zimbabwean political scene.

Zimbabwe has experienced political conflict since early 1980s between ruling party and opposition parties; however, the conflict between ZANU-PF and MDC is one of the longest in Zimbabwean history. This study argues that the language used to represent this conflict in the media is frequently commented on by scholars and political commentators. This suggests that through their representation practices, such as selection framing and agenda-setting, the media have enormous influence in the way in which political conflicts play out in society. However, very few studies have attempted a thorough investigation of the press' representation practices on the conflict. The current study aims to fill this knowledge gap by employing the framing theory as a conceptual tool for understanding this representation.

Zimbabwean's ZANU-PF offers important parallels and insights into the challenges which confronted former liberation movements in Southern Africa as they become political parties and governments. These shared aspects include the importance of personality, ethnic and clan politics which helped to shape the liberation movement during the struggle and independence. There is also the important legacy of emphasis on solidarity and lack of internal discussion and debate. This study argues that the latter led to power struggles and

factionalism in the ruling party. Onslow (2011:2) argues that the role of the 'armed struggle' and the associated use of violence have left lasting influence on society. These formative attitudes and experiences forged political cultures which have continued to play out in the domestic political arena post-independence. Onslow (2011:2) points out:

ZANU-PF is an extreme case study of the limits of how susceptible and receptive liberation leadership may be to internal dissent and debate as they address the considerable difficulties of nation-state construction after formal independence. By late 1990s ZANU-PF was facing a profound challenge to the legitimacy of its victory, and to the legitimacy and identity of the liberation movement itself. From 2000 the struggle in Zimbabwe constituted 'a battle for the state', and this battle is continuing to play out in present day Zimbabwe.

The current study contends that the press is directly implicated in conflicts in the sense that they can either fuel conflicts or promote peace through their representation. It is important to note that in Zimbabwe and ZANU-PF's case, the process of centralising power took place in stop-start phases. First, there was the period 1980-87 leading to the 1987 pact of unity, after which ZAPU was absorbed within ZANU-PF. From 1980 the one party phase dominated the political scene until 1999, and the period ended with the emergency of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999. In the third phase, from 2000, ZANU-PF maintained its dominance by restructuring state power, and attempting to manipulate the constitution and the electoral process until the Global Political Agreement (GPA) of September 2008. The Government of National Unity (GNU) was finally implemented in February 2009 which ushered in the fourth phase of significant transition. The Government of National Unity which ended after ZANU PF emphatically won the 2013 elections could be the fifth phase and is significant in the sense that it has witnessed intense intra-political party struggles than any other period in Zimbabwe. These struggles have been manifested through succession plots, party splits and factional battles that have had serious impact on the political scene in Zimbabwe. Following the disputed July 2013 elections ZANU-PF effectively retained its hegemony leaving opposition political parties severely weakened and disoriented. After the MDC failed in its legal and diplomatic manoeuvres to ensure the conduct of fresh elections, it started to battle strong internal conflicts. Disgruntled with the party's loss, some high ranking members began to call for leadership renewal, especially regarding the party presidency calling for early congress to elect a successor to Tsvangirai in order to renew the party and the leadership. There were also fresh conflicts within ZANU-PF in which presidium officials were accused of plotting President Mugabe's ouster. Hence the current phase is characterised by power, succession struggles and factionalism in political parties.



The printed press in the country extensively reported on these conflicts. The aim therefore, is to analyse representation of these conflicts in the identified newspapers in order to understand the extent to which press is implicated in these conflicts.

#### **1.4 Political Conflict in Zimbabwe: A Historical Background**

In Zimbabwe, political conflict goes as far back as the 1960s. In order to fully comprehend contemporary power and succession struggles and factionalism it is pertinent to locate these political conflicts in a historical context. Hence historical trends in nationalist and opposition politics need to be briefly explored. Several studies of African opposition politics in Zimbabwe during both the colonial and post-colonial periods stress the importance of a triple legacy in undermining the growth of a democratic tradition. This legacy includes the influence of the politics of citizen and subject (Mamdani: 1996). The authoritarian structures of colonial rule and the commandist politics of the liberation struggle with its attendant view that only liberation parties can represent the ‘will of the people’ for the foreseeable future deserve to be interrogated (Moyo, 1993; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2004; Masunungure, 2004).

Raftopoulos (2006) argues that during the colonial period nationalist politics was often characterised by violent ruptures both between and within nationalist parties. The 1963 split between ZAPU and its splitter organisation ZANU was marked by a series of violent clashes and mutual demonization that continued until the formation of the Patriotic Front on the eve of the 1979 Lancaster House Conference. The rivalry between two parties continued in the aftermath of the post-1980 settlement, punctuated by the Gukurahundi violence of the new state in Matabeleland and the Midlands in the mid -1980s. This massive deployment of state violence effectively led to the formal subsumption or assimilation of PF-ZAPU to the ruling ZANU-PF in the form of the 1987 Unity Accord, and thus the demise of a formidable opposition party (Raftopoulos: 2006). Within the nationalist parties themselves a number of violent power struggles occurred in both ZANU and ZAPU during the 1970s that consolidated the leadership of the ‘old guard’ (Moore: 1991), setting the precedent for the violent marginalisation of dissenting voices within nationalists politics. It is important to note that the struggles within ZANU have been well described in Fay Chung’s (2006) autobiography, *Re-Living the second Chimurenga: Memories from Zimbabwe’s Liberation Struggle*. Chung (2006) maintains that ZANU’s right wing targeted to eliminate members of the ‘Nhari’ group because of sharp differences in ideology. ZANU’s left wing was repeatedly purged prior to independence.

However, a standard and authorised version of ZANU-PF version has emerged. In this version Nhari was a 'sell-out' suborned by Rhodesian Intelligence to betray the revolution. This is the 'patriotic history' version taught in Zimbabwe today.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2004:103) describes the effects of these legacies on post-colonial politics as follows:

The new Zimbabwean state under ZANU-PF failed miserably to make a break with the tradition of nationalist authoritarianism and guerrilla violence as well as colonial settler oppression. The ruling party itself failed to de-militarise itself as a militarised liberation movement, not only in practise, but also in attitude and style of management of civil institutions and the state at large. The new ZANU-PF government readily assumed the resilient colonial and equally military oriented structures left by the retreating settler state, with serious implications for democracy, human rights and human security.

Raftopoulos (2006) reckons that for most of the 1980s the political milieu was characterised by a combination of repression, in particular the brutal state response to opposition in Matabeleland, and a general deference to the authority and liberation legitimacy of the new state. By 1987 the ruling party had disposed of two opposition groups, the first in 1986, by constitutionally removing the entrenched white seats in parliament agreed to the Lancaster House Constitution, and the second through the brutal Matabeleland disturbances campaign against ZAPU in the mid-1980s and the pursuant 1987 Unity Accord between the two major nationalist parties which effectively incapacitated ZAPU. Through these measures, the introduction of an executive president in 1987 with the immense power, with ready access to the repressive legacies of the settler state, the outlook for opposition politics appeared dismal (Moyo: 1992).

According to Raftopoulos: (2006:3) "Building opposition politics on the African continent has proven immensely difficult largely because of the oppressive nature of most post-colonial states and the extremely difficult condition under which opposition forces have to mobilise and reproduce their support." In this regard, in countries which have undergone an extensive liberation struggle, such as Zimbabwe in Southern Africa, the development of the opposition politics present specific challenges. In particular, the strong legacy of legitimacy enjoyed by former liberation movements and their capacity for revived nationalist mobilisation have presented opposition forces with immense obstacles in developing alternative programmatic positions. Moreover, the often-repressive nature of post-colonial states, compounding the longer repressive histories of colonial politics has presented democratic forces with few precursors of alternative democratic forms.

It is therefore not surprising that civil and opposition forces on the continent generally, and in Zimbabwe, in particular have struggled to locate themselves firmly within the historical legacies and contemporary demands of their particular national context (Raftopoulos 2006).

However, the combination of a contracting economy, the erosion of state legitimacy through the exposure of corruption in the ruling party, and the emergence of critical social forces such as the labour and student movement, along with critical intellectual and media responses, led to the emergence of another opposition party in 1989. Led by former ZANU-PF stalwart, Edgar Tekere, the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) fought the ruling party's attempts to impose a one party state in Zimbabwe, and performed favourably in the 1990 presidential election despite violence and intimidation on opposition leadership and electorate. Though the party did not survive for long in the 1990s, and was largely confined in terms of its support base to a small urban and student base, particularly in Tekere's home area in Mutare, ZUM both fractured the seeming Unity of ZANU-PF and fought for the necessity of multi-party politics (Raftopoulos 2006).

The various attempts at opposition that followed in the 1990s, such as the ZANU Ndonga, the Democratic Party, the Forum Party and the Zimbabwe Union of Democrats were largely unsuccessful in constructing national constituencies and in providing popular alternatives to ZANU-PF. In the face of determined state repression and an electoral system that provided little space for them to score electoral victories, these parties, with limited capacity to develop viable structures and organisational networks, remained little more than political amusement for the ruling party. By the mid-1990s opposition politics were largely built around individuals, prone to fractious outbreaks, and unable to develop both a popular message and a national reach. As Masunungure (2004:165) notes, these parties 'appeared to be more aggressive in attacking each other than in directing their fire power at ZANU-PF'. By the latter half of the 1990s the fortunes of the opposition politics look a different turn. The most formidable opposition party of the post-colonial period emerged into an apparent barren field of dissent. In 1999 the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was born, the product of a combination of labour struggles, constitutional politics and a generation of human rights struggles, and built on the memory of failures of previous attempts at opposition politics. The new movement also attracted the support of the mainly white large scale commercial farming sector.

Constructed in the era of the debilitating Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), the MDC drew on and fed into a growing wave of political and economic disenchantment provided some new hope by its message of 'change' which found resonance through national structures. Using the language of political rights, constitutionalism and economic reform, the MDC and its social partners confronted ZANU-PF with its first mass opposition party, and threatened to defeat the ruling party (Masunungure: 2004:165; Raftopoulos 2006:8).

Carried on the wave of the constitution movement's referendum victory against a ZANU-PF imposed constitution of 2000, and backed by the promise of popular mobilisation, the MDC gained nearly 50% of the parliamentary vote in 2000 in the face of enormous electoral obstacles and state violence. Moreover as Laakso (2004:13) points out, the organisational base of the MDC "was not merely one of popular discontent with the executive, but an explicit agenda to democratise the state through a peaceful transition." Raftopoulos (2006) argues that since its dynamic ascension onto the Zimbabwean political stage in the 1990s the MDC has had to face the difficult task of building accountable party structures, organisational patterns, developing policy positions and peaceful political strategies, and projecting a regional and international profile against an authoritarian state that has consistently closed down the spaces for opposition politics in the country. Moreover, the MDC has had to confront the effects of the country's authoritarian political legacies on its attempt to develop an alternative political culture.

It is imperative to examine the challenges of opposition politics in an authoritarian state which subsequently culminated to factional battles. Raftopoulos (2006) contends that soon after its launch in September 1999 the MDC had to confront a number of organisational and structural problems. The problems of organisation, responsibility and accountability in party structure later led to internal conflict due to creation of a parallel structure within the party. As LeBas (2005:187) notes:

...the activities of this structure not only resulted in major problems of accountability and violence within the party structure, but became a central site of struggle for the control of the party between the president and the secretary general: one of the first major sign of the problems that was being caused by this parallel structure was the violence that occurred at the party headquarters in 2004, specifically the beating up of party officials. According to the commission of the inquiry into disturbances of party headquarters (draft report), December 2004: 4-5, the report implied that there were conflicts between the 'professionals' in the secretary general's department and the 'quasi-professionals' in the president's office who believed that the secretary general was 'insubordinate' to the

President and was working to launch a new party. One of the major findings of the report was the view that there was a ‘strong anti-Ndebele sentiment that had been propagated, orchestrated and instilled into the innocent party members’ minds by senior party leaders under the guise of sheer hatred for the secretary general at a personal level.

The issues of tribalism pointed to a new factionalism that was emerging in the party. In May 2005 there were new outbreaks of party violence at the party headquarters in Harare, the Bulawayo provincial office and in Gwanda (Raftopoulos: 2006). As with the 2004 report there was no action taken on the issues raised in other commissions of inquiry, apart from the expulsion of several youth believed to have been responsible for the violence. There was no attempt to hold to account the senior party figures alleged to be the handlers of these youths. Also significant is that after each general election, such as in April 2005, soon after the MDC defeat, MDC leadership met with leaders from the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) to discuss the way forward. Raftopoulos (2006:16) points out that “the NCA in particular argued that the MDC should not take up its seats in parliament, but instead concentrate on extra-parliamentary struggles, and stop sending confused signals to its support base.” However, the MDC leadership pointed out that there was a strong lobby within the MDC advocating the importance of occupying the democratic space in parliament, notwithstanding the limitation of the electoral process. There was no consensus and this led to disputes.

In addition to the strategic and organisational challenges the MDC has faced the problems of developing an inclusive, non-tribal and non-racial post nationalists’ ideology. This has proved an exceedingly difficult challenge in addressing a non-racial party which has proved extremely challenging. Raftopoulos (2006: 16) reckons, the presumed ‘white face’ of the MDC has been heavily exploited by ZANU-PF in a country and region where the memories of a settler colonial rule are still fresh. This factor has also been an impediment in the mobilisation and the media strategies of the MDC. In a post elections campaign report in 2000, one party secretary made the following observation on the role of white members in MDC campaigns:

They must not involve themselves physically on the ground as had been the case. They should occupy the back seats so that ZANU-PF does not see them. ZANU-PF captures seats because it tells the people that the MDC is for the white men. Through ignorance the people believe and they vote ZANU-PF (Raftopoulos (2006:17)).

While this problem was certainly not the same in all rural areas of the country, it can be assumed that it presented a challenge for the MDC.

White political participation in the politics of independent Zimbabwe was for most of this period marked by the racist settler politics, and the unofficial pact of the ruling party's reconciliation policy (Raftopoulos: 2006).

Dealing with the weight of racial legacies in MDC structures has been immensely difficult. While the MDC has been the party most committed to non-racialism in Zimbabwean politics, the deepening crisis within the party has resulted in less inclusive forms of politics, resulting in the withdrawal of whites, particularly white farmer involvement in the party following the increased violence of the state, and an attempt to deal with the labelling of the MDC as a 'white controlled' party (Raftopoulos: 2006:18). Mugabe's anti-white message resonates with members of the MDC in the context of the legacies of racism in Zimbabwe. Thus in a critique of the party structures carried out in 2005, the MDC leadership itself viewed the party as having "moved away from its social democratic, all inclusive, tribalism foundations". Thus, it is clear that one of the responses of the MDC to the authoritarian nationalism of ZANU-PF has been a more guarded approach towards its public racial profile and a greater sensitivity to the ruling party's accusations that the MDC was foreign controlled. One example of this was the assertion made by Job Sikhala, the MDC Member of Parliament for St Mary's. In an interview with government controlled *The Herald*, Sikhala indicated that race was one of the consequences of the MDC's broad alliance of social forces. Referring to one key white figure in the MDC, Sikhala complained that in the MDC alliance 'we had people like Eddie Cross, who is a white supremacist, an ardent follower of Rhodesian fundamentalism who believes that everything begins and ends with Rhodesia. (Kitchen cabinet destroyed MDC: Sikhala. *The Herald*, 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2006).

Raftopoulos (2006) argues that as the organisational and strategic problems deepened in the MDC, the factional struggles within the party intensified. He further reckons that for those in the leadership who were connected to or controlled the parallel structure, became the means for isolating members of the leadership opposed to Tsvangirai in the run up to proposed national congress in 2006. Most of the energies of these structures have thus been turned on perceived enemies within the party, rather than developing a strategy to confront the Mugabe regime.

The issue that brought matters to a head in MDC resulting in its decision not to participate in the senate elections in late 2005; To be or not to be was the question: as was seen from the senate debate which led to the split in MDC.

According to Raftopoulos (2006:19),

Mugabe's major reasons for re-introducing the senate into the political sphere were both to accommodate those in the ruling party who had lost in the parliamentary elections and to exacerbate divisions within the MDC, divisions that had been actively cultivated by ZANU-PF.

To many observers the senate debate first appeared as a fairly innocuous issue that would be resolved with the MDC top six and national council. However, given the growing conflict and division within the MDC, the senate question became the central battle ground of the leadership for the control of the party. What ensued and unfolded reopened tribal sentiments. The debate over the senate became an ugly public spectacle carried out in the state controlled and private press, and characterised by disturbing levels of character assassination on both sides. Accusations and counter accusations of corruption, violence, tribalism and complicity with the ruling party were traded. In a further ironic twist the internal battle in the MDC ended up in the courts of the Mugabe regime. As the leadership struggle continued Tsvangirai expelled the 'senate rebels' from the party (*The Sunday Mail*, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2005). Raftopoulos (2006) argues that the response from the major civic groups was to support Tsvangirai. The boycott of elections coincided with the long term position of the NCA, while the ZCTU denounced the creation of the senate and urged all workers to oppose it with all their might.

By February 2006 it was clear that divisions in the MDC had solidified and the split in the party was formalised at the congresses of the different factions. The senate issue that provided the pretext for the party split was not in itself the fundamental cause of the problems in the MDC. It was merely the site on which the different factions fought out long standing problems of organisations, structure, accountability and strategy within the party (Raftopoulos 2006). In the end, lack of trust within the leadership was all pervasive, and it was clear that both sides committed to a split in the party. However, it was clear that neither faction had developed effective struggle strategies to confront the Mugabe government and that both sides would have to face the difficult task of once again developing the national constituencies that the united MDC had once denied.

For the anti-senate group, the challenge would be to win over the Matabeleland region, while for their opponents the lack of a credible Shona leader would constitute a huge limitation in their efforts to develop a national profile hence the election of Arthur Mutambara, a candidate from outside of the existing leadership structure. Mutambara became the leader of pro-senate faction because of the ethnic dynamic of Zimbabwean politics.

Even as ZANU-PF has faced major challenges around the politics of succession and the enormous structure of problems in the economy, it has had space to ponder these obstacles in the presence of an opposition politics that faces even more arduous difficulties, and is temporarily paralysed by another debilitating split in its ranks (Raftopoulos 2014). Apart from the immense challenges of state repression and political obstruction faced by the MDC-T since its formation and under the Global Political Agreement(GPA), the long standing problematic internal dynamics of the party (Raftopoulos 2007; LeBas 2013) combined with a weakened electoral strategy in 2013 (Zamuchiya 2013), has induced a further crisis. Indeed, the strong and sustainable democracy is dependent on the existence of well-functioning political parties. Political parties are crucial actors in bringing together diverse interests, recruiting and presenting candidates, and developing competing policy proposals that provide people with viable choices (Chege 2007). While crisis and conflict are common features of political parties the world over, it appears the MDC-T may have failed to manage and contain its internal conflicts resulting in yet another split in 2014 that saw some senior officials forming the MDC-Renewal Team.

The post 2013 election period has witnessed several significant developments in Zimbabwean politics. While ZANU-PF has presided over the implosion of the MDC-T the complete marginalisation of the smaller MDC formation, the ruling party has also been marred by renewed internal factional struggles. The constraints of victory have become clear as ZANU-PF struggles to find a path through the daunting economic and political challenges that confront it in the new era. Raftopoulos (2014:19) argues that a major factor that favours the ruling party is the fact that it is attempting to deal with these tasks in the presence of the debilitating weakness of the once formidable MDC. In sum, the ruling ZANU-PF and MDC formations are confronted with power, succession battles and factionalism.

Given this background government controlled and the privately-owned press have intensively represented political conflict in Zimbabwe using different frames and discourse.



This research will explore the representation of conflict in the four selected newspapers mentioned above.

### **1.5 Relevance of the topic**

Research concerning representation of conflict in the press in Zimbabwe can influence media houses to rethink their reportage on issues, particularly their use of language, frames and discourse. The print media play the fundamental role of providing information, providing a platform for public discussion, reflecting the goals and values of society. This research may lead to rethinking the influence of press on the public and being powerful agitators arming citizens with information for making decisions about governance. This study may lead to rethinking of policy implementation by policy makers on the print media coverage of conflict. Newspapers have a chosen agenda which almost inevitably influences news selection. This study therefore, seeks to conscientise Zimbabwean citizens to be critical of the media. The research can also be important to political parties in many ways, particularly on issues of internal democracy and how to manage divergent views. This study can cover a historical gap in the academic field in Zimbabwe, especially because this area has not been adequately researched. Most of the studies that have analysed conflict have focused more on land reform and economic crisis in general. This study may be unique in its approach and content. For the general public this study seeks to develop a critical mind-set to understand media reportage, equipping the public with critical media literacy skills so that they do not become victims of unscrupulous media, particularly in a society where the media are not just polarised, but partisan as well.

### **1.6 Relationship of the topic to the Discipline of Communication**

The topic of this research is relevant as it articulates and explores critical press issues which influence and shape the interpretation of messages. This research examines representation of conflict in the press interrogating the difference of coverage by pro-government and privately owned press. The study examines headlines, articles, photographs and captions as well as cartoons in representing political conflict in Zimbabwe. It also analyses metaphors and intertexts in selected articles to thematically unpack their meanings. The topic is therefore related to communication as it deals with messages and their interpretations in political conflict through the press as a crucial discursive arena.

## 1.7 Literature Review

A number of scholars have written theses and articles on representation of Zimbabwean crisis. Many of these scholars have, however, largely focused on issues of land reform, general elections, economic meltdown, among others. Nevertheless, land reform issues were part of a much wider economic and political crisis in the country which this study is focusing on as political conflict. Willems (2004) argues that the Zimbabwean government became increasingly concerned about how the land occupations were covered in the media and attributed great importance to media representations of the land question. Willems' (2004) article entitled "Selection and silence: contesting meanings of land in Zimbabwean media" analyses how meanings of land were contested in two daily newspapers, the privately owned *Daily News* and the state funded *The Herald*. It deals with the nature of their reporting, their selection of headlines, and their attribution of agency towards certain actors. Her analysis is relevant to this study although the current research is broader in its context as it analyses four newspapers, *The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail* (state-owned daily and weekly respectively) and *Daily News* and *The Standard* (privately-owned daily and weekly).

Willems (2004) posits that news is always a selection of events that are taking place in the real world at a particular moment in time. News is therefore not simply that what happens but that which can be presented as newsworthy. She further argues that whereas some events will be highlighted, others will be ignored. As Foucault (1978:27) points out, silence is very much part of any discourse:

Silence itself- the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers-is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies.

Applying this to news production, Van Dijk (1991:114) argues that the analysis of the "unsaid" is sometimes more revealing than the study of what is actually expressed in text. The focus of this analysis will be on how newspapers have both included and excluded information in their represented conflict. As Tendi (2010:3) argues:

Zimbabwe's new history overlooks, or ignores, many important events in the country's recent past. No mention is made of the purge of members of the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA) from the liberation movement in 1977. There is silence on arbitrary violence used against alleged 'sell-outs' during the liberation war, and on the Gukurahundi, a programme of political repression in the 1980s--- contributions to the liberation struggle by critics of ZANU-PF are minimised or denied.

As mentioned in the background to the study, ZANU-PF never narrated what happened to members of the Nhari group during the liberation struggle in Zambia and how they were purged and brutally executed. A ‘patriotic’ version of history, disseminated by public intellectuals and state media, has distorted legitimate grievances. Tendi (2010) argues that the ruling party conscripted elements of history which it believed would generate support and undermine the opposition. Themes and events which did not serve ZANU-PF agenda were downplayed or misrepresented. This study argues that both the state controlled and privately-owned press used selection and silence in their representation of conflict in general, and factionalism in particular. In reporting conflict in the context of the new political developments in early 2000, the Zimbabwean press clearly took very different positions.

Willems’ (2004) comparison of *The Herald* and *Daily News* and her analysis of content, headlines, photographs and discourse employed inspire this study. In her conclusion, Willems (2004:17) points out:

With clearly separate agendas, the two Zimbabwean daily newspapers, the government- controlled *The Herald* and the privately funded *Daily News*, have drawn upon different views to represent the land question. By selecting to report on a particular issue and silencing another, through the use of pictures, choice of certain headlines, and attribution of agency to certain actors, they have produced a construction of the events in Zimbabwe that served to satisfy their interests in an increasingly, polarised political environment in this tense climate, both papers become easily associated with diverging political opinion.

This study argues that the four selected newspapers’ representation of conflict follows the same agenda and template employed in reporting the land reform. However, because the period covered is long and complex in Zimbabwe political conflict assumed many phases; this may account for divergent representation. Willems (2005) explores the various ways in which the British media, and the broadsheet the *Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph* in particular framed events in Zimbabwe since 2000. Her article, “Remnant of Empire? British media reporting on Zimbabwe” (2005), argues that representations of the situation in Zimbabwe have been largely struggles over meaning and definitions of ‘crises’ in the country. She discusses how Zimbabwe was represented in the British media, why it attracted so much attention and what responses British media coverage provoked from the Zimbabwean government. Willems argues that the government used its media to counter the British press’s images and stereotypes of the crisis.

She further contends that the British media helped to create the conditions that allowed the Zimbabwean government to define the situation in the country as a struggle against imperialism. However, her study was limited to Zimbabwean crisis but this research focuses on a broader period of study as well as aspects of political conflict that have not been investigated.

This research will benefit from insights by Willems' (2005) strategies, framing and representation. Willems argues that British press, through strategies of simplicity, ethnicisation, marginalisation, personification and re-appropriation have framed and represented events in Zimbabwe in terms of racial conflict between black and white and more importantly, how the Zimbabwean government has successfully managed to exploit these discourses on what they termed as "Britain's kith and kin". Willems (2005) analyses the photographs in order to examine meaning that could be obtained or depicted. The context of the photographs pertains the contested land reform which fundamentally constitutes the central source of conflict. Willems (2005:2) argues that:

Although news is often portrayed as a reflection of reality, for example through the metaphor of a 'mirror', this paper will depart from the notion that news is always socially constructed, shaped by the particular context in which it is produced. It is therefore crucial to analyse the socio-economic environment in which news stories are made.

This study assumes that socio-economic imperatives gave birth to political conflict in Zimbabwe; it is in this context that the press reports using different frames and discourses. Press coverage of the conflict between 2000 and 2016 reveals competing versions of reality epitomised by vested group interests in the context of a political economy of the media: While reportage is largely event and personality based, scholarly literature on conflict tends to be highly opinionated, selective, emotional and personalised. An academic enquiry on how conflict has been reported in local press in Zimbabwe is still missing, nor have the implications of media reporting of conflict on policy matters and public opinion have been adequately interrogated. Identifying the ideological assumptions underpinning the content of conflict and its possible impact on readers and the socio-economic and political climate in which the content was produced are examined in this study.

Because this study analyses pictures and cartoons in their depiction of political conflict, it will utilise Willems' (2011) article "Comic strips and "the crisis": Post-colonial laughter and coping with everyday life in Zimbabwe".

In African studies, political cartoons and comic strips have frequently been analysed in relation to concepts of power and resistance and considered as ways in which those subject to power challenge the rulers (Mbembe 2001; Nyamnjoh 2009).

Willems (2011) argues that to a certain extent, these studies have reflected the wider debate on the role of humour in the relation between the rulers and ruled in the post-colony. In the discipline of media and cultural studies, scholars have analysed comics primarily as ideological texts which offer a particular framing of reality. This study will analyse selected cartoons which were published in both state-controlled newspapers and privately funded press. Most of the cartoons to be examined focus on political figures and personalities as well as unfolding events in conflict related situations between 1999 and 2016. Some of the cartoons centre on party leaders such as President Mugabe, Joyce Mujuru, Didymus Mutasa, Morgan Tsvangirai, and Tendai Biti among others. Willems (2011) maintains that post-colonial laughter does not always address those in power, but humour may also point fingers at those subject to power in an attempt to make readers cope with the tragic events unfolding around them. Towards ZANU-PF's annual congress, one typical cartoon which was published in the Zimbabwean privately owned weekly newspaper, *The Standard*, November 16 to 22, 2014, depicts President Robert Mugabe driving a commuter omnibus going to December Congress, with him menacingly holding a knobkerrie with spikes looking through the window while Vice President Joice Mujuru perilously and desperately clinging at the back of the same omnibus; seemingly defying her being banned from attending the congress. Lying scattered on the ditches are other former ZANU-PF stalwarts who were ousted from the party like Rugare Gumbo. This cartoon is one of the many to be analysed in this study, with the above described portraying the ugly power succession battles and factionalism in ZANU-PF much to the damage of the economy.

Cartoons highlight in some instances, how media discourse reflects the way in which politics slowly invades the line of high standing politicians, thereby reinforcing the importance of treating media texts as embedded in broader social discourses. Cartoons may also portray particular institutional ideology of newspapers. Willems (2011) argues that a number of scholars have placed the emergence of comics and cartoons in the broader context of shifts in political power in Africa as a result of processes of political liberation and democratisation. Focusing on political cartoons in Senegal, Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Kenya, Eko (2007:225) for example, analyses cartoons as resistant forms of satirical subversion that mock the excesses of Africa's political leaders:

Indeed communication in Africa in the post-cold war era has become a gigantic struggle of images. Political leaders who had a monopoly over media content during the 1960s and 1970s now face the stiff competition from private independent media outlets. Cartoons are at the forefront of this battle of images. They take the animal mascots and other images that African leaders had created for themselves, turn them up-side-down and transform them into a caustic critique of the abuse of power.

Cartoons which are going to be analysed in this study reflect unfolding conflicts, be it between political parties or conflict within a party centred on power struggles and factionalism. Willems (2011) acknowledges that the debate has not only focused on the way in which cartoons ridiculed those in power but has also reflected on the implications of cartoons for those in power. Eko (2007:235) for instance, has attributed agency to cartoons and points out that cartoons and caricature are politically sensitive, even dangerous texts. This is because “cartoons are addressed mostly to urban dwellers that were at the forefront of agitation for democratisation and liberalisation in the 1990s.” Writing about the role of cartooning in South Africa, Mason (2002:388) has argued that while

It would be an exaggeration to claim that it was a major factor in the overthrow of apartheid ...cartooning in its various forms, nevertheless, played an important role in crystallising issues of allegiance and identity, introducing revolutionary concepts into public discourse, undermining the ideological hegemony of the state and valorising the political struggle.

This research, while agreeing with Mason’s (2002) notions, asserts that the Zimbabwean cartoons largely are meant to ridicule, caricaturise and mock political leaders who abuse power. Some of the cartoons are meant to unmask hypocrisy- serving as a reminder that power and political affiliation is not permanent but in a state of flux because betrayals are ever lurking in political parties as can be found out obtaining in both ZANU-PF and MDC. Allegiance and loyalty are never permanent features; relationships are ever fluid in nature.

This study discusses how and whether cartoons in Zimbabwe can be positioned in relation to the question of power and resistance. Willems (2011:3) points out:

In the case of Zimbabwe, one can question the extent to which cartoons and comics have come to fulfil the role of ‘hidden scripts’ i.e. subtle, implicit forms of critique against those in power. It is certainly tempting to view them in this light, given the widely reported range of legal and extra-legal restrictions which the government imposed on press freedom. Arrests of journalists and acts of intimidation were common in Zimbabwe in the 2000s. Pieces of legislation such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), which were both introduced in early 2002, did have a serious impact on journalistic practices. Journalists and editors

reported to be cautious in what could be published and what might attract persecution from government...

While this research agrees with Willems to a large extent, this study argues that privately owned newspapers such as *Daily News* and *The Standard* defied state muzzling, particularly during and post-Government of National Unity. Cartoons which were published during this period had no sacred cows and there was no fear of 'Big Brother'. There were numerous examples of frank reporting on the unfolding conflict in both articles and cartoons. This study notes that GNU opened spaces for press freedom which were further strengthened in post GNU by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services, Professor Jonathan Moyo during tour of media houses. While Willems's (2011) study maintains that cartoonists probably did take extra care in the way they represented Robert Mugabe to avoid being charged under POSA, this research argues that during and post-GNU, cartoonists seemed to be at liberty with cartoons on any political elites including President Robert Mugabe as cartoons analysed will testify.

According to Willems (2011), a treatment of media discourse as reflective of social change could also contribute to wider debates in the field of media studies. She reiterates that the events that a newspaper report do not simply reflect the significance of those events but rather reveal the selection criteria of a newspaper. Events are not news worthy in themselves but only become 'news' when they are selected for inclusion in news reports. This study analyses specific news articles selected on the criteria of their 'headlines' among other narrative and genre texts in terms of conflict slant. Despite the abundance of academic or scholarly analyses on the roots and symptoms of the 'Zimbabwe crisis,' few studies have focused on political conflict and how local press represent it.

### **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

This section is divided into two parts. The first part critically examines scholarly works on the Western media's representation of Africa, focusing primarily on Zimbabwe. The argument for this perspective comes from the assumption that the privately-owned press in Zimbabwe is influenced by Western values and standards of reporting issues and therefore, employ frames meant to promote and/or achieve regime change in local politics. Among the scholarly works used in this section are Ndlela's (2005) "The African paradigm: the coverage of the Zimbabwean" crisis" in the Norwegian media and Willems (2005) "Remnants of Empire? British Media Reporting on Zimbabwe."

This section also includes the works by Mudimbe (1988; 1994), Mazrui (2005), Nyamnjoh (2010) and Allimadi (2002) to examine how Africa has generally been negatively represented by the Western media. Willems' (2005) study has inspired this research in a great way. The second section discusses the theoretical framework underpinning the study. These are framing, agenda-setting and critical discourse analysis.

Africa has been generally represented negatively by the Western media (Mudimbe 1994; Mudimbe 1988; Mazrui 2005; Allimadi 2002; Agutu 2008; Willems 2005; Ndlela 2005). Often such representations are characterised by stereotypical frames that journalists use as points of references whenever a new event unfolds in Africa. In Zimbabwe, for instance, journalists in privately owned media have been criticised for using frames similar to the American and Western perspectives, as this study will show.

In Kenya, the criticism seems to be similar as shown by Agutu's (2008) study, "The impact of Ownership on media content: An Exploratory case study of Nation media Group and Standard newspaper Group; Kenya." Media ownership patterns influenced news coverage and media content during the 2002 multi-party elections in Kenya. Agutu's (2008:8) indicates how "the emerging winner was also the candidate with the most coverage in the two newspapers". This research, however, does not fully agree with the notion of a candidate being covered most as translating to victory. In Zimbabwe there are many factors which determine a winner, such as Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) which presides over voter registration processes; the nature of election campaigns - whether there is intimidation, violence of all sorts; rigging machinery amongst other factors. The liberation struggle ruling party may have declared again that the opposition will never rule the country through the ballot box. However, this researcher agrees with Agutu (2008:8) when he says "media ownership patterns are seen to influence editorial choices, compromising the practise of objectivity and consequently influencing representation".

Agutu (2008:8) utilises critical political-economy of the media as a conceptual framework to show how "ownership patterns affect media messages in total disregard to establish additional policies and other industry based practices...ownership control and interference makes the future of journalists quiet bleak". However, the study fails to understand media under the control of government or ruling party. In Zimbabwe, for example, Zimpapers are controlled by the government. This research can argue that, depending on the political environment or terrain, particularly when the liberation party movement's hegemony is under



threat, journalists simply toe the line and report news as instructed. The representation of issues follows a strict given template from the powers that be in politics. This researcher argues that Zimbabwean local journalists' professional expectations are sometimes "shelved" in order to fulfil specific representation frames mandated by owners of the media. There is need to critically examine the pressures and challenges editors and journalists face within the internal working environment and the consequences of such pressure on representation.

Ndlela (2005:73) argues that:

The very process of selection and construction in representation serves not only to stereotype, but also to exclude many features and understanding the issues in Africa. Negativity is one of the main features or dimensions of events which are likely to be reported...

What does not come out clearly from Ndlela's (2005) work and other scholars is how local media represent conflict. It would seem many studies focus on how Western media represent Africa in general. This study specifically focuses on Zimbabwean press and how it represents conflict. It compares the state-owned and the privately-owned press's representation of political conflict between the ruling party and opposition and further explores internal conflict within political parties, that is, power struggles, succession battles and factionalism. Nevertheless, this research utilises Western media perspectives as alluded to earlier. For example, how do ideologies of journalism dictate the criteria by which news is selected?

The events in Zimbabwe since 2000 have been framed negatively to construct a broad consensus of the 'reality' that Zimbabwe was experiencing a crisis. Ndlela (2005:71) indicates that "the disputed parliamentary and presidential elections are events that have placed Zimbabwe in the international media limelight".

Ndlela's paper analyses the problematic issues associated with the coverage of the Zimbabwean crisis in the Norwegian main stream media between 2000 and 2004. The analysis is limited to representations of the controversial land reforms and the disputed elections in two major newspapers, *Aftenposten*, *VG* and *Dagbladet*. However, this study is much broader because it uses four local newspapers, that is, two pro-government and two oppositional. This research is also broader because it deals with conflict which embraces socio-economic and political issues extensively, embracing land reform, elections between 2000 and 2013, and then post 2013 elections conflict. Those events will be analysed from local media's representation but will also draw from the works of Willems (2005) study.

Willems (2005:95) argues that “farm occupations enabled journalists to simplify the situation in Zimbabwe” since “the more clear and unambiguous the signal... the more probable that it will be recorded as worth listening to”. The possibility of reporting Zimbabwe positively was denied through signification politics where events were often negatively framed and sensationally “to limit the range of possible meanings” (Willems: 2005:95).

Although Willems rightly notes how farm occupations were framed negatively and without contextualisation, journalists had a different argument that justified the manner in which they covered the occupations.

They claimed that the latter were ‘a big story and you can’t ignore’ it and had higher premium in the news value criterion because it involved the issue of race (Willems 2005:96). In reporting the racial conflict, for example, the Western press used to portray one side as *Good* and the other as *Evil* in reporting. Willems’ (2005:97) study shows how some newspapers in the British press supported the idea of racial conflict by suggesting incidences of ethnic cleansing. Her study further highlights how “British media framing of the situation in Zimbabwe as a black versus white conflict ultimately made the much larger number of black victims invisible as “it marginalised them” (Willems :2005:98). In other situations journalists personalised the situation in Zimbabwe where the blame shifted to personalities. The key personality that the weeklies focused on was President Robert Mugabe with occasional references to Thabo Mbeki. Willems (2005:100) captures occasions where Mugabe was represented as the ‘bad guy’ by the British media noting that:

Journalists often used the metaphor of The Jewel of Africa to describe how wonderful Zimbabwe had been before Mugabe turned to it a nightmare. The narrative of the transition from ‘food basket to basket case’ was often invoked in order to stress that Zimbabwe was the tale of a success gone bad (Willems: 2005:100).

Although this study is not primarily on representation of land reform in local press, Willems’ (2005) discourse analysis will be utilised. As noted in the background to the study section, the problem of developing a non-racial party has proved extremely challenging for opposition party. The ‘white face’ of the MDC has been heavily exploited by the ZANU-PF in a country and region where the memories of settler colonial rule are still fresh. In this research, the local press focuses on personalities too, particularly political party leadership.

For instance, pro-government press portray President Robert Mugabe as “father” loosely translated in Shona as “baba”. In local Shona culture the ‘father’ is not criticised, he is immune to any blame. He (Mugabe) is depicted as infallible like a god. Pro-government newspapers never ever find blame or criticise the President. However, opposition leader is portrayed as the cause of all problems in Zimbabwe such as violence, sanctions, economic meltdown among others. He (Tsvangirai) is represented in derogatory metaphors such as “Chematama” [the chubby cheeks person], sell-out, stooge of the West, proxy of the British and Americans. In this regard, Willems’ (2005) analysis of good and evil is well exemplified in how local press represents conflict and personalities.

Ogenga (2010:115) argues that if any analysis is confined to a single political-economic cause, ‘the textual meaning often amounts to reductionism’, which means it uses what is already familiar about the situation to the audience to construct meaning. The situation in Zimbabwe is therefore, likely to be constructed as another African tragedy. Ogenga (2010) further reckons that there is a tragedy of post-colonial African mind set determined to resist neo-imperialism, defend liberation solidarity and engage the West with suspicion. This is opposed to the determinism approach, whereby certain contextual conditions and broader structures can be used to understand and set the limit to the possible determinants of events that lead to certain textual discourses and meaning in the first place; like the case of how liberal human rights and democracy discourses would influence reporting. This causes for the consideration of various competing but determining contextual factors regarding how the Zimbabwean conflict is represented. Thus, a complementary approach or framework is the one utilised in this study fundamentally because the conflict is complex and the period is broad in which diverse press is analysed.

The analytical approach utilised in this study sets the processes of economic determination alongside other processes and pressures in culture and analysed their interaction. Other important factors in examining political conflict in Zimbabwe are: the role of institutions that have been colonially inherited; the forms of discourses such as neo-imperialism, pan-Africanism, national ‘patriotic history’ versus liberal ideas of human rights and democracy. Tendi’s (2010) study “How intellectuals made history in Zimbabwe” will be used to analyse state controlled press’ representation of conflict. According to ZANU-PF, ‘Patriotic History’ emerged as a response to Western imperialism in 2000. The retort is well captured in ‘Inside the third Chimurenga’, which is a collection of speeches and writings by Mugabe. Tendi (2010) argues that the production of patriotic history was sparked and accelerated by the rise

of a credible opposition party in the shape of MDC in 1999. Journalists in pro-government press extensively quote and utilises speeches by ZANU-PF intellectual allies who were co-opted from the academy who are more prolific and sharper in their formulations. These intellectuals' writing in the national press contributes to the patriotic history's multi-layered nature. These intellectuals have actively collaborated in the development of the themes in Mugabe's speeches and writings- that is, land, race, sovereignty, patriotism which captures the dichotomy between 'patriots' versus 'sell-outs' (Tendi:2010:2). On the other hand, the privately owned press' representation of conflict is anchored and buttressed on liberal ideas of human rights and democracy- perhaps and arguably coloured with issues of regime change.

The approach chosen in this study is sensitive to the factors mentioned above. The study strives to be more nuanced in its analysis of the socio-economic and political events in Zimbabwe by the local press in order to examine representation of conflict. Before discussing theoretical framework of agenda setting and framing, it is imperative to briefly explain media representation.

### **1.8.1 Theories of Media Representation**

Gaye Tuchman's social construction theory (1978) is a useful lens for analysing the way the press represents conflict in society. The social construction theory views news as a social construct dependent on the ideology of those who produce it, and the framing theory which argues that people do not only acquire factual information about events from the news, but also how much value to attach to those events. Borrowing from the idea of social construction, representation refers to the construction in any medium (especially the mass media) of aspect of 'reality,' such representations may be in speech or writing as well as still or moving pictures. The term refers not only to the process involved in construction, but also to the product and its reception by the audience. Representation is an attempt to interpret reality in order to make sense and meaning. Therefore, it is not necessarily a reflection of reality (Hall 1997). In representation, the term 'reality' is problematic. It is difficult to give an account of what is actually real because reality can be socially constructed through texts (images, photographs, illustrations, words, etc.) in language leading to different kinds of meaning (Ogenga 2010). Reality is always represented- what we treat as direct experience is mediated by perceptual codes (Ferguson 1998: Manning 2001). There is potential for different kinds of meaning in media representation due to the polysemic nature of media

texts. Every media form is a representation of someone's concept of existence using a coded language that can be read by an audience. The media do not operate in a social vacuum but are part of the society and exist within a certain culture which cannot be divorced from the political and economic realities in that society.

Hall (1997) has argued that representation does not entail a straight forward presentation of the world and the relationship in it. For Hall (1997), representation is not similar to reflection but is a deliberate attempt to make things mean through framing them rather than the transmission of a pre-existing meaning (Briggs and Cobley 2002). All media texts (including news) are re-presentations of reality, meaning that they are intentionally constructed and targeted to specific targets. They are entirely artificial versions of what is perceived as real. However, the media broadens our perception of reality without which our perceptions will be very limited. Therefore, the media plays a critical role in helping individuals come to terms with what they would want to consider real.

The press plays a critical role in public opinion formation and representation. There is no question that the media form, shape, influence and direct public opinion. Its role in representation and meaning interpretation may be more effective in target groups or intended audiences in the society and less effective in others. Factors such as age, sex, language, religion, intelligence, education, and political affiliation have to be taken into account when the target group is receiving messages send by the media and how the meanings of these messages are understood. It can be assumed that in political conflict, what journalists write and the manner in which they frame issues can have powerful effects on their intended readership. In this regard, theories which emphasise the effectiveness of the media in the formation of public opinion and representation should be examined. For this study, agenda setting and farming and their links to the Critical Discourse Analysis approach used in this study are discussed.

### **1.8.2 Agenda Setting**

When the first agenda-setting research was conducted, the researchers were trying to answer this research question: How does "news coverage influence our personal perceptions of what are the most important issues of the day?" (McCombs & Bell 1996:105).

As McCombs and Yuksel (2004:328) argue: “Agenda setting theory basically explains how and why the public learn how much importance to attach to a topic from the emphasis placed on it in news coverage”. The mass media sets the agenda for public attention and lay the groundwork for public opinion. In short, this is “the idea that the media don’t tell people what to think, but what to think about” (Baran and Davis 2003:311). As this is an effect of the media, the question is: who sets the agenda of the media? McCombs and Yuksel (2004: 383) cite five major categories namely;

- 1) influence from individual media workers
- 2) influence of media routines
- 3) Organisational influence on content
- 4) Influence on content from outside media organisations, and
- 5) Ideology.

In the Zimbabwean context political events unfolding in country set and determine the agenda in the local press. News stories in both state controlled and privately owned press generally follow political agendas rather than develop independently. This is particularly so in conflict situations such as the one in Zimbabwe since 2000. The media do this mainly through an over-reliance on highly selected quotations that come directly from elites and socially privileged sources like politicians. Furthermore, newspapers set their own agendas through the selection of quotations and their choices in how to present official sources. According to McCombs (2005:164) “...key government officials and institutions can have considerable influence on what is covered and how it is covered,” McCombs, however, believes that editorials affected by these sources are limited. This study argues that in Zimbabwe the situation could be different because government officials and the uniformed forces do have so much influence on government controlled press (*Zimpapers*) while the privately-owned press owners also determine agenda setting, especially in the context of unfolding conflict.

McQuail (1987) notes that the term ‘agenda setting’ was coined by McCombs and Shaw to describe the trend they had noticed in election campaign. The media successfully influenced public opinion by the way they covered news stories, consequently determining the outcome in elections.

McQuail (1994:357) explains the agenda setting hypothesis thus:

Mass media news and information reflect the content and order of priority of issues. This representation of issues in the mass media exerts an independent effect on issue content and on relative salience in public opinion.

This study argues that political conflict in general and factionalism in particular have been influenced by agenda setting. For example, during elections campaigns the press in Zimbabwe deliberately and consciously set the agenda on presidential, legislative, senate and council candidates. Due to polarisation, pro-government press prominently concentrate on positive news stories on ZANU-PF and negative stories on opposition candidates or remain silent on them. On the other hand, privately owned press largely cover positive news on opposition candidates and negatively report on ruling party. It can be argued that the same template may have been used to represent factionalism and succession battles in both parties.

However, the state controlled press vilified and exposed those who were deemed plotting President Robert Mugabe's ouster in post 2013 elections. The agenda was set on ZANU-PF 'rebels' who had to be purged systematically. The privately owned press seemed to have a clear agenda to assume a neutral or sympathetic tone to Joyce Mujuru faction in as much as it did with supporting MDC-Tsvangirai yet attacking the Renewal Team (those who had split from main MDC party). Agenda setting, therefore determines the way the public views political figures through the manner of coverage as journalists place emphasis on certain issues thereby structuring them as important. Due to emphasis placed readers become aware of how much importance to attach to the issues.

In choosing and displaying news, editors, and newsroom staff play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position (placement). For example, stories on power, succession and factionalism dominate the press on daily bases. Of course, people's attention to mass media political information varies greatly. Thus, agenda setting theory supports the hypothesis that the media play a key role in shaping public agenda. Scholars argue that agenda setting later developed into the frame theory which is sometimes referred to as second-level agenda setting.

### **1.8.3 Framing**

The theoretical premise of framing posits that media content which is transmitted to media audiences is influenced by journalistic norms and the world views of individual journalists. In order to understand representation of conflict in the press, it is important that an understanding of message presentations be focused on. It is argued in this research that message framing influences message receptions which in turn impacts on readers' attitudes or reactions. Entman (1993) uses the term "framing" to refer to the way in which the media shape reality through their representation. He defines framing as the selection of

...some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral education and / or treatment recommendation for the item described (Entman 1993:52).

Similarly, Melkote (2009: 549) defines framing as "the ways in which news media organise, treat and present issues, events and news objects as news makers'. Framing may involve ignoring or downplaying certain aspects of an issue, creating an artificial balance in coverage, media and journalists, speaking with the voice of the government, exaggeration and lack of analysis of events and use of narrow selection of experts (Melkote, *ibid*: 549). Framing influences how audiences think about issues by invoking certain interpretations of information. Framing is achieved in the way in which news is packaged, the amount of exposure, the tone of the presentation, the accompanying headlines and visual effects, and the labelling and vocabulary. Framing provides useful ideas for understanding the interaction between media, public agenda and public policy (Chari, 2010). Since this thesis seeks to examine the representation of political conflict between the ruling party and the opposition parties in newspapers, the concept of framing and social construction help to bring more insights on how news on conflict is selected and packaged to achieve a particular political agenda.

McQuail (2005) explains news framing as a way of presenting interpretations of events and items of fact. Through framing, journalists present issues in a predictable manner. They arrange the facts and order stories in patterns that are unique to each media house. This research concerns itself with the divergent editorial approach which may produce different news frames on conflict.



Framing differs significantly from priming and agenda setting. The theory is based on the assumption that the manner of news packaging or how news is framed has an influence on how news is understood by readers. Framing is often traced to news writers, and the different media house editorials that determine how news frames are packaged (Scheufele & Tewksbury: 2007). Frames are important in this study as they clearly show numerous ways in which journalists present their judgement in the news stories.

Because issues are often complicated and require the processing of information from a variety of perspectives, frames provide shorthand for understanding the situation by focusing only on the features deemed important by the particular individuals involved. This process of emphasising certain features of the issue by cropping or downplaying less prominent features allows the most important information surrounding a dispute or controversy. However, while this theory is valid and crucial for this study, the researcher argues that despite the frames used by the media different people see certain dimensions of issues in very different ways. What may be of primary importance to one stakeholder may not be important at all to another. Though framing provides shorthand filtering of essential information, it can also generate conflicts through the differing interpretations of a dispute and disagreements over the importance of its component parts.

According to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) framing consists of three elements: Language, Thought and Forethought. Language helps us to remember information and acts to transform the way in which we view situations. To use language, people must have thought and reflected on their own interpretive frameworks and those of others. In this regard, framing is a useful tool for analysing, because it allows us to view the particular frames that journalists use when examining a particular issue. Bainbridge, Goc and Tyran (2011:235) point out that framing the text involves two considerations:

- (a) The frame of the text is the way the text is presented to us.
- (b) The context is where it is located and how it is encountered by use.

Bainbridge et al (2011: 235) argue that when looking at the frame of the text we should ask why certain elements have been included, but also what has been left out. There is need to ask why these elements have been left out and how does that affect the possible meanings the text might have.

Bainbridge et al (2011) suggest that in thinking what is not included in the frame, look at structuring absences (elements in the text that have meaning despite or because of the fact they have been left out) : what is missing from the text, and what meaning these omissions might connote. Since all media texts are representations which are mediation of the world affected by a series of choices and selections, and framed in a certain way, we always must be aware of what is not included in the text. For example:

- (a) What is missing?
- (b) What choices have been made in leaving out this or that element?
- (c) What meaning might be elicited from the absences?
- (d) What selection of images and information has occurred?

(Bainbridge, Goc and Tyran: 2011:235).

In this study the framing theory will be used as a conceptual tool for analysing how the state-owned and the privately-owned press selected news articles, headlines, photographs, cartoons and language in their representation of conflict. Framing is a useful tool for analysis particularly where newspapers are compared in how they represent conflict.

#### **1.8.4 Discourse and Ideology**

As one of the most important sites in which and through which national agenda is articulated and disseminated, national newspapers play particularly important roles in representing and interpreting news stories (Li: 2009:85). This study examines representation of conflict in local newspapers therefore it is vital to explore discourse and language in analysing press texts. In order to examine the articles in the newspapers, as well as photographs and cartoons in this study, Critical Discourse Analysis approach will be utilised. Ndlela (2005:72) posts that CDA is “a particular type of qualitative methodology that tries to understand the processes through which reality comes into being”. This research argues that CDA offers insights into the way in which newspaper articles become meaningful to their readers by examining the textual patterns that serve as the vehicle for communication. Media sources may influence the public not only by choosing the slant of a particular report, but also merely by choosing what to report. The news media, however, is widely viewed as biased. But the question is that: where can the bias in reporting be detected and what is the tool for it? Answering to this question, (Richardson: 2007:13) introduces “language as the medium to do so”. He examines the language use (discourse) of newspapers and identifies language as a “non-neutral element”.

Language is social. It is through the use of language that we grant meaning to our actions; equally, it is through our use of language that we can attempt to remove meaning from our actions (Richardson 2007:10). Given all the above mentioned ideas, this study tries to investigate the ways language is used by the public media in general and printed news media in particular to represent and interpret some news stories of conflicting ideas between state controlled and privately owned press in Zimbabwe.

Li (2009:91) believes that there is no creation of language in the discourse that is not influenced by certain social groups, classes, discourses, conditions or relationships; we thus consider language to be “both constitutive of the social world as well as constituted by other social practices”. Investigating the relationship between media and language choice is of prime importance in critical and analytical studies and that is the reason why Popp (2006:6) expresses that “media language choice is an institutionalised means of framing reality”. Therefore, framing social, political, cultural, economic and ideological realities highly depends on the language use of the printed news media. Bloor and Bloor (2007:10) argue that most discourse used by members of a group tends to be ideologically based. However, the belief or attitudes that stem from ideology may not always be held consciously by individuals; they can be so deeply ingrained in our thought patterns and language that we take them for granted as self-evident. While numerous theoretical definitions of ideology exist, it is believed that Van Dijk’s (1998) definition is particularly well suited to the study of ideology through a CDA approach which is the framework of this research. Van Dijk (1998:69) argues: “ideologies are representations of who we are, what we stand for, what our values are, and what our relationships are with other groups, in particular our enemies or opponents, that is those who oppose what we stand for, threaten our interest and prevent us from equal access to social resources and human rights.” In other words, an ideology is a self-serving schema for the representation of *Us* and *Them* as social groups. Van Dijk (1998:33) maintains that many group ideologies involve the representation of *Self* and *Others*, *Us* and *Them*. Many therefore seem to be polarised – we are *Good* and *They* are *Bad*, ‘We’ group is presented in a favourable light and the ‘They’ group unfavourably. This ideological polarisation consists of ‘emphasising our good properties/ actions; emphasising their bad properties/actions, mitigating our bad properties/actions; and mitigating their good properties/ actions’ (Kuo & Nakamura 2005: 410). This study will utilise these concepts in order to examine and compare representation of conflict in local press.

Kuo and Nakamura (2005:395) believe that language is a reality-creating social practise, and anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position. CDA emphasises the need to critically examine the role of newspaper language, which is the focus of this study. The ideology of the news writers, according to CDA, is not always apparent but is hidden in the subtle choice of linguistic forms, and only by examining linguistic structures in a ‘critical’ way can the ideological underpinnings of news discourse be unpacked. In this regard, CDA emphasises the importance of not accepting a presented reality at its face value but reading it critically instead. CDA therefore provides the means to investigate the means and ways in which language operates in social life. In the analysis of newspapers selected, this study employs CDA from the perspective of the cited scholars. However, this study will also utilise Fairclough’s (1995) framework of discourse analysis which has three components. The first dimension is textual analysis, the second is analysis of discourse practise through which texts are produced and received. It is concerned with how people interpret and reproduce or transform texts. The third dimension is analysis of social practices, focusing in particular on the relation of discourse to power and ideology; this practise is concerned with issues of power-power being a construct that is realised through inter-discursivity and hegemony. Analysis of this dimension includes exploration of the ways in which discourses operate in various dimensions of society (Shojaei, Yousseffi & Hosseini 2013: 860). Both Van Dijk’s and Fairclough’s versions of CDA focus on media text and content which this study is concerned about also.

### **1.9 Goals and objectives of the study**

The goals of this study are:

- To examine representation of conflict in the selected newspapers in Zimbabwe.
- To compare pro-government and privately owned press’ reportage of power, succession struggles and factionalism.

### **1.9.1 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this study are exploratory and descriptive.

The objectives of this research are to:

- Investigate how conflict is represented in the Zimbabwean press.
- Compare pro-government and privately owned newspapers' reportage on, and representation of power, succession struggle and factionalism.

### **1.10 Formulation of the research problems**

#### **1.10.1 Formulation of the research questions**

- In what ways have the press represented political conflict in Zimbabwe?
- How have state-controlled and privately owned press reported power, succession battles and factionalism?

#### **1.10.2 Formulation of the key assumptions**

- State-controlled newspapers do not hide their allegiance to ruling party and are used as mouth pieces of ZANU-PF.
- Privately owned press are largely pro-opposition.
- The media has influence on society such as political conflict.
- Zimbabwean society is polarised and the media is also polarised.

### **1.11 Methodology**

O'Leary (2005:85) states that research methodology is the framework associated with a particular set of assumptions that can be used to conduct research. This study employs qualitative research since it explores and examines representation of conflict in Zimbabwean politics. It will be basic research as it will be based on content analysis that will be carried out in the newspapers that were selected for the purpose of their research. Therefore, this study is exploratory and is guided by interpretive paradigm of critical discourse analysis.

#### **1.11.1 The research method**

The research method is qualitative content analysis. This will use critical discourse analysis. Qualitative content analysis was predominantly used because research in representation of reality by the media is usually qualitative by nature.

A research design is a plan of procedures for data collection and analysis that is undertaken to evaluate a particular theoretical perspective' (Guy 1987:92). The research design therefore involves the process of planning what and how data will be collected. It is the strategy and design used in choosing the selected methods which link them to desired results in a study. The main focus of this research was to analyse representation of political conflict in Zimbabwe in state-owned *The Herald and The Sunday Mail*; and privately-owned, *Daily News* and *The Standard*. This research analysed articles, headlines, photographs and captions and cartoons in order to examine framing or representation of conflict. By utilising CDA, the study also analysed linguistic aspects such as metaphors, analogies and inter-texts and selected stories to thematically unpack their meanings. Journalists usually create conceptual frameworks in news articles and columns in order to draw attention to issues which they feel are important. In the print media selected it is typical for a perceived 'other' to be constructed, either intentionally or unintentionally in presenting a conflict perspective. Archival selected newspapers will be the main source of data accessed from *The Herald* library which stores all main stream newspapers, both Zimpapers and privately owned newspapers.

### **1.11.2 Population**

Du-Plooy (2002:100) describes population as all possible units of analysis. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (1994) describe population as the study of objects and consist of individuals, groups, organisations, human products and events or conditions to which they are exposed. Du-Plooy (2002:53) defines target population as the entire class or group of units, objects or subjects to which they want to generalise findings. She further describes accessible population as the units of analysis in the target population to which the researchers have access. Therefore, a research problem relates to a specific population which encompasses the total collection of all units to be analysed in which the researcher hopes to draw conclusions from. For this research the target population are all newspapers in Zimbabwe, while the accessible population are the four newspapers that will be analysed by the researcher. The selected newspapers analysed are *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Daily News* and *The Standard*.

### 1.11.3 Unit of Analysis

Du-Plooy (2002:53) defines unit of analysis as “the smallest elements” investigated. Royce and Singleton (1988:67) define unit of analysis as “the entities (object or event) under study” in social research. Units of analysis for this research will include whole articles on political conflict, paragraphs, sentences, headlines, photographs, captions and cartoons. Under political conflict, the sub-themes analysed, from qualitative perspective were elections, draft constitution/referendum, power, succession struggles, factionalism, economic and land reform issues. These were chosen because of the controversies and challenges of violence, intimidation and rigging, particularly concerning elections.

### 1.11.4 Sample

Du-Plooy (2002:100) posits that sampling involves following a rigorous procedure when selecting units of analysis from a larger population. It is a sub-set of a population or a set of some of the measurements about which the researcher intends to draw a conclusion. This research uses purposive sampling in which the researcher selected the period 1999 to 2016, and newspapers relevant to the study. The selected newspapers are:

*The Herald* –a daily newspaper which is state-funded and therefore government controlled and falls under Zimpapers stable. Its duty is to serve the public in a democracy. *The Herald* is guided by the Social Responsibility theory. This theory demands a commitment to serve the public interest. The content that is produced in state-controlled media is mostly shaped by government ideology. Mushore (2010) asserts that state-controlled newspapers at times follow Development Media theory which seeks to provide positive views, social harmony and preservations of indigenous cultural identity of heritage and encourages support of state development efforts. *The Herald* is guided by its parent company editorial policy which is that of its sister weekly paper *The Sunday Mail* as outlined below.

- *The Sunday Mail* - is a weekly government controlled newspaper which also falls under Zimpapers stable. It is owned and published by Zimbabwe Newspapers (1980 Pvt Ltd), a state-owned profit-making company. Formerly owned by the Argus Printing and Publishing Company, the paper has been in existence since 1935. The newspaper is guided by its parent company’s editorial policy, which among other things states that;

- (a) Newspapers must be credible, giving readers information that is as accurate as possible.
- (b) Newspapers must be as complete as possible, publishing reports of the major national, regional and international events, whether news, sport or cultural.
- (c) Newspapers will be supportive of Zimbabwe and its goals and generally supportive of the elected government of the day.
- (d) Newspapers must be fit to read for all, requiring sensitivity in the handling of sensational and lurid stories.

*The Sunday Mail* is the most widely read newspaper in the country and has a circulation figure of 90 000 (Chaguta, 2006:25).

- *Daily News* – is the first independent Zimbabwean daily newspaper. It is a private, oppositional newspaper formed by private business people and former journalists with a history of confrontation with President Mugabe’s government. The owners and senior journalists of the newspaper, due to their history had scores to settle with the government. Through its alternative journalism, in the sense of giving oppressed voices and ordinary people a platform from which to articulate their issues and challenge abuse of power, especially ordinary victims, civic and opposition political activists who were not necessarily experts and intellectuals, *The Daily News* positioned itself as alternative leader, organiser and mobiliser against state forces, with the intention of rejuvenating the emerging democracy. It should be pointed out that *Daily News* was not the only privately owned newspaper in Zimbabwe.

What was unprecedented is its sustained alternative journalism approach in relying not only on experts as sources in its news coverage, but in systematically and deliberately focussing on, and telling the stories of the ordinary victims of political repression, in their own lived circumstances and voices. *The Daily News* was also the only private and daily run newspaper in a country where the government had a firm grip on the public media, with two major daily newspapers, *The Herald* and *The Chronicle*, published in Harare and Bulawayo, the country’s largest and second largest cities (Ruhanya, 2014). *The Daily News* was not merely an opposite of the mainstream and government controlled news media, but it sought to challenge and change the balance of power in the country.



The *Daily News* was launched in March 1999 but quickly became the medium of choice for pro-democracy forces to spread their messages of reform to the Zimbabwean population. The *Daily News* became the mouthpiece for the opposition and for civic actors opposed to Mugabe's dictatorship (Ruhanya, 2014). Data on circulation and readership shows that after only a short period of existence the *Daily News* successfully overtook and broke the monopoly of state-controlled newspapers in the dissemination of news, and it became the leading alternative to government newspapers. The arrival of the *Daily News* captured the issues of the moment in that context of an enormous governance crisis marked by authoritarian tendencies against opponents of the government. The newspaper set the agenda during the four main elections held during its life, the referendum of February, 2000, the June, 2000 elections, the 2002 presidential elections and 2013 harmonised elections.

- *The Standard* - is a privately-owned weekly newspaper published on Sunday. This newspaper is owned by Zimind Publishers (Pvt Ltd), which is owned by businessman Trevor Ncube, owner of the *Mail and Guardian* (South Africa). The paper was launched in 1997. The paper is guided by its parent company's Mission Statement which states that: "Our duty is to serve and inform the public, which we strive to do professionally, courageously and responsibly while enhancing stakeholder value and upholding press freedom, human rights and cultivating democratic values" (Pindayi, 2010:14). At its initial formation the paper was targeted at the business community and high or middle-income Zimbabweans. It gradually became more of a political tabloid with almost leading with a political story of the sort or the other. Like the *Sunday Mail*, the paper carries different sections mixing hard and soft news. Although *The Standard* has a national outlook its news coverage and distribution is largely urban, particularly the main cities and towns around the country. The circulation is believed to be around 40 000, although this figure could not be confirmed (Chari, 2010). The newspaper is increasingly critical of the achievements of government and plays an important role of exposing corruption, government mismanagement and the deepening economic and social crisis in Zimbabwe.

The study benefited from the inclusion of both left-leaning and oppositional press because of their divergent points of view due to different ideologies. However, one main limitation was that there was a vacuum of nearly seven (7) years when *Daily News* stopped publishing between 2003 and part of 2010. This meant no news articles were analysed for the

privately-owned daily newspaper thereby giving state-controlled *Herald* the monopoly of daily news to the citizens. Another limitation was that although newspaper editions were selected, the same story was likely to be used for the main theme and sub-themes mentioned above under 1.11.3 'Unit of analysis'. This resulted, more or less, in repetition when explaining the factors that influence news construction in different chapters, especially considering that the study was dealing with complexly interlinked theme and sub-themes. It is important to state that this was not a case study. Therefore, the findings of this research are limited to the four newspapers that were selected for analysis during the given period and thus cannot be used as a basis for broad generalisation.

### **1.11. 5 Sampling techniques**

Welman et al (1994) describes a sampling technique as the miniature image or likeness of the population. It is a subset of a population or a set of some of the measurements about which the researcher intends to draw a conclusion. Sampling is a way of selecting smaller units from a population of interest in order to generalise the outcome and results from the selected population, this used the purposive sampling to select textual material that helped to address the objectives of the study.

### **1.11.6 Purposive sampling**

Royce et al (1998) argue that in this form of sampling, the researcher relies on his or her expert judgement to select units that are 'representative' or 'typical' of the population. This method is convenient when the researcher's judgement is required urgently. Purposive sampling is a technique that allows the researcher to select objects of research that are relevant in answering research questions, as providing a particular hypothesis, concept, preposition or theory (Denzin cited in Ogenga, 2010). Purposive sampling technique, used in this study, demanded that only four newspapers be selected because they were the major press in Zimbabwe. Purposive sampling has an advantage of saving time, money and effort and overcoming the restriction on accessing the entire population by the researcher. Purposive sampling technique gave room for flexibility when selecting articles for analysis in the four selected newspapers. It also extended the chances of inclusion of articles to be analysed given the limitation faced regarding consistency of articles selected in some newspapers like the *Daily News* which had no stories appearing between 2003 and 2010. However, this newspaper resumed publication in late 2010 and articles were available from 2010 to 2016. Therefore, there was a void and *The Herald* had monopoly of daily coverage

of news. However, purposive sampling's disadvantage may be that subject to the knowledge used by the researcher, the result may be flawed or incorrect. Although the ideal way of sampling is by random selection of targets (probability sampling), random sampling was not applicable considering the nature of the study. The study was concerned with representation of political conflict in the Zimbabwean press – focusing on four newspapers. Purposive sampling was therefore the most suitable sampling technique because it enabled the researcher to select information rich newspaper articles on political conflict.

### **1.12 Feasibility of the study**

This research is quite feasible since it is based on a carefully thought out plan and will suit available time, financial and theoretical resources.

#### **1.12. 1 Anticipated findings**

One of the most commonly accepted norms to the success of democracy is the system's inseparable relationship to a free press. The media provides citizens with information essential for decision-making, especially when choosing the country's political leaders. The media is a source of power that influences, controls, and promotes new standards in society and reinforces existing ones. The press is supposed to report truthfully and objectively but in a polarised country such as Zimbabwe, the press reportage is also polarised. In representing political conflict in which the ruling party's hegemony and legitimacy to power is waning, state controlled newspapers maintain an unwavering nationalistic pro-ZANU-PF agenda in order to maintain grip of power by demonising opposition. Zimpapers show uncompromising patriotism, loyalty and allegiance through 'patriotic history' reportage on conflict.

The content is likely to be one sided whereby reports may be manipulative propaganda. Zimpapers' pro-state/ruling party stance may show their fronting of ZANU-PF political ideologies and their unbending support for government politics. In the unfolding conflict, state-controlled press toe the President's perspective as other ZANU-PF officials are subject to criticism by the same newspapers as is evident in their vitriol on ousted party members due to factionalism. On the other hand, the privately owned press report conflict with sympathy to opposition but criticising the ruling party for its misrule. Nevertheless, these print media are very critical of the opposition also as they pursue 'middle of the road' editorial policy. Privately owned press are largely sympathetic to victims of factionalism in ZANU-PF. Therefore, representation of conflict is likely to be polarised.

### **1.12.2 . Anticipated contributions of the study to the Discipline of Communication.**

This research advances critical investigation of representation of conflict in local print media and interrogates frames employed in the reportage of political issues and events. It challenges the editorial policies and journalistic practices which may be traced to ownership and control patterns. Such research has a huge potential to influence media policy, regulation and training. Media houses will be challenged to revisit their editorial policies to adjust theories of news production in an effort to adopt professional media practice. There has been a gap in academic research in Zimbabwe on this topic.

Very few scholars have written on representation of conflict in Zimbabwe in the local press. Although there have been a number of media researches on related topic, how conflict has been reported by domestic print media has not been adequately investigated. The current study makes a significant contribution to the literature as it takes a comparative approach to analysing the political conflict representation in pro-government and privately owned press. This study will focus on discourse employed by print media to represent broader conflict between ruling party and opposition as well as investigate frames utilised in power, succession and factionalism in both parties. It demonstrates how journalists have employed partisan reportage based on their individual media houses editorial policy templates to the sacrifice of professionalism.

### **1.13 Ethical considerations**

This research adhered to ethics of research in different ways. In the process of gathering information from the selected media houses the researcher indicated to the editors or responsible management that the information required would be used for academic purposes only and would not be divulged to other parties.

### **1.14 Chapter organisation**

This research is divided into seven chapters. Chapter one is the introduction. It contextualises the study by providing information on the various aspects of the research and highlights the purpose of the study, the background of the study, and explores the importance of the research. The chapter also includes the research problem, the research goals, objectives, questions, key assumptions and justification of the study. It also explores literature review and the theoretical framework, methodology and chapter organisation. Chapter Two situates the study within the context of the other scholarly voices on the issues being investigated.

The literature review identifies and explores existing literature sources and theories on representation of conflict related issues. The nature of this conflict demands literature review which traces the history of political conflict in Zimbabwe from armed struggle, to independence and how ZANU-PF has maintained its dominance. This chapter explores conflict in the 1980s, 1990s, post 2000, Government of National Unity and post 2013 period. The literature review ends on how ZANU-PF has continued to rule the country, examining print media discourses employed in framing the obtaining conflict between the ruling party and conflict within political parties. This section will examine how reportage has changed over time. Chapter Three analyses the representation of political conflicts by the state-owned and the privately-press during the Government of National Unity (GNU) which was formed between the ruling party ZANU PF and the opposition MDC. The analyses is based on archival textual material from four newspapers, namely *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Daily News* and *The Standard*.

Chapter Four examines the representation of ZANU PF succession battles, factionalism and power struggles in the state-owned and the privately-owned press with a view to gain insights into the way in which the press is deeply implicated in politics. The chapter begins with some reflections on the concept of power, succession and factionalism and how these are mediated in the state-owned and the privately-owned newspapers. A comparative analysis of privately-owned and government-owned press representation of ZANU PF succession and factionalism is also made. Further, the chapter also analyses the representation of ZANU PF succession and factionalism in press cartoons.

Chapter Five analyses power struggles and factionalism in the opposition political party, the MDC. An attempt is made to explore causes of splits in the main MDC that led to multiple splits and formation of new parties. Newspaper representation of these will be examined. The approach adopted in this chapter is to follow five steps, namely: defining political parties, factions, stages of splinter party formation, representation of succession struggles and factionalism in both the state-owned and private-owned press; and finally way forward for the opposition parties for 2018 elections and future.

Chapter Six discusses the betrayal of liberation movements in Africa in general, and Zimbabwe in particular, which gave rise to opposition forces, thereby culminating in political conflict. The chapter draws parallels between colonial rulers and liberation-movements.

Further, the chapter discusses decolonisation as a method of consolidating rule that is maintained through processes of rhetoric and national unification. This is followed by press representation of political parties in Zimbabwe.

Chapter seven presents the overall findings of the research and offers recommendations for future research in the area of news frames, language and discourse in print media.

## **Chapter 2: Press and Political Conflict in Zimbabwe**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This study is about newspaper representation of political conflict in Zimbabwe, with particular focus on how the state-owned and the privately-owned newspapers framed political party power, succession politics and factionalism. The aim of this chapter is to review literature linked to the study in order to situate the study in its proper context and also to identify any existing knowledge gaps in the body of knowledge. The chapter will begin by providing a background of the Zimbabwean political and economic crises, beginning at the turn of the century. An analysis of the genesis of the Zimbabwean political conflict will entail reviewing events around the constitutional referendum in 2000, the election campaigns between 2000 and 2008, the Government of National Unity between 2009 and 2013 and the 2013 harmonised elections.

### **2.2 Political Conflict and the Media in Zimbabwe**

Conflict has been part and parcel of the making of the Zimbabwean nation, beginning with the first Chimurenga in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the second Chimurenga beginning in the 1960s, the Gukurahundi genocide of the early 80s and the land reform programme of the 2000s (coined as the Third Chimurenga by ZANU PF), among many other conflicts. In fact Zimbabwe and conflict are inseparable.

The year 2000 is very significant in Zimbabwe as it marked the genesis of the current Zimbabwean political and economic crisis. Faced with a plethora of problems including the erosion of their hegemony, economic and social crises President Robert Mugabe and his ZANU PF party started repackaging history. Faced with waning electoral support, brought on by economic decline and popular disenchantment with the party's authoritarian politics, ZANU-PF turned to Zimbabwe's liberation story and other strategies to maintain its hold on power. This chapter argues that there was descent into violence in Zimbabwean society. The millennium marked the onset of Zimbabwe's descent into political terror and economic collapse.

The events of the year 2000 signalled that Zimbabwe's citizens were realigning politically. Bratton and Masunungure (2011) observe that the ruling coalition, which represented the declining relevance of the politics of national liberation, was losing mass support to an emergent opposition that promoted a liberal discourse embedded in the advocacy for peace, economic opportunity and human rights. The year 2000 also marked an intensification of the ruling elite's strategy: finally abandoning any pretence of political toleration, ZANU-PF leaders endeavoured to crush any opposition movement that threatened its permanent hold on power. They embarked on a no-holds-barred effort to retain office regardless of the costs to the country's legal and administrative institutions or to the development of the economy and society. For its part, the untested MDC struggled to make good on stated democratic principles amidst a pervasive political culture of predation, militarisation and terror (Bratton & Masunungure, 2011, 15).

The turning point was the referendum on a new constitution. The government's official draft of the constitution ignored popular views – voiced more accurately by the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) – for a reduction in presidential powers. In a vote in February 2000, a 55 percent majority voted 'NO' on a 20 percent turnout. It was the ruling party's first defeat at the polls. It was after suffering the body blow that ZANU PF started promoting confrontational discourses through the state-owned media to denigrate the opposition MDC by labelling it 'puppets' of the West, 'stooges', 'sell-outs', "unpatriotic" and "enemies of the state". Since the MDC victory in the 2000 referendum, ZANU-PF embarked on new propaganda tool as a way to regain back its hegemony. Name calling was one of the propaganda techniques ZANU PF unleashed. The ruling party has allegedly called MDC names such as puppets, stooges and sell-outs (Gatsheni-Ndlovu 2009; Chuma 2008; Mazango 2005; Moyo 2005; Waldahl 2005). In the privately-owned media MDC was thus constructed as "a victim of a rogue state" (Chuma 2005).

The Mugabe led government was shocked by the referendum defeat and its response was swift and brutal. The President and his party blamed their loss of the referendum to the newly formed opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) which they sought to portray as a front for the white settler minority and western imperial powers in the state-owned media. Henceforth, these "enemies of the state" could not expect protection from the rule of law.



Fearing another defeat in the upcoming parliamentary elections of June 2000, the ruling party turned to its tried and tested tactics of regaining lost power by whipping up emotions up grievances over the sensitive land issue. War veterans and unemployed youth were manipulated into synchronising a campaign of farm ‘invasions’, which was proclaimed as a third phase of Chimurenga [liberation war]. Since white commercial farmers had often openly supported MDC, they became targets of ‘jambanja’ [chaos] by which ‘unruly gangs’ occupied white-owned farms, destroyed crops, livestock and equipment, and harassed landowners and farm workers alike, forcing them to flee (Bratton & Masunungure, 2011). Party leaders ordered the previously neutral police not to intervene.

The ruling party strategy for subsequent elections – in June 2000 (parliamentary), March 2002 (presidential) and March 2005 (parliamentary) – was to create ‘no-go’ zones in the countryside that were closed to opposition campaigns. Under the direction of the party hierarchy, local ZANU-PF officials and members ignored constitutional guarantees of free association and assembly by effectively banning MDC from entering certain areas. State-sponsored militias harassed, intimidated, raped and murdered MDC candidates and supporters. At the same time, the ruling party employed mass media – especially government controlled television and radio stations and daily and weekly newspapers to restrict coverage of MDC, except to depict them as pawns of neo-colonialism. For its part, the opposition used ZCTU and NCA structures to build a rival network of activists among public service workers like teachers, nurses and agricultural extension workers, including in the ruling party’s rural strongholds. The MDC slogan – ‘Chinja maitiro’ [change your ways] – had a stronger appeal to the long suffering urban youth, workers, professionals and the residents of politically disaffected regions such as Matabeleland, Midlands and Manicaland. It was a new party with a ‘fresh’ agenda whose coalition of supporters included the privately-owned media, particularly the *Daily News*.

After the formation of the MDC in 1999, the referendum, and the fast track land redistribution programme in 2000 with its attendant political conflicts, the press in Zimbabwe were divided along political affiliation (see Willems, 2004; Chari, 2010). As a consequence, the Zimbabwean society became polarised. The government press unreservedly supports the ZANU-PF government and always portrays the opposition in bad light. On the other hand, the private press which is stridently anti-government maintains a “hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil” stance towards MDC and its society allies (Chari, 2009: 55).

Inevitably politics in Zimbabwe is viewed in binary terms, what Chuma (2005) refers to as “the good and the evil”. According to Chuma (2005) the state-owned media has always viewed the MDC as the evil and ZANU PF as the good. For the state-owned media, ZANU PF is the good because it ‘represents’ the interests of the Zimbabweans while MDC ‘represents’ the interests of the British. Gatsheni-Ndlovu (2009:140) supports this view when he argues that Zimbabwean politics is divided into “traitors, puppets, sell-outs enemies of the nation versus patriots and authentic national subjects”. Whether the press in Zimbabwe has the potential to engender conflict or promote peace through their representation is the focus of this thesis. In particular, it interrogates how political conflicts within the ruling party, ZANU PF and the opposition MDC are framed in the press. It is important to note that the two political parties have different ideologies because of their historical backgrounds. It is generally believed that the state-owned press always sympathises with the ZANU PF government while the privately-owned press unapologetically supports the opposition MDC. However, evidence to support these views is largely anecdotal as there are no conclusive academic studies on this. This thesis seeks to contribute towards building a body of knowledge in this regard. Given this scenario it will be significant to analyse how both the parties and their leaders are represented in the newspapers. Whether the state-owned and the privately-owned press always differ in their representation of political issues or not is therefore a central question. Media representation of political conflict could be a very useful lens for gaining insights into this issue because political conflicts are emotive and polarising, meaning that it would be difficult for the press to disguise their sympathies on political issues than any other issues. It is important to briefly examine the emotive issue of land reform in Zimbabwe so as to appreciate media representation on it.

### **2.2.1 Media Representation of Land Reform**

There are scholars who have examined how newspapers in Zimbabwe report on controversial issues like land reform. These scholars include Willems, Chari and Mushore though the first two will be given more emphasis. These scholars made some important contribution to this study by providing the general picture of the representation tendencies of the public and private media in Zimbabwe. Although land reform is not the main focus of this study, it is important to state that it is one of the sub-themes and therefore how newspapers reported on it is helpful as it contributed to the broader political conflict in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe few scholars have studied media representation of land reform which was carried out post 2000.

These scholars include Willems (2004), Chari (2010) and Mushore (2012). This section focus on what these scholars examine on Zimbabwe's media representation of Land Reform programme. Willems (2004) in her article *Selection and silence: contesting meanings of land in Zimbabwean media* compares and examines how the *Daily News* and *The Herald* newspapers have represented the land reform programme which gained momentum in 2000. Willems (ibid) argued that *Daily News* published on criticism of farm occupations. Various groups such as the international community, opposition parties, human rights organisations, labour unions, business community, and farm worker representatives were quoted as expressing their disapproval of farm occupations although they supported the principle of land reform as long as it would be conducted in a transparent manner. By contrast, *The Herald* carried articles in which other, mainly political actors declared their support for the land reform such as foreign governments, churches, labour unions and most importantly ruling and oppositional parties from neighbouring countries. However, while supporting land reform if it would be conducted in a transparent and orderly manner, some actors were reported to be concerned about the farm occupations.

Willems (2004: 7) argued that:

Media representations of the land question in the run up to the June 2000 parliamentary elections came to parallel the political polarisation environment, thereby missing chances for a serious and more subtle debate on the land issue in the Zimbabwean media.

Mushore (2010) also argues that media parallelism was notably demonstrated after a constitutional amendment on compulsory acquisition of land by the government which was pushed through Parliament in April 2000. He argues further that before this constitution amendment Bill was passed in Parliament, the citizens of Zimbabwe had already rejected it through the referendum which had taken place in February 2000.

Despite this background, *The Herald*, according to Willems (2004):

Constructed the amendment as a historical occasion concluding the ‘struggle for land’ in Zimbabwe which had started during the first uprising against the British in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century [‘First Chimurenga’] and had continued during the liberation war in the 1970s [‘Second Chimurenga’].

It described the amendment

as a means to overcome past impediments to land reform, giving rise to a “Third Chimurenga”, thereby suggesting that legal restrictions had been the main reason for the previously limited extent of resentment (Willems, 2004: 8).

Willems concluded that *The Herald* failed to denigrate the Bill because it was and is still sponsored by the state. This can be a clear fact that state-controlled media support government projects as contained in Zimpapers’ editorial policy.

The *Daily News*, on the other hand, commented negatively about the Bill through a cartoon which portrayed ZANU PF MPs dancing to the tune of “ZANU ndeyeropa” which Namate the cartoonist, literally translated as “ZANU is ‘bloody’” (Willems, *ibid*, 8). While *The Herald* quickly focused on the historical background of the land issue that had necessitated the passing of the Bill by Parliament [government of ZANU PF], the *Daily News* was forward looking, focusing instead on the “violence that would be a likely accompaniment of the [ZANU PF] strategies to remain in power”. It should be noted that cartoons in both the public and private media created contestable categories of public issues and individuals that reflected particular conceptual ways of depicting divergent ideologies. Mushore (2012) states that visuals placed in a story can add, accentuate the message and even contradict what the verbal words are suggesting. The analysis in this study partly focuses on visuals such as photographs, and cartoons and how these complement texts in the construction of meaning about political conflict.

Willems (*ibid*) argues that the state-controlled *The Herald* blamed the rejection of the referendum on “the massive turnout of whites”. The state media explained the rejection of the constitution by whites as motivated by the clause that would allow the government to compulsorily acquire land without compensation for the landless masses. Willems further argues that whites could not really have had a significant impact on the final results since they constitute a small percentage of Zimbabwe’s population. But with the establishment of the MDC, whites did come to play a more public role in political activities and some held positions in the party. This was quickly taken up by ZANU PF and the state media who portrayed the MDC as a party ‘funded by white farmers’ and dominated by ‘Rhodesian interests’ (Willems, 2004:11).

Whereas commercial farmers did not have positions in government, farmers had political power as a result of their strong economic position (Von Blanckenburg, 1994 cited in Willems 2004). As a consequence of their increasing presence in party politics and because of the scale of the farm occupations, white commercial farmers frequently became the target of violence.

The *Daily News* paid significantly more attention to violence associated with farm occupations whereas *The Herald* generally described the farm occupations as peaceful. According to the *Daily News*, farmers were assaulted, harassed, held hostage, abducted, taken for ‘re-education’ sessions and intimidated. The paper described it as follows: “Police offered no comfort as they watched helpless, mainly middle-aged whites struggling to brace themselves in the face of angry mobs of men, women and children chanting war slogans and nationalistic songs” (Willems, *ibid*, 11). In a number of occasions, the *Daily News* illustrated its reports with pictures of assaulted farmers and affected farm widows.

Both newspapers reported on the murder of five white farmers although agency was attributed to different actors. In its reports of the killings, the *Daily News* portrayed the farmers as passive victims of violent war veterans. *The Herald* reported emphasised that the white commercial farmers were provoking war veterans, thus attributing a more active role to the white farmers.

The discussion above therefore demonstrates how the two dailies became poles apart in terms of the way they interpreted the new developments concerning the land issue as they took place in 2000. In view of the above, Willems’ article discussed the way *The Herald* and the *Daily News* represented issues of land in the period between the rejection of the referendum in February 2000 and the parliamentary elections in June 2000. In her article, she focused on three main themes of land and these were: representation of the land reform and resettlement programme, portrayal of farmers and farm workers and reporting on the causes of farm occupations (Mushore, 2010).

In terms of methodology, Willems (*ibid*) looked at how the two dailies selected their headlines. Secondly, she looked at the stories that were included and those that were excluded (omitted) the choice of vocabulary and their attribution of roles to various agents. In a nutshell, Willems looked at how news was ‘selected and silenced’ in these two dailies.

Applying silence to news production, van Dijk (1991:114) in Willems (2004:6) argued that the analysis of the ‘unsaid’ is sometimes more revealing than the study of what is actually expressed in text. By choice, information is both included and excluded. Owing to the above background, Willems (ibid) therefore argued that headlines are usually read more frequently than the articles themselves and so ‘are powerful way(s) to convey a particular ideological view’. Furthermore, the choice of vocabulary also constructs particular ideological representations of events.

Willems argues that the roles or subject positions which grammar constructs for the participants have ideological meanings. She states that ‘participants can be grammatically constructed either as direct agents of processes such as violence and repression or as affected participants, frequently as victims’ (Willems, 2004:12). In terms of her findings, Willems stated that:

With clearly separate agendas, two Zimbabwean daily newspapers, the government-controlled *The Herald* and the privately-funded *Daily News*, have drawn upon different means to represent issues of land. Through use of specific vocabulary, pictures, choice of particular headlines, omission or inclusion of information and attribution of agents to certain actors, they produced a construction of events in Zimbabwe that served to satisfy their interest in an increasingly polarised political environment. In this tense climate, both papers became associated with diverging opinions (Willems, 2004:12).

According to Willems (ibid), *The Herald* clearly attempted to provide a positive image of ZANU PF main campaign issue: its radical land reform programme. In the representations of the land occupations and land questions in general, *The Herald* frequently drew upon anti-colonial discourse in which the past played a dominant role. In drawing extensively upon the past Willems (ibid: 13) highlighted that:

*The Herald* neglected to assess critically how the present land occupations would affect the land reform exercise. By ignoring or downplaying the more negative aspects of the occupations such as the violence, the newspaper failed to speculate on how the future of Zimbabwe would look like under ‘fast track land reform’.

On the other hand, Willems (ibid) saw the *Daily News* as a paper which was very much concerned with the present, thereby missing its chance to reflect upon the past. She commented that:

Focusing on the negative economic effects of what the paper describes as ‘land invasions,’ it failed to get into serious debate on land reform. By discrediting the land as party politics, the newspaper ignored that there certainly is a clear desire for land among Zimbabweans.

From the two findings above, Willems (2004:14) arrived at the conclusion that:

Readers of the papers were confronted with very different positions which clearly made dialogue or compromise more difficult. By supporting the side of commercial farmers and farm workers on the one hand, and war veterans and ZANU PF supporters on the other hand, newspapers reinforced stereotypes of the ‘good’ and the ‘evil’. In portraying the agenda of certain stakeholders as credible and others as illegitimate, both newspapers ignored that ‘the other side’ might also have a valid point to make and failed to take up a more subtle position toward the land question. Concerning the further course of events in Zimbabwe, this polarisation of attitudes might lead to more divisions on the issue within society whereas a lively public dialogue could potentially contribute to a final solution.

Willems’ (2004) study is therefore significant to this study in that she introduced an important concept of ‘polarisation’ which characterised the two dailies in Zimbabwe in the year 2000. In addition to that, the methodology employed by Willems (ibid) in her study which looked at how language was used to mediate or frame land reform is critical in my study. The study will adopt the method in that it will also focus on how headlines or words were utilised in the four selected newspapers.

However, unlike Willems who focused on two dailies *The Herald* and the *Daily News*, on land reform, this study will focus on two more newspapers in addition to the two she focused on. This study will bring to the fore *The Sunday Mail* and *The Standard*, weekly newspapers, the former government-owned while the latter is privately-owned.

This study will focus on a broader aspect, which is the representation of political conflict in Zimbabwean press, in which land reform is one of the sub-themes. In addition to that, this study differs with Willems in terms of period covered. Willems only focused on the representation of land during the referendum and parliamentary elections period in 2000 while the present study focuses on the representation of political conflict in the Zimbabwe press (in the above mentioned four newspapers) in the period 1999-2016.

In terms of conclusions arrived by Willems (2004) that readers of the two papers were confronted with very different positions which clearly made dialogue or compromise more difficult, this study agrees with her views concerning land reform, however, the period post 2013 witnessed a significant shift in state-controlled newspapers' reportage in that they supported one particular faction within ZANU PF and vilified the other faction.

Chari (2010) has looked at the representation of land in newspapers in his published article titled: Salience and silence: representation of Zimbabwean crisis in the local press. Chari (ibid) envisaged the press as having the power to shape public opinion by providing a cue to news readers on 'how much salience to attach to an issue'. The press are therefore 'primary sources of "the pictures in people's heads"' and they furnish them with interpretative frameworks for understanding public affairs' (Chari, ibid: 131).

In his article, Chari (ibid) imagined land issue as a crisis and as such he sought to examine how the land issue was represented by the local press between 2000 and 2008. He argued that, 'representation of the Zimbabwean crisis [land issue] mirrors the contours chalked by the polarised media environment' (Chari, 2010:131). To support his argument he quoted Raftopoulos (2005:1) who accordingly commented that:

In the journalistic world the Zimbabwean crisis since 2000 has been constructed through the dichotomy of either a radical nationalistic redistributive project carried out as historical redress in the face of neo-liberal orthodoxy, or a breakdown of the horns of liberal governance through the machinations of an authoritarian figure (Chari, 2010:131).



Chari (2010) used textual analysis which was informed by Maxwell McCombs' agenda setting theory in his study of the representation of land in the state and privately-owned press between 2000 and 2008. News articles were selected on the basis of accessibility and potential to furnish relevant data which my study also adopted. He looked, first, at how the press (*The Herald*, *The Chronicle* and the *Daily News* and *The Zimbabwean Standard* newspapers) in Zimbabwe represented land issue; secondly, he looked at the aspects of land that have been accorded salience or have been downplayed. Lastly, focus was on how the newspapers' attempt to manufacture public opinion about the land issue. In terms of the justification of the demarcation of the period (2000-2008) of the study and classification of elements of the crisis, Chari (ibid) argued first that the choices have been necessitated by space constraints as well as access of data and second, that, there was a general assumption that the Zimbabwean crisis [land issue] gained unprecedented media attention after the constitutional referendum in 2000.

Chari (2010:133) further argued in his article that, in terms of reporting, the media became more polarised after the formation of the *Daily News* and the opposition party MDC (both in 1999), often holding entrenched positions on social, economic and political issues'. According to Chari (ibid), the state-owned newspaper – *The Herald* rallied behind the ZANU PF government while the *Daily News* vigorously and unapologetically backed the MDC'. Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ) in Chari (2010:134) commented that:

The polarisation in our society today is best depicted in the press. Basically, the press is either pro-government or anti-government. Sometimes objectivity is sacrificed in order to be true to their chosen position... If you buy newspapers from one divide you will get half the story.

Chari (ibid) looked at how land was reported by focusing on three aspects of the land issue during the period 2000-2008. These three aspects were: land as either 'political gimmick or correction of historical injustices; hyperbole and 'feel-good journalism' and humanism and 'worthy victims'. On the issue of whether land issue is a potential gimmick or correction of historical injustices Chari (ibid) argued that, 'media representations of land reform reflected deep-seated and irreconcilable ideological differences between the state and the privately owned media, with which state media advocating land reform on the grounds of correcting 'historical injustices' while the private press opposed it as a political gimmick by the ZANU

PF government'. In order to show that privately owned newspapers did not support redistribution of land, Chari (ibid: 135) pointed out that:

The private press characterised the programme as “violent farm occupation”, and war veterans and peasants who occupied farms were labelled ‘thugs, squatters, ‘goons’ ‘hoodlums’, Mugabe cronies... in contrast the public press referred to the land redistribution exercise as meant to ‘correct historical imbalances’ while land occupiers were constructed as ‘peaceful demonstrators,’ thus downplaying violence on the farms.

In addition to the above strategies, the state-owned newspapers, also included numerous opinion pieces which showed that the land issue was not a political gimmick but an unfinished item on the country’s decolonisation agenda coupled with the ‘historicising of the issue’ by the state owned journalists and the blaming of Britain for renegading on promises to fund the land reform in Zimbabwe (Chari, ibid: 135). Chari further pointed out that:

Voices opposed to land reform were organised, resulting in a narrower debate it could possibly have been. The public press therefore fell short in terms of giving a holistic picture of the land issue... and the relationship between the state and privately owned newspapers in relation to land issue became a struggle over meaning and the ability to win the hearts and minds of people. The social responsibility role of the press was thus shunted to the margins with the consequence that discourse on land reform became selective, simplistic and self-serving’ (Chari, ibid: 136).

In contrast to the positive presentation of land reform by the state media through historicising and selecting and publishing opinion pieces which supported the programme, Chari revealed that privately owned newspapers delegitimized the land reform programme. The private press attempted to delegitimize the programme by employing ‘hyperbole and apocalyptic prophecies particularly with regard to the food security situation in the country’ Chari, 2010: 136).

Chari (ibid) also noted that the public media ignored or gave attention to violence on the farms and the temporary dislocation that could result from the land reform. Chari (ibid: 137)

further states that the public media referred to violence on farms as peaceful demonstrations and in most cases this violence was ‘sanitised through silence’. White farmers who were the victims of these violent demonstrations were ‘constructed as villains rather than victims’ (ibid). The private press, on the other hand, blamed war veterans for the ‘orgy violence’ (Chari, ibid) while downplaying the killing of black Zimbabwean citizens by some white farmers. The scenario above led Chari to arrive at the conclusions that, ‘the press reporting and meaning construction around the land issue was a battle for hegemony between two media camps. Their ability to report truthfully and responsibly was thoroughly compromised (Chari, ibid).

Chari’s (2010) views and conclusions are therefore important to this study in that they provide some valuable information regarding the way the public and private media have been reporting the land reform programme in the period 2000-2008. Chari’s study focused on four newspapers namely *The Herald*, *The Chronicle*, *The Zimbabwean Standard* and the *Daily News*. The point of departure is on the period and focus of study. While Chari only looked at land reform in the period 2000-2008, my study has a much broader focus of political conflict in the period 1999-2016, of which land issue is just but one of the sub-themes in my study whose other sub-themes include, referendum, elections, power, succession struggles and factionalism. Like Chari and Willems, the point of departure for the present study is that land reform contributed to the broader political conflict in Zimbabwe.

It is also important to briefly examine other authors’ views on the land issue though not from press representation perspective but from historical point of view. Richardson (2004) questions why Zimbabwe is lagging behind in Africa in his thesis on ‘‘The Collapse of Zimbabwe’’. He introduces the idea of property rights, with a special emphasis on how land rights were violated in Zimbabwe. However, he does not thoroughly explore the genesis of such violations in Zimbabwe. The interesting idea out of Richardson’s argument is that violations of property rights suddenly becomes an issue only when the ‘rights’ of white Zimbabwean farmers are in danger. Richardson (2004) thus omits the discourse of colonial invasion and how black Zimbabweans suffered under the hands of Ian Smith’s regime through evictions and marginalisation from the productive land. On such a note, he cannot escape accusation of employing selective memory and history (Ogenga, 2010).

This thesis argues that white minority rule in Zimbabwe (Ian Smith regime) is equally responsible for the anarchy experienced in the country because it set precedence for the marginalisation and domination of the poor by those in power. Moore (2001:913) adds that the fact that settlers took land from Africans was a form of primitive accumulation that undermined their property rights, “Africans were removed from productive land and restricted to poor reserves”. In fact, Richardson (2004:17) rightly notes that “reforms that only guarantee property rights to privileged elite, while excluding a great majority of citizens, are retrogressive”. However, his theoretical framework of questioning immorality in Zimbabwe leaves a lot to be desired. It appears as if he refuses to go beyond a certain historical moment (pre-Lancaster house Agreement) when the white minority leadership of Ian Smith perpetrated injustices that he is criticising the black majority government of Robert Mugabe for. However, actions by the Mugabe government must be scrutinised if Zimbabwe is to overcome the current socio-economic and political difficulties. Comparing immorality in both regimes does not help the situation and does not equally mean this thesis wants to overlook the salience and selection memory regarding Zimbabwe’s history. It is through past mistakes that societies learn to be more cautious about where they would want to see themselves in the future and selective history plays a refreshing role in this regard (Ogenga, 2010). He argues that the only problem is that once selective history is employed, it hides very contentious issues within competing discourses.

It is ‘unfortunate’ that lands belonging to white minority farmers were taken “illegitimately”. However, that may depend on which side of the fence one sits regarding the historical injustices experienced in Zimbabwe. The sensible argument in such a scenario is that questions of legitimacy and land ownership rights in Zimbabwe are contestable and should be approached with flexibility. Land was acquired illegally by British settlers through military conquest. Herbst (1990) presents an interesting thesis titled: ‘Conflict over Land: White farmers and the Black Government’ that argues that:

Land was the central issue during liberation struggle for Zimbabwe and continues to be the most important domestic issue in the post-independence period. The appropriation of African land by European settlers guaranteed white economic dominance and Black poverty during the colonial period and the inequitable distribution of land in Zimbabwe today is the most dramatic symbol of the enduring structures of an unequal society (Herbst, 1990:37).

Based on the foregoing discussion, the Zimbabwean government has the moral obligation to provide equal opportunities for citizens and avoid confrontational politics of anarchy.

This highlights the competing discourses of pan-Africanism and human rights and democracy, but in the end takes a 'centre' approach regarding the crises in Zimbabwe. The conviction is that if a closer and objective inspection of human rights and democracy discourses is done and weighed against those of pan-Africanism, patriotic history, liberation solidarity and neo-imperialism, then the contention is that they both punch heavily. It is in this regard that both state controlled media and private media offer contrasting views and positions regarding representation of land reform due to their ideological orientations as highlighted above.

### **2.2.2 Political situation-Elections and violence in Zimbabwe since 2000**

Ogenga (2010) argues that many scholars have tried to justify what Zimbabwe has become in light of the crises facing the country. However, there seem not to be a clear consensus (Raftopoulos & Savage, 2004; Muzondidya, 2009; Ndlela, 2005; Willems, 2005; Mlambo, 2005; Herbst, 2004; Gevisser, 2007). The prominent discourse emerging is the relationship between the Lancaster House Agreement and current socio-economic and political problems in Zimbabwe. The question that one would likely raise regarding such reasoning is why the Lancaster House Agreement was celebrated then, as African leaders rushed for power, but now seems to be the biggest mistake ever made (See Goebel, 2005). The other one would concern why Zimbabwe experienced relative buoyancy and stability a few years after liberation and only descended into crisis in the late 90's and in the 2000's. Why would a country suddenly 'collapse' more than a decade after Lancaster House Agreement?

Mlambo (2005) extends the 'rush to power' argument by indicating how political leaders failed to focus on the promise of liberation for the sake of their own interests ultimately creating tensions and polarisation amongst various stakeholders. The tensions culminated in political violence fuelled by politicians and the media. Among many stakeholders, Mlambo (2005) cites political parties and the media as the most notorious ones.

Even though much of the problems in Zimbabwe stem from leadership failures, it suffices to say that the black majority rule was haunted by colonially inherited institutions that were traditionally in the service of the interest of the white minority. The political process thus became a hot-house of competing discourses.

... a major cause of bitterness among Zimbabweans is the history of violence associated with political processes. Political violence in Zimbabwe is historically rooted in the brutality of the struggle for liberation. After independence in 1980, there was no social or legal process to deal with the trauma suffered during the struggle and, therefore, the bitterness and mutual suspicion continued

(Mlambo, 2005:16).

The discussion above attempts to highlight some of the factors that led to violence in Zimbabwe and the media exacerbated the conflict.

Moore, in Vambe (2008:25) argues that the emergency of MDC as a powerful opposition has acted as a real threat, similar to ZAPU in the 80's, forcing ZANU PF to devise various strategies to neutralise the threat, one of which has been the use of "violence and intimidation tactics". Mlambo (2005:6) further argues that "the MDC is the most successful opposition...so far. In the 2000 parliamentary elections, it gained 57 seats compared to ZANU PF's 62, putting them on an almost 50/50 situation with ZANU PF". The MDC has been largely viewed as a Western puppet due to its ideological position that leans towards white farmers. Solidarity Peace Trust, in Ranger (2004:219) points out how President Robert Mugabe, in a speech after the 2000 election results, claimed that "the MDC is driven by the repulsive ideology of the return of white settler rule" since the West has been seen as the source of its campaign funds. In this regard the media in Zimbabwe widely reported elections, again projecting diametrically opposed views.

The media in Zimbabwe has been dominated by the state. Mlambo (2005) talks of media polarisation in Zimbabwe and his argument focus on two ideas. Firstly, that the 'independent' or private media has been most critical of Robert Mugabe and secondly, that the state controlled media has acted as a mouth piece of ZANU PF. I have earlier argued that post 2013 the state-controlled media became identified with particular factions in the ruling party, no longer necessarily for ZANU PF in general. However, when it comes to reporting on the opposition the government owned media does not reflect its factional lens.

Mlambo (2005) explains that out of many reasons, journalists change employers to change the “shackles of partisan editorial policies”. One respondent in his study argues that:

It is common knowledge that papers under the Zimpapers stable are government mouth pieces. It is also common cause that you hardly find a code, which state that journalists should be propaganda agents for the government, but this is achieved through a process of socialisation in the newsroom. The way one’s stories are treated help a reporter, especially new ones, form an impression of the editorial position or course of a publication (L<sup>é</sup> in Mano, 2005:64).

As opposed to state-owned media, the private media has been more critical of the government. Conflicting political interests between the private and government owned media have created a lot of pressure when reporting Zimbabwe and there is no occasion when they shared the same view regarding local politics. Such polarisation calls for journalistic objectivity even though it is quite known that journalistic objectivity is a myth (Bignell, 1977). The latter means journalists strive to be ‘objective’ when covering events in order for them not to be accused of bias. This is important when considering that journalists reporting for the private media would naturally be subjective when it comes to reporting events in Zimbabwe that deviate from the ideology of democracy and human rights while those emerging from government owned media would traditionally support the state’s position on contentions issues such as the main theme and sub-themes in this thesis as indicated in chapter one.

Following the fore-going discussion, there is a particular way of news construction and representation in Zimbabwean media. News is constructed through a routine process of selection, presentation and emphasis which influences the way in which particular issues, events, individuals or groups are represented. Manning (2001) indicates how journalism is a practice that involves a process of manufacture/fabrication or construction which culminates in representation. Gitlin (1980) argues that news frames are replicated across the journalistic profession where they assume a natural process of selection and omission leading to form stereotypes. Journalists rely on sources to write their stories. Ogenga (2010) asserts that sources have the power to decide what information they withhold or give out to journalists depending on their interest on a particular issue.

Journalists tend to form symbiotic relationships with sources with authority and credibility and those who are readily available. In this symbiotic relationship, some sources become more utilised than others (McGregor, 1997). The sources mainly utilised are usually government and officials since they are recognisable and credible owing to their status of prestige which makes the audiences easily trust them (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The symbiotic relationship between journalists and sources, where journalists constantly use some and not others creates a powerful frame within which news is constructed. The more powerful the source, the more likely he or she will be used in the news production process (Ndlela, 2001; Schudson, 2003). In this thesis the selected newspapers used different sources to create specific representations.

### **2.2.3 The 2000 Referendum**

It is important to examine how one of the sub-themes under political conflict is represented by the media. The constitutional referendum marked a watershed in the Zimbabwean and political landscape. The ruling party, ZANU PF had enjoyed considerable support between 1980 and 1990 when a break-away party, the Zimbabwe Unity Movement led by former ZANU PF secretary general Edgar Tekere was formed. However, the situation changed when disillusionment with the party that brought independence started growing as a result of economic stagnation, unemployment, increasing corruption in government.

The introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESA) in 1990, at the instigation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank led to austerity measures, resulting in job cuts in the civil service, removal of subsidies on basic commodities, and income inequalities between the rich and the poor. This disillusionment started manifesting itself through strikes by civil servants, university students and labour organizations under the umbrella of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union which led by Morgan Tsvangirai. However, ZANU PF remained strong electorally, at least up to 1996 when President Mugabe was the only presidential candidate. Elections between 1990 were more of a formality as ZANU PF did not face any stiff competition.

Meanwhile a groundswell of opposition which crystallised around campaigns for a new constitution (as a result of the uneven electoral field) were largely ignored by the government until when the government relented and set up a Constitutional Commission to lead the writing of a new constitution.



However, civil society organisations, under the banner of the newly formed National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), a coalition of civil society bodies, churches, students and labour organisations boycotted the process arguing that a government led process was inherently flawed and therefore not genuine. The NCA campaigned for the rejection of the draft constitution and in a referendum held in February 2000 the ‘No’ vote prevailed with a 55% in a vote where only 20 percent of eligible voters participated. The rejection of the constitution marked the beginning of a protracted economic, social and political crises characterised by multifaceted conflicts. As expected media reporting of the referendum was characterised by intense polarisation, with the state-owned media supporting the ‘YES’ vote while the privately-owned media rooted for a ‘No’ vote.

For instance, *The Sunday Mail*, January 30, 2000 had a commentary ‘NCA must not detract people’. The newspaper attacked civil society organisations and the NCA, which was the leading voice in the campaign for the ‘No’ vote was portrayed as misleading citizens. The NCA claimed that it would release its own draft constitution which it purported was better than the government’s. The newspaper predicted that the “no vote” campaign would result in a huge embarrassment at the polls.... In its editorial, the newspaper argued that:

As the Constitutional Commission has so often said, the current constitution-making process is not about principals but principles. Let’s see the NCA releasing its document and engaging the nation in debate on the principles of governance. Let’s see its constitution speak for the people on matters regarding land alleviation and national sovereignty, the very issues that were the back-borne of the liberation struggle (*The Sunday Mail*, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2000).

*In a commentary* titled, ‘Referendum: No violence please: use the ballot box!’, *The Herald*, February 11, encouraged parties campaigning for the referendum to preach peace and desist from violence. Although the article urged police force to ensure that public political meetings will go ahead without fear of disturbances and that those arrested for violent behaviour should be made to pay for their crimes, the law favoured the ruling party. MDC rallies were often either banned on flimsy pretexts or disrupted by ZANU PF supporters. It can be argued that largely, MDC perpetrators of violence faced the brutal wrath of the law while ZANU-PF was spared. Such a context in which the law seemed to favour the ruling party supports the view that the army, the police, central intelligence department and youth militia had been actively co-opted into ZANU-PF to ensure that the ruling party remained in power.

The commentary referred to above accused 'the political new comers as the cause of violence'- referring to MDC whose members were arrested and being tried in courts. Because editorial decisions on selection reflect the influence of ownership, news selection plays an important role in shaping political reality. The agenda of newspapers is also reflected through headlines.

In the *Daily News* of 15 February 2000, 'No' vote leading' reported that Zimbabwe's first post-independence national referendum appeared headed for a 'NO' verdict on the draft constitution. The Constitutional Commission (CC) has been urging people to vote in favour of the draft constitution while the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), a grouping of human rights and civic groups, churches and groups, advocated for a 'No' vote, resulting in some of its members being arrested. The newspapers critiqued claims that the draft constitution, written by a 400 member commission selected by Mugabe and dominated by ZANU-PF members, does not take into account demands made by Zimbabweans during a consultation programme.

As a claw back and desperate bid to regain lost authority, the ZANU-PF elite drastically curtailed the residual independence still enjoyed by institutions of the Zimbabwean state. The main victim was the rule of law. Until then, the judiciary had retained a good measure of professionalism and autonomy, often issuing verdicts against the government in constitutional test cases (Bratton & Masunungure, 2011). But the anarchic events of 2000-2, whether referendum on national constitution, land invasions (redistribution), political intimidation, or election tampering- along with an amnesty cynically granted for perpetration of violence- were all clearly illegal.

A further strategy to retain power by the ZANU PF government and was to have a tight control of the state-owned media and muzzling of the privately-owned media. Mukasa (2000) argues that ZANU-PF media control was tested in the 1990s with the rise of weekly newspapers such as *The Zimbabwean Independent*, *The Standard* and the *Daily News*. *The Standard*, as with other private press is largely anti- government and sympathetic to the opposition parties as is evidenced by headlines, tone of text and content of articles. Polarisation of the media due to political conflict is once again demonstrated in the two dailies, that is the *Daily News* and *The Herald*. The *Daily News* of January 14, 2000's headline: 'ZANU-PF loses in poll survey' has a clear agenda in opinion formation on Zimbabwean citizens who long for a change in government.

Although the *Daily News* claimed that the respondents in the poll survey were fairly distributed across the provinces, *The Herald* of January 21, 2000 dismissed the *Daily News* poll survey, referring to it as ‘trash’ and ‘... a terrible example of misinformation.’

In their attempt to explain ZANU PF’s prolonged stay in power, most analysts have argued that the party’s hold on power, especially from 2000 onwards, has been achieved simply through coercion and not consent because ZANU-PF had completely lost all forms of popular support (Blair, 2000; Meredith, 2002, Makumbe, 2009). According to these critics of ZANU PF’s populist politics, the party’s violence against the population, especially after its near electoral defeat of 2000, demonstrates this lack of popular support for ZANU PF and its exhausted racial nationalism which, according to these accounts, has lost both popular legitimacy and appeal in contemporary Zimbabwe (Bond: 2001, Bond & Manyanya, 2000, Campbell 2003 & 2008). Despite the ruling party preaching against violence both in press and campaign rallies, violence remained a key feature of Zimbabwean society.

The emergence of a strong opposition party at the turn of the century in the name of the MDC therefore shaped the political events in the country and in many ways influenced the nature of political conflicts that are the focus of this thesis. The emergence of a major political opposition heralded a new phase in Zimbabwean politics. As Raftopoulos (2005: 12) reckons “The movement drew its ideological strength from an emphasis on political, civic and human rights, pointing to the democratic deficit of the incumbent ruling party and building on the cumulative popular frustration with ZANU- PF after nearly two decades of one party dominance”. The desire to be the only dominant party in the country has been a constant feature of ZANU PF rule since independence. Over the decades ZANU PF has not hesitated to eliminate anyone who is a threat to their political advancement. However, the ruling party faced its first humiliating defeat at the polls.

Although President Mugabe appealed to accept the verdict of the plebiscite and commended them for exercising their rights in a peaceful and orderly manner, very few people believed him given ZANU PF’s history of double talk. As events turned out subsequent elections were characterised by state sponsored violence. The large turnout in the referendum by the white community caused suspicion in ZANU PF and served as confirmation that the MDC was a party of whites, a proxy party hiding behind a black face. This suspicion later invoked wrath from war veterans and ZANU PF supporters, particularly during land redistribution or invasions.

It is imperative to highlight that the country was going through an unprecedented economic crisis with unemployment, inflation, interest rates, foreign investments and poverty at their highest ever. There was shortage of fuel and foreign currency. The “no” vote meant the country would continue to be run under the old Lancaster House Constitution which had been amended nineteen times.

#### **2.2.4 ZANU PF Succession Issue**

Although Mugabe and senior party officials had repeatedly denied reports that he was under pressure to resign before the 2002 presidential elections, *Focus Magazine* quoted Professor Jonathan Moyo who had been appointed head of the government Constitutional Commission saying that Mugabe had already indicated that he would not stand in the 2002 presidential elections. Moyo further said that the need to prepare a careful transition without encouraging factionalism within ZANU PF meant that any announcement had to be made in a manner protective of the party’s interest. Important to note is the sensitive issue of ‘transition’ and ‘factionalism’. The President and the party have not openly debated on this matter despite the fact that President Mugabe had already served more than two terms – an issue raised by opposition parties and pressure group affiliated to the NCA. ZANU PF officials have also perpetually denied existence of factionalism in the party. When ZANU-PF was losing popular support in each election, the leadership developed authoritarian strategies to thwart any dissent voice or opinion from both within the party and opposition. The result was the formation of factions within the ruling party with members who did not toe the line being either suspended or purged from the party. Similarly, opposition parties have shown lack of internal democracy resulting in splits and serious divisions.

Chimbanda (2014:3) argues that this is more evident where there is a canonised ‘big brother’ who leads the party. He is so hero-worshipped that he is seen as some kind of a ‘demi-god,’ a ‘messiah,’ a ‘liberator’ or a ‘father.’ This was the case with Lenin, Mao TseTung, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, Kenneth Kaunda, Joshua Nkomo, Nelson Mandela and now Robert Mugabe. He further reiterates that these leaders were given praise names by their mesmerised followers, including ridiculous title of ‘doctor.’ In doing so, an impression was created that they had a divine right to rule and could not be questioned. But, as posterity shows, such glorification was unwarranted because these were ordinary human beings, some of whom made monumental and unpardonable mistakes that ruined the countries they led.

ZANU-PF supporters particularly officials who long and crave for positions become bootlickers and hero worship the President and the First Lady. President Robert Mugabe is given titles such as ‘baba’ (father), ‘son of man’ (which is blasphemous), while the First lady, Mai Grace Mugabe is referred to as ‘Queen Mother.’

Chimbganda (2014) further reckons that the culture of benevolent dictatorship, unfortunately, has cascaded down to the current crop of leaders, some of whom cannot tolerate constructive criticism. They only want to hear vainglorious praises about their achievements even if it is abundantly clear that they have lost the soul of the people they claim to lead.

A typical example is ZANU-PF whose internal divisions undermines the smooth running of the party and, in turn, fails to offer an effective government which is able to fulfil its election promises. Cases in point are events which happened and continue to happen from 2013. Due to never ending infighting, the economy has been sacrificed.

I conclude this section by observing that the draft constitution was rejected by people of Zimbabwe because the extensive executive powers of the President were not reduced considerably; the legislature was not strengthened significantly, the size of the cabinet was not reduced to between 12 and 15 posts, and that an independent electoral commission was not appointed among other things. People felt it was the ‘Mugabe Way’ and the ‘Zvobgo Way.’ Nevertheless, the draft constitution was key to land issue according to President Mugabe. Therefore, the rejection of the draft constitution in the referendum sparked land invasions and galvanised ZANU-PF to devise strategies for the June elections which were characterised by violence.

### **2.3 Elections as a Source of Conflict**

Elections received the most coverage by the four selected newspapers largely because they were perceived to be neither free nor fair, particularly by the privately owned press. Moreover, the political crisis surrounding the elections was viewed as the main reason behind the ‘economic collapse’ and political conflict. The selected privately owned newspapers used certain textual devices and narrative genres to represent the situation. However, state-controlled press projected the view that elections were always free and fair evidenced by discourse of patriotism and liberation struggle. Government controlled newspapers and ZANU PF officials resorted to land reform as an agenda for elections.

The Zimbabwean electoral system and process experienced extreme forms of strain and stress in the 2000 and 2002 elections. Their weaknesses became clearer with exposure to both domestic and international observers. There were unresolved conflicts over electoral procedures between the main contending parties, namely ZANU –PF and MDC yet there were no tried mechanisms for resolving these conflicts. The Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC) the precursor to the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) noted that:

There are presently no conflict-resolution structures on election-related issues at the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC), Election Directorate and Registrar of Election Office. Election petitions and grievances are made to the High Court (ESC 1996).

Sachikonye (2004) argues that a petition could be made to the High Court on matters such as undue election of a Member of Parliament (MP) on grounds of corrupt practice; illegal practice, disqualification, irregularity or ‘any other clause’ by another candidate or registered voter in a particular constituency. Prior to 2000, the major landmark case of a successful election petition was the one by the then Harare South Independent candidate, Margaret Dongo, against Vivian Mwashita who had stood on a ZANU-PF ticket during the 1995 elections. The election was won by Margaret Dongo. This was the first time in Zimbabwe’s electoral history that a successful challenge had been through on election petition. This 1995 case was a harbinger of a spate of election petitions made following the 2000 parliamentary election. There were so many conflicts arising from petitions.

*The Sunday Mail*, 12 March, 2000 highlighted the need for ZANU-PF task force to work out strategies to rejuvenate the ruling party ahead of the parliamentary elections scheduled for April. The task force recommended an overhaul of ZANU-PF by weeding out incompetent and corrupt people from the party echelons and to resolve land imbalance.

ZANU-PF’s National Chairman, Cde John Nkomo, who chaired the task force, reiterated that the problems facing the country could only be addressed if their root cause- the land imbalance had been resolved. The ruling party’s rhetoric about land was a strategy to whip people’s emotions so that its waning and dwindling support base would improve. *The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail* did not hide their allegiance to ZANU-PF and bias in favour of ZANU PF and its programmes while the local private media sought to delegitimise Mugabe’s rule because of the perceived injustices in the land reform and allegations of elections rigging.

They often echoed the government in blaming Zimbabwe's woes on a coalition of local and international foes including white farmers, the British government and the opposition MDC party.

A government task force noted that although the people had rejected the draft constitution there was need to look into the problems of and land recommended the transfer of the clause empowering the government to acquire derelict land without paying compensation to the Lancaster House constitution. The calls by liberation war veterans that excess land should be recovered from commercial farmers were due to frustration arising from defeat at the referendum. The result was violence against the population. Although there was genuine hunger for land by masses the method used by the government to redress land ownership imbalances was questionable.

The violence which ensued after the rejection of the draft constitution is testimony of the chaotic nature of the land reform programme. Such violence was extensively covered in the privately-owned newspapers, particularly the *Daily News*. For instance, The *Daily News*, 6 March, 2000 had an article titled 'Political violence flames in Hatcliffe'. The article depicts the land reform programme as a calculated move by ZANU-PF to intimidate, coerce and beat their perceived enemies. This study argues that because of the polysemic nature of media texts different readings could be expected.

The foregoing discussion confirms Hall's (1997) assertion that representation is not necessarily a reflection of reality because the term 'reality' is problematic. One event is subject to different interpretations. With reference to the land issue the state-controlled press projects ruling party actions as justified while privately owned newspapers which emphasises democracy and human rights represented the land reform programme as chaotic.

#### **2.4 Politics, Violence and Conflict: From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe**

Onslow (2011:7) argues that the continuation of ZANU- PF as a dominant one- party state has been intimately connected to the reorganisation of state structures, and the role of violence and intimidation. When ZANU PF came to power in 1980 it did not just inherit the political economy of the white settler state, but also the power of the colonial state: its monopoly of the use of force, and so its security executive and legislative capacity.

It also inherited well-established and particularly effective organisational structures of surveillance and control: the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) and the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP). Furthermore, there was the legacy of the colonial state wing's asymmetric and disproportionate force when dealing with opposition and dissent. Such force was consistently deployed against the MDC since its formation in 1999. ZANU- PF has applied all forms of violence to repress and totally silence the opposition. The idea of holding on to power became an obsession of the ruling party. However, MDC supporters were not to be out done, in extreme cases they would fight back to avoid continued bullying.

Violence is part of the political culture of ZANU -PF, dating back to the liberation war era. There is the place of violence in Mugabe's own thinking: he has ghoulishly joked that he had degrees in violence (Meredith: 2007:241).

Faced with the social and political consequences of the accelerating economic decline resulting from a sharp contraction of agricultural and industrial productivity, the progressive formalisation of labour ..., and massive internal displacement and economic and political migration, the state responded with proven techniques to quell open and suspected dissent (Onslow, 2011). Nathan Shamuyarira, the former ZANU PF cabinet minister and party secretary for information once stated "The area of violence is an area where ZANU- PF has history' (Meredith, 2007:214). Important to note again is that ZANU PF would roar into song each time it attacked MDC. For instance, the late ZANU PF political commissar, Eliot Manyika's songs were replete with violent messages which had become acceptable to the party. The sources of violence varied with the structure and organisation of ZANU- PF as a political movement; one of the key players is ZANU Youth militia, derogatively dubbed 'Green Bombers' because of the green, military-like attire. Other organs of violence were the war veterans – the vanguards, campaign tools for the party, ordinary ZANU- PF supporters and other groups. During election campaigns, and post-election periods, from 2000 to 2013, Zimbabwe experienced all forms of violence which were documented in the press and NGO reports.

The privately-owned press was unrelenting in its exposure of violence. For instance, a news article in *The Standard* (9-15 April 2000) pointed to the continued use of violence against MDC, was a reflection of the fact that some members of society do not really understand the principles of tolerance and democracy which allow individuals freedom of political affiliation and participation.



However, the state-owned press downplayed election violence, if anything tacitly supported it. For example, *The Herald* March 28, 2000 the story ‘President Mugabe won’t sell the country.’ The newspaper highlighted ZANU PF’s achievements such as independence, access to education, accommodation, health but singled out land as the top most priority for the government.

In order to understand why state owned newspapers were silent on violence perpetrated on opposition supporters and leadership, it is important to reflect on what media theorists postulate. Willems (2004) posits that news is always a selection of events that are taking place in the real world at a particular moment in time. News is therefore not simply what happens but that which can be presented as newsworthy. She further argues that whereas some events will be highlighted, others will be ignored. As Foucault (1978:27) has pointed out, silence is very much part of any discourse:

Silence itself- the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers-is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies.

Applying this to news production, Van Dijk (1991:114) argues that the analysis of the “unsaid” is sometimes more revealing than the study of what is actually expressed in text.

Bainbridge et al (2011: 235) argue that when looking at the frame of the text ask why certain elements have been included, but also what has been left out. There is need to ask why these elements have been left out and how does that affect the possible meanings the text might have. Bainbridge et al (2011) suggest that in thinking what is not included in the frame, look at structuring absences (elements in the text that have meaning despite or because of the fact they have been left out) : what is missing from the text, and what meaning these omissions might connote. Since all media texts are representations which are mediation of the world affected by a series of choices and selections, and framed in a certain way, we always must be aware of what is not included in the text.

I can argue that press coverage of political conflict, with land issue as a central aspect, reveals competing versions of reality epitomised by vested group interests in the context of a bifurcated political economy of the media. While reportage is largely event based, scholarly literature on the subject tends to be highly opinionated, selective, emotional and personalized (see Curtin, 2008; Blair, 2002; Meredith, 2002; Bond & Manyanya 2002).

Besides state sponsored violence and electoral irregularities, MDC made significant electoral gains in June 2000, managing to win almost half the elected seats in parliament: 57, to ZANU PF's 62. The opposition challenged the election results in 39 constituencies and won four court cases. According to Bratton and Masunungure (2011; 24):

Zanu PF appealed to the Supreme Court, which compliantly delayed deciding on the cases until after the next general elections in 2005. Eventually Tsvangirai grudgingly accepted the outcome and promised that the MDC's inexperienced parliamentary caucus would work constructively with the government. For the first time, Zimbabwe had a fully-fledged opposition party with a large enough block of legislative to prevent further constitutional amendments.

With parliamentary elections over, the next struggle was for presidential elections which were held in 2002. The press was the battle ground for contest of power, so the next section will focus on the representation of political conflict in the press. MDC was however, less successful in the March 2002 presidential elections, however, when President Mugabe reportedly won 56% of the valid votes to Tsvangirai's 42 %. The campaign was again marred with violence and the application of new legislation such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) which outlawed meetings of five or more people without police permission and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), which required the registration of journalists and banned foreign correspondents. Together, these instruments amounted to the suspension of constitutional protections and the re-imposition of a state of emergency.

According to Bratton and Masunungure (2011) working outside the law, Mugabe used presidential decrees to manipulate electoral rules and to limit availability of polling stations, thus disenfranchising many of the urban voters. As a result, observers from the Commonwealth, European Union and SADC Parliamentary Forum declined to endorse the 2002 elections as free and fair. Bratton and Masunungure (2011) argue that Tsvangirai contested the presidential election with a trumped up treason charge hanging over his head for allegedly plotting to assassinate Mugabe; another treason charge was added in 2003. After a drawn out trial that stalled the opposition politically, the MDC leader was acquitted of all charges. The March 2005 elections were relatively more peaceful. But fewer than half of the fatigued and battered electorate turned out to vote: of the contested 120 seats ZANU PF won 78 to MDC's 41, with the expanded ruling party majority a testament to the effects of violence, prosecution, hate speech and fear (Bratton and Masunungure 2011).

However, the MDC was also in disarray; flip flopping on whether to participate, thus confusing the electorate and later splitting over the issue of whether to take part in elections or not.

It is however, worth noting that the *Daily News* was forced to close in September 2003, thereby creating a huge void in Zimbabwean media space. This left *The Herald* with no other daily newspaper to compete both commercially and in terms of views.

According to Mazango (2005), there is discursive demolition of ‘enemies of the state;’ who are said to be opposed to the nation’s collective history which was borne out of 1970s armed struggle for independence whereby enemies were constantly labelled and vilified. For instance, the state controlled media consistently lampoons prominent political opponents such as Tsvangirai, foreign funded civil society organizations and the independent or non-governmental media as ‘instruments of neo colonialism’ and ‘shameless surrogates of western interests’, particularly of Britain and the United States. It is conflated that by contesting the legitimacy of government and its policies these entities are opposed to the country’s history and independence (Mazango 2005:43). They (MDC) is also accused of being a front of the West bent on effecting regime change in the country.

Accordingly, the state-owned press quotes President Mugabe saying ‘Zimbabwe will never be a colony again’. For opposing the ZANU PF government and inviting the imposition of sanctions on the government blame has masterfully been apportioned on the opposition that they are negating national identity and are fomenting social strife and instability in a once peaceful and prosperous country. Through editorials, headlines and news articles in *The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail*, a complex mixture of vitriol and intellectual discourse on pan-Africanism tries to unpack, expose, discredit and smear the opposition, labelling them variously as ‘misguided’, ‘stooges’, ‘terrorists’, ‘puppets’ and ‘sell-outs’.

Mazango (2005) explores binary viewpoints and media polarity. He argues that another view in the coverage of Zimbabwe is found in what the government terms ‘oppositional’ media. These include the remaining local independent, the hostile ‘white South African press’, and the western media. At best they criticize the government for abrogating the constitution and inculcating a culture of violence as an essential component of the political landscape of Zimbabwe. At worst they portray Mugabe as some freak tyrant in spite of the fact that he is quite a rational-maximizing tactician.

Despite being curtailed by harsh media laws, what remains of Zimbabwe's private press continues to be vigorous and outspoken as demonstrated by constant denunciations of the government. Activist journalism still exists and in similar hard hitting editorials, columns such as 'woodpecker' in *The Standard*, headlines and news articles, voices and opinions that, to various degrees, are alternative to that of the government, still enjoy space with widespread name calling of government and public officials expressly indulged in.

However, it is undeniable that what remains of the independent press in Zimbabwe exists under an increasingly trying environment governed by harsh media legislation such as AIPPA and POSA as mentioned earlier, that makes the practice of journalism a minefield. The result has been a contraposition of two conflicting viewpoints on the country, binary positions that have spurred rigidly contrasting coverage (Mazango 2005). The implication is that one story on Zimbabwe today is never the whole story. The reader has to read a story in private press and state owned press in order to decipher or interpret the meaning. Put differently, depending on who you listen to, Robert Mugabe is the worst African tyrant after Idi Amin or the most fearless surviving African nationalist. The rift in media coverage of the country has taken on a heightened importance because these two camps, the Zimbabwe government and its antagonists, employ a concerted, strategic mass media discourse to demolish the other. There has been much polarisation and crosstalk between the government-aligned media and the independent media and a barely concealed hostility can be noticed in pro-government denunciations, of 'enemies of the state' as in international news depictions of Mugabe's mayhem (Mazango, 2005:44). In a way the result has been a suppression of the true significance of events that are unfolding in the country.

## **2.5 The 2008 Elections**

The elections of 29 March, 2008 in Zimbabwe attracted phenomenal media attention surpassing previous elections since the country gained independence from Britain in 1980. Chari (2010:1) argues thus:

Having widely conceived as a conflict resolution mechanism which would end the country's debilitating economic and political crisis of eight years the electoral outcome failed to produce a clear winner necessitating second round of voting, between the incumbent, Robert Gabriel Mugabe and his arch-rival Morgan Tsvangirai, thus exacerbating the political uncertainty.

I concur with Chari's observation because the ruling party had to fight it out in its many strategies and tactics to defend the threatened hegemony and maintain sovereignty of the

country. Although the incumbent, Robert Mugabe lost to his main challenger Morgan Tsvangirai of MDC with 47.9% of the ballot against Mugabe's 42%, Tsvangirai failed to garner the constitutionally mandatory 51% thus, necessitating a runoff between Mugabe and Tsvangirai. Mugabe's party, ZANU PF also lost its parliamentary majority for the first time managing only 99 seats against the MDC Tsvangirai faction with 100 seats while the smaller MDC faction led by robotics professor Arthur Mutambara had 10 seats and independent candidate, Professor Jonathan Moyo, with one seat (Human Sciences Research Council, 2008). Because of the high stakes and expectations in the election, the press took centre stage as a terrain for hegemonic and counter hegemonic discourses (Chari 2010).

In *The Herald* of 3 May, 2008, the editorial comment titled "Poll results, Zimbabweans the winners" reported 'the long awaited results of the presidential elections are out and no candidate managed an outright majority, that is 50 plus 1 percent of the votes cast'. The comment further highlight that the two top candidates must now gird their loins for a runoff on a date to be announced.

Chari (2010) notes how weekly newspapers such as *The Sunday Mail* and the *Zimbabwe Independent* resorted to "dirty campaigning and labelling" during the March 2008 elections. He argues that it would be an understatement to say that the March 29, 2008 election was the most closely contested election in the history of Zimbabwean elections.

The festering economic crisis meant that the ruling ZANU PF party's support was being eroded and the prospects of losing power were highest since year 2000 when the party won 63 seats against the newly formed MDC's 47. Chari (2010:11) further asserts: "Although the MDC was the major beneficiary of the economic crisis in terms of support it had not made significant in-roads into rural areas, perceived to be the traditional ZANU PF stronghold". Consequently, the MDC was not guaranteed of an outright victory to avoid second round of voting. Against this backdrop the canvassing for votes was fiercest in the history of Zimbabwean elections and campaign tactics became dirtier as the election day approached. The media therefore became critical conduits of dirty campaign tactics, meaning that they were deeply implicated in the conflict.

Chari further notes how in *The Sunday Mail* Tsvangirai was portrayed as a puppet of the West, particularly Britain and United States of America while Simba Makoni, the leader of the newly formed Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn was depicted as a sell-out, suggesting that he was not his own man.

Makoni's movement 'Mavambo/ Kusile/ Dawn' project was described as futile and declared dead before it was born. Former ZANU PF politburo member, Dumiso Dabengwa, an ally of Simba Makoni who had recently defected from ZANU PF was described as a 'tribalist'. President Mugabe described Makoni as 'worse than a prostitute from 'Mbare' (an old high density suburb in the capital, Harare). Mugabe mocked Makoni saying Makoni was fooling himself thinking that he had a magnetic power to attract ZANU PF but failed dismally, thus projecting Simba Makoni as a person suffering from delusion of grandeur and therefore doomed. Chari (2010:12) argues thus:

By focusing on the personalities and mudslinging tactics of contestants the newspapers failed to create space for sober analysis of the manifestos and policies of political protagonists thereby undermining their responsibility to act as spaces for ventilating the political agora...

This shows that the press is deeply implicated in political conflicts and that sometimes it may exacerbate conflicts rather than resolve them because of its reportage.

The extent to which private media have given voice to the opposition has been questioned, particularly by Waldahl (2005) who argues that while the private media have criticised the ruling ZANU PF party and its policies, they have not particularly been a voice for the opposition as they fear losing credibility. However, Chuma (2008) disputes this on the grounds that during elections editorial pages of the private press have implored readers to vote for the opposition MDC, although in news pages they concentrate on the shortcomings of ZANU PF.

While it is true that the opposition in Zimbabwe has been aided by private media, I agree with Chuma (2006) that news pages of the private press try not to be too explicit in expressing their support for the opposition, but editorial pages are sometimes explicit. I also argue that the media environment prevailing in Zimbabwe makes the private press take a cautious approach for fear of being gagged. Chari (2010:205) argues that after the formation of the MDC in 1999, the press in Zimbabwe became divided along political affiliation with the state controlled press 'unreservedly' in support of ZANU PF while the private press adopted a 'hear-no-evil, see-no-evil, speak-no-evil' approach in relation to the MDC.

While opposition parties and civil society organisations are systematically denied access to state controlled media (Moyo 2007), the private media provide the opposition the much needed space while framing ZANU PF as an incompetent party (Chuma 2010) that is leading the country to economic ruin. Waldahl (2005:64) notes that in the 2000 elections private media portrayed ZANU PF as economically reckless, with emphasis on farm invasions “consequences for further agricultural development, for banks with large outstanding loans to farmers and for the balance of trade”. I agree with Waldahl on his observation about the privately-owned press in the sense that the ruling ZANU PF party spent all its energies in protecting its hegemony at the expense of the economy.

In the lead up to 2000 elections the privately owned *Daily News* “urged the opposition to mobilise effectively for total victory, which would ensure an abrupt discontinuation of twenty years of ZANU PF corruption, cronyism and arrogant mis-governance” (Chuma 2008:33). Perhaps to emphasise their disgust in the way ZANU PF has been running the country, the private media have consistently sought to expose the ruling party’s shortcomings such as the use of violence during elections (Chuma, 2008; Waldahl, 2005). This led to ZANU PF officials to label the private press ‘Morgan Tsvangirai press’. The opposition stance taken by the private press (Chuma 2008) has led to some viewing them as permanent adversaries of the government (Ndlela 2005).

Mazango (2005) argues that the state can enter the media market to shape the kind of messages and content that has bearing on political and social life. In such a scenario “the media become both a crucial setting and a tool of power struggle, with the boundaries of freedom expression coming under stress as vulnerable governments attempt to influence public opinion in their favour” (Mazango 2005:34). I agree with Mazango (2005) and this thesis argues that ZANU PF has never faced a formidable opposition party like the MDC. The ruling party has employed every tactic to remain in power despite losing at the ballot box. ZANU PF officials have declared that they will not allow any opposition party to take over power even through the ballot box or else they will go back to war.

Mazango (2005) notes that the state controlled media in Zimbabwe constantly attack the private media as instruments of neo-colonialism and Western imperialism. This is because the private media carry reports that portray ZANU PF as an enemy of democracy and human rights (Mazango 2005).

Considering the level of political violence by ZANU PF to opposition parties' supporters which include among others intimidation, harassment, torture, rape, murder, disappearances, the ruling party abuses its power through use of military, police, youth militia and CIO.

The narrative of human rights was invoked in private media particularly when reporting on land reform, elections and referendum. Such narratives appeared to be the driving factor behind the nature of representation regarding the political situation in Zimbabwe. It is difficult to say discourses of human rights were used selfishly by the privately owned media to achieve their interests. On the other hand, state controlled newspapers projected that the fight for liberation was a reaction to the injustices and human rights abuses committed by Ian Smith's regime. Therefore, one would argue that the struggle against colonialism is actually responsible for the deconstruction of imperialism and construction of liberty and democracy in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

The discourse of state owned media fights the neo-imperialism discourse in Zimbabwe. Neo-imperialism discourse in Africa plays an important role of preserving the memory of the colonial past and raises a red flag regarding the possibilities of the reincarnation of this ugly past (Ogenga, 2010). This is why it has continuously been upheld to date and some African leaders like Mugabe are very robust about it. However, this does not mean that such leaders are immune to criticism regarding human rights abuses by virtue of their liberation history. The reality is that human rights records for many African leaders like Mugabe are also questionable and that is why civil society is increasingly visible in many countries in Africa.

The repeated representation of violence in Zimbabwean elections by private media was meant to highlight human rights abuses in the country. To argue that such kind of representation was biased is to overlook the real challenges facing the people in Zimbabwe. The private media argued that the elections were characterised by violence leading to the massive migration of Zimbabweans into other countries due to a crumbling economy, torture and intimidation of the opposition supporters. It can be argued that state controlled newspapers dominated election coverage and overwhelmed private press because the *Daily News* had ceased publication.

With ZANU PF and the two MDCs in government it is necessary to examine whether representation of political parties changed, if so, what discourses and framing were employed by both state controlled and privately owned press. The next chapter attempts to interrogate press representation of Government of National Unity till 2013 harmonised elections.



## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed previous literature on the topic under investigation, which is press and conflict. An overview of the Zimbabwean political crises, beginning the year 2000 when the ZANU PF led government lost a crucial referendum, through the various elections, the Government of National Unity and the post-2013 harmonised elections has been explored. Considerable attention was given to reviewing literature on how the Zimbabwean press has represented conflicts. It was noted that the media in Zimbabwe was polarised along political lines and this influenced their framing of conflicts. A salient feature of media framing which had potential to fuel conflicts was that of “othering”, whereby negative labels are given or derogatory labels. The chapter also noted that a number of political events such as the constitutional referendum, the land reform and elections helped polarised society and the media.

A key observation made in this chapter is that framing of issues and contestants in Zimbabwe’s elections runs contrary to the view that the media are mere observers who faithfully and innocently record events. It is testimony of the fact that journalists do not always work autonomously as servants of the truth and public interest but may operate as hired guns of certain political and commercial interests (Street, 2001:145). Chari’s (2010) article entitled “Issue framing in Zimbabwe’s 2008 elections: An analysis of two weekly newspapers...” is relevant to this study. He argues that the manner in which the two newspapers framed electoral and contestants demonstrates that “the press is deeply implicated in power politics. As a consequence framing of issues reflects competing interpretations of reality whereby the state owned *Sunday Mail* projected ZANU PF as the better party while the privately owned *Zimbabwe Independent* became a megaphone of the opposition MDC” (Chari, 2010:19).

Further, economic collapse and social anarchy and violence are represented in the privately-owned press as consequences of the ruling party’s sponsored electoral malpractices and politics of disorder. The discourse advanced by the privately owned press was that human rights and democracy are under threat in Zimbabwe due to the iron fisted rule of Robert Mugabe. The election is represented in a manner biased against the ruling party. These newspapers seem to support the regime change agenda of the West who have arguably over the past thirty years invented and magnified Mugabe as the epicentre of Zimbabwe’s political conflict and hyped the flawed elections, allegedly attributed to Mugabe’s self-rule agenda.

The privately owned press personalised and simplified the crisis situation in Zimbabwe. In many instances, they downplayed the neo-imperialism discourses championed by pan-Africanists and advocates of national liberation in Zimbabwe. However, neo-imperialism was countered as re-appropriated by crusaders of human rights and democracy who were given generous coverage by privately owned press' representations. On the other hand, state controlled press defended the status quo.

Whilst privately owned press discourse was lack of democracy and human rights abuses, state controlled press countered that by extensively quoting Mugabe emphatically saying the West should not teach Zimbabweans on democracy and human rights because the country was won through the barrel of the gun. The sharp contrasts, in representation of issues and political contests underscores the fact that the press do not merely reflect reality but actively manufacture, fashion and sustain reality according to their ideological positions. As observed by Starc cited in Chari (2010: 224) journalists are crucial actors in the struggle for the truth and in our understanding of social reality. This thesis argues that the polarised political environment obtaining in Zimbabwe is also reflected by the polarised press which ultimately influences representation of political conflict.

## **Chapter 3 Press Representation of the Government of National Unity (2009-2013)**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the representation of political conflicts by the state-owned and the privately-press during the Government of National Unity (GNU) which was formed between the ruling party ZANU PF and the opposition MDC formations. The analysis is based on archival textual material from four newspapers selected for this study. The coalition government followed gruelling and protracted negotiations after the violent and disputed 2008 27 June presidential run-off. Opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai had narrowly won the election but did not get sufficient votes to avoid a run-off. The negotiations for the coalition government, under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and facilitated by Thabo Mbeki, the then South African president were not easy as there were many thorny issues and points of contention. Like in all other Zimbabwean political conflicts the media became a key arena upon which these political disputes were ventilated.

### **3.2 GNU Negotiations in the State-Owned Press**

Press reportage on the negotiations for a Government of National Unity did not differ significantly from other contentious issues as the polarisation between the state-owned and the privately - owned press continued unabated. There was no improvement in the government media's reportage of the negotiations for a coalition government between the two MDC factions and ZANU PF. Rather than providing incisive information on the fate of the dialogue, including Mbeki's planned visit to Harare to revive the talks, the state controlled media continued to blame Tsvangirai for the impasse while suffocating growing regional and international disquiet over President Mugabe's role in the stalemate. Instead, they cited Mugabe's invitation to Swaziland by King Mswati III to celebrate his 40th birthday and the kingdom's 40 years from British rule as evidence of the Zimbabwean leader's legitimacy and popularity despite efforts by some countries to isolate him. These efforts to reinforce Mugabe's legitimacy as President were reflected in many stories in the state - owned media featured on the topic. For instance, *The Herald* 4 September 2008, failed to critically assess the implications of Mugabe's threat that he would form a new government without the MDC if its leaders refused to sign the agreement. *The Herald* uncritically quoted Mugabe telling journalists in Zambia after the funeral of the late Zambia President, Levy Mwanawasa, that "if...Tsvangirai does not sign" the deal "today" he would "proceed to

appoint a Cabinet as the country cannot be frozen forever'. No attempt was made to question the basis on which he intended to do this apart from reporting him saying "we are a government, and we are a government that is empowered by elections. So we should form a cabinet..." *The Herald* also made no attempt to reconcile Mugabe's claim to legitimacy with the universally condemned June 27th presidential run-off election upon which he based his claim to legitimacy. *The Herald* representation was that Mugabe was a legitimate president.

There was little information in *The Herald* about the state of the negotiations, apart from *The Herald* of 4 September 2008 speculating that Mbeki was expected in Zimbabwe the following day to try "for the last time" to persuade Tsvangirai to sign the agreement. The next day, 5 September 2008, *The Herald* simply announced that Mbeki had postponed his visit to next week. The rest of the official media's stories on the matter either maliciously accused the MDC-T formations of not having the national interest at heart for refusing to sign the document, or reinforced Mugabe's allegations that the West was behind Tsvangirai's reluctance to sign. The argument which should have been represented by the state controlled press is that for the document to be signed, the three political parties should first agree on conditions on the table for negotiation.

*The Herald* of 1 September 2008 accused the MDC-T party of "living true to its chameleon like politics" and described Tsvangirai as a British puppet who would not sign the deal without Britain's approval. *The Sunday Mail* of 7 September 2008 accused Tsvangirai of "holding the talks hostage" and "throwing spanners at every turn" without clearly explaining how he was doing this.

This contrasted sharply with the favourable coverage the state-owned media accorded to Mugabe and ZANU PF, exonerating him from any role in the stalemate and reporting portraying him as still commanding unwavering support from the region despite Western criticism. *The Sunday Mail*, for example editorised its news story entitled "Khama eats humble pie" by representing Mugabe as having been given "a hero's welcome from a packed Somhlolo Stadium in Swaziland "with people waving and cheering at the Zimbabwean leader". It claimed that this left Botswana president Ian Khama who had refused to recognise the results of the June 27 presidential election runoff "with no option but to shake the veteran's leader's hands."

*The Herald* of 20 November 2008 depicts Morgan Tsvangirai as a puppet of the West in a cartoon.

The newspaper caricatured Tsvangirai, who was portrayed in the cartoon saying “I can’t go to Swaziland on an ETD...even aboard Mswati’s private jet...But I’ll go to France, even without a passport or ETD.” The cartoon was reference to *The Herald* 19 November 2008 story titled “France sponsored Tsvangirai’s trip.” The newspaper reported that France President, Nicolas Sarkozy had financed the MDC-T leader who was to “consult” the West on the government of national unity. Previously, Tsvangirai refused to travel to Swaziland for a meeting of the SADC organ Troika because he did not want to use an emergency travel document.

*The Herald’s* representation of Tsvangirai in cartoons also echoed that in the news whereby Tsvangirai was constructed as a ‘proxy’ of the West where he would constantly fly to seek second opinion. A cartoon in *The Herald* of 8 September 2008 depicted Tsvangirai as anxious and unsure if he should sign the pact. The cartoon seemed to be an allusion to the story published in *The Herald* of 6 September 2008 titled “hidden hand behind MDC-T’s intransigence”. These were a series of articles written by Tafataona Mahoso who allegedly was co-opted by ZANU-PF in the propaganda war against the opposition and the West. In the article, Mahoso claimed that there is “a direct link between the external manoeuvres of the regime change forces led by US and UK and the manoeuvres of their internal proxies in the form of MDC-T and its NGO cohorts here in Zimbabwe”.(p13). Mahoso blamed Condoleezza Rice, Gordon Brown, Jendayi Frazer and Walter Kansteiner who represents America, Britain, Europe and the proxy groups they chose to sponsor regime change in Zimbabwe. Representation of the white racist powers forms Mahoso’s predictable rhetoric and discourse.

Blessing- Miles Tendi (2010) argues that when ZANU PF and President Mugabe were faced with waning electoral support, they began to repackage history; a ‘patriotic’ version of history, disseminated by public intellectuals and state media. In this scenario, Mahoso became a columnist in both *The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail* where he would vent his vitriol against Europe and America.

*The Herald* 17 September 2008 (p.8) published a cartoon which seemed to suggest that the three leaders in the negotiations for a Government of National Unity had finally resolved to work together. The comments in the cartoon read: "...THAT WHICH ZIMBABWEANS HAVE PUT TOGETHER...LET NO ONE PUT ASUNDER". The cartoon by Mpofu, made a biblical allusion representing the ruling ZANU PF's ideology which suggests that Zimbabweans should have a home-grown agreement without external influence. This has been the discourse depicted throughout the long complex negotiations and talks.

*The Herald* of 11 November, 2008 had a story headlined "New Cabinet Imminent". In the story, MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai reportedly had been invited by President Mugabe to submit a list of ministers from his party. The newspaper reported that Mugabe expressed optimism that a Cabinet would be in place soon following recommendations by the Extraordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government in Sandton, South Africa, that the inclusive government be established urgently.

The summit reportedly endorsed the earlier position of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, calling for co-management of the contentious ministry of Home Affairs by ZANU-PF and MDC-T. MDC-T demanded sole control of the ministry with ZANU PF insisting the portfolio should be shared for national security reasons. ZANU PF was uncomfortable with Tsvangirai getting sole control of the ministry because of the alleged training of militias by MDC-T. *The Herald's* representation on the issue was that the ministry of Home Affairs was the only outstanding sticking point. The newspaper did not attempt to explain to the readers that there were other outstanding issues in order to create the impression that the MDC was being unreasonable.

In the same *Herald* of 11 November 2008, there was a photograph in which Tsvangirai was lampooned, in the background there is Christopher Dell and James McGee (former and then US ambassador to Zimbabwe). Tsvangirai is saying: "BECAUSE THIS IS A POWER SHARING DEAL I'M NOT SHARING HOME AFFAIRS WITH ZANU-PF". The message seems to be that Tsvangirai was not his own man because he was being influenced by Western diplomats like Dell and McGee. ZANU-PF's relentless attack on the MDC and its portrayal of the party as a western-sponsored party was meant to justify Mugabe's vow not to allow power sharing.

It is imperative to note that ZANU PF's major condition and demand for the inclusive government was the total removal/ lifting of sanctions on Zimbabwe. It is therefore interesting to see *The Herald* of 12 November 2008 captured MDC-T's perception on the issue of sanctions. In the cartoon we have a banner reading "PAN-AFRICAN MPs DEMAND SANCTIONS REMOVAL", while three MDC-T MPs are depicted not to "see, hear and talk" about it. The last cartoon discussed in this chapter appeared in *The Herald* of 13 November 2008 which portrayed the 'swearing-in ceremony' of partners in the inclusive government symbolized by joining hands. What is striking is the representation of Tsvangirai's party labelled as a proxy of the west again. In the cartoon Tsvangirai is depicted as saying "AURGH!! ...NO TO MINISTERIAL POSTS!!... SO HELP ME UNITED NATIONS (US/UK)...JUST SWEARING FOR OTHERS!" The other hand, arguably representing ZANU-PF says "SO HELP ME GOD...SWEARING IN FOR SOME!"

It is important to highlight the fact that only *The Herald* has been analysed in this section because the *Daily News* had been banned in 2003. In this regard, the state controlled daily newspaper had the monopoly to make representations which were pro-government while negatively representing the opposition parties.

In her article titled "Comic strips and "the crisis": post-colonial laughter and coping with everyday life in Zimbabwe" Willems (2011) asserts that in African Studies, political cartoons and comic strips have frequently been analysed in relation to concepts of power and resistance and considered as ways in which those subject to power challenge the rulers (Mason, 2002; Mbembe, 2001; Nyamnjoh, 2009). She further argues, "To a certain extent, these studies have reflected the wider debate on the role of humour in the relationship between ruler and the ruled in a post colony".

In media and cultural studies, scholars have analysed comics primarily as ideological texts which offer a particular framing of reality. The debate has not only focused on the way in which cartoons ridiculed those in power but has also reflected on the implications of cartoons for those in power. EKO (2007:235) for instance, has attributed agency to cartoons and points out that "cartoons and caricature are politically sensitive, even dangerous texts..." In his analysis of political cartoons in Cameroon, Mbembe (2001) is less convinced about the effectiveness of political cartoons as forms of resistance. He argues that the very act of making the autocrat visible in cartoons in fact reproduces its power.

However, Nyamnjoh (2009:107) disagrees with Mbembe's analysis and argues that "Mbembe seems to imply that (the autocrat's) power diminishes if the public were less preoccupied with him in this way. But I think it is important to see in what light he is represented: he is generally talked of in negative terms, which obviously has a greater effect than if the press were simply to ignore him as if he did not exist". Nyamnjoh (2009; 97) encourages us to be critical of any suggestion that such cartooning has little impact simply because it has failed to bring about a revolution or revolt against the status quo" and he proposes instead to analyse "...Effects that maybe gradual, cumulative and in the long term, than on effectiveness that stresses immediate outcomes to the detriment of that which takes time to unfold".

Willems (2011:2) argues that "these scholars have thus focused on the role of cartoons in offering spaces for resistance-whether effective or not- and the way in which they have functioned as what Scott (1990) would call 'hidden scripts'. I agree with Nyamnjoh (2009) in that those in power or 'to be in power' in the case of opposition leaders such as Tsvangirai, may reflect on how they are depicted so that they may reconsider their perceptions, positions and attitudes. However, in a polarised media environment, the cartoonists become conduits of official voices that may merely reflect or represent the ruling elite's propaganda based on skewed and biased views on opposition parties. In the case of Zimbabwe one can question the extent to which cartoons have come to fulfil the role of 'hidden scripts', that is, subtle, implicit forms of critique against those in power.

Given the above background therefore, while political cartoons in Zimbabwe certainly could be seen as forms of political resistance and opened up alternative communicative spaces, as Arntsen (2010) has argued, it remains questionable to what extent cartoons were unique in offering opportunities for political dissent. Like news articles, columns and editorials, cartoonists openly criticised politicians, ministers and even the President and (Prime Minister) (Willems, 2011). Cartoonists, like news reporters and editors, were polarised, therefore, they took the ideology of their newspapers. In fact, cartoonists "eavesdrop" or closely followed events obtaining in society and the agenda setting of their newspapers so that they could create their cartoons in order to represent specific discourses and rhetoric.



In terms of content, *The Herald* cartoons relied to a large extent on the official voice of government elites and represented the spectacle of the state. Mpofu's (2008) cartoons could be classified as anti-opposition because of their disparaging depictions of the MDC-T officials, particularly its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai. I agree with Willems (2011:4) when she argues that, 'in the case of Zimbabwe' treating cartoons as a form of resistance primarily would perhaps attribute too much weight to them, given the role of other forms of dissent in newspapers..."

Partly responding to Mbembe's argument, Schneider (2004:79) has argued that "the value of comics may not so much lie in its potential to provoke (instant) political change, but in the way comics keep track and record actual and historical reality. As such, they form an important part of the public memory". I argue that *The Herald* cartoons by Mpofu (2008) were part of a larger hegemonic effort to represent MDC-T as a western puppet and therefore, must be rejected by citizens in order to maintain the status quo in which President Mugabe and his ZANU PF remain in power. Therefore, Mpofu's cartoons were meant to appease the ruling elites through echoing their voices and political ideology which was anti-imperialism/ anti-West; therefore anti-MDC-T.

Politicians are not portrayed in a very favourable light (but instead as hypocrites and corrupt officials). It is interesting to point out that Mpofu's (2008) cartoons did not attract any fear of any potential charges against him from opposition party because he enjoyed the "immunity" provided by the state since he was writing for the government. While previous literature has revealed cartoons "as forms of political resistance and opened up alternative communicative spaces" (Willems, 2011:3), this study argues that cartoons in both state owned media and privately owned press played the role of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses. They reflect the polarised media environment that is obtaining and unfolding in the Zimbabwean society which is saturated with political conflict.

### **3.3 The Inclusive Government and the Press**

There was a considerable shift in the representation of the opposition MDC after the party had agreed to be part of the Government of National Unity. The Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ, 2009) contends that while news and analysis of Zimbabwe's most recent political developments in the Zimpapers' publications (and on ZBC) remained superficial and biased in favour of the politicians who control their output, the days following the MDC National Executive Council's decision to endorse Tsvangirai's recommendation for the party

to form a coalition government with ZANU PF witnessed an abrupt change in the government media's relentless propaganda campaign to malign and discredit the main MDC and its leader.

The Global Political Agreement signed by the country's three main parties on September 15th, urges all the media to "refrain from using abusive language that could incite hostility, political intolerance and ethnic hatred, or that unfairly undermines political parties and other organization" (Article 19 (c) (d) & (e) of the GPA). MMPZ (2009) argues that instead of adhering to these conditions and facilitating an atmosphere of co-operation and tolerance to encourage constructive dialogue between Zimbabwe's rival parties, the official media pursued their election campaign by vilifying Tsvangirai and his party by attempting to portray them as incompetent, cowardly puppets of the west's "illegal" regime change agenda. The news analysis pages of state controlled media were arguably replete with news of political developments, exclusively blaming the MDC-T party for the delays in the formation of a new government in addition to the economic and humanitarian crisis afflicting the country.

As noted earlier, the government press even reinforced their disdain for professional journalistic practice by employing disparaging cartoons and letter – to –the editor columns to drive home their abusive messages. Press representation before and during negotiations was antagonistic but media reportage changed for the better during the first phase of the inclusive government. Nevertheless, journalists in both pro-government and privately - owned press faced a challenge on how to cope with change of framing and discourses, now that the rivals were in government together.

It remained to be seen whether these so called news institutions were capable of performing their duties as fairly, in a balanced and accurate manner and as messengers of the news in the service of the public.

However, it is worth noting that despite the drastic shift in the state-owned press representation of issues relating to the activities of the coalition government was arguably still polarised, although the intensity of polarity had changed. Although the inclusive government was established there were many outstanding issues which were sticky and controversial. Among the sensitive and complex issues was the sharing of cabinet portfolios, media reforms, ambassadors, provincial governors, constitution making process. It is against this background that the press was used as a battlefield for competing perspectives.

The government controlled public media allegedly failed to give a fair and accurate picture of the activities of the inclusive government. They continued to feed their audiences with ZANU PF perspective of the progress the coalition had made. These media proved to be unreliable messengers of government in implementation of the GPA, their unequal coverage of the coalition partners' operations meant they continued to violate provisions of the political agreement (Article XIX(d) obliging them to accord "balanced and fair coverage 'to the parties' legitimate political activities". For example, *The Sunday Mail* of 21 March 2010, which carried the news headline, "One step at a time Mr. Prime Minister", resorted to editorialising and cited unnamed sources claiming that Tsvangirai "got more than he had bargained for" when he was allegedly, "told that the registration of other newspapers will not be a hurried process".

The newspaper represents Tsvangirai desperate to have the *Daily News* registered. On the contrary, *The Standard* 21 March 2010 gave a different report on media reforms. The report, was accompanied by a picture of the Prime Minister surrounded by beaming members of the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC), quoted Tsvangirai advising the commission to "ignore opponents of media reforms in the inclusive government" who were trying to frustrate the licensing of new media products.

It is imperative to highlight the fact that 'media reforms' were a thorny issue but the fact that the *Daily News*, which had been forced to close in 2003 bounced back in April 2010 meant that an alternative and dissenting voice would be disseminated to citizens yet ZANU PF had the monopoly enjoyed by *The Herald* for seven years.

On the one hand, the state- owned press downplayed the violence that rocked the Constitutional Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) outreach consultations. *The Herald* of 21 September 2010 attributed the occurrence of violence to parties' entrenched positions on 'certain key positions' and reduced the incidents to "mere skirmishes". The private media, carried editorials, quoted analysts, MDC-T, civil society and human rights organisations doubting the constitutional reform exercise's ability to truly reflect people's views and aspirations in light of the violence, which they argued was because of the ineffectiveness of the coalition's Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration. The private press depicted the violence as a fore runner to bloody polls.

They reported many incidents of rights violations related to the constitution making process. These largely identified ZANU PF supporters, war veterans and state security agents as perpetrators of violence against a cross section of Zimbabweans. The violations published in the private press included assaults, intimidation and the suppression of freedom of expression. The *Daily News* of 23 September 2010 quoted Prime Minister Tsvangirai condemning the exercise as a “messy” process that had “failed” the test of legitimacy, credibility and people driveness”.

*The Sunday Mail* of 14 November 2010 quoted Vice President John Nkomo telling a ZANU PF provincial committee meeting in Matabeleland that ZANU PF made the mistake of entering “the inclusive government, thinking this was the best way forward”. He added: “we can’t sit at the same table with the enemy and pretend to be friends when we are not. We are strange bedfellows and the earlier we separate the better”. The newspaper representation of “marriage of convenience” was clear amidst election threats following calls by senior officials from Zimbabwe’s two coalition parties for holding of fresh elections as a way of resolving their protracted power sharing disputes.

The remarks appeared to have been sparked by President Mugabe’s disdain for the coalition and his alleged unilateralism. Mugabe made attempts to call for early national elections throughout the inclusive government. While the state controlled media promoted Mugabe’s intentions to hold early polls, they ignored the fact that the coalition had not fulfilled many of the preconditions governing the holding of elections outlined in the GPA. Such concerns were discredited as having been prompted by the MDC-T’s alleged fear of electoral defeat. Most of the comments made in the state-owned press, mostly by ZANU PF and its sympathisers and senior officials of Zimbabwe’s state security organs amounted to politically intolerant language and bordered on hate speech.

*The Herald* 16 November 2010 quoted Chinamasa who described and castigated MDC-T senators as “rowdy”, equivalent to “hooliganism”, sure evidence that the MDC-T was “unfit to govern” and a justification for the need to dissolve Parliament to pave way for fresh elections. Chinamasa said: “they are precipitating a crisis that will bring elections much earlier than the president has indicated. By rendering the senate dysfunctional, they are cutting off their noses to spite their faces...”

Wiki leaks disclosures threatened to torpedo the coalition. The state media selectively reported on the diplomatic correspondence, highlighting only those points that portrayed Prime Minister and MDC-T President Morgan Tsvangirai in bad light. *The Herald* of 11 December 2010 for example, quoted professor Jonathan Moyo, among others, advising Tsvangirai to "...resign not just from government but public life altogether", adding: "He must be prosecuted for a litany of treasonous acts against the state". The private media viewed the Wiki leaks revelations as likely to increase tensions within the coalition, as evidenced by ZANU PF calls for Tsvangirai to be arrested although analysts and legal experts argued that such charges would not "stand in any court of law" (*The Standard* 19 December 2010). *The Daily News* of 31 March 2011 published a story titled: "Zimbabwe's killing fields: Mass grave of over 600 bodies found in mine shaft". The fallen Heroes of Zimbabwe Trust, a group of Mugabe party loyalists said the remains had been discovered in the disused Chibondo gold mine in Mount Darwin.

While Mugabe loyalists said the bodies are those of victims of colonial atrocities committed under the former leader Ian Smith, pathologists said visual evidence may point to more recent killings in a nation plagued by election violence and politically motivated murders. The story was accompanied by disturbing photographs with captions which read: "Grimy discovery: Hundreds of skeletons found in a disused mine shaft have brought a macabre thrust to election campaigning in Zimbabwe".

Many photographs were shown in both state owned and privately owned press. Pro-government press's agenda was to whip people's emotions to loath whites and opposition parties. State controlled media's representation of the controversial issue was to discredit rivals and Western critics of President Robert Mugabe who was calling for elections to end the coalition government. *The Sunday Mail* of 5 December 2010 had quoted Mugabe saying he "feels awkward" being part of the inclusive government because it allegedly drew authority from a "semi-legal" and "makeshift" political agreement.

As the GPA staggered to an end, continued violations of the agreement, reform deficits, limited institutional credibility and the rejection of a UN election needs assessment mission underscored the absence of conditions for peaceful and credible elections, despite the new constitution adopted in March 2013.

### **3.4 Internal Political Party Dynamics in ZANU PF**

Machinations, suspicions and shenanigans within the coalition parties would have a direct bearing on the elections. All the parties were deeply divided, and rifts grew as politicians competed for nomination in the primaries.

ZANU PF's centralisation of power triggered factionalism and succession battles. Struggles over who would succeed the president previously surfaced in 1998 and at 2004 party congress, when Joice Mujuru was elected Vice President ahead of Emmerson Mnangagwa (Matyszak, 2012). Mugabe's endorsement of Mujuru was interpreted as disapproval of Mnangagwa who was arguably demoted both in the party and the executive. But his star was to rise in 2008, when he was rewarded with the defence ministry for his central role in Mugabe's victory in the presidential run-off.

The Crisis Group Report (CGR 2013) reckon that at the beginning of 2012, ZANU PF witnessed preparations for national elections, which involved restructuring the grassroots support base, but for the party's District Coordinating Committee (DCCs) were bedevilled by tensions and clashes between those perceived as Mnangagwa supporters and those perceived as Mujuru loyalists. Several ZANU PF leaders, including Mugabe, have become more critical of factionalism and succession battles, stressing the importance of unity at this critical time. *The Herald*, 30 June 2012 had a story titled "Zanu PF DDCs disbanded".

While some considered the dissolution as favouring Mujuru's succession bid, others presumed it was Mugabe's strategy for consolidating his power in the party. The official position was that Mugabe remains the party's leader and presidential candidate, that he is not considering stepping down and even if he was, the party would observe its official hierarchy.

Despite DDCs banning, the move was seen as part of a broader effort to contain factionalism and assert Mugabe's leadership. This meant addressing allegations of corruption and the leakage of sensitive party documents. But succession and factionalism concerns, influenced by an array of fixed and evolving variables, including ethnic, economic, and political and security interests, will not disappear (CGR, 2013, Matyszak, 2012, Onslow, 2011). These dynamics had a direct import for 2013 elections, possibly influencing who would lead the country, as well as the party's approach to the polls. Mugabe was seen as the only presidential candidate able to unite ZANU PF's emerging factions. This may explain why some elements, worried by his declining health, were pushing for early elections.

While some say Mugabe's failure to quell these power struggles showed that his grip on the party was waning, others saw it in his political interest to maintain uncertainty around his succession (CGR, 2013, Matyszak, 2012).

### **3.5 Factionalism and infighting in The MDC-T**

Whilst MDC-T had tried to largely portray itself as party of excellence capable of delivering the much needed democratic reform, its role in the GNU exposed its bureaucratic ineptness. MDC-T was viewed by the urban populace as having neglected their promises by engaging in wealth accumulation. The corrupt MDC councillors angered the urban voters and Tsvangirai himself was seriously soiled by his promiscuity. The waning popularity and inability to develop sound development policies and the threats of factionalism and infighting severely weakened the MDC-T. The 2011 MDC-T congress, for example, exposed clear internal divisions and resulted in violence over leadership positions in all provinces. It is a controversial issue that intraparty inconsistencies that recently rocked the MDC-T party and the subsequent split has implications that this has on the party support base ahead of the 2018 election. Strong and sustainable democracy is based on well-functioning political parties. Chege (2007) argues that political parties are crucial actors in bringing together diverse interests, recruiting and presenting candidates, and developing competing policy proposals that provide people with viable choices.

While crisis and conflict are common features of political parties the world over, it appears the MDC T may have failed to manage and contain its internal conflicts resulting in yet another split that saw some senior officials forming the MDC Renewal Team. The Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) (2014) report titled "Political Parties Split in Zimbabwe: the case of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T)" reckon that in April 2014, the MDC-T suffered yet another major split following the 2005 split over disagreement on whether to participate in the country's senatorial elections.

To distinguish between the two splinter parties the MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai was named MDC-T while the other formation was dubbed MDC-N. The MDC has been slowly losing support because of this split despite the 2008 election result where it almost dislodged ZANU PF from power. Some scholars noted that during the inclusive government (February 2009 to July 2013), there was a gradual shift of public opinion and political affiliation. Masunungure (2013) also argues that after the 2008 elections, the MDC-T lost many of its supporters and not a few of its core supporters.

However, it must be borne in mind that the ruling party's election machinery was still strong and this might have contributed to the MDC's defeat in the 31 July 2013 elections. Elections in Zimbabwe from 2000 to 2013 have always been controversial with ZANU PF's desire to continue holding on to power. Following the disputed 31 July 2013 elections, ZANU PF effectively retained its hegemony, leaving the opposition political parties severely weakened and disoriented. After the MDC-T failed in its legal and diplomatic manoeuvres to ensure the conduct of fresh elections, it started to battle strong internal conflicts.

Disgruntled with the party's loss, some high ranking members began to call for leadership renewal, especially regarding the party presidency, calling for an early congress to elect a successor to Tsvangirai in order to 'renew' the party and the leadership (ZDI, 2014). As the then party treasurer Roy Bennett put it:

Mr. Tsvangirai has served two terms and is nearly completing a third. Deep introspection needs to be undertaken by our collective national leadership, not for the purposes of looking for scapegoats, but for our party to reinvigorate leadership, with a leadership which reflects the will of the people. Regrettably, some within our leadership as the case with many political parties do not wish the grassroots democratic will of the people to prevail.

After this statement by Roy Bennett, a number of MDC-T leaders expressed the same sentiment. Ian Kay, for example, a former member of parliament for Marondera Central said that the "MDC-T as a party is like "a soccer team" and that "if the coach continues losing, there is need for the technical board to sit down and deal with the issue". The leadership agenda came to a head when the then deputy treasurer Elton Mangoma wrote a letter to Tsvangirai in which he urged him to step down from party leadership. The contentious letter was fully published in *The Herald* of January 27, 2014. However, the private press was silent on this letter until much later.

In a letter titled "Restoration of Hope and Confidence: A case for Leadership Renewal", Mangoma stated that:

The aftermath of the election has been a state of confusion, consternation and apprehension on the part of the movement. The party is grieving from a crisis of leadership legitimacy, crisis of expectation and above all crisis of confidence, externally and internally. Leadership renewal is an inexorable truth that the party will have to confront lest it is plagued by some succession conundrum affecting ZANU PF. Since the outcome of the election calls for leadership renewal have been made in different quarters and at different platforms. It is my unbending resolve that leadership renewal, at this juncture, could be the only avenue to restoring the credibility of the party lest it risks being confined to history.



The tension within the party fuelled violence, suspensions and counter suspensions which finally culminated in a split, with the pro-renewal team lead by Sekai Holland and the then secretary general, Tendai Biti and the other formation remaining loyal to Morgan Tsvangirai (ZDI, 2014).

Although the MDC-T was faced with significant internal challenges, especially after the 2013 election, a split was neither necessary nor strategic. A split would only give the ruling ZANU PF party continued domination and hegemony. I agree with ZDI (2014) observation that with the 2005 party split and the recent 2014 split, there are concerns that divided opposition political parties can only serve to ensure ZANU PF's continued stay in power. While the MDC –T once proved to be a viable opposition capable of articulating problems of the day and presenting voters with coherent electoral alternatives, the splits might weary the electorate and wane the party's support.

ZDI (2014) further argues that naturally after an election, all political parties are expected to look into their internal issues to see where they went wrong and map a way forward. Instead, MDC-T's self-introspection resulted in a split that counters party development, which is detrimental to democracy. The split, as viewed by some, drives the party into a political *cul de sac* that neither helps it to move forward nor strengthens it. Instead, the split scatters the party's energy and even resources.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the representation of political conflicts by the state-owned and the privately-owned press during negotiations and after the Government of National Unity (GNU) which was formed between the ruling party ZANU PF and the opposition MDC formations. The analyses is based on archival textual material from four newspapers, namely *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Daily News* and *The Standard*. The chapter argues that, although there was a significant change in the state-owned media's representation of the opposition MDC, the press remained polarised along political lines. The state-owned press toned down its vitriol against MDC but continued depicting the party in negative light. At the same time, the privately-owned media maintained its negative stance against ZANU PF while it represented the MDC in positive light.

This trend continued until the harmonised election of 31 July 2013 and beyond. In the next chapter I will discuss press representation of ZANU PF power, succession struggles and factionalism.

## **Chapter 4: Press, ZANU PF Succession and Factionalism**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the representation of ZANU PF succession battles, factionalism and power struggles in the state-owned and the privately-owned press with a view to gain insights into the way in which the press is deeply implicated in politics. The chapter begins with some reflections on the concept of power, succession and factionalism and how these are mediated in the state-owned and the privately-owned newspapers. A comparative analysis of privately-owned and government-owned press representation of ZANU PF succession and factionalism is also made. The chapter also analyses the representation of ZANU PF succession and factionalism in press cartoons.

*The Herald* of 2 June, 2012 published a newspaper article by Lovemore Ranga Mataire titled: 'Locating the Genesis of Factionalism in ZANU PF' which offers some interesting insights on power and succession struggles in the ruling party. Mataire (2012] argues that what is new is the physical confrontation that has characterised the holding of district coordinating committee (DCC) elections in some provinces ... which have caused concern for the leadership. President Robert Mugabe has in the past bemoaned the continued clashes of ZANU PF members on many occasions and urged members to revisit the founding principles of the revolutionary party that have sustained it during and after the liberation struggle. Mataire (2012) further notes that ZANU PF has historically managed to deal decisively with factional problems that have manifested in the pre- and post-liberation era by constantly referring to its ideological foundational principles of selfless service to the people.

It can be argued that apart from the absence of ideological orientation on the party new members of the revolutionary party in the post liberation era, other factors fuelling factionalism include the lack of ideological guiding principles, tribalism, personality differences, the succession issue, corruption, the generational gap of old and emerging leadership and the various social interest groups and the scramble for control of the revolutionary party.

The liberation movement's membership has ballooned over the years, accepting within its ranks people who simply identify with the party's pro-majority policies; some do not have a clear understanding of its ideological foundational principles.

Some of the essential elements of that foundation include discipline, pursuance at all times pro-majority policies, selfless dedication to serve the masses, anti-imperialistic, nationalistic and total respect of the hierarchical order.

To a great extent, ZANU PF has failed to offer young members strategic ministerial posts despite their educational achievements. President Mugabe has retained the old guard, even some incompetent cadres at the detriment, not only of the party, but also of the country as a whole, especially the economy. If the President had consistently disciplined errant members, be it in relation to corruption, incompetence, fuelling divisions in the ruling party among other ills, ZANU PF could have been saved from factional fights.

According to Mataire (2012), another factor that has contributed towards factionalism is tribalism. Tribal profiling is so rampant in some provinces that some members had to relocate to their provinces of birth in order to be elected into positions. An example is in Mazowe, a district in Mashonaland Central, where there is an unwritten code that anyone who is not from the Chiweshe area must not be voted into any position. Those fuelling this tribal profiling conveniently disregard the fact that Mazowe is surrounded by farms occupied by new farmers from other provinces. Tribalism breeds decadent leadership, which is bent on protecting its own selfish interest instead of being at the service of the people (Mataire, 2012).

Mataire (2012) observes that the succession issue has had an effect in the cohesion of the party. There seems to be a tendency in the revolutionary movement for people to align themselves with a faction deemed to have leverage of power in the event of change of leadership at the top. Change in leadership comes in various forms; it could be death (which is inevitable), incapacitation, voluntary retirement or end of term in cases where the party and the state constitutions are clear on limits of term of office. In revolutionary parties and states such as ZANU PF where the constitution is silent on term limits people are bound to align themselves with factions.

In bridging the generational gap, the ruling party must as a matter of survival adapt itself to the dynamic changes within the social-political fabric so as to enhance a healthy osmosis of ideas between the old and youthful members of the party (Mataire, 2012). Mataire further argues that the youthful members must as a matter of necessity realise that nothing beats experience and equally important is for the old to harness and not antagonise the exuberance of the youth to ensure that their energy is channelled towards the articulation and execution of

the party policies. The youth should be treated as an integral part of the main body and avenues must be created for their entry into key decision-making positions within the structures of the party. For instance, for 15 years Absalom Sikhosana was the leader of the ZANU PF youth league in spite of the fact that he was no longer a youth, yet there were many younger youths with huge potential to succeed him.

It is also important to highlight the fact that varying social classes or constituencies that make up the membership of the revolutionary party have been the source of conflicts and contradictions (Mataire 2012). War veterans, ex-detainees, the academia and business people must find common ground and not fuel divisions in electing leadership at cell, ward, district or provincial levels. Mataire (2012) argues that it is not good for war veterans, for example, to field their own candidate as being separate from the generality of the membership. Such stratification creates the impression of special treatment, ultimately leading into conflicts.

Corruption is another scourge that has entrenched itself in the revolutionary movement whereby those with financial muscle resort to vote-buying to position themselves in strategic structures of the party. ZANU PF allowed corruption to spread like a cancer which has totally permeated into every fabric of its structures and levels. Bad precedence has been set by the President by failing to severely punish corrupt ministers and other officials, to an extent that it has become a 'culture' to be corrupt and get away with it. Mataire (2012) cites the ZANU-PF election manifesto of 1990 as an example of a case that illustrates the party's position on corruption. The manifesto stated that leaders who took part in any form of corruption or irregular practices, or those who deviate from the leadership code, would no longer be accepted or allowed to continue holding positions of leadership..." If ZANU PF had preserved its liberation ethos as espoused in the popular liberation song from Mao TseTung "KuneNziraDzemagamba" (Code of Soldiers), it would have succeeded in rooting out corrupt tendencies.

President Mugabe should be consistent in punishing or disciplining corrupt leaders instead of applying the law selectively.

## **4.2 Press Representation of ZANU PF Succession Battles**

The stated controlled media represented ZANU PF succession battles through a 'selection and silence' lens, whereby some issues are given the status of "sacred cows" while others are excluded from "scrutiny" through control of the means of communication (Nyamufukudza 2005: 20). Nyamufukudza (2005) argues that insisting particular issues are out of bounds is a "means and method of oppression, of silencing certain imaginaries that could better heal society. It ensures that legitimate concerns of society remain unattended" (Moyo, 2014: 5). This suggests that the state-owned media's attempt to exclude certain voices from the marketplace of ideas is a form of silencing those voices. Thus, in the state-owned press, there is no room for non-partisan discussions. This situation creates an environment whereby society is "able to live comfortably with contradictions, lies and even deliberate mystification of perfectly explainable social phenomena" (Nyamufukudza, 2005: 21).

The state-owned press in Zimbabwe focuses more on denying obvious political problems, thus leading to the conclusion that rulers are less preoccupied with the idea of attempting to solve social, economic and political problems and more worried by denying the existence of such issues. Hence, in the state-owned newspapers, openly encouraging the succession debate in ZANU PF was regarded as taboo. Hence possible contenders like Vice President Joice Mujuru were not given a platform to express their views, but instead were accused of plotting to assassinate President Mugabe.

However, the privately-owned press, which is critical of the government was more daring in reporting on ZANU PF's succession battles and factionalism, and would quote anonymous ZANU PF officials' views on the sensitive and emotive subject. As the fourth estate, the privately-owned press plays a critical role "informing the public about what happens in the world, particularly in those areas in which audiences do not possess direct knowledge or experience" (Harper 2013).

In order to consider how the succession within ZANU PF could unfold, it is instructive to look at past succession to positions within the Presidium and factional battles (Matyszak, 2014). Nevertheless, it is crucial to consider the notion that ZANU PF keeps mum on succession mechanisms, especially when one examines President Mugabe's speech after 'winning' 2013 elections.

Mugabe said that:

The principles we learn must continue to govern us that those in front must depend on those in the grassroots. We are leaders because there are people who support us, good leaders of course. Let us be with our people.

Significant to note is the fact that ZANU PF has kept a tight rein on any official statements or thoughts related to the issue of succession in Zimbabwe. Reports concerning those vying for the presidency are usually based on conjecture and political gossip. The conventional wisdom in Zimbabwe is that there are two main factions within ZANU PF contending for the presidency on Mugabe's departure, those who are grouped around the late Solomon Mujuru and are now grouped around his wife Joice Mujuru, and those grouped around Emmerson Mnangagwa. However, it has also been suggested recently that those formerly aligned to Solomon Mujuru now rally around Sydney Sekeramayi as Mugabe's successor. *The Standard* 24 June, 2012 published an article titled: "Generals Ditch Mujuru in Succession Struggle". *News Day* of 17 April 2014 also had a similar heading in an article titled: "Sekeramayi Emerges as Likely Mugabe Successor". It is important to highlight that neither Mujuru nor Mnangagwa admit that they lead factions – it has become a myth on their denial for reasons best known to them.

Matyszak (2014:23) reckons that both the "Mujuru" and "Mnangagwa" factions have advanced differing and expedient perspectives on the manner in which the presidium of ZANU PF is to be constituted to advance the cause of favoured candidates to the posts. The blurring of the lines between ZANU PF as a party and the state has been a hallmark of Zimbabwe's polity since 1980, and is reflected in the ZANU PF Constitution itself- that ZANU PF will always be the ruling party because it is the sole legitimate voice of the people of Zimbabwe. Such statements reflect ZANU PF's ambition on the one party state which was challenged by the late Edgar Tekere. One manifestation of this is the confluence of the Party presidium and State presidium.

The state and ZANU PF Constitution both establish the posts of a president and two vice-presidents. Those holding the posts under the State Constitution have always been the same individuals who hold the posts under the Party Constitution (Matyszak, 2014). With Mugabe having the unfettered discretion to appoint both Vice - Presidents under the State Constitution, this power affects the process under the party Constitution. Combined with the fact that there is no unequivocal statement of term limits for the Presidium under the ZANU

PF Constitution, a sector within ZANU PF, and particularly the Presidium itself, which of course included Joice Mujuru, then advanced the notion that unless there is a “vacancy” in the presidium, the nominations from the Provinces prior to Congress for the top three positions are a mere formality in the same way as the People’s Conference is required yearly to declare the President of the party as the ZANU PF candidate for the State Presidency. Mugabe and his supporters have thus adopted the refrain that “there is no vacancy in the Presidium”. For instance, *The Herald* of 9 June, 2014 published an article titled: “No Vacancies in the Presidium”, while the *Zimbabwe Independent* 6 June, 2014 had an article titled “No Vacancy for President, Mujuru Told”. This suggests that Mujuru had fallen out with Mugabe and the writing was on the wall that press representations depict Mujuru to have fallen out of favour from President Mugabe. The writing was already on the wall for Mujuru and her allies. Mugabe had never told Mujuru that there was no vacancy in the Presidium. Before she was expelled from ZANU PF, Mujuru and her supporters sought to advance the view that she was number two in the party, implying that her ascendance to the presidency merely required endorsement.

Those challenging these views were labelled factionalists, opportunists and sell-outs causing dissension within the party (Matyszak, 2014). *The Sunday Mail* of 13 April 2014 published an article titled “Mujuru blasts opportunists”, while *The Zimbabwean* of 11 September 2013 carried a news article with a heading, ‘Mujuru is Next: Gumbo “. *The Financial Gazette* of 17 April 2014 also published a similar article titled “Intense Intrigues in Zanu PF Succession”. The statement by Gumbo suggests that Mujuru was Mugabe’s natural successor, a view that was disputed by the Mnangagwa faction which contended that fresh elections for all posts within the Presidium must take place every five years by way of nominations from the provinces. The Mnangagwa faction’s view was that these nominations are not merely a formal and automatic endorsement of the incumbents (Matyszak, 2014).

ZHRNGOF and RAU (2014) assert that a second fault line dividing the Mujuru and Mnangagwa camps is a result of the Unity Accord which absorbed Joshua Nkomo’s PF ZAPU party into ZANU PF in December 1987. The accord ended the *Gukurahundi* in which an estimated 20 000 people in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces were killed by the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade deployed to the region ostensibly to crush PF ZAPU aligned “dissidents.”



It is alleged that Mnangagwa was the brains behind the atrocities but this is sensitive subject in ZANU PF. One section of ZANU PF claims that there was an unwritten pact between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU that the four posts in the Presidium would be shared between the two liberation parties, with ZANU PF occupying the presidency and a vice presidential post, and PF ZAPU take the other vice presidential position and the post of National Chairman since the power base of PF ZAPU is in Matabeleland, the further inference by some is that the PF ZAPU posts will be held by members of the majority ethnic group in Matabeleland, the Ndebele. RAU (2014) argues that while some factions within ZANU PF might wish to exploit ethnic considerations, some political observers have cautioned against using ethnicity as an analytical lens for understanding ZANU PF internal dynamics. For several years, and most obviously in the aftermath of Mugabe's electoral defeat in March 2008 (when those heading the security sectors stepped in to make sure Mugabe's "victory" in the presidential run-off election in June), it has been evident that the President and any aspirant to the presidency are heavily dependent on support from security sector.

It is important to highlight that there was early manoeuvring on succession battles in the ruling party, from the time the executive presidency was created, and the Unity Accord signed in 1987, there was little challenge to the triumvirate of Robert Mugabe as President and Joshua Nkomo and Simon Muzenda as Vice- Presidents. The only position which admitted any fluidity was that of National Chairman a possible future stepping stone to the Vice – Presidency on the demise of any of the two Vice – Presidents (Matyszak, 2014). Positioning and manoeuvring around the issue of succession to President Mugabe began as early as 1999, when sectors within ZANU PF were beginning to view President Mugabe as an electoral liability (Crisis Coalition in Zimbabwe 2014; RAU and ZHRNGOF, 2014).

The Mujuru and Mnangagwa factions firstly locked horns following the death, on 1 July 1999, of Joshua Nkomo, and then the PF ZAPU nominated Vice President. Pursuant to what PF ZAPU member has described as a series of "secret meetings", the National party Chairman, Joseph Msika was "elected" as the new Vice – President by the congress that convened in December 1999. *News Day* of 21 December 2011 published an article titled "ZANU PF tried to impose Nkomo Successor". The article quoted Dumiso Dabengwa, the leader of the revived ZAPU. Although a member of PF ZAPU, and raised in Matabeleland, Joseph Msika was Zezuru, the same ethnic group as President Mugabe.

This caused disgruntlement within PF ZAPU who felt that Msika had been imposed from above, and not being Ndebele, was not an appropriate representative of the Matabeleland Provinces. However, being fourth in the Presidium hierarchy and previously second in command to Joshua Nkomo within ZAPU, his elevation to the vice- presidency was not overtly contentious (Matyszak, 2014).

The promotion of Joseph Msika to the vice-presidency left the position of National Chairperson open, and Mnangagwa threw his hat into the ring for this position. Had he succeeded in the quest, he would have been in pole position to succeed Vice-President Simon Muzenda, also a Karanga, and within reach of the Presidency after Mugabe's departure (Matyszak, 2014). It was apparently astute political manoeuvring by Solomon Mujuru, however, that secured the nomination of John Nkomo, an Ndebele, from eight of the ten provinces. As an Ndebele Nkomo was unlikely rival to Solomon Mujuru's choice for the Vice – Presidency when the opportunity arose – as it did with the death of Simon Muzenda on 20 September 2003.

#### **4.3 The Tsholotsho Saga**

The “Tsholotsho Declaration” refers to a meeting organized by a ZANU PF faction led by Emmerson Mnangagwa, which allegedly sought to remove President Robert Mugabe from power in 2004. The meeting was held at Dinyane Secondary School in the Tsholotsho District of Matabeleland North Province. It became a very sensitive issue in ZANU PF to an extent that some ruling party stalwarts were expelled from the party, while others were demoted. With the vacancy in the Vice – Presidency, after the death of Simon Muzenda, the appointment of a successor was never going to be easy. Mugabe and ZANU PF were, however, seemingly content to wait for the ZANU PF Congress of December 2004 before filling the vacancy.

According to Matyszak (2014), a bruising battle took place between the Mujuru and Mnangagwa camps in the intervening period, from which the Mujuru camp emerged the stronger. CCZ (2014) argues that intrigue has defined Mugabe's post-colonial leadership style as he constantly out manoeuvred competition in his own party. Those who have tried to challenge him using the internal party process have often been outwitted or have been forced to leave the party. Cases in point are Edgar Tekere's departure in 1989 and Simba

Makoni's breakaway in 2008 out of frustration. Following ZANU'S merger with ZAPU in 1987 through the signing of Unity Accord, Mugabe has managed to maintain a delicate balance where cadres from ZANU PF have occupied the second Vice-President's position, with Shona always holding the first Vice-President's position. An attempt to upset this trend was ruthlessly suppressed in October 2004 when a planned secret meeting by six provincial chairpersons of the party and senior leaders to scuttle the ascendancy of Joice Mujuru to the post of Vice-President was aborted after it was interrupted by state intelligence.

ZHRNGOF and RAU (2014) contend that after a series of meetings in August 2003, headed by provincial chairmen and provincial governors, presided over by the national political commissar, it was clear that Mnangagwa had the support for the Vice-Presidency from all except three provinces – Mashonaland Central, Harare, and Mashonaland East.

The Mujuru alignment, which included elements from the three disaffected provinces, came together shortly after these meetings began. A strategy was devised whereby the gender issue was to be used to undermine the Mnangagwa group. The Mujuru camp thus latched upon a resolution, first put forward by the Women's League at its August 1999 meeting in Victoria Falls, that one of the four members of the Presidium must be a woman. Apparently, the league had threatened to boycott the forthcoming December Congress if its demands were not met. Ironically, given subsequent events and that she is now regarded as being very firmly on the Mnangagwa side of the fence, Oppah Muchinguri as Deputy Secretary of the Women's League, reportedly played a key role in driving the proposal.

The Women's League was prevailed upon to repeat its demand at its preliminary meeting of 2 September 2004, (which was then headed by Thenjiwe Lesabe). Accompanied by his wife Grace, Mugabe attended the meeting and announced that he supported this demand. Mugabe seemed poised to frustrate anyone harbouring presidential ambitions and that way he is kept balanced between factions to remain in power. The Mnangagwa faction was unimpressed, therefore plotted to out-manoeuvre Mujuru group. However, a September 2004 resolution by the Women's League saw Mujuru being nominated for the Vice-Presidency, although a group linked to long time Presidential aspirant Mnangagwa had planned to nominate him for the post ahead of the December congress. According to CCZ (2014), a livid Mugabe suspended the six chairpersons and later demoted Mnangagwa to an obscure ministerial portfolio for going against a party position. Jonathan Moyo was removed from the Politburo (and subsequently the party, and also as Minister of Information).

What is interesting to note is that succession battles and factionalism continue to unfold in the ruling party. Many events have since occurred in the revolutionary party and tables continue to be turned as this thesis unravels the drama.

#### **4.4 Grace Mugabe's Entry into Main Stream Politics**

*“People say I want to be president, why not? Am I not Zimbabwean?” The 49-year old said when addressing veterans of the county's liberation struggle at her farm in Mazowe. Zimbabwe's First Lady Grace Mugabe has announced her candidacy to succeed her husband, 90-year-old President Robert Mugabe, when he leaves (Mail & Guardian, October 23, 2014).*

First Lady, Grace Mugabe's entry into active politics can be understood from Oppah Muchinguri, the former Secretary of ZANU PF's Women's League's description of the First Lady as “...an Angel, a Queen and the nation's own Cremora” in reference to her near-perfect being, as well as her philanthropic disposition.

Therefore, the ascendancy of Grace Mugabe and her vicious attacks on Joice Mujuru is a manifestation of the resurrection of a historically stated intent by Mugabe to rule till death. Grace Mugabe was introduced into the political terrain to stem perceived and real aspirations, especially by Mujuru and her backers to ascend to the Presidency during Mugabe's life time. A Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition publication titled “Protracted Road to Transition: Dissecting Zimbabwe's succession Conundrum” (2014) reveals attempts to link current developments and discourses in ZANU PF politics to the late 1980s aspirations by Mugabe for a one-party state, which Zimbabwe seems to be now. In addition, it links this one-party state discourse to the “life presidency” aspirations of Robert Mugabe, and perhaps the possibilities of a matrimonial succession, which would allow Mugabe to rule from both his death bed, and the graveyard (CCZ, 2014:7).

Developments around the succession question actually point to what could be one of the biggest national challenges at the moment; a leadership crisis that is characterised by leadership aspirations that is steeped towards the acquisition of power more than transformation of people's lives. A leadership that is bent on the ‘will to power’ is preoccupied with its own interests and personal aggrandisement, and instrumentalises the same to promote personal, fraternal and factional interests.

While a leadership that is preoccupied with the ‘will to transform’ seeks power to discipline it, it uses it for the benefit of the masses, and transforms it and the systems that support it, for the good of the people. It can be argued that recent and current developments with regard to the ‘succession question’ in ZANU PF and Zimbabwean, including the definite entry into Zimbabwe’s mired political field of First Lady “DR” Grace Mugabe, and Mugabe’s continuous hold of power are denotative of his unfinished quest for a one party-state in Zimbabwe and pursuit of the life presidency project.

Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (2015) argues that the orderly transfer of power from one political leader to another is a litmus test for the stability and legitimacy of a political system and the success to which the transfer is orderly conducted posits the maturity of the political system. Throughout history, succession to power has been one of the trickiest political problems faced by politics, no matter what kind of political infrastructure they run. ZDI (2015) further contends that in prehistoric tribes as much as in modern countries, who becomes the new leader whenever the incumbent paramount dies, the term of office expires, renounces or loses his capacity to rule, has been and is a tough political problem, for it can very easily and frequently cause fights between candidates to ascend to the throne. The transfer of power from one individual to the other has become more of a crisis of stability and survival of the political system particularly in personalised, charismatic and powerful monolithic parties such as ZANU PF. In Zimbabwe, the issue of presidential succession has been a thorny one since independence as the ruling ZANU PF has declared it is the only legitimate party to rule this country.

As mentioned earlier, the second part of the device was to increase Grace Mugabe’s political capital by placing her at the Secretary of ZANU PF Women’s League. While the league was then headed by Oppah Muchinguri, Muchinguri is likely to have stepped aside willingly (from her confessions) in the hope that Grace Mugabe and by extension, President Mugabe, would elevate her into senior Politburo post then possibly into the presidium as a reward. The then ascending of the Mujuru faction made it probable that Muchinguri would in any event have lost the position to Olivia Muchena a Mujuru ally, who had long coveted the post at the impending Women’s League Conference. This was hinted by Muchinguri herself in *The Herald* of 18 October 2014 in the article titled “Why I let post go: Muchinguri”.

The *Zimbabwean Independent* of 17 September 2014 also published an article titled “Knife-edge tension at Women’s League Conference” in which Muchinguri declared surrendering the post. The tension that characterised this conference was reminiscent of the 2009 Women’s League Congress.

With Muchinguri being part of the plotters (the four leaders were later referred to as the “gang of four”) who were hoping to ensure that both Vice-Presidential positions were vacant by the time of the Congress, it should be recalled that the ZANU PF constitution then prescribed that one VP had to be a woman. Muchinguri hoped that the post of the party Secretary for Administration would also become vacant so that she could have been confident that surrendering her position as head of the Woman’s League would have been merely a prelude to obtaining higher post. It is also ironic that Oppah Muchinguri played a key role in having Joice Mujuru elevated to the post of Vice-President in 2004, yet she (Muchinguri) was now plotting for the expulsion of Mujuru, her fellow cadre. Within ZANU PF, anything other than the unrestrained eulogisation of Mugabe is considered a blasphemy (Matyszak, 2015). *The Standard* of 8 February, 2015 published an article titled ‘Mugabe: a God-given Leader- Kasukuwere.’”

Mugabe is depicted as divinely appointed – an example of exaggerated outlandish praise in order to gain favours. Accordingly, one means by which each faction within ZANU PF has traded barbs has been to accuse the other of disloyalty towards the party leaders. This attitude resonates with the concept of “*We*” are right and “*They*” are wrong. It would seem the ruling party’s philosophy is ... if you are not with us, you are against us, which is narrow and fallacious.

Van Dijk (1998:69) argues: “ideologies are representations of who we are, what we stand for, what our values are, and what our relationships are with other groups, in particular our enemies or opponents, that is those who oppose what we stand for, threaten our interest and prevent us from equal access to social resources and human rights.” In other words, an ideology is a self-serving schema for the representation of *Us* and *Them* as social groups. Van Dijk (1998:33) maintains that many group ideologies involve the representation of *Self* and *Others*, *Us* and *Them*. Many therefore seem to be polarised – we are *Good* and *They* are *Bad*, ‘*We*’ group is presented in a favourable light and the ‘*They*’ group unfavourably. This ideological polarisation consists of ‘emphasising our good properties/ actions; emphasising their bad properties/actions, mitigating our bad properties/actions; and mitigating their good

properties/ actions” (Kuo & Nakamura 2005: 410). Few believed that Grace Mugabe would have been elected as Secretary of the Women’s League without Mugabe’s consent. Matyszak (2015) reckons that the proposal had to be considered as beyond reproach. Criticism directed at Grace Mugabe’s ascendancy would be conceived as a criticism of Mugabe, and could be used as a club to bludgeon opponents or to raise complaints about them to Mugabe.

Under the guise of campaigning for Grace Mugabe’s appointment and showing support, provincial committees rushed to nominate Grace as their “candidate” for the Central Committee. ‘Matabeleland Backs First Lady’s Endorsement” and “Harare offers First Lady Key Slot” were headlines that appeared in *The Herald* of 28 July 2014 and 27 August 2014 respectively. The committees were joined in their show of support by numerous other individuals and bodies, the youth league, church groups among others. For example, “Leagues Throw Weight behind *Amai* (Mother) Grace Mugabe”, was the headline of an article published in *The Herald* of 29 July, 2014. *The Herald* of 8 August 2014 had “Youths Endorse *Amai* Mugabe”. The endorsement of the First Lady was expected to be a foregone conclusion within ZANU PF structures, arguably out of fear of “Big Brother.” Consequently, the government controlled press represented the first family in positive light.

Worth noting was the fact that none of the privately-owned press published similar articles, instead, they heavily criticised the First Lady’s conferment of a doctorate which has been a controversial issue in Zimbabwe. Gitlin (1980) argues that news frames are replicated across the journalistic profession where they assume a natural process of selection and omission leading to stereotypes. This thesis argues that private media deliberately did not report on Grace Mugabe’s endorsement because of their ideological inclination.

A period of “Grace Mania” was followed by praise singing about the First Lady and numerous vehicles in the cities, particularly Harare were emblazoned with posters carrying her image (Matyszak, 2015). All state institutions, be they universities, colleges, polytechnics, parastatals and even privately owned organisations joined to congratulate the First Lady.

It has become a norm and culture in Zimbabwe to express solidarity when President Mugabe makes appointments of similar nature. The Mnangagwa faction controlled state newspapers, *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Sunday News*, *The Chronicles*, and electronic media also set into motion saturation coverage of the First Lady’s activities, marked by a slick of obsequiousness (Matyszak, 2015).

Every flattery by eager cadres was dutifully reproduced. An agenda was set for the Zimbabwean society. As McCombs and Yuksel (2004:328) argue: “Agenda setting theory basically explains how and why the public learn how much importance to attach to a topic from the emphasis placed on it in news coverage”. The mass media sets the agenda for public attention and lay the groundwork for public opinion. In short, this is “ the idea that the media don’t tell people what to think, but what to think about” (Baran and Davis 2003:311).

The *Daily News* 9 October 2014 published an article titled “Grace Mugabe for President”. In the article, Oppah Muchinguri was reported to have referred to Grace Mugabe as the “Queen Mother. The Queen of the Queens...” Such representation is suggestive of a to-be crowned president. Such flattery was a means to gain ultimate recognition for yearned promotion which, when denied, may cause frustration and even deep hate. According to Matyszak (2015), the encomium around Grace Mugabe and her new political prominence may have been overdone by the plotters. It was such that it led to speculation that the public was being prepared for her to be appointed to one of the Vice-Presidential positions at congress, and a prelude to her ascendance to the presidency.

With Grace Mugabe having been elevated to the party hierarchy the stage was set for the next act of the plot. A decision was taken that she would address rallies in each of the country’s ten provinces. The central theme of Grace Mugabe’s speeches was factionalism within the party. She would be presented as someone who would unify the party and expunge the scourge of factionalism. Her well-meaning efforts in this regard would be treated as spurned by Mujuruites (a term coined to refer to those aligned to Mujuru), and the idea appears to have been that she would slowly ratchet up the pressure, and, carefully monitoring any backlash from the Mujuruites, gradually increasing both the intensity of the attacks on those claimed to be fanning factionalism (Matyszak, 2015). It is interesting and curious to note that throughout Grace Mugabe’s speeches in all ten provinces in which she viciously attacked Joice Mujuru; President Mugabe did not make any comment or restrain his wife.

Mugabe was apparently incensed with Mujuru as a result. Mujuru responded by denying that she had any ambition to take over the presidency and countered that the allegations were themselves a plot to remove her from the Vice-Presidency, asking Mugabe “Is this the way you want to remove me from the Vice Presidency?” Mugabe reportedly responded that “it is the people who elect leaders“. “Mugabe, Mujuru in Stormy Meeting”, *The Zimbabwean Independent* 22.08.14).



Mujuru's ally, Webster Shamu, accused the youths of trying to foment a 'Nhari type' rebellion against Mujuru. "Nhari" and others rebelled against ZANU PF Leadership in Zambia; most of the members were killed in 1974. Mugabe did not take any action at the State House gathering, simply referring the matter to the next Politburo meeting for consideration. Despite Mugabe's obvious displeasure with them Mujuru and her allies were not cowed.

Days after Mugabe left Zimbabwe for China, the very next week, on 23 August, 2014; Mujurites proceeded with an immediate attempt to purge the Youth League of some key members considered hostile. Harare Province Youth League leader, Godwin Gomwe was first in the firing line, while Temba Mliswa reportedly led moves to remove Vengai Musengi and his deputy Joseph Nyariri in Mashonaland West. *The Herald* of 27 August 2014 represented this purge in an article titled "Youths Targeted in ZANU PF Purge".

The state controlled press intended to instigate emotions so that the President would react on the perpetrators. I can argue that the press was at the forefront in exacerbating and fanning factionalism. In a normal situation the media is supposed to report events and individuals in a manner aimed to resolve conflict and not to fuel it. On the day of the scheduled Politburo meeting, 3 September 2014, *The Herald* published a significant editorial, which seemed to be an unprecedented criticism of Mugabe. The editorial (which reflects the official line) bemoaned the fact that "no heads had rolled" as a result of the "bhora musango" [ball off-target] campaign, no heads had rolled following the provincial elections the previous year despite "vote-buying and manipulation" and no heads had yet rolled over the vote-buying in the Women's and Youth League elective conferences. ZANU PF's inaction on saboteurs since 2008 explains the prevailing problems.

'Unless those behind the Shenanigans are made to answer for their actions, they will continue their nefarious agenda in the knowledge that nothing will happen to them. To this end we hope and we are sure we speak for the generality of Zimbabweans, that the special politburo meeting will not be another talk show. Heads must roll or must be seen to roll to foster discipline down to the grassroots. Where the alleged irregularities are proved, results must be nullified so that intra-party democracy triumphs' (*The Herald*, 3 September, 2014) 'Time ZANU PF Showed Some Teeth' (editorial) and "Politburo Urged To be Decisive" (*The Herald* 3 September 2014).

*The Herald* took a partisan position dictating to President Mugabe and the Politburo what decision they should make. *The Herald's* agenda was clear, instigating, exacerbating and fuelling conflict. The editor of this state owned newspaper seemed to be the mouthpiece and conduit of the elite, particularly the Mnangagwa faction which controlled the pro-government newspapers. *The Herald's* allegiance to the ruling party is unquestionable but its reportage fans factionalism and divides the party instead of building peace and fostering unity in the liberation movement. What is important to note is that before 2013 most government owned media which have a left leaning and subscribe to 'pan-Africanist' ideology were always pro-ZANU PF, but it can be argued that post-2013 they aligned themselves to a particular faction in the ruling party.

"ZANU PF'S inaction" can only be read to mean that of Mugabe, and *The Herald* could not have been urging or have expected the Mujuruites dominated politburo to take action – the call was really for Mugabe to exercise his powers as leader and act "decisively". "Time ZANU PF Showed Some Teeth" and "Politburo Urged to be Decisive" (*The Herald* 3.09.14). The result of the Youth and Women's League Conference elections were allowed to stand. This was represented in *The Herald* of 14 September 2014 in an article titled "Politburo Upholds Conference Results". The *Daily News* of 5 September 2014 published an article with headline "Mujuru Prevails".

From the *Daily News* headline, it can be argued the newspaper clearly had an agenda to support Mujuruites. It can be argued that the two dailies were opposed on their agenda setting. Although it can be argued that the privately owned press generally supports or is sympathetic to opposition parties, in this scenario, it sympathises with the Mujuruites, who in a way represent the "opposition". May be the private press' could explain the claimed 'middle of the road' approach when it comes to reporting issues, events or personalities. The question this thesis may raise is: is this consistent and sustainable?

#### **4.5 Mnangagwa Faction Strategy**

This section attempts to examine press presentation of one faction in the ruling ZANU PF party. The media played a key role in fuelling factionalism. Parent (1993) argues that framing is achieved in the way in which news is packaged, the amount of exposure, the tone of the presentation, the accompanying headlines and visual effects, and the labelling and vocabulary employed.

It should be underscored that even President Robert Mugabe was now aware that there state controlled media was fanning factionalism. Therefore, there was no more pretence that government owned media was pro a faction in ZANU PF.

With Mugabe in his 91<sup>st</sup> year ahead of the congress, the build-up to the congress was destined to be fraught with controversies as those seeking to succeed Mugabe strategically positioned themselves. A key factor in their positioning was control of the provinces. Until its development, the ZANU-PF party constitution provided that the provinces submitted to congress their candidates for the presidium and central committee.

Although these candidates would be elected by congress, in practice they were merely endorsed. It thus caused considerable alarm to the “Mnangagwa faction” that the provincial executive council elections at the end of 2013 delivered nine of the ten provinces Mujuru. Complaints about the manifest electoral improprieties around these elections were ignored by Mugabe and the Politburo. A fight back strategy was required.

Matyszak (2015) contends that Plan A was for the Mnangagwa faction to use its control of the media to undermine Mujuru. A series of exposures of “obscene salaries” being earned by top officials began to appear in the state owned press. The privately owned press also reported on the “salary- gate” extensively. The tactic did nothing other than to incur the ire of President Mugabe, who in a public address called his Information Minister, Jonathan Moyo, believed to control state media, a “weevil”. Didymus Mutasa, the party Secretary for Administration followed the cue given by the President, stating that weevils must be dealt with by “Gamatox”, a long banned insecticide (Matyszak, 2015:1). Thus, the two camps became known as “weevils” and “Gamatox” or “Team Weevils versus Team Gamatox”. *The Standard*, of June 8 to 14, 2014 published an article titled ‘Moyo’s’ World Crumbles’. The article reported that during a politburo meeting, Mugabe initially ordered the dismissal of editors who had been appointed by Moyo claiming that they were sourced from institutions that were advocating for “regime change”.

Speaking at the funeral of ZANU-PF Politburo member, Nathan Shamuyarira at the National Heroes Acre, Mugabe hinted about an impending crackdown on what he described as “party weevils” that were destroying the ruling party from within. Mugabe had accused Moyo of using the media to fan divisions in the party. Mushava and Moyo (2015) quoted President Mugabe saying: “Even in ZANU-PF, we have the weevils. But should we keep them? No. Even our youth are already infested with the weevils.”

The President (and his wife Grace) seemed to have been persuaded also that Didymus Mutasa and other “Gamatoxes” were plotting to remove him from power at the impending congress and install Vice-President Joice Mujuru in his stead (Matyszak, 2015). Mugabe appears to have given a green light to Moyo, a group which became known as the gang of four, leading a larger group of twelve dubbed the “clean dozen” to prevent the plot and rid the party of senior Mujuru allies.

It would seem that although President Mugabe does not trust Jonathan Moyo he cannot do without him for propaganda purposes (he is a necessary “weevil”). According to Matyszak (2015), the means by which this was to be accomplished was partly through Grace Mugabe, who, as Mugabe’s wife, was rightly judged to be immune from criticism. With her status first elevated as incoming head of the Women’s League Grace Mugabe began a campaign to denounce “factionalism”, which, with the aid of the state media was constructed as synonymous with Mujuruites. Rather than two factions competing for power, media propaganda created the image of a solid ZANU-PF headed by Mugabe under the attack from a “putschist cabal”.

Matyszak (2015:2) further argues that; “with the ground thus prepared by Grace Mugabe, the plotters set about gaining control of the provinces.” Mugabe directed that the suspensions of the Youth League members were to be reversed and, it seems, that there were to be no further suspensions of party members before congress to prevent the ongoing chaos in the party. *The Daily News* of 12 October 2014 published an article titled “Suspended ZANU-PF members Appeal to Khaya Moyo” while *The Herald* of 4 September 2014 carried a story with a headline “Harare Province Defies Politburo Directive”. The newspaper representations of anarchy in the ruling party had become the agenda in Zimbabwean society. *The Herald* seemed to whip the president’s emotions again after it earlier instigated in its editorial, as previously discussed, that the Politburo “...should show teeth.”

#### 4.6 Press Representation of Grace Mugabe's Nationwide Rallies

*Zimbabwe's First Lady Grace Mugabe makes her grand entrance into politics following her recent nominations as national secretary of the ruling party's Women's League through a sensational two week-long crusade around the country, whipping supporters into a frenzy and ruffling the feathers of Vice President Joice Mujuru...Tapping into party grievances and adopting the Zanu PF Youth League's anti-factionalist slogans to rally support for her husband, Mrs. Mugabe's movement up the Zanu PF ladder adds a new twist to the battle for the president's succession..."(Zimbabwe – Grace*

*Mugabe's rise to power and pole position in succession race (Tendai Marima in Daily Vox/all Africa, October 24, 2014).*

Grace Mugabe's first rally was held in Chinhoyi, Mashonaland West on 2 October, 2014. Mashonaland West is President Mugabe's home province. The First Lady reportedly denounced factionalism, stating that, instead of fighting amongst themselves, the ZANU-PF leadership should attend to service delivery (Matyszak, 2015). Throughout her rallies factionalism was the First Lady's leitmotif. With regard to those leading the "factions", Mugabe's wife stated:

We have been hearing that some people have been leading factions for a long time and now we hear that they are receiving money from the US to remove President Robert Mugabe...we see them dancing... here as if they love the President, they are good at chanting slogans in the public, but deep down their hearts don't love him... At night, they are plotting his ouster claiming that he is old hence he must go so that they take over (*Daily News* 14 October 2014).

*The Standard*, 2 November 2014 published an article with the headline 'Mugabe to blame for ZANU – PF fights! (Feluna Nleya)' The article reported that Mujuru's alleged ties with the West were revealed in the whistle-blower website Wiki Leaks cables which suggested that she clandestinely met with former US Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Charles Ray "under cover of darkness" in December 6, 2009, after dodging her security and the Central Intelligence Organisation. The Whistle-Blower website also exposed that other senior ZANU-PF officials such as Jonathan Moyo and Savior Kasukuwere met with officials from the US Embassy.

The newspaper article also quoted political analysts, Ibbo Mandaza and Charles Mangongera who concurred in accusing Mugabe of propping up a faction and then crushing it when it threatens his interests. The article further claimed that Mujuru fell out of favour with Mugabe because of her “soft spot for the West”.

It should be noted how newspapers choose their sources. Journalists rely on sources to write their stories. Ogenga (2010) asserts that sources have the power to decide what information they withhold or give out to journalists depending on the interests they have on a particular issue. Journalists tend to form symbiotic relationships with sources with authority, credibility and those who are readily available. In this symbiotic relationship, some sources become more utilised than others (McGregor, 1997). The sources mainly utilised are usually government and credible officials since they are recognisable and credible owing to their status of prestige which makes the audiences easily trust them (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The symbiotic relationship between journalists and sources, where journalists constantly use some and not others creates a powerful frame within which news is constructed. The more powerful the source, the more likely he or she will be used in the news production process (Ndlela, 2001; Schudson, 2003). In this thesis the selected newspapers used different sources to create specific representations.

At the second rally, on 6 October, 2014, at the ZANU-PF Conference Centre in Gweru, Midlands Province, Grace Mugabe reportedly made the first reference to the need to remove Provincial Chairmen, whom she claimed were ineffective, adding that some senior party politicians were conspiring with the MDC-T and Western powers (Matyszak, 2015). The First Lady is also reported to have castigated those whom she alleged were bribing delegates ahead of the December Congress and called on them to desist from the practice.

Small text at the top of the page: ...the first Lady said this while ... "Mushu amani Biko Mugabe ...

# 'Unity Accord' struck in Harare

• First Lady brings together belligerents • . . . they all pledge to work together

**Fatma Mubvumba and Peter Dube**

THE First Lady Annet Moyo Mugabe yesterday said a "Unity Accord" had been struck in Harare as she brought together belligerent provincial chairmen, Cde James Moyo and the province's Youth League chairperson Godwin Gumbo together before thousands of party supporters who packed the City Sports Centre in the capital.

The party's deputy Harare South legislator Cde Mubvumba Mubvumba said she was glad the First Lady was taking a political issue to the grassroots level, Premier Moyo's spokeswoman said.

Cde Mubvumba reportedly said President Mugabe's nephew Cde Peter Dube was the first to see the Central Committee members for Annet Moyo in Harare and they had to make use of her in Harare and Wind.

Annet Moyo, who was on the third leg of her "Meet the People Tour" which kicked off in the revolutionary party's new wing, said she was pleased to see the party members in Harare working together to reach towards building a united party during last year's constitutional debates.

Some 3000 people took part in the rally.

**Photo Caption:** The First Lady Annet Moyo Mugabe yesterday said a "Unity Accord" had been struck in Harare as she brought together belligerent provincial chairmen, Cde James Moyo and the province's Youth League chairperson Godwin Gumbo together before thousands of party supporters who packed the City Sports Centre in the capital. (Picture by Justin Mawema)

The third rally, in Harare on 8 October, 2014, was billed as a “mini accord” as Grace Mugabe portrayed herself as magnanimous by bringing together those who had spoken for and against her ascendancy, (see picture above) and as part of a claimed role as the unifier who would stamp out factionalism in the party.

Photographs and captions dominated the representation of Grace Mugabe rallies as shown above. The photographs used were those representing factionalism and Grace as an embodiment of unity. An image alone in news is polysemic that is open to a number of interpretations. To clarify what the image means and so to make it relevant to the purpose of the news, texts are added. Ogenga (2010) contends that the image serves as a ‘hook’ while the text anchors meaning.

The same photograph takes a different connotation with different accompanying texts. The photographs that were used to represent First Lady's rallies seemed to reinforce the need for unity in ZANU PF. *The Herald* of October 2014 published a story with the headline "Amai Mugabe to nip factionalism in the bud;" which reported on the "Meet the People" rally held at the City Sports Centre in Harare. Oppah Muchinguri was reported to have said "the decision to ask the First Lady, Dr. Grace Mugabe to lead the party organ was meant to stem factionalism that had taken root in the party," (Farai Machivenyika and Felix Share: 2014:2). In another story of the same paper titled 'Unity Accord' struck in Harare, the First Lady told thousands of people at the rally that the day would be historic in the politics of ZANU-PF, before unexpectedly calling Midzi and Gomwe to come to the stage where the latter apologised. She forged a mini 'Unity Accord' between the two as illustrated in the photograph above.

It is yet to be seen whether her mission to 'end factionalism' was accomplished or that the party was further divided by her rhetoric, myth and symbolism. Gamson et al in their book titled: 'Media Images & the Construction of Reality' (1992) argue that the production of images rather than facts or information is a more subtle form of meaning construction. Facts, as much as images, take on their meaning by being embedded in some larger system of meaning or frame. Fiske (1987) suggests that reading media imagery is an active process in which context, social location, and prior experience can lead to quite different decoding. In the same way photographs utilised in this thesis are subject to different readings as they assume particular ideological representations.

However, the suggestion that "Mujuruites" were to be forgiven and brought back into fold appears to have been abandoned at the rally in Masvingo on 9 October 2014. At this rally, Grace Mugabe inched closer to disclosing that Mujuru herself was a prime target and subject of her excoriation. She claimed that those who wanted to rule in place of her husband were unable to do so and, having been placed in their positions by Mugabe, could just as easily be removed (Matyszak, 2015).



She is reported to have warned that:

Some of you here were called (by Mugabe) and were warned, but you did not listen. You know what's next. There are many people who can take the job that you have. You are a crook. If you harden your head, what if the person you are fighting for loses? What will you do? Where will you go...? Most people were being spoon-fed by my husband. He worked for them, yet today you hear them saying they want to rule the country. Are you able to rule? Leave us alone, you are revolting, you are not able to rule the country ('I'm Aiming for High Post – Grace Mugabe' (*News Day*, 10 October 2014).

Oppah Muchinguri claimed that the First Lady had an important role to play in the party. She stated that:

We realised that there were some who wanted to take over from Mugabe but we plotted against them and decided to use our mother (Grace Mugabe) to come and take over because she is a worthy candidate...We had to do this because it was the same people who are undermining us and intimidating us to support their cause to replace *baba VaMugabe* (father Mugabe) but we have put it to an end by the coming in of *Amai* (mother i.e. Grace Mugabe) (*Daily News*, 11 October, 2014).

Before Grace Mugabe began her rallies, the initial path was cleared for her. This set the tone for her rallies and did not make it appear as if she was promoting maverick policies and discussing factionalism which the party had previously wished left out of the public domain. The public were aware of the existence of these factions despite the fact that both Mujuru and Mnangagwa denied it. There were three significant developments marking this process according to Matyszak (2015). Firstly, trenchant criticism of two prominent Mujuruites by President Mugabe himself; an outstanding interview with war veteran Christopher Mutsvangwa, published in *The Herald*; and the meeting with the Youth League at State House already mentioned.

The strident tone of the interview is well captured by this opening salvo by the abrasive war veteran in regard to a question referring to “reports” of factionalism within ZANU-PF:

An ambitious coterie of political chancers...has also recruited lumpen elements with criminal intent... pursuing a fascist agenda as they employ Nazi tactics to try to wrestle power and then proceed to resurrect a post-Rhodesian political agenda. The coterie is totally opposed to the revolutionary history of the party whose regalia and banners they are so much wont to flaunt. ... Now ever the busy-body Mutasa, he has been angling to abuse the illustrious record of another cadre, the Vice President...Mujuru. In a scheme that sidesteps fellow comrades who fought alongside her, there is some coaxing at instigation of Mutasa and cohorts on Vice President Mujuru to make her challenge His Excellency Mugabe. This conspiracy is directed at the man who has given Vice President Mujuru post-independence high offices from the onset of the Republic, an honour and recognition that has not been accorded to any other of her peers (*The Herald*, 16 August 2014).

Mutsvangwa’s tone was full of vitriol, mockery, denigration and despise. What is of interest is that state owned press was setting the agenda and taking sides in fuelling factionalism. Mutsvangwa belittled the roles played by Mutasa and, to some extent, Mujuru, in the independence war, maintaining that Mutasa was a coward who had done everything possible to remove himself from zones of danger and that the legend that Mujuru had downed a Rhodesian helicopter, was manufactured by Webster Shamu. The interview was extremely significant in the sense that any doubt that the party was not deeply divided had been abandoned. And the cause of the division was openly declared to be a plot to oust Mugabe, orchestrated by Didymus Mutasa, and with the intent of placing Mujuru as the head of party and government.

The Mutsvangwa interview starkly disclosed the depth of the antipathy between the opposing camps in ZANU PF. Also remarkable was the fact that Mutsvangwa made such comments seemingly without fear of many adverse consequences, despite the fact that the party’s National Disciplinary Committee was under the control of Mujuru and her allies (Matyszak, 2015). When Mujuru-aligned youths and supporters clashed with Grace Mugabe’s supporters at her rallies, they claimed that they were not demonstrating against the First Lady herself, but rather against the use of the ‘down with Gamatox’ slogan. However, the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans leader, Jabulani Sibanda, in a characteristically outspoken manner, refused to be cowed. Sibanda is reported to have said that:

If you want to find me guilty of not attending the First Lady's rallies, I plead guilty on that one and I won't attend unless the programme changes. I can't attend a function where they say 'Pamberi ne (forward with) Mazoe Crush', 'Pasi ne (down with) Gamatox'. That slogan is unknown in Zanu PF---All able-bodied people should stand up --- and block attempts to stage a coup, both in the boardroom and in the bedroom ( 'Jabulani Sibanda Arrested' (*The Herald*, 29 November, 2014).

Sibanda was suspended from the party shortly after a politburo meeting and was arrested for insulting the President. The foregoing discussion highlights importance of state media sources which create particular frames and representations. Gans (1979) further explored the relationship between reporters and sources. He argues that the power of official sources, combined with the need for efficiency, ultimately structures how news organisations decide what news is.

Following the First Lady's comments about Mugabe's power of appointments, an article appeared in *The Sunday Mail* on 12 October, 2014, arguing that the election of the Presidium was the root of factionalism in the party. The article quoted plotter, Patrick Zhuwao, and maintained:

Observers said this situation saw the non-appointed officials creating their own centers of power, which resulted in factionalism that manifested itself in vote-buying, violence, intimidation and general disloyalty to the President. They pointed out that the party constitution was at loggerheads with the 1987 Unity Accord as regards to how people could occupy the two VP posts. Article 4 of the Unity Accord states: "That Zanu PF shall have two Second Secretaries and Vice Presidents of the Party" ('President should Appoint VPs, Chair' (*The Sunday Mail*, 12 October, 2014).

This suggests that the plotters were clearly setting the agenda for the December congress. Part of the propaganda techniques was to effect repetition, and the state-owned press published articles on the issue of President's appointment powers. At her sixth rally in Gwanda, Grace Mugabe made reference to Mugabe's appointing powers, but compared the party and state institutions rather than the party constitution and the Unity Accord as the plotters probably intended.

As a result, when reporting on the rally, *The Herald* of 14 October, 2014, claimed that the First Lady's remarks concerning appointments reflected "growing demands" that the President's powers in this regard be aligned with the Unity Accord.

The media set the agenda based on what the elite intent to decide on so that people are prepared slowly to accept the ultimate outcome. The rally in Mutare on 10 October, 2014, was significantly the most poorly attended and marked by clashes between youths led by Harare leader Godwin Gomwe and those supporting Manicaland supremo Didymus Mutasa. Grace Mugabe chided Manicaland province as being the worst culprit as far as factionalism was concerned and indirectly criticised party leaders in the province by decrying the successes achieved by the opposition MDC-T there. The First Lady's speech was covered in *The Herald* of 11 October, 2014, in a story titled "Count Me Out of factions-*Amai*".

*The Herald* of 14 October, 2014, published a scathing story on VP Mujuru headlined: "First Lady Tears into VP aspirants". The newspaper quotes Grace Mugabe saying:

Some people like to ride on the back of the President, they think that being Vice President means sitting in the office and Mugabe working for them....We don't want that, we want people who are capable. We don't want! We don't want! We don't want a liability. We don't want such one who spends time sitting with no ideas... (*The Herald* 14 October 2014).

In addition, Grace Mugabe made repeated and pointed references at this rally to her husband's power to make senior appointments, under both the party and state constitutions, stating also that the fact that a person was a Vice-President of the Party did not ensure that they would be a Vice-President of the country.

The MMPZ's (2014) comment on media coverage of ZANU PF factional fights notes that the state media took sides in ZANU PF factional wars. It expressed concern over the increasingly hysterical "news coverage" in the state owned media regarding developments surrounding the feuding factions within ZANU PF. The MMPZ (2014) asserts that while these pro-government media are notorious for denigrating the political opposition, particularly during elections, the intensity with which the ruling-party controlled news outlets turned on a section of ZANU PF was disturbing.

Apart from the publicly owned media having a constitutional obligation to “be impartial” and “afford fair opportunity for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions”, they resorted to persecuting Vice-President Joice Mujuru and those who allegedly supported her.

While these events made unsavoury reading for their own crude and offensive assaults on Vice-President Mujuru, the state owned media became willing recruits in amplifying the hatred and intolerance expressed by Grace Mugabe (MMPZ, 2014).

Grace Mugabe publicly accused Mujuru of being corrupt, an extortionist, a “sell-out”, lazy, devious and deceitful, incompetent, inept, among other grave allegations, but it would seem that this was carefully “choreographed” to prepare for Mugabe’s vitriolic attacks on the Vice-President and to convince the public of the “truth” of the allegations once made. However, most of the non-ZANU PF aligned press had little doubt that, although no names had been mentioned, the First Lady’s address was an attack on Joice Mujuru. For example, *Daily News* of 14 October, 2014, published an article with a headline; “Grace Savages Mujuru Again”. The headline itself depicts a tone of sympathy which is supported by the content.

In her Lupane, Matabeleland North (13 October) and Bulawayo (14 October), Grace Mugabe only made covert reference to Mujuru, whom she chided for vying for a vice-presidential position. Before she took to the podium, a spat developed between Philip Chiyangwa and Temba Mliswa who was believed to be a member of the Mujuru faction chanted the “*pasi ne* (down with) Gamatox” slogan. The last two of Grace Mugabe’s rallies signalled a change in tactics. At a closed door provincial committee meeting ahead of the penultimate rally in Bindura, Grace Mugabe reportedly revealed the existence and content of the “spy tapes”. The attack on Joice Mujuru then recommenced with renewed vigour (Matyszak, 2015). The “spy tapes” were part of the scheme and propaganda to finally smear Mujuru. The plotters had to spin allegations which had to be covered in the state-owned media, both print and electronic.

The repetition of these accusations was craftily engineered for agenda-setting, in order to completely destroy Joice Mujuru. *News Day* of 17 October, 2014, quoted the First lady' saying:

The youths have alerted me about someone who is spearheading factionalism in their (Mashonaland Central) province and I told *Baba* (President Mugabe) to 'baby-dump' that person. I told him that if he does not dump that person, we will do it ourselves----you can no longer deny that you are a faction leader. Enough is enough, even those men who are being used by this faction leader; we will dump them when we dump that person (*News Day* 17 October 2014).

Grace Mugabe added that:

The faction leader is moving around saying *Mai* Mugabe has money, yet the (same) person has diamond mines and has about 10% shares in almost every company. That is greed. That is corruption, yet the person goes around saying a lot of rubbish about *Amai* Mugabe. That is why I am saying to *Baba* (Mugabe), if he does not dump the person in the street to be devoured by the dogs, we will do it ourselves. Dumping her is the only way forward, dumping the baby so that she can be exposed to the elements. If we expose her, even flies or wild dogs will be repulsed with her corrupt activities, which stink (*News Day*, 17 October 2014).

Contrary to her claims when she began her rallies, the First Lady's speech does not bode well for unity or "stemming factionalism in the bud". The coarse language and vulgarity used by the First Lady such as "baby dumping" was out of taste. Such crude language was also used at her second rally in Mazowe where she is reported to have said:

Do not take unnecessary risks saying you are brave because you will end up being humiliated and have children laughing at you. You will be humiliated and left naked and dogs will not come near you because you stink, if you have put on perfume---.You are not going to heaven because God will not touch your stinking body. And even mosquitoes will not come near you because you stink ("Go now, Grace orders Mujuru": *Daily News*, 18 November, 2014).

*The Daily News* of 17 October, 2014 published an article whose headline read “Grace Wants Mujuru Out.” By the 16 October, 2014, Grace Mugabe’s calls for Mujuru’s ouster had not only become overt, but she claimed to have made a direct challenge to her husband to expel Mujuru telling thus: “...I said this faction leader must be dumped by you. If you do not do it we will do it ourselves. We will dump her ourselves because she is dividing the party...” The challenge was repeated a few weeks later as reported in *The Herald* of 17 November 2014 in an article with the headline “First Lady Repeats Call for Mujuru Resignation”.

*The Herald* quoted the First Lady declaring “We are saying to the President you made a mistake (in appointing Mujuru) and now correct that mistake.” It is clear that *The Herald* was taking a position and actively participating in widening the feud between Grace Mugabe and Joice Mujuru, thereby worsening factionalism in the party. At her final rally in Marondera, Mashonaland East, Grace Mugabe was particularly acerbic in her attack on Mujuru, though again, refraining from mentioning her by name (Matyszak, 2015). She claimed that the “demon of factionalism started in Mashonaland Central” (Mujuru’s home province), and went on to accuse Mujuru of being behind parties opposed to ZANU PF and in alliance with them, seeking to stop elections in 2013 and to remove President Mugabe accusing him of using his wealth to support Mujuru and factionalism, and that he was supporting an inept leader who could not stand against President Mugabe.

#### **4.7 Representation of the Purgings of Provincial Chairpersons**

Matyszak (2015) contends that, in order to gain control of the provinces and preclude nominations to the Presidium, the plotters deemed necessary the removal of the nine allies of Mujuru who were provincial chairpersons, elected at the end of 2013, since the Politburo had directed the “suspensions of suspensions” in early September, 2014. Temba Mliswa, Chairperson of Mashonaland West, was the first target.

In order to effect that, a series of denigratory articles about Mliswa began to appear in the Mnangagwa camp- controlled press (state-owned media) in September, 2014. *The Herald* of 19 September, 2014, published an article titled: “12 MPs in US Funding Scandal”. In the story, Mliswa was accused of being part of a group of 12 ZANU PF legislators whom *The Herald* dubbed as the “dirty dozen”, and also claimed that they had received funding and leaked the party’s classified information to an American CIA operative.

*The Herald* of 10 October, 2014, carried an article titled: “Mliswa’s ‘dirty’ Liaisons Exposed,” in which the paper subsequently alleged that Mliswa was hobnobbing with white farmers and business persons, and implied that the donations he solicited from them were neither properly accounted for nor channelled towards the purpose for which they were requested. Whenever ZANU PF wanted to get rid of someone from their ranks the state-owned press became a key instrument in rubbing that official by employing propaganda to tarnish their image. The same tactic was used against Mujuru.

*The Daily News* of 2 October, 2014, published a story with a headline: “They Want me Out: Mliswa.” According to the *Daily News* the first attempt to oust Mliswa by a vote in the Provincial Executive Committee (PEC), in early October, 2014, failed. It is worth noting that the privately-owned press sympathise with Mujuru and her allies who were represented as victims of the Mnangagwa faction. Thus the private press represented a faction of ZANU PF in positive light while another was portrayed negatively, whereas previously all ruling party elites were negatively represented. *The Standard* of 12 September, 2014, published an article headlined “I am still in Charge: Mliswa”, in which Mliswa maintained that the PEC meeting had been improperly convened and that due process had not been followed and that he had refused to accept his ouster as reported in *The Sunday Mail* of 12 October, 2014, in a story titled: “Mliswa still Chair”.

*The Daily News* of 19 October, 2014, carried an article with a headline: “Mash West Trashes anti-Mliswa Drive”. The newspaper reported that a Provincial Inter-District meeting was held at which a reported 780 of 900 delegates reaffirmed Mliswa as Chairperson. There were no further votes of no confidence against the Provincial Chairperson until the conclusion of Grace Mugabe’s rallies (Matyszak, 2015). They then took place in rapid succession, commencing with the ouster of Retired Brigadier General Calisto Gwanetsa in Masvingo on 30 October, 2014.



Almost all were as messy as Mliswa's ouster. *The Standard* of 2 November 2014 carried an article titled "I am still Provincial Chairman: Gwanetsa", but he was accused of causing chaos in the party by refusing to step down as was captured in *The Herald* of 4 November 2014 in a story titled "War Vets stick to guns on Gwanetsa." *The Herald* of 7 November 2014 published a story titled "Vote of no confidence in Midzi, while *The Daily News* of 9 November 2014 had an article titled "Violent ZANU-PF Mob Accosts Midzi." *The Herald* supported ouster of Midzi while the *Daily News* depicted the ruling party as violent.

Although all the Provincial Chairpersons initially refused to accept their expulsion, claiming procedural improprieties, they were eventually forced out of office. The other chairpersons who were also expelled include Jason Machaya, of the Midlands Province who accepted the result; Andrew Langa of Matabeleland South and John Mvundura of Manicaland Province. *The Herald* of 10 November 2014 had an article titled "Chairman Bites off the Dust" while *The Sunday Mail* of 16 November 2014 published an article titled "And Then There Were Only Four." *The Herald* of 10 November 2014 reported on Jason Machaya's expulsion while *The Sunday Mail* reported Mvundura ouster, which was reported in *The Standard* of 16 November 2014 under the headline "Another Mujuru Ally Kicked Out." Bulawayo Provincial Chairperson, Callistus Ndlovu was expelled on 17 November 2014, and this was reported in the state-owned press in Bulawayo, *The Chronicle* of 18 November 2014.

Matyszak (2015) argues in his report that the Mashonaland East Provincial Chairperson, Ray Kaukonde was singled out by the First Lady for attack, allegedly for fanning factionalism, accusing him of bankrolling Mujuru. Notwithstanding this cue, a Provincial Coordinating Committee meeting of 1 November, 2014, rather than moving a vote of no confidence against Kaukonde, in fact expressed confidence in his leadership. An attempt had been made to force Kaukonde from office on 10 November, 2014, by ZANU-PF supporters drawn from the Youth League, War Veterans, War Collaborators, former political prisoners and detainees, as captured in *The Herald* 11 November, 2014, in an article titled, "Ray Kaukonde, Langa Kicked Out." Kaukonde was eventually expelled on 17 November, 2014 after the passing of a vote of no confidence.

Luke Mushore, Provincial Chairperson of Mashonaland Central, Mujuru's home province, was the last of the group to be removed, on 18 November 2014. Again promoting factionalism and plotting to topple Mugabe were cited as the reasons for his removal and *The Herald* of 19 November 2014 carried an article titled "9<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chairman Booted Out." However, the Chairperson of Matabeleland North was not thought to be a Mujuru ally and survived the frenzy of expulsions.

#### **4.8 Pre-December Epic Congress Purges**

After the ZANU PF Provincial Chairpersons had been removed from their positions, the next move by the plotters was to purge senior officials allegedly aligned to Mujuru faction. Having slandered Mujuru's allies through the public media with increasingly outlandish and unsupported allegations the next move was to expel senior members of the Mujuru faction, including Mujuru herself. Just before the purges of the Provincial Chairpersons had begun, an article with the headline "US, VP Mujuru plot to oust President" had appeared in *The Sunday Mail* of 26 October 2014. In the article, it was reported that Mujuru, in cahoots with American intelligence agents were plotting to oust President Mugabe through a vote of no confidence in Parliament. Part of *The Sunday Mail* story claimed that:

Investigations show that this was part of double-pronged strategy that included challenging President Mugabe's incumbency at the ZANU-PF Congress in December... As such, President Mugabe would have first lost control of ZANU-PF, and then lost state presidency via parliamentary procedures hinged on Section 97 (Removal of President or Vice President from office) of the Constitution (*The Sunday Mail* 26 October 2014).

However, the story did not gain much traction, probably because it was too legally technical. As discussed earlier, ZANU-PF had always felt that Mujuru had a soft spot for the United States of America as she was perceived to be a "moderate", ideologically contrary to Mnangagwa who was considered a "hardliner". In this regard, a well orchestrated plot to smear Mujuru was to use state-owned media to 'expose' her links with United States. Thus, *The Sunday Mail* of 16 November 2014 published an article with a headline "VP Mujuru Linked to President Assassination Plot."

The story's representation went a step further to make allegations of treason of Mujuru. Matyszak (2015) asserts that because false allegations of plotting to assassinate President Mugabe had been used repeatedly before this to neutralise political opponents, these allegations were likely to cause sceptical yawns among non-Mnangagwa loyalists and readers. It is imperative to note that when ZANU-PF is faced with a presidential threat to fight its hegemony, it uses treasonous allegations on its opposition. For example, *The Zimbabwean Mail* of 5 March 2015 carried an article titled "Robert Mugabe's Imaginary Assassins". Most notably against presidential challengers were Ndabaningi Sithole in 1997 and Morgan Tsvangirai in 2002. Nevertheless, charges were dropped when ZANUPF lost cases in court.

It is worth noting that state-owned newspapers never made effort to balance their reporting by way of seeking views of those alleged in plotting President Mugabe's assassination. Professional values of verification, balance, ethics and objectivity were deliberately shelved or 'suspended' in order to achieve their goal – of destroying Mujuru remnant before Congress.

*The Herald* of 19 November 2014 published an article with a headline "Goche under Fire". The representation was meant to smear Nicholas Goche, a Mujuru ally, who was drawn into the issue when, three days after the first publication of the "plot" he was reported to have played a key role by seeking to recruit hitmen to kill Mugabe, travelling to South Africa and Israel under the guise of government business. Mugabe himself alluded to the plot when he said that "This man (himself) was to die in September and he refused to die in that September, and still refused to die. 'Ah, it now needs sangomas'. They say to (Ray) Kaukonde, 'look for a sangoma'".

*The Standard* of December of 21 to 27, 2014 published an article titled "Goche gunfire reports a pack of lies". Part of the story depicts ZANU-PF's scheme thus:

The factional fighting in ZANU-PF that has claimed the scales of former Vice President Joice Mujuru and several powerful politicians in the party has taken a new twist amid indications some of the accusations levelled against the ousted party gurus could have been a pack of lies aimed at destroying their political empires.

According to the newspaper article, allegations were used to push hard through the state media, claiming that Goche had told an official at a sugar estate in the Lowveld that there was going to be real war at the Congress where Mugabe was set to be removed from his seat. The newspaper further reported that Goche had openly told witnesses that the alleged coup plotters intended to kill Mugabe before the ZANU PF Congress. This shows that the state media was used as tools for advancing factional agendas and were very instrumental in the eventual fall of Joyce Mujuru and her allies. Worth noting, however, is that, apart from hearsay, no evidence linking Mujuru and her allies to the assassination plots could be established, even though police were said to be investigating the matter, (Matyszak, 2015). However, this did not deter the state-owned press from treating the alleged plot as fact.

The state-owned press began to refer to Mujuru and her allies as a “cabal” and then as a “putschist cabal”. Despite the relentless and scurrilous nature of these allegations, both before and after the congress, they were later cynically brushed aside as inconsequential by Jonathan Moyo, who stated that the allegations were merely normal “political banter” to be expected between rival groups in a pre-election environment. The fact that some key officials allegedly belonging to Mujuru had been thoroughly smeared and purged meant that ZANU-PF factional plotters still had a final task to remove Joice Mujuru and members of Central Committee aligned to her. Again the state-owned newspapers played an important role in mudslinging targeted officials.

#### **4.9 The Fall of Mujuru**

Two days after the end of the Congress, on 9 December, 2014, the dismissal of Mujuru, seven ministers and one Deputy Minister was announced, not by Mugabe but, by the Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Dr. Mischeck Sibanda.



*The Herald* of 10 December, 2014 reported on the dismissal of Mujuru in an article with a headline “VP Mujuru and Ministers Fired”. *The Daily News* of 10 December, 2014 covered the story under a headline “Carnage! ...as Mugabe sacks Mujuru, 8 Ministers”. The *Daily News* article was accompanied by Joice Mujuru’s photograph whose caption read: “AXED: VP Joice Mujuru has been fired from government”. These headlines show that the state and private media interpreted the fate of a Vice President and other ministers in different ways.

In the study of media discourses, headlines are particularly interesting. Brooks cited in Willems (2004) asserts that readers often tend to focus on the headlines of articles rather than on the content. Headlines serve as summaries of news articles and emphasise what the journalist considers to be the most important or most remarkable points of an article. Headlines also include the issues that reporters wish their readers to remember. Headlines often appear to be only partial summaries of the news text. Since headlines are usually read more frequently than the articles themselves, they are a powerful way to convey a particular ideological view. Headlines activate and reproduce the knowledge readers already have on the subject and may as a result also reconfirm readers’ prejudices.

From the above arguments, *The Herald’s* intention was to demonstrate its lack of sympathy towards Mujuru and her allies. I can argue that since state-owned press has been instigating and fuelling conflict between Mujuru and Mnangagwa through its reportage, it was celebrating the fall of Mujuru. The content of the article clearly shows the position of the state controlled newspaper. The photograph is accompanied by a caption which read: “Mujuru ouster no answer to factionalism – Mujuru faction will have to engage the First Lady, but I don’t see that happening”.

The discourse in the private media points to a significant phenomenon which satirises the futility of purging Mujuru and her allies hoping they get rid of factionalism.

On the contrary, the *Daily News's* headline “Carnage!” (10 December 2014) carries connotations of shock and horror at the unprecedented deed. The accompanying Mujuru photograph is meant to arouse sympathy as the image depicts gloomy, disbelief and melancholy. Willems (2004) asserts that the choice of vocabulary also constructs particular ideological representations of events. I also posit that “words” are the “garments” in which we “dress” thoughts. Apart from their descriptive function, words express views and attitudes. The selection of specific words rather than others has clear ideological implications because it often reveals the underlying beliefs of journalists about actors and events. The party could be more divided now and worse fissures may emerge with the passage of time, especially with speculations that a new political party is in the offing by Mujuru and allies.

Another point of interest is how actors were grammatically structured. The roles of subject positions which grammar constructs for the participants have ideological meanings. Participants can be grammatically constructed either as direct agents of processes such as violence and repression or as affected participants, frequently as victims. For example, in the above article, *Daily News* headline “Carnage!...as Mugabe sacks Mujuru, 8 Ministers”. The representation is that Mujuru is a victim of a dictator, deduced from the diction employed “sacks”. Carnage has connotations of perish and destruction. In fact, Zimbabweans were aware of the impending disaster since it had been looming for long. The *Daily News* article confirms this in the lead paragraph; “AS EXPECTED, President Robert Mugabe has sacked Vice President Joice Mujuru and eight cabinet ministers perceived to be loyal to her, in a move analysts described ... as “potentially catastrophic” for the country.

The article reported on the axed ministers who included Didymus Mutasa (Presidential Affairs), Webster Shamu (ICT and Postal Services), Nicholas Goche (Public Service and Labour), Simbarashe Mudarikwa (Mashonaland East Province), Francis Nhema (Youth Development and Indigenization), Olivia Muchena (Higher & Tertiary Education), Dzikamai Mavhaire (Energy & Power Development) and Munacho Mutezo (Mavhaire’s Deputy).

Mujuru herself confirmed to the *Voice of America's* Studio 7 station that she had indeed been fired by Mugabe, adding that she would, however, not be quitting the ruling party despite the enormous pressure on her to do so. The newspaper depicted that the dismissals would add to the uncertainty that was already bedeviling the country's ailing economy. On the contrary, state controlled newspapers were silent on how succession struggles were impacting the economy. If anything, they glorified Mugabe's efforts in securing "mega billion" deals sealed between Zimbabwe, China, Russia and Nigeria among others yet the country continued to reel under economic devastation. Eldred Masunungure, a University of Zimbabwe political scientist said that "...those decisions are not just political but will have serious consequences on the government". In the same *Daily News* article of 10 December, 2014 referred above International Crisis Group's Southern Africa Project Director, Piers Pigou was quoted saying that the economy would remain in a parlous state unless there was a "paradigm shift" in the political sphere." Pigou also said it was unlikely that the vanquished Mujuru camp would have the courage to form their own party.

The motivations for restructuring of the cabinet are not efficient and delivery. The President is motivated by vindictiveness and the need to get rid of ministers accused of siding with Mujuru and "plotting to kill him". As usual, President Mugabe sees cabinet as a space for rewarding his loyalists and not as the chief policy-making organ that is supposed to drive government business. It is an extension of his patronage system. It can be argued that Grace's feud with Mujuru divides ZANU-PF – this chaos has spawned and could split the ruling party and also lead to scores of legislators quitting the liberation movement. Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) Director, Pedzisai Ruhanya was quoted by the *Daily News* saying that "...the congress only served to illustrate that ZANU-PF is a personal project of Mugabe...we are going to see the revival of Mujuru faction. This Grace thing is a passing phenomenon; she can only be here and there during the life of her husband".

After Mujuru and her alleged allies were fired, the following day, 10 December, 2014, President Mugabe announced the appointment of the Party Presidium, and what *The Herald* of 11 December 2014 reported as a 33 member politburo, comprising three members of the Presidium, 22 Heads of Department, five committee members (reduced from the 10 previously) and three deputy heads of department. Mugabe exercised his power to add an additional politburo department to the 21 set out in the only recently amended document (Matyszak, 2015).

*The Herald* of 12 December, 2014 headline “President Unveils New Ministers” did not amuse Zimbabweans who knew it was a recycle of the same “deadwood” selected from ‘loyal’ crop.

It was evident that the fired ministers were punished because of their poor conduct (association with Mujuru) as party cadres, and not as ministers, who were at fault. Furthermore, the replacement ministers were appointed on the basis of factionalism and not meritocracy as prescribed by the constitution. President Mugabe’s comments during this changing of the guards are of considerable interest and are worth quoting at length (Matyszak, 2015). They appear in the article on the appointments in *The Herald* of 11 December, 2014 in a story with the headline “VPs Appointed: Mnangagwa, Mphoko Land Posts”, where it was reported that, before the President announced the names of the party appointees, he declared that the position of National Chairman of the party had been “abolished”. Mugabe is reported to have said that:

We are reducing that top heaviness, the two vice presidents have no real function except that they are deputies and I can give them work to do. We feel it’s not necessary that if you have the two Vice Presidents you have the Chairman. They can rotate so we want to do without the Chairman.

It is interesting to note the Mugabe’s use of “we” meant himself. It is common knowledge that there is little, if any, internal democracy in ZANU-PF. When later asked about the change to the Party Constitution, which removed the requirement that one Party Vice President must be a woman, Mugabe replied:

Ah, we have removed it? I do not think we have removed it. We just ignored it for now because of the circumstances when a woman, who grew too ambitious and, did not want to bid her time to see the President should either retire or die soon after the elections, she wanted to take over in a short space of time, the strategy. The man has just won the election, you want to push him out (President Robert Mugabe’s 91<sup>st</sup> birthday interview, ZBC (online) 3 March, 2015).

Matyszak (2015) argues that the duty to appoint the national Chairperson is that of Mugabe and Mugabe alone (Section 39 of the Party Constitution). Yet the unconstitutional decision to “abolish” the post is as if that of some unknown collective.



Hence it is “we” who decide to reduce the top heaviness, it is “we” who feel that if you have two Vice Presidents that a Chairman is not required, “we” who want to do without the Chairman. Mugabe uses “I” in regard to giving the Vice Presidents work to do, but immediately switches back to “we” in the next two sentences which concern his unconstitutional failure to appoint the Chairperson.

In announcing the appointments to the Presidium, Mugabe refers to himself in the third person – not “I lead the presidium”, but “at the top is President Mugabe”; he does not say that he has appointed the Vice Presidents, but that they have seemingly acquired these posts without any action from him.

Part of the scheme was to bar perceived Mujuru allies from contesting in the elections. In the Midlands Province, Francis Nhema and Flora Bhuka lost elections, which meant two Mujuru aligned officials had been removed. In the Politburo meeting, held on 22 November, 2014, Mugabe removed any remaining doubts as to which faction he supported. According to Matyszak (2015), an inappropriately jocular Mugabe snubbed Mutasa by failing to greet him, facetiously telling Kudakwashe Bhasikiti, the then Masvingo Provincial Affairs Minister, and a Mujuru ally that he was “in the wrong basket” (camp) or the wrong faction. It was reported that Mugabe, also teased Nicholas Goche saying to him in Shona “*Ko, ndiwe urikunangirwa huroyi* [you are the one who is being accused of witchcraft?], before mockingly singing a few bars of the song “*Ndiwe muroyi ndiwe...*” [You are the witch]. This was represented in *The Sunday Mail* of 23 November 2014 in an article titled “President Confronts Goche Over Coup Plot”. *The Daily News* of 26 November, 2014 published an article with the headline “ZANU-PF Heavyweights Lose”.

The newspaper reported the plot in which those elite officials allegedly aligned to Mujuru faction were removed from Central Committee. According to Matyszak (2015), the PEZ simply did not put the names of those they considered undesirable on the list of eligible candidates. Attempts were made to block others, including Didymus Mutasa, from standing. When the polls returned Mujuruites, the results were annulled by the PEC. This meant that the names of candidates who had been selected were struck down and replaced by persons deemed to be more desirable, that is, those who allegedly belonged to Mnangagwa faction.

The *Daily News* of 26 November, 2014, under the same article “ZANU-PF Heavyweights Lose” purported that Didymus Mutasa failed to secure a position in the Central Committee.

The *Daily News* of 10 November, 2014 published an article with a headline “ZANU PF Factional Wars Engineered by Mugabe” (Tendai Kumhungira, 2014). The article reported that one of Zimbabwe’s leading political scientists, Eldred Masunungure was of the view that ZANU-PF’s deadly factions and succession wars were part of President Mugabe’s “Machiavellian game” to remain in power. The newspaper quoted Masunungure saying: “He (Mugabe) is playing games, setting the people up against each other”. Masunungure’s observations came as the battle to succeed Mugabe shifted a gear up, with Mnangagwa supporters now going all out to smear and scandalise Vice President Joice Mujuru’s allies ahead of ZANU-PF elective Congress in December.

The vicious attacks on Mujuru’s perceived supporters were meant to annihilate her voting base ahead of December Congress. This way, she would lose her power base so that she would not succeed Mugabe. The *Daily News* interpreted the state media’s attacks on Mujuru as “a comprehensive strategy to isolate Mujuru via provinces” (Masunungure, 2014). Hence, the suspensions were meant to ensure that the nominations of candidates to the presidium would weigh heavily against Mujuru, and in favour of the Mnangagwa faction. A similar strategy had been employed when Mugabe appointed Mujuru as the Vice President in 2004. Mugabe is reported to have encouraged Mujuru to “aim higher”, thereby creating the impression that he wanted Mujuru to succeed her. The new political developments in ZANU PF therefore, made observers wonder what had changed since then.

*The Herald* of 26 November, 2014 published a story titled “Home District Shuts Door on Mujuru”. The newspaper reported on provincial elections in Mashonaland Central, Mujuru’s home province and how elections were handled. The paper quoted acting head of the Provincial Executive Committee declaring:

We sat last week as the Provincial Executive Council and agreed that we should defend our President. We agreed that any member who is accused of plotting to assassinate the President we are not going to accept his or her curriculum vitae (CV) (*The Herald* 26 November 2016).

Matyszak (2015) posits that the applications as candidates to the Central Committee in Mashonaland Central for Lazarus Dokora and Epmaras Kanhanga were thus rejected on this basis along with at least ten (10) others. This was also captured in *The Herald* of 26 November, 2014 as cited above. At the same meeting, the youths reserved special venom for Nicholas Goche who was present at the meeting where the petition was presented. The youths accused Goche of displaying “disrespect of the highest order by plotting to kill the president and that he was a saboteur unfit to occupy such a senior post in the party: (‘I Quit – Goche’ *Daily News*, 4 November, 2014). In the face of this threatening behaviour, Goche decided to withdraw his application to join the Central Committee; and this was reported in the *Daily News* of 24 November 2014 as cited above. *The Herald* of 27 November 2014 published an article with a headline “Goche Accepts Card Carrying Member Status”. The state-owned *Herald* reported Goche as withdrawing his application voluntarily “to maintain unity in the party”. *The Herald’s* representation appears neutral on plotters’ instigation.

*The Herald* of 24 November, 2014 carried a story titled “Mash Central Says No to VP Mujuru” which reported that the Mashonaland Central Provincial Election Directorate had rejected Joice Mujuru’s application. However, the *Daily News* of 26 November 2014 reported that she had decided not to apply – this was depicted in a story titled “ZANU-PF Heavyweights Lose” which was cited earlier. It should be noted that the two dailies had different agendas which influenced and shaped their framing of events - the same story but different representation. The failure by VP Mujuru to get nomination was just the beginning of the sealing of her fate in the ruling party. *The Sunday Mail* of 23 November 2014 published a story under the headline: “How Mujuru fell out with Mugabe”.

The state owned *Sunday Mail* newspaper published an article seeking to explain how President Mugabe fell out with Vice President Joice Mujuru. The newspaper claimed that President Mugabe had, for close to a decade been aware of a growing plot by senior ZANU-PF officials to push him out by hook or crook and had elevated VP Joice Mujuru, but had bided his time before acting. The paper further claimed that the President had information about a fairly elaborate scheme from back in 2006 to topple him but had played his cards close to the chest to avoid rocking ZANU-PF before the 2008 harmonised elections and during the Inclusive Government’s tenure (2009 – 2013).

The newspaper article further reported that the 2008 elections which saw a clique aligned to VP Mujuru campaigning against President Mugabe under the slogan “bhora musango” (don’t score), resulted in ZANU-PF losing control of Parliament for the first time since 1980, and the Presidential candidate having to retain office via a run-off.



**Fungi Kwaramba**  
STAFF WRITER  
kwarambaf@dailynews.co.zw

**E**MBATTLED Vice President Joice Mujuru (pictured) came out guns blazing yesterday, panning her Zanu PF detractors and answering back on all the “contrived” allegations that have been levelled against her.

In a hard-hitting statement last night that she addressed to “Comrades, Friends, fellow citizens and countrymen”, Mujuru emphatically rejected accusations that she wanted to oust and assassinate President Robert Mugabe, saying she remained “loyal to the President and faithful to my party, and its leader, devoted to its aims, obedient to its cause and resolute in my service to Zimbabwe”.

Clearly

It should be highlighted that with three days before the 2014 Congress commences, Mujuru (pictured above) seemed down after she was blocked from filing her nomination to contest for the powerful Central Committee seat and the last minute amendments that allowed Mugabe the right to appoint his own deputies and national chairman. According to the article, political analysts argued that while Mujuru's political end seemed certain she could be retained but in a weakened position. The newspaper quoted Charles Chirimambowa saying:

For now Mujuru's political currency is on the decline and she seems to be heading towards the door from the top table. However, Mugabe may keep her in the party but her position will be weakened (*The Sunday Mail*, 23 November 2014).

Another media analyst, Pedzisai Ruhanya expressed his view thus, "Mujuru is now in a vulnerable position and her future now depends on Mugabe's benevolence". The article reported that the world is full of comebacks and Zimbabwe waits to see if Mujuru will have her own "Lazarus moment". It is therefore worth noting that the press featured prominently in the ZANU PF succession plots, with state-owned press against Mujuru while the privately-owned newspapers sympathised with her.

#### **4.10 Cartooning Succession Politics**

This section attempts to examine cartoons' representations of political conflict. The cartoons used are those that mocked the political and socio-economic situation in Zimbabwe, particularly the purging of Vice President Joice Mujuru and her perceived allies. Just like the photographs and captions, the cartoons qualified or reinforced the existence of power struggles in the ruling party that needed urgent attention. They acted as political satires that ridiculed the main players in the purging of senior party members with the intention of exposing the plotters' scheme to finally get rid of alleged 'enemies' in the former liberation movement. Even though, more often than not, the cartoon representations and other forms of representations amounted to misrepresentations according to ZANU PF, they have, arguably, exposed the situation in Zimbabwe and contributed to project power, succession and factionalism in ruling party.

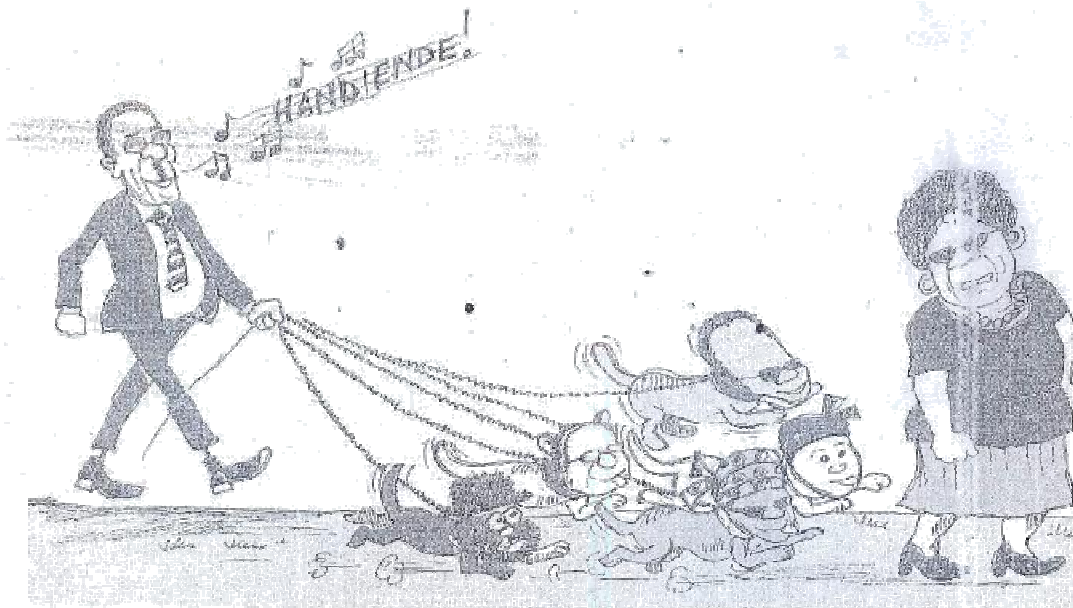
In addition, these cartoons just like the photographs, acted as powerful open texts that could be read differently by the audience but, most importantly, they seemed to reinforce the subject of the stories.

Most of the cartoons in *The Standard* have been done by Nutshell and those in *Daily News* by Tommy Namate. It is important to state that some cartoons analysed in this section do not bear the names of cartoonists. It should also be pointed out that only privately owned newspapers' cartoons were identified for this section because of their agenda to depict purges in ZANU PF members as state controlled media did not seem to project the chaos that was unfolding in Zanu PF. This shows that news is a selection of events that are taking place in the real world at a particular moment in time (Willems, 2004, Chari, 2010, Foucault 1978).

Political cartoons and comic stripes have been analysed in relation to concepts of power and resistance as ways in which those subject to power challenge the rulers (Mbembe 2011; Nyamnjoh 2009). Willems (2011) maintains that post-colonial laughter does not always address those in power, but humour may also point fingers at those subject to power in an attempt to make readers cope with the tragic events unfolding around them.

Whilst I agree with these scholars, this thesis argues that cartoons which represented the unfolding drama on Joice Mujuru were allegedly crude and coarse humour. For example, a cartoon that was published in *The Standard* of November 02 to 08, 2014, (see below) depicts President Mugabe setting 'Napoleon dogs' on 'helpless VP Mujuru' who appears 'resistant', yet wincing with fear. In the cartoon, Mugabe, who looks jovial and enjoying Mujuru's attack by 'his dogs' which are personified, holds on to strings attached to the dogs, symbolising his total grip on power.

Perhaps, the cartoonist recalls George Orwell's "Animal Farm" where Napoleon kept 'secret dogs' which were meant to attack his rivals in the hour of need. In the meantime, the president is portrayed singing a defiant lyric meant to be sung by Mujuru, who at all odds refused to be ousted from the ruling party she had fought for. The song was "*HANDIENDE!*" [ I won't go anywhere...], composed by a local musician, Steeve Makoni, whose music is replete with satirical themes. Of interest to note in the cartoon is that three of the five 'dogs' represent women at the forefront in attacking Mujuru, which symbolises that women were being used to destroy each other.



OPINION

## Factional fights: Economy on the brink

Important to note also in the cartoon is that three of the five ‘dogs’ represent women at the forefront in attacking Mujuru, implying that a woman’s worst enemy is another woman. The cartoon seems to tie in well with arguments raised by MDC-T Member of Parliament for Harare West, Jessie Majome, who was quoted by *The Standard* of November 23 to 29, 2014, in an article titled: ‘Grace Mugabe derails gender movement’.

The remarkable gains that had been made in elevating women to positions of authority have been obliterated by the “cat fight” pitting the First Lady, Grace Mugabe, against the Vice President, Joice Mujuru. Female politicians and lobbyists observe the fight was retrogressive to the fight of equality. The newspaper quotes Jessie Majome arguing: “This is a very disturbing gender debacle which has clearly confirmed that the country is still largely patriarchal. Men are still in control and are using women to oust other women”. The outspoken legislator further observed that regardless of who was right or wrong, the fallout had denied efforts and reversed gains that had been made in pushing women into positions of influence.



The message appeared to be that someone was furthering their interests by setting up these women against each other, and of great concern is that other women are buying into this charade. Grace Mugabe even went to the extent of attacking Mujuru personally, by insinuating that she was ugly.

*The Standard* also quoted MDC Secretary General, Priscilla Misihairambwi Mushonga saying that:

This just confirms what we have always said, that space for women in politics is limited. We have been socialised in such a way that we believe that a woman can never dislodge a man from power...Women in positions of power are targeted because they are vulnerable to such attacks,...women are busy pulling each other down,...The men in the respective camps are quietly watching as the ladies claw at each other. I feel that even if there are issues to be cleared, it should have been done differently and not in the public domain (*The Standard*, 23 November 2016).

Gift Mambiri, an analyst was quoted saying “It was a tragedy that women were being used as pawns in a game whose main characters is men. What is queer about this whole issue is that men in the various camps involved have found it useful to manipulate the women for their own gains, and come congress time, the women will be elbowed out”. Mambiri further stated that the language to attack Mujuru was de-humanising, and exposed glaring gender connotations that would cast female political figures in negative light.





*The Standard* of 26 October, 2014, carried another cartoon depicting Joice Mujuru as a victim of Grace Mugabe. In the cartoon, Grace Mugabe is wielding a spiked knobkerrie targeted at Mujuru, whilst pointing at her. In the background, watching but unmoved, are President Robert Mugabe and another equally unconcerned ZANU PF official puffing his pipe. This symbolises the silence of President Mugabe during his wife Grace Mugabe’s so called “Meet the People” rallies.

Mugabe’s silence when Mujuru was being viciously attacked meant that he was ‘setting’ her (Grace) against Mujuru. In the background, the cartoon further portrays that ZANU PF, as a party, was ‘falling apart’ and the ‘centre can no longer hold’, as signified by ZANU PF as a building requiring support props since it was on the verge of collapse and glaring cracks are visible. The cartoon further makes a caricature of the Zimbabwe economy, yawning and cracking, also supported by overwhelmed wooden props.

In the last couple of years, acres of space in the private media have been dedicated to debating leadership succession in ZANU PF and, in each article, the issue of an economy that is on the brink, due to factional fights, have been highlighted. The message in such representations suggests that ZANU PF does not care about people's welfare but its hold on power.

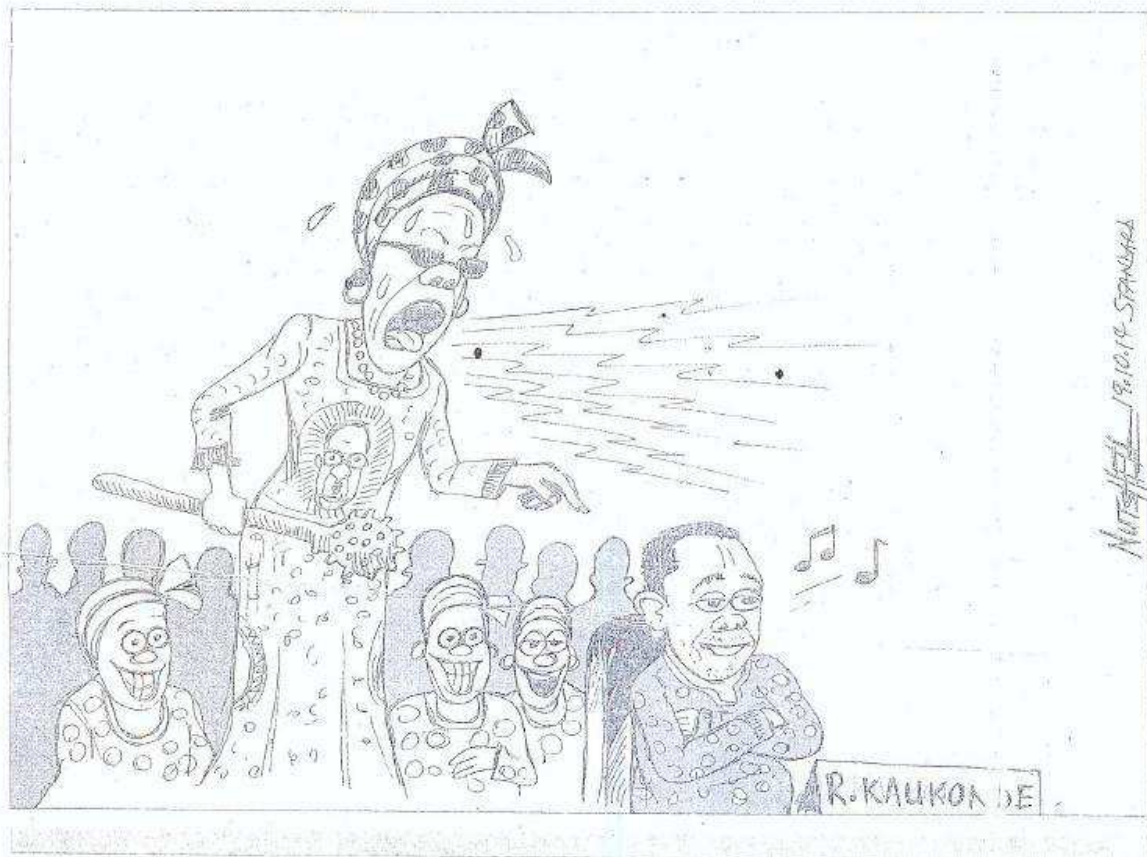
*The Standard* of November 16 to 22, 2014 published an ominous cartoon (see below) which depicted President Mugabe driving a commuter omnibus going to the December Congress, with him menacingly holding a lethal knobkerrie with spikes and looking through the window. Perilously and desperately clinging at the back of the same omnibus is Vice President Joice Mujuru, seemingly defying her being barred from attending the elective congress. Lying scattered on the ditches are other former ZANU-PF stalwarts who were brutally ousted from the party like Rugare Gumbo, Didymus Mutasa and Nicholas Goche. The cartoon further represents images of impending bruising as symbolised by Red Cross material as luggage on the bus – indeed there were going to be casualties physically, emotionally or both. ZANU PF is a revolutionary party known for spilling blood as can be deduced from some of its songs, sung during election campaigns.



The cartoon reinforces the discourse of power struggles evidenced by arguably callous purges of ruling party officials. It seems to argue that there are no permanent friends or foes in politics but only permanent interests.

An opinion piece on the same page as the cartoon seems appropriately juxtaposed as it is titled: “It’s time for Joice Mujuru to run!” The unfolding drama in ZANU-PF helps confirm the fact that President Robert Mugabe intends to die in office – as well as show the depth of ruthlessness he is capable of in dealing with matters to do with preserving his power. The Mujuru faction, I argue, had come to know without doubt that Mugabe has been made to believe they wanted to dethrone him. It does not matter whether this was true or not. What matters is that the President’s wife, Grace, had said that and therefore Mugabe believed it. They were clearly aware of what Mugabe was going to do – destroy them to preserve his power and please his wife. They knew no amount of argument in denial would save them.

*The Standard* of 19 October, 2014, captured the First Lady's intention by representing her vitriol in a cartoon (see below). The cartoonist depicts Grace Mugabe in ZANU PF regalia, wielding a spiked knobkerrie while pointing at Ray Kaukonde, who seemed relaxed and unmoved by the threats. In the background, the crowd at the rally looks excited, seemingly suggesting "he is in trouble today and he will face the music!", indicated by icons in the cartoon next to the victim.



The First Lady is depicted as extremely furious but insulated against any backlash since she is the President's wife, whose symbol and image is embedded on her party regalia. Using the Marxist theoretical view which propounds that works of art are reflective of the society from which they emanate, the cartoons in this thesis unravels and articulate issues of governance, power, corruption, gender, tribalism/ethnicism and succession struggles in Zimbabwean politics. They mock and expose hypocrisy, follies and errors of omission and commission in totalitarian regimes which gag people from expressing themselves.

It is through literary works that a society can evaluate its values by privileging that which it considers as important and rebuking what is viewed as anathema. Cartoons therefore satirise societal evils in order to expose the rot that maybe unfolding in a particular system or institution.

Matyszak (2015), notes that after the rallies ended, Grace Mugabe continued the invective against Mujuru and her allies from the safety of her Mazowe Farm, where she not only felt safe to mention Mujuru by name, but directly charged that “instead of acquiring wisdom from President Mugabe, she (Mujuru) was busy plotting against him so that she takes over,” (quoted in “Resign Now”: *The Herald*, 24 October, 2014). She demanded that Mujuru resign or face dismissal. She called Mujuru “ungrateful, power hungry, daft, foolish, divisive and a disgrace” to ZANU PF and Zimbabwe. The First Lady said:

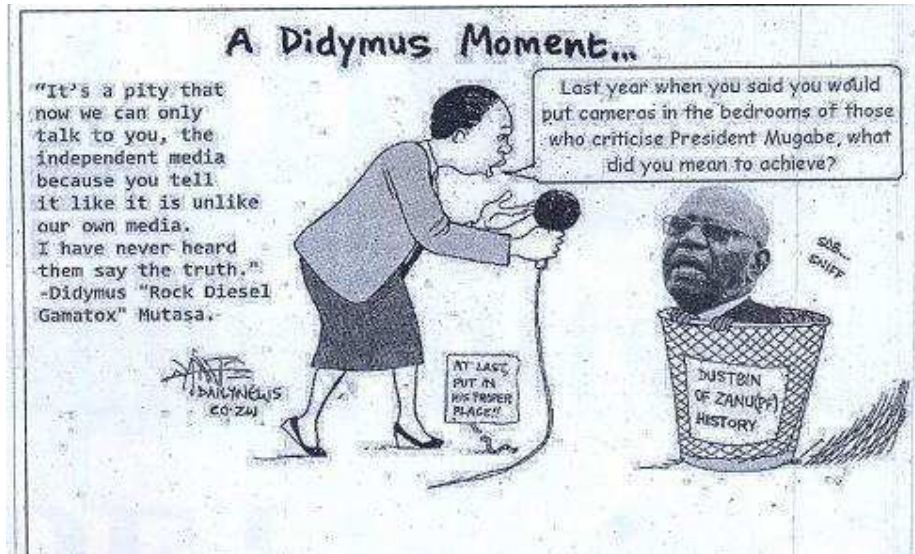
Mujuru should just do the honourable and resign...It is not good to be fired. It would be better if *Mai* Mujuru resigns than wait to be fired by President Mugabe...If you are here and you support *Mai* Mujuru, you should immediately leave because what I am about to say will cause you diarrhoea. You should tie up your pants (*The Herald*, 24 October 2014).

It is crucial to note that despite all the venom and vitriol targeted at her, Mujuru remained calm and composed.

In the meantime, Harare Youth League Chairman, Godwin Gomwe, reportedly said that they would prevent anyone who criticised Mugabe in the media from attending congress. Thus, the press became a battlefield for factional fights which were growing nastier by the day.

*The Daily News* 23 December, 2014 the editorial page published a cartoon titled “A Didymus Moment...” which depicted former Presidential Affairs Minister recently ‘guillotined’. The cartoon presented Didymus Mutasa in a ‘DUSTBIN OF ZANU-PF HISTORY’ being interviewed by a journalist.

Part of the cartoon message, probably from the reporter as an aside to readers; reads “AT LAST PUT IN HIS PROPER PLACE!!” which suggests mockery of Mutasa who used to be arrogant and flamboyant during his tenure in



ZANU-PF Presidium. The other section of the cartoon, quoted from Mutasa’s previous confession reads “It’s a pity that now we can only talk to you, the independent media, because you tell it like it is unlike our own media. I have never heard them say the truth”. Didymus: “Rock Diesel Gamatox” Mutasa. The cartoon representation portrays crude humour in the sense that a former Presidium official who was notorious in attacking private media now says the state media does not tell the truth unlike independent media. Of interest to note also is the apparent signature of Didymus who identifies himself with the factional name “Gamatox”.

Of interest to note is the journalist’s question to Didymus Mutasa “Last year when you said you would put cameras in the bedrooms of those who criticize President Mugabe, what did you mean to achieve?” I can argue that this question was painful to Mutasa, now that tables were turned. I should point out that the cartoon comes in the context when Didymus has been in recent weeks venting vitriol to President Robert Mugabe using ‘independent media’, particularly *Daily News*. Could we say for Didymus Mutasa that ZANU-PF is now “sour grapes?”

Although many ministers, deputy ministers and other ZANU-PF officials have so far been 'relieved' of their duties, both in party and government, Didymus Mutasa and Rugare Gumbo have been most vocal. In most cases, the two have tended to 'expose' the 'evil' of the ruling party. A case in point could be what was represented in *The Standard* August 17 to 23, 2014 in an article titled "You know the truth, Mutasa tells Mugabe". The newspaper reported that Didymus Mutasa scoffed at criticism levelled against him by President Mugabe following the chaotic preparations to the ZANU-PF Youth and Women's League Conferences. The President had publicly dressed down Mutasa for the chaos that blighted the party events. According to the party's constitution, Mutasa was supposed to ensure that all the logistical arrangements for the conferences were in place. But Mutasa said he could not do much as the party coffers were empty. He defended himself against Mugabe's attacks saying the fact that ZANU-PF was broke was public knowledge. It can be argued that the newspaper article represents 'exposures' within the ruling party.

What is significant to point out in the cartoon which depicts Mutasa is that the cartoonist quotes Didymus Mutasa's statement which he uttered on 17 December, 2014 but reported in *Daily News* of 18 December, 2014 in an article titled "It's not over, says Mutasa...as he takes ZANU-PF war to SADC". The newspaper reported that former ZANU-PF Secretary for Administration (who was also Presidential Affairs Minister) Didymus Mutasa says he and others who were ousted from the party for allegedly plotting to overthrow President Robert Mugabe from power and assassinate the 'nonagenarian' will not be forced out of the party. Mutasa wrote a hard-hitting letter to regional leaders imploring them to intervene in the country's deepening political crisis spawned by the ruling party's brutal and sometimes violent infighting. It is in this context that Mutasa was quoted by *Daily News* saying: "It's a pity that now we can only talk to you, the independent media because you tell it like it is unlike our own media (state owned media). I have never heard them say the truth".

It should be recalled that the same Didymus Mutasa had threatened to muzzle the press in May 2014; the press which he now praises. *The Standard* of May 25 to 31, 2014 published an article under comment and analysis "Mutasa cannot be allowed to Muzzle Press". The article reported that Mutasa threatened to take action against journalists who report about President Mugabe's health. Mutasa was quoted as saying "Such news [Mugabe's health and succession] will lead us to arrest journalists...".

It should be pointed out that as the fourth estate, the media has a duty to report on any issues that are of public interest, and concerns about the President's failing health fall in that realm, just as succession issues. On the contrary, Mutasa wants a press that cheats both the government and the people – one that flatters and lulls national leaders into a stupor of complacency and a false sense of infallibility.

The scathing and blistering factional fights in ZANU-PF depicted so much bottled up bitterness in some cadres who thought an opportune moment awaited itself to expose senior ruling party officials. *The Herald* of 29 November, 2014 published an article with a headline “Once a sell-out, always a sell-out”. The article is an extract from *The Manica Post* (a weekly regional sister paper to *The Herald*) in which Provincial affairs Minister, Mandi Chimene was interviewed. She is a liberation struggle cadre who at one time boasted she disciplined suspended ZANU-PF national spokesperson, Rugare Gumbo, during the liberation struggle after he allegedly rebelled and caused the abduction and detention of senior members like the late Dr. Herbert Ushewokunze in Mozambique. Her interview came against the backdrop of a lot of issues that have been put onto the public domain ranging from factionalism, succession, corruption, assassination plots, and humiliation of the first and ousting of provincial chairpersons.

The Manica Post allowed Mandi Chimene to ‘betray’ ruling party secrets in an unprecedented manner. The newspaper representation is that Rugare Gumbo (because he is being vocal now) was a sell-out and that he never repents like Dzikamai Mavhaire who at one time boldly told President Mugabe he must retire. This resulted in Mavhaire being suspended in ZANU-PF for five (5) years. The newspaper quoted Chimene saying:

We had people like Olivia Muchena who were members of the late Abel Muzorewa's United African National Council (UAWC) now political commissars in the Women's League. What does she know about the history of the struggle? What can she teach me about the dos and don'ts expected of a cadre of a revolutionary party? Can she sing any one revolutionary song? Maybe she can sing a church hymn...

The utterances can only depict how deep seated the fury ruling party members have towards one another. This further reveals disharmony had always existed well before issues of factionalism and succession were discussed publicly.



Important to note also is that Chimene looked down upon Flora Bhuka, Dzikamai Mavhaire, Didymus Mutasa, John Mvundura, Kasu, Kaunye, among other senior officials in the ruling party. Later on, Mandi Chimene crossed swords with Oppah Muchinguri, and took over Mutasa's farm. These actions only serve to depict chaos, anarchy, hate and never ending feud in ZANU-PF in the unfolding, power struggles.

*The Daily News* of 17 December, 2014 carried a headline "ZANU-PF sharks turn on each other...as Mnangagwa camp fights over spoils". The headline is accompanied by a photograph depicting anxious Mugabe scratching his head. The caption reads: "FEUDING: After vanquishing the country's former number two Joice Mujuru, members of the faction led by newly appointed Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa in President Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF are believed to be fighting each other for power". The newspaper reported that the faction aligned to Mnangagwa is now locked in a nasty and escalating fight for the spoils of their "thuggish victory" over Mujuru, with many in the camp apparently feeling that they have not been rewarded sufficiently for their role in annihilating the former VP's camp. The article suggests that the so-called "Gang of Four" [G40] – comprising senior party officials Oppah Muchinguri, Jonathan Moyo, Saviour Kasukuwere and Patrick Zhuwao were deeply mired in the intra-faction brawls, amid suggestions that they were looking to grab more power in the party in the Politburo but were disappointed by Mugabe's choices. However, the state media has now openly attacked Mnangagwa indirectly through one of his loyalists [Hungwe] who likened Mnangagwa to Jesus as represented in *The Standard* December 21 to 27, 2014.

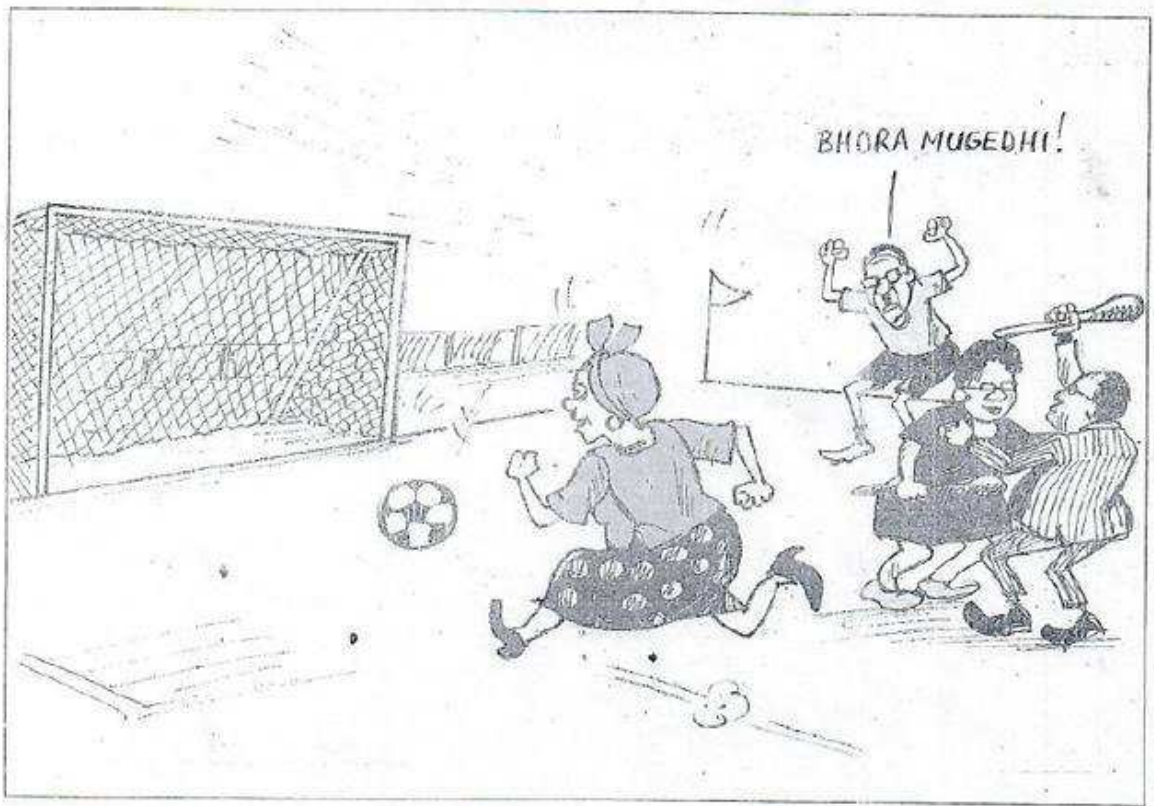
"ZANU-PF politicians thrive on hero-worshipping" is the title of an article published in *The Standard* of 21 to 27 December, 2014. With another article titled "Mnangagwa likened to Jesus" in the same paper. The newspaper reported that Hungwe's utterances comparing Mnangagwa to Jesus Christ prove that bootlicking had become entrenched in ZANU-PF. Hungwe, who was introducing Mnangagwa during celebrations, described the new VP as the "Son of Man" whose rise up the staircase of power was ordered by God. Christians accused politicians of being blasphemous using the name of Christ in vain as several ZANU PF officials have in the past used the analogy on Mugabe; Oppah Muchinguri called Grace Mugabe "Queens of Queens". The phrase "Son of Man" suggests messiah which is only supposed to refer to Jesus Christ.

The newspaper representation is that choruses of praise – signing and idolising shifted from President Robert Mugabe and the First Lady Grace Mugabe to the new first Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa when he hosted a huge rally at his Zvishavane home to celebrate his elevation to the new position. The argument is that Hungwe was trying to push for the creation of another centre of power in Mnangagwa, which suggests that all is not well in the ruling party.

*The Sunday Mail* of 23 November 2014 published a story under the headline: “How Mujuru fell out with Mugabe”. The state-owned but ZANU-PF controlled *Sunday Mail* newspaper published an article seeking to explain how President Mugabe fell out with Vice President Joice Mujuru. At the time the newspaper was controlled by a faction of the party loyal to Mnangagwa. The newspaper representation is that President Mugabe had nearly a decade ago been aware of a growing plot by senior ZANU-PF officials to push him out by hook and crook and elevate VP Joice Mujuru, but had bided his time before acting. The paper established that the President had information regarding the fairly elaborate scheme back in 2006, and played his cards close to the chest to avoid rocking ZANU-PF before the 2008 harmonised elections and during the Inclusive Government’s tenure (2009 – 2013).

*The Sunday Mail* further reported that the 2008 elections which saw a clique aligned to VP Mujuru campaigning against President Mugabe under the slogan “bhora musango” [don’t score], resulted in ZANU-PF losing control of Parliament for the first time since 1980, and the Presidential candidate having to retain office via a run-off. It can be argued that the ruling party will always devise means to ensure it remains in power which is viewed as “bhora mughedhi”, as illustrated in the cartoon below. This was one of the few cartoons published in government controlled press but does not show the name of the cartoonist. In the cartoon, President Robert Mugabe is seen encouraging a cheerful woman striker scoring the ball, as illustrated by Mugabe’s words “Bhora Mughedhi!” [Score the ball!]. In the same cartoon, another ZANU PF official is projected entertaining Joice Mujuru so that her plot of “Bhora Musango” is thwarted. The cartoon suggests that Mugabe loyalists and party supporters could easily win signified by absence of a “goalkeeper” at the gate, thereby mocking Mujuru faction.

President Robert Mugabe then engineered a ‘brilliant’ campaign that saw him ‘resoundingly win’ the 2013 elections, thereby setting the stage for him to reassert sole control of Government and allow ideological realignment of the ruling party. State controlled media, which was now leaned to one faction in the ruling party assumed an agenda to spew vitriol on Mujuruites as plotters wanted to finally annihilate them.



The newspaper reported about the alleged secret meeting between Mujuru and US Ambassador (as earlier discussed). Important to note is the allegation as quoted:

President Mugabe could not fathom how a VP subordinate and denigrate the entire state in such a manner, and how his deputy whose elevation in 2004 he facilitated despite her relatively junior position in Government at the time – could plot his ouster in such brazen fashion (*The Sunday Mail*, 23 November 2016).

Mnangagwa loyalists who controlled the state media were fuelling and fomenting the President’s anger against Mujuru. According to unnamed sources in the same newspaper article, another issue that indicated there was need for a clearing of the decks related to an incident around the same time in 2013 when President Mugabe was outside Zimbabwe and

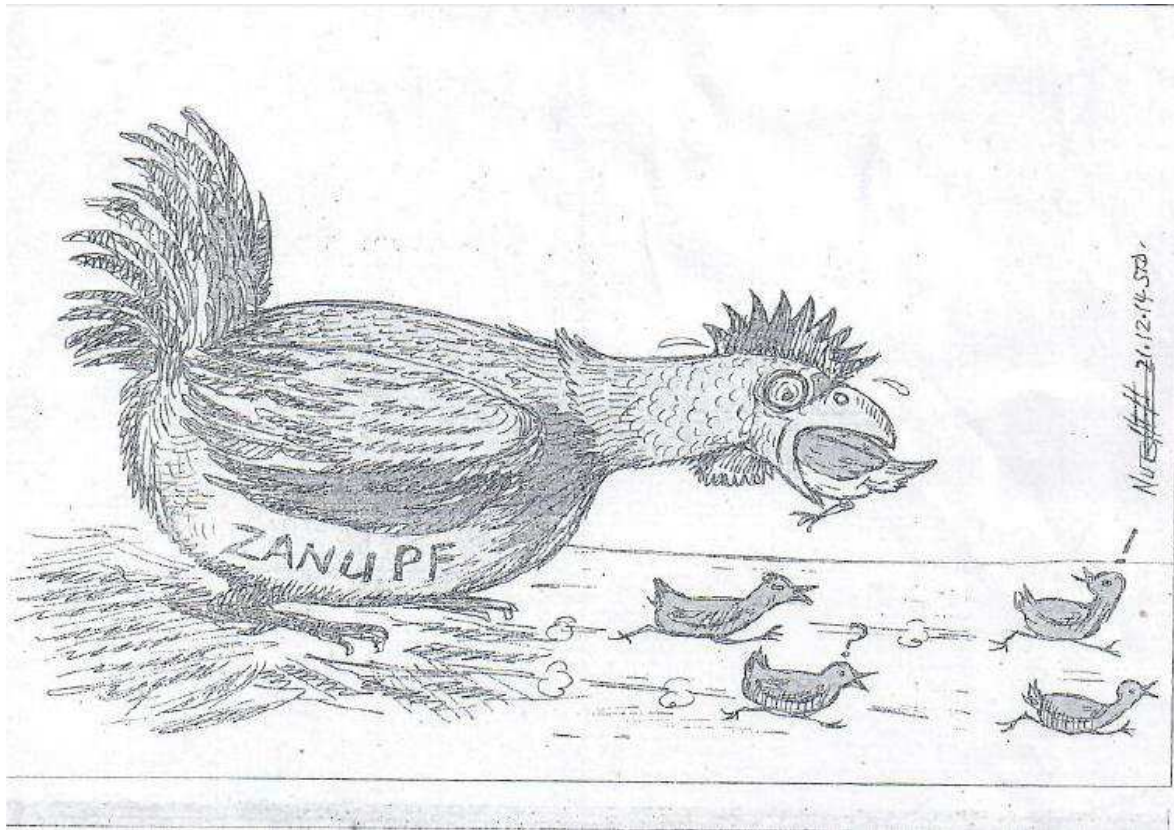
Vice President called for a ZANU-PF Politburo meeting. The paper depicts that Mujuru loyalists supported the meeting, whose agenda remains murky, while several senior politburo members flatly rejected the call and pointed out that only ZANU-PF's First Secretary would sanction such a meeting. The article reports that this plan failed but further says:

...the past year (2013) has seen VP Mujuru increasingly try and establish a competing center of power by attempting to seize control of Cabinet and Politburo proceedings. She has been acting as *de facto* chair and President Mugabe has been watching her quietly, gently trying to point out where she is erring, but again those overtures have not been met kindly.

*The Sunday Mail* article also says a source said VP Mujuru often hand-picked her factional supporters to dominate discussions while seeking to drown out alternative views. This entailed caucusing before Cabinet and Politburo meetings and agreeing on their own agenda for the discussions. According to the article in November 2013, she (Mujuru) interrupted the President as he spoke during an Extraordinary Politburo meeting which – among other issues – tackled media reports concerning factionalism in ZANU-PF.

According to the article, the second stage of the scheme involved mobilising support to oust the President at ZANU-PF's December National Congress and replace him with VP Mujuru and provincial chairs were tasked to lead this part of the plan; one of the chairs allegedly confided to *The Sunday Mail* that VP Mujuru had American backing to push out President Mugabe. Thus the state owned media were willing tools to be used in factional battles; particularly in blatant and unsubstantiated allegations such as those published in *The Sunday Mail*. This is real propaganda by mudslinging and smearing Joice Mujuru and her allies. The newspaper article merely talks of 'a source...' which can be fabrications, imaginations and a result of plotters' scheme to annihilate Mujuru camp.

Of interest again to note is the motif of linking Joice Mujuru to America in order to whip peoples' emotions and ire against her.



Considering the purge of ZANU PF officials' pre and post December Congress, the ruling party could be likened to a hen eating its own chicks as illustrated in the cartoon above, thereby, causing panic within party ranks. This cartoon confirms the perception that ZANU PF is a party that devours its own; it suggests that probably no one is safe in the ruling party, it may be a matter of time before fresh purges begin as factional struggles continue unabated and the media is the new battleground.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

This chapter examined the representation of ZANU PF succession battles, factionalism and power struggles in the state-owned and the privately-owned press with a view to gain insights on how the media are implicated in power struggles. The chapter also analysed the representation of ZANU succession politics in press cartoons. It discussed the concept of power and how it was manifested during the ZANU PF succession battles.

It argues that the press played a very crucial role in succession politics, particularly the fall of Joice Mujuru from grace. The press became a key platform upon which the succession issue was fought, with the state-owned media being representing Mujuru and her allies in negative light while the privately-owned press was sympathetic to her cause. This shows that the press is deeply implicated in power struggles and the individual politicians can either rise or fall at the hands of the press. The next chapter examines the representation of MDC succession and factionalism in privately-owned and state controlled press.

## **Chapter 5: Power, Succession Battles and Factionalism in the MDC**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the representation of power struggles and factionalism in the opposition political party, the MDC in the state-owned and the privately-owned press. The chapter argues that the media was polarised in its reportage. This chapter used representation techniques uncovered by Willems (2004) to analyse the representation of internal conflicts in the main opposition party. An attempt will be made to explore causes of splits in the main MDC that led to multiple splits and formation of new parties. Newspaper representation of these will be examined. The approach adopted in this chapter is to follow five steps, namely: defining political parties, factions, stages of splinter party formation, representation of succession struggles and factionalism in both the state-owned and private-owned press; and finally way forward for the opposition parties for 2018 elections and future.

Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (2014) argues that the multiplicity of political players guided by democratic values is good, but it is also desirable to democratise and strengthen existing political organisations in the interest of wider democratic practices in the country. To ensure accountability, good governance and economic development, it is essential that there are strong, effective, democratic political parties that keep pressure on the ZANU-PF government to transform constitutional provisions into reality for all Zimbabweans. Chege (2007) asserts that strong and sustainable democracy is dependent on the existence of well-functioning political parties and he further proposes that political parties are crucial actors in bringing together diverse interests, recruiting and presenting candidates, and developing competing policy proposals that provide people with a choice. Chege (2007) argues that in a democracy there is no substitute for open competition between political parties in elections. Throughout the world, however, political parties find themselves in crisis, unpopular and increasingly distrusted. They are suffering from declining membership, internal management practices that are often weak and not sufficiently democratic, and party system regulations that often set far-reaching limits to the way in which parties are allowed to operate (Chege 2007). In Africa and in Zimbabwe in particular, political parties face challenges similar to those faced elsewhere in the world, challenges that are further exacerbated by diverse and complex political and development challenges.

Zimbabwean political parties, like any other social groupings, are susceptible to splits due to various reasons. According Gatscheni-Ndlovu (2011), splits that rocked political parties since 1963 cannot be explained in terms of one factor or a singular political ideology. Splits are products of a build-up and coalescence of various factors, ranging from ethnic, constitutional, ideological, tribal, personality clashes and external infiltration. Thus, notwithstanding the incentives to stay together, parties sometimes do break-up. The effect of these splits on the electoral behaviour of voters, the electoral fortunes of parties and the development of party systems is immense, but varies from one party to the other. At this stage it is important to give a brief background of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). MDC has posed the greatest challenge to President Robert Mugabe's ruling party, ZANU PF, since it came to power at Zimbabwe's Independence in 1980. Founded in September 1999, the MDCT is a coalition of trade unions, church groups and student organisations. The party also draws support from the majority Shona and the minority Ndebele ethnic groups, as well as from whites in the cities and rural areas. However, conflicts within the party resulted in a split in 2005 giving birth to a splinter party as a new competitor within opposition parties. Subsequently, more splits occurred and continue to occur to this day.

## **5.2 Political Parties in Zimbabwe**

Conventionally, political parties have been treated as unitary actors. However, as Ozhan Demirkol (2014) states that most political parties face periods of intra-party conflict. Although most of these conflicts are resolved within party platforms, some conflicts are never resolved. This shows that political parties are not unitary actors. Moreover, studies on factionalism reveal that political parties are composed of sub-groups. As Manor (1998:1) argues, "different coalitions of forces are being formed within the party and actors striving for dominance interact with each other in the struggle for relative influence within the organisation; the interplay between internal actors, each with his or her own agenda, is thus the driving force of party life".

Political parties might be defined as any group seeking to elect government office holders under a given label, which may or may not be on the ballot (Epstein, 1993:9). While this definition enables us to select cases, it does not provide any room for intraparty actors. Hence, as Sartori (2005:3) suggests, "political parties might resemble a miniature of a political system with their authority structures, representative processes, electoral systems



and sub-processes for recruiting leaders, defining goals and resolving internal system conflicts”. They are composed of different organs that are horizontally and vertically linked.

During factional conflict, the party leadership will be more likely to take sides with the majority faction that has voted for the leader since party leaders are primarily concerned with keeping their status as party leaders. I concur with Demirkol (2014) who states that this majority faction might be called the dominant coalition, that is, a coalition of internal party forces that align with the party leader in ruling the host party.

Political parties are of central importance for the functioning of democratic systems (Lipset, 2000). It is therefore not surprising that their structures and processes, as well as the factors which determine or influence them, have been analysed time and time again. Kollner and Basedau (2005) observe that the resulting stream of research has shown a great variety of possible organizational forms that political parties can take – and thus also a variety of ways in which parties perform society and state – oriented tasks. There is no universally solid organisational form of political parties, nor one that is forced upon them by sheer necessity. There is no ideal or best organizational form since today’s advantages of a given form can amount to disadvantages tomorrow (Panebianco, 1988:17, Wiesendahl, 1998:64; Siaroff, 2002:168,189). Like all organisations, parties exhibit alongside their formal organisational structures informal relational systems, operating procedures, and norms which are institutionalised to different degrees (Kollner, 2006).

A central insight of the literature on party organisation is that parties are not homogenous organisations which are sure of their goals and which follow some sort of unitary will. Rather, as Kollner and Basedau (2005) note, parties consist of coalitions of political actors who pursue their individual interests and goals. The coalitions these actors enter are based on the exchange of political resources (Panebianco, 1998). Just as politics in general can be seen as a process based on the conflictive and consensus-oriented relations among interdependent individuals, intra-party politics is characterised by conflict and consensus between interdependent groups within parties (Maor, 1997:147). The activities of intra-party groups, so-called factions, can not only influence changes in the identity, organisation, and internal decision-making processes of parties (Harmel and Tan, 2003). This brings us to the next section on factions.

### 5.3 Defining Factions

Demirkol (2014) contends that party split is a consequence of sub-group formation and conflicting sub-group identities and/or conflicting interests. An analysis of literature on factionalism reveals that these internal actors have been labelled as currents, fractions, factions, cliques, conflict groups, wings (left and right), interest groups, tendencies or clientele groups. The variety of these label stems from the fact that scholars working on factionalism have attempted to provide typologies of three sub-party groups based on organisational and motivational dimensions.

Earlier works on factions considered any intra-party grouping that competed with each other for the realisation of their goals as a faction. They were defined as semi-visible, irregular and unstable pre-party entities that could evolve into political parties (Chambers, 1963 cited in Belloni and Beller, 1976), or leader-follower groups with self-defined roles: “followers give support to the leader in parliament and in intra-party struggle, the leader has the primary responsibility to provide positions, funds, and other necessities of a good life” (Nicholas, 1977:57).

The previous chapter (Chapter 4) interrogate two factions in ZANU-PF, that is, one aligned to oust VP Mujuru and the other linked to Mnangagwa; and later in the chapter, a faction so-called G40 comprised of Young Turks allegedly aligned to First Lady, Grace Mugabe. Because faction leaders of these ‘cliques’ have tried in vain to deny leading the factions, they aptly fit the descriptions given above as ‘semi-visible’. In this chapter, an attempt will be made to identify specific factions in MDC which later evolved into splinter parties.

Factions structure the process of intra-party politics and decision-making, define the struggle for control of the party, its policies, its leadership and offices, its doctrines, its treasury among others; are devices for the distribution of party patronage – and, for governing parties, of government patronage; and they are instruments for generating and supporting rival candidates for public office (Demirkol, 2014). Factions are relevant for party splits as they are the main actors initiating party splits and forming new parties (Boucek, 2002:461). Similar to social movement or citizen initiatives, factions have a new demand or a neglected issue that they would like to be addressed.

They mostly pressure the party leadership for the fulfilment of the perceived demand but they might also evolve into potential new parties in the sense that they mobilise their political resources in order to take part in the decision-making process. A case in point is Ncube and Gibson Sibanda's demand in 2005 that they (MDC) should participate in senatorial elections. When MDC President, Morgan Tsvangirai refused to participate, this 'neglected issue' resulted in the party split.

What is significant about factions is not their structural properties but their relationship, activities and consequences of these activities for party politics. For this reason, factions can be defined as any intra-party combination, clique or grouping whose members share a common identity and common purpose and are organised to act collectively – as a distinct block within the party – to achieve their goals (Zariski 1960:33). These sub-groups enable the dissatisfied members of the parent organisation to voice their demands around a common leader.

Kollner and Basedau (2005) define factions as a group or combination acting together within and usually against the larger body, such as in a state or political party. Factions are characterised by dissension within a group. In general terms these are two basic views with regard to factions and political parties. The vast majority of studies portray factions as groups within parties. There are, however, nearly as many views of such intra-party groups as there are studies. There is little agreement about the characteristics which determine factions in a constitutive manner. Studies have also arrived at quite diverging findings about the causes of factionalism and its consequences for political parties, party systems, and political systems.

Before I deal with stages of splinter party formation in Zimbabwe and the possible structures, consequences, factors or causes of factionalism in political parties, it is imperative to define factions from a political-science perspective. In 1931, Harold Lasswell provided one of the first such definitions. The term faction is commonly used to designate any constituent group of a larger unit which works for the advancement of particular persons or policies. The faction arises in the struggle for power and represents a division on details of application and not on principles (Muller – Rommel, 1982:14).

Beller and Belloni (1978:419) define factions as 'any relatively organised group that exists within the context of some other group and which (as a political faction) competes within rivals for power advantages within the larger group of which it is a part'. From this perspective, as Maor (1997:149) has put it succinctly, factionalism in political parties can be

understood as a form of conflict organisation which reflects the tendency of intra-party actors to act collectively to reach common goals.

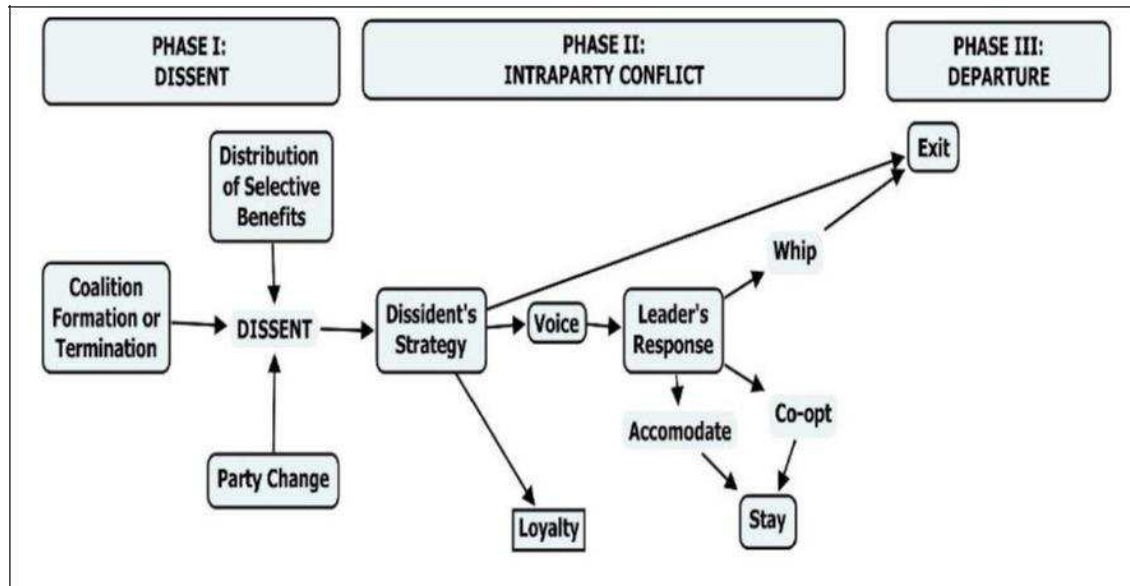
In drawing together the definitions of Zariski, Beller and Belloni, the term 'faction' is used to designate every intra-party grouping which exists for a certain period of time, possesses a minimum of organisation, exhibits a common group consciousness, actively pursue political goals (be these policy, personal or group specific ones) within a party and which thus can be discerned as a block within the party (Kollner and Basedau, 2005:9). Important to note is that factions are disciplined groups with a solid organisation who are conscious of their own existence and possess some stable personnel. Factions have a primary goal such as patronage (control of the party and government office by members of the faction, influence of party strategy and policy) and promotion of certain ideologies.

#### **5.4 Stages of splinter party formation**

Splinter party formation is an outcome that is reached only after a series of stages. Demirkol (2014) states that the first stage, dissent, is the phase during which dissident party members start to organise around a cause or during which already existent faction becomes disappointed with the party leadership's policies and strategies. The second phase, intra-party conflict, is the phase where dissent is manifested in the form of exit or voice. The final part, departure is the stage when dissatisfied dissidents decide on the final strategy.

Figure 1 below illustrates stages of splinter party formation.

**Figure 1: Stages of Splinter Party Formation**



*(Adapted from Demirkol, 2014)*

#### 5.4.1 Dissent

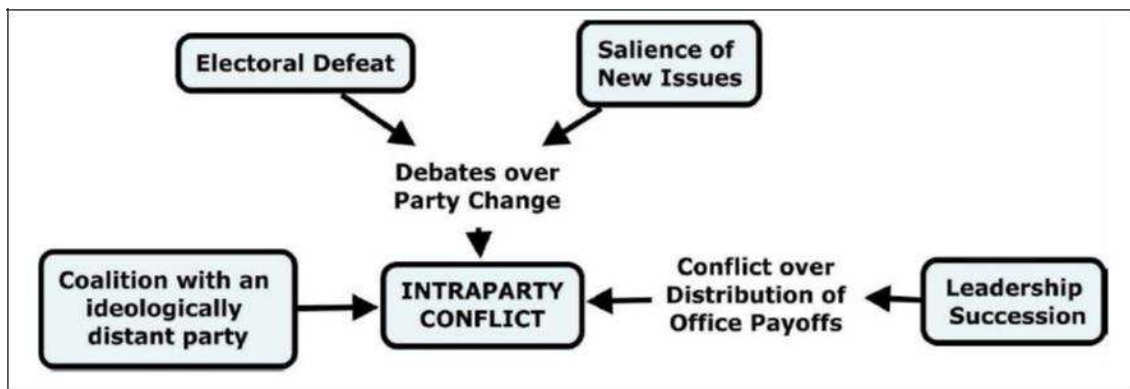
Most parties pass through periods of unity and dissension. There are numerous reasons for dissatisfaction. Some of the reasons are contextual and impossible to be generalised. For example, lack of internal party democracy, elite competition for power, intolerance and failure to handle factionalism within parties, personalisation of power and the premium placed on personal loyalties leads to the formation of breakaway parties. Other reasons for party splits include greed, perceived personal class differences, weak leadership, failure to adhere to the party constitution; and repeated failure to capture political power (Demirkol, 2014; Simutayi, 2009; Mavhinga, 2014).

Nevertheless, we might take note of a number of factors that facilitate factional conflict. These include debate over the host party's policy position due to the rise of new demands or electoral defeat, conflicts over strategies of the coalition under multipartyism, conflicts over distribution of spoils, and leadership succession in polities with high degree of personalism (Demirkol, 2014). It can be argued that some, if not all, of these factors led to the split in the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

A case in point is the issue of participating in the senatorial elections in 2005. The original MDC was formed in September 1999. Since then there have been two major breakaway formations, starting with the split of 2005 and another in 2014. They in turn have experienced their own cracks, leading to splinter formations. The first split led to a formation led by Professor Welshman Ncube, but it later split into two, with another referred to as MDC-M, led by Professor Arthur Mutambara. Before the split, there had been an earlier fracture, leading to a new formation called MDC-99, led by Job Sikhala (Magaisa, 2015: Part 2).

In 2014, senior MDC officials, Tendai Biti and Elton Mangoma broke away from the MDC forming the MDC Renewal Team. Hardly a year after it broke away, the MDC Renewal Team also split, with Mangoma announcing the formation of the Renewal Democrats of Zimbabwe (RDZ), the newest kid on the block (Magaisa, 2015: Part 2). Detailed analysis of MDC splits and factors that led to the splits shall be explored later in this chapter. It is crucial to briefly illustrate potential reasons of dissent in a political party. Figure 2 below shows the various reasons for political dissent in a political organization.

**Figure 2: Potential Reasons of Dissent**



*(Adapted from Demirkol, 2014)*

This thesis argues that political parties are not homogenous, as is seen in the political literature on political parties. Based on figure 2 above, some parties might decide to initiate change in their policy positions, especially following electoral defeats. Thus in 2005, Zimbabwe’s main opposition split after losing to Mugabe’s party that won flawed elections.

The MDC ‘dissidents’ won seats in defiance of party leader, Morgan Tsvangirai who later called for shift to mass resistance. MDC emerged divided as supporters of Mugabe won the majority of seats in senate elections. Tsvangirai vowed to lead a newly radicalised party prepared to take to the streets rather than contest elections. Tsvangirai expelled the 26 candidates; an action which his rivals within the MDC said violated the party’s constitution. The editor of the country’s two remaining independent newspapers, *The Zimbabwe Independent* and *The Standard*, Iden Wetherell lamented Tsvangirai’s decision commenting thus:

This is yet another tragedy for Zimbabwe...At the moment when the country is crying out for solutions, both political and economic, the best democratic alternative has collapsed into name-calling. The MDC intends to go down fighting, unfortunately not ZANU-PF but itself.

After abolishing the senate in 1990, President Mugabe pushed through a constitutional amendment to re-establish it in 2005. Critics argued that the reconstitution of the senate was a ploy to increase patronage by Mugabe. Out of the 50 elected seats, Mugabe could also appoint 16 more senators.

The senatorial election was also notable for the near disintegration of the MDC. After MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai had expelled the 26 candidates party leaders ignored his order and instead voted to suspend him and to order him to appear before the party’s disciplinary committee on misconduct charges. However, the suspension had no effect or force because there were no grounds in the MDC constitution for censuring or impeaching of the president, only congress could do so.

#### **5.4.2. Intra-party conflict: Voice or Exit**

Demirkol (2014) posits that dissent starts in a latent way. It becomes observable when it is manifested by a group of dissidents in various forms, including party split. Intra party conflicts might take two forms: intra-elite conflict and elite-follower conflict. Intra elite conflict is usually accompanied by elite follower conflict since members of the conflicting elites have their respective followers in the party organisation. Intra elite conflict is the conflict that occurs within the parliamentary party, including those between members of the parliament and party representatives in government, whereas elite-follower conflict signifies any other internal disputes (Demirkol, 2014).

As Maor (1998: 10-11) states:

Intra-party conflicts, for example, may be manifested by resignation of elite members (i.e. the 'exit' option), dissension in parliament and petitions and appeals to party elites with the intention of forcing a change in party strategy (i.e. the 'voice' option). Elite-follower conflict, by comparison, may be manifested by a decline in party membership (i.e. the 'exit' option), demonstrations of party activists and petitions or appeals to party elites with the intention of forcing a change in strategy (i.e. the 'voice'

It should be pointed out that dissatisfied members might leave the organisation (exit), or express their dissatisfaction directly to some authority (voice). However, my argument is that voice is preferred to exit. This brings us to the loyalty option, which corresponds to an attitude or commitment to the party.

According to Hirschman (1970:77-78) any individual with consideration attachment to an organisation will often search for ways to make himself/herself influential, especially when the organisation moves in what s/he believes is the wrong direction. Because of this, loyal members of an organisation are more likely to resort to voice rather than exit (Dowding, John, and Mergroupis, 2000). For example, when Welshman Ncube, Gibson Sibanda and other members of the MDC left the party in 2005 some influential members in the executive such as Tendai Biti, Chamisa and Elton Mangoma remained loyal to their leader Tsvangirai. However, when the MDC split for the second time in 2014 Tendai Biti and Elton Mangoma left the splinter group MDC-T to form their own party but Chamisa and Thokozani Khupe preferred to voice their discontent rather than leaving.

Party split is initiated by the decision of the dissidents. When they are dissatisfied with the performance of the party leadership they might simply leave the party. In other words, they might resort to the exit option either with or without attempting to voice their dissent within the host party (Dowding, John, and Mergroupis, 2000).

I argue that such a move demonstrates that such party members lack purpose because they follow persons instead of ideology and policy. In any political party, MDC included, there are supporters who easily join the bandwagon without personal conviction. It follows that when party dissidents resign from a party, they might simply remain as independent, switch to an ideologically neighbouring party or form a new party. Although party switching is a preferable option for individual deputies, it is a highly costly option for the dissident faction.



This is due to the large number of dissidents which may make it difficult for the targeted party leadership to absorb the dissenting faction without harming the delicate balance of power within it. Investing their resources in a political project that might achieve success is likely to deter the dissenting faction from exit in the first place. For this reason, dissident faction is more likely to use the available means of dissent diffusion and voice their demands before departure.

It is important to point out that there are various ways to voice dissent within party organisation and outside the party. Within party organisation, voice dissent could be done through national congress motions, call for extraordinary congress to debate the party line, call for group meeting among others. On the other hand, voice dissent outside party organisation may be through vote of no confidence, press release, memorandum, resignation (exit). Moreover they force the party leadership and executive boards to resign. As for MDC-T, an extra-ordinary congress which was supposed to be held in 2015 was called for in 2014.

#### **5.4.3 Factors influencing the outcomes**

Party split is a consequence of the interplay between the dissenting faction and party leadership. It occurs when the party leader refuses to accommodate the demands of the dissent faction and when the dissenters insist on the realisation of its demands. Studies on new party formation have shown that this interaction is conditioned by exogenous factors. The dissent faction is expected to leave the party when the costs of exit are low and when benefits of exit are high (Tavits, 2006). However, as Demirkol (2014) posits, even when costs of exit exceed perceived benefits of exit; a dissident faction might be forced to exit when the party leader completely or partially purges members of dissenting faction. Dissidents who voiced demands are expected to leave the party when the party leadership does not accommodate their demands. The party leader's resort to the option of whip depends on a number of endogenous factors, including the nature of disagreement, leadership's autonomy and the relative size of the dissenting faction in the party system.

#### **5.4.4 Endogenous Factors**

All factions are bound to be united by some kind of common endeavour. They might strive to change or conserve the policy position of the parent organisation. Studies on individual party splits demonstrate that parent organisations are prone to split in cases of major disagreements over policy goals or policy positions and strategies of the parent organisation towards

external stimulus that leads to re-evaluation of the party's policy position (Boucek, 2002; Cole, 1989; Hine, 1982).

Party leadership will be less likely to accommodate dissidents' demands in case of disagreements over party's policy goals. In the event that ideology does not act as a unifying bond, parties might be prone to splits (Owens, 2003; Reiter, 2004: 268). Indeed, conflicts over selective benefits might threaten party unity in case their disagreement revolves around the legitimacy of party leader. If the dissenting faction directly attacks the party leader and attempts to undermine his rule, then accommodation becomes impossible given that party leaders are primarily concerned with keeping their status as party leader (Back, 2008: 74). This scenario is what happened to MDC-T when dissident members cited earlier attacked party leader, Tsvangirai, and undermined his leadership. Therefore, the party leader is less likely to accommodate the dissidents' demands if the dissenting faction rejects the legitimacy of party leader's rule.

#### **5.4.5 Exogenous Factors**

As stated before, party splits are likely to occur when the party leader refuses to accommodate the dissident faction's demands and when the dissident faction refuses to step back in the factional strife. When deciding on their strategies, the leadership to the dissenting faction exercises some degree of foresight and is aware of the possibility that they might be expelled (Ceron, 2011: 196-197). Hence, they take the costs of new party formation and potential viability of a new party into consideration before entering into factional competition with the party leader and the dominant coalition. I argue that MDC dissent faction may not have calculated the costs of new party formation. I posit they acted impulsively without any clear purpose hence the frustration and continued spits into smaller and smaller entities which serve no purpose to the electorate and nation.

Demirkol (2014:93) states that entry costs are the costs required for the formation of a new party. 'These costs include the costs to register officially, to appear on the ballot, to pass through the visibility filter, and to access public offices'.

Another exogenous factor influencing the calculations of the dissidents is perceived viability of a new party. Accordingly, political entrepreneurs are less likely to invest on new parties when the party system is institutionalised since they calculate that their potential new party will be less likely to receive support. Senior members of the MDC who decided to leave the

party and later MDC-T did not seem to have considered exogenous factors seriously as the new parties they formed do not have an impact on the electorate. This is evidenced by the lack of support base and unending defections and resignations by key members, resulting in few seats in parliament. The viability of a possible new party and the host party can be measured by public polling.

### **5.5 Departure: splinter party formation versus infiltration**

Once the dissidents depart from the parent organisation, they have four options. According to Demirkol (2014), they might abandon politics, remain independent for a while with the hope that their demands will be reconsidered by the host party leadership, infiltrate into an ideologically neighbouring party that welcomes the dissidents or form a new political party to represent the issues which they believed were underrepresented by the parent organisation (Berrington, 1985). Although individual party members might simply abandon politics, this is less likely for members of a dissenting faction. This is due to the fact that they have a unifying theme to be realised (Boucek, 2002). Hence, they have three main options (Turan, Iba, and Zarakol, 2005:19).

The first option is to resign and remain independent and is mostly a preliminary step to the formation of new party. That is, resigned officials mostly wait for the echoes of their exit in the host party with the hope that their departure would trigger discontent of a larger section of the host party. During this wait-and-see period, they are less likely to engage in publicised negotiations with another established party since such an act will not be welcomed by ‘dissidents’ remaining sympathisers. However, once they realise that they will no more influence developments in the host party, they will either search for dialogue with the existing parties or start to work on new party formation (Turan, 1985:24).

For example, when Joice Mujuru and her allies were purged by ZANU-PF, they went through these three options (similarly the same with dissidents from MDC-T). Now that there are possibilities and rumours of People First party, an off shoot from ZANU-PF, there are millions of sympathisers for Mujuru and her allies, allegedly many top officials in the Politburo, Central Committee, war veterans and party structures to the cell level. The People First party was secretly, quietly and strategically being formed for fear of infiltration and possible purges before it was officially launched. This was a wait-and-see period.

### 5.5.1 Causes of Party Splits: MDC



*(Adapted from Zimbabwe Democracy Institute, December 2014)*

The image in the above insert symbolises the deep cracks that developed in the main opposition, MDC-T which subsequently led to the second split in the party in April 2014. Chege (2007) states that various reasons account for party splits including low levels of internal party democracy, greed, perceived class differences, weak leadership, failure to adhere to the party constitution, repeated failure to capture political power, and the failure to handle factionalism within the party.

According to Magaisa (2015) reasons for party splits are diverse and include factionalism, lack of discipline and loyalty, lack of opportunities for advancement, the cost of leaving, benefits of leaving, lack of ideological fluency, fatigue and frustration, low costs of forming parties, sponsored parties, big egos and delusions of grandeur among others. In this section, I will attempt to analyse a selection of these and fuse some of the factors which are related in an effort to explain the frequency of splits and breakaways in the opposition parties. The MDC family, as Magaisa (2015) calls it, is the primary point of analysis.

Emmerson Mnangagwa, the Vice President of ZANU PF was quoted by Magaisa (2014) mocking the MDC thus:

There is one major difference between Zanu PF and MDC...Zanu PF fires while MDC splits. Look now we have about five MDCs; MDC Tsvangirai, MDC Mutambara, MDC 99, and MDC Biti. So MDC splits and Zanu PF fires.

While Mnangagwa's statement may sound cynical, smirking and crude, he was speaking an uncomfortable truth. Magaisa (2014, Part 1) observed, "Opposition supporters won't have liked the sound of it (Mnangagwa statement), but with a party being formed before you can say the 'D' in the MDC, it's hard to ignore the statement. We are at the point now where the image in the public consciousness is of an opposition that is forever fighting small internal battles or creating smaller and smaller entities, each claiming to be the solution". Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) (2014) asserts that a split invariably weakens the party as it dents its credibility and negatively affects the party's recruitment drive and supporters' loyalty and affiliation. ZDI(2014)'s study established that the MDC-T split seriously weakened the party, although the Morgan Tsvangirai group remained significantly stronger than the Tendai Biti group in terms of grassroots support.

I concur with Magaisa (2015) who posits that big ego and delusions of grandeur is one of the reasons for party splits in MDC. Magaisa (2014, Part 2) argues, "This might sound harsh but some characters are quite simply delusional or have huge egos. The trouble is everyone wants to be a leader and none wants to be led". There is nothing particularly wrong with ambition...but it is also easy to be ambitious and impatient at the same time and to be delusional about one's prospects. In an election when splinter parties held candidates in each constitution, opposition parties competing against each other instead of the ruling party, the electorate becomes confused. The result is that votes are split among smaller parties instead of the electorate voting for one grand coalition opposition in order to triumph.

### **5.5.2 Factionalism**

Contrary to common thought, factionalism is not, on its own, a problem. Factions are natural in any group of people. So it is hardly surprising that there are factions in political parties. Kollner and Basedau (2005) contend that factionalism can affect the stability and institutionalisation of parties and party systems and it can impact on the efficiency and legitimacy of political parties and political systems as a whole.

Factionalism tends to be regarded as a phenomenon belonging to the 'pathologies of politics' (Friedrick 1972 cited in Kollner and Basedau 2005:13). This certainly reflects the views of party leaders and officials for whom the existence of factions poses an open challenge to party management. Indeed, factions can undermine the cohesion and the effectiveness of political parties. Clear –out dissent within a party and ensuing repression can take parties to the verge of disintegration. A case in point is what happened to MDC where dissent led to splits which seem to cause confusion in members and electorate base.

Factionalism can lead to intra-party decision on personnel that are not based on merit and ability of the people involved but on their factional affiliation. I have highlighted specific examples in chapter 4 where ZANU PF purged Mujuru faction members who were alleged and perceived to be harbouring intentions to eliminate President Robert Mugabe.

Faction-based intra-party conflict can also lead to blurry and contradictory positions of a party and thus render voters' decisions more difficult - it leads into voter apathy. Factionalism can impede or block intra-party discussions and issue-oriented debates can be drawn into the vortex of inter-faction power struggles (Kollner and Basedau 2005). Therefore, factionalism can destabilise the party system and it can lead to growing cynicism on the party voters.

Magaisa (2015) asserts that opposition parties, just like ZANU PF, also face the challenge of factions. Factions can be around issues but more often they are around personalities within the party. People rally around their favourite leader, which results in factionalism based on personalities.

As Magaisa (2015) asserts, the difference between ZANU PF and the opposition parties is that ZANU PF has been able to manage factions, with Mugabe using his vast political skills to play one faction against another for decades, while managing power. It can be argued that ZANU PF factionalism was created and engineered by Mugabe in order to perpetuate his hold on power. The MDC, on the other hand, and its formations have not been able to contain the factional wars - the result has been splits. The trick, Magaisa (2015) argues, is in developing systems within the party to manage and contain factional wars and to avoid splits. Factional wars will never cease, they just have to be managed.

### **5.5.3 Lack of discipline and loyalty**

I posit that members of a political party whether in a senior position or at cell level, should respect their leader(s). There should be a clear hierarchical order from cell to presidium and that orders come from the top and the subordinates listen and implement. Although I agree that there is some form and measure of discipline and loyalty in ZANU PF, I do not concur with Magaisa (2015) in his assertion that in the opposition parties there is a *laissez faire* approach.

Magaisa 2015 admits:

I have often criticised the MDC (both privately and publicly) for trying too hard to be democratic and that often times this has worked against the party. In other words, at times it has tried to be democratic for its own good; far too often important decisions are left to the mob and the mob rarely agrees on issues and the decisions of the majority are not always the right decisions. Democracy is not always about the majority; it also understands the minority view, which might be the correct one. The result is conflict, with the minority often feeling hard-done by. The leadership has to be firm and give direction on important issues.

I agree with the above observations but could have been more convinced if he had cited specific examples in particular context than generalising. According to Magaisa (2015: Part 1), “In Zanu PF, people rally around the party and their leader. If they are not happy, they might sulk, but eventually they will keep around. If they are suspended, they will live in the hope of returning again. In the opposition, if someone sulks, he is likely to go and form his own party. Lack of loyalty and discipline are important factors in this regard.”

My argument in this thesis is that ZANU PF members who are suspended or expelled remain silent not because of loyalty but fear that if they speak out, assets, wealth and gains they have accumulated will be withdrawn. Some of them might fear for their lives as anything can happen to them. A case in point is pre and post congress purges where Didymus Mutasa’s farm has been taken by Mandi Chimene because he has been exposing the dark side of ZANU PF. Mutasa and Rugare Gumbo decided not to remain silent after they were purged, perhaps they never harbour to re-join the liberation movement after suffering humiliation but decided to form their own party with Mujuru as their leader.

#### **5.5.4 Lack of opportunities for advancement**

There is a view that parties split and people form their own parties because they are frustrated by the style of leadership and lack of opportunities for advancement. The lack of succession planning and the refusal by leaders to give way to others are often cited as major points of disagreement in opposition parties, leading to the formation of splinter organisation. When the MDC Renewal Team was created in 2014, moving away from the MDC-T, the major grievance was against party leader Tsvangirai, whom the dissenters thought had outlived his usefulness to the party but was refusing to let go. When Professor Welshman Ncube and others left in 2005 to create their own MDC, they complained about the leadership style but the split was sparked by a major disagreement over the decision to participate in that year's senate elections (Magaisa 2015).

Any leadership aspirants are given the harsh treatment, as Joice Mujuru saw in 2014. Sometimes decisions have been made that were unpopular with other factions. But all this has not led to those unhappy factions leaving and forming their own parties. I have already alluded to some possible reasons why ZANU PF members remain stuck despite frustration and disillusionment. Magaisa (2015) cites Tsholotsho Declaration as an occasion where a faction led by Mnangagwa was angling for a better position in the succession race. Mnangagwa was almost certain to become the Vice President, ahead of his rivals before his bid was cruelly thwarted, leading to the decimation of his own faction.

Mnangagwa and his group could have walked away, sulking and deciding to form their own party. But they did not do that. They took their punishment silently. One of the alleged architects, Professor Jonathan Moyo was fired but came back a few years later and at the time of writing the Mnangagwa faction was in ascendancy and Moyo was back in his old post. If what happened in 2004 in ZANU PF had happened in the opposition...a new party would have been formed. However, I argue that Mugabe has inconsistency insofar as disciplining dissenting factions is concerned. If he forgave the Mnangagwa faction why did he purge Mujuru and her perceived allies? As for Jonathan Moyo, my view is that Mugabe and ZANU PF cannot do without him, particularly during election period- he may call him a "weevil" or "devil incarnate" but the truth remains that Moyo seems an indispensable propaganda spin doctor for ZANU PF to remain in power.



### **5.5.5 The Cost of Leaving**

One reason people stay within or around ZANU-PF even after serious frustrations or being mistreated is that the cost of walking away to form a new party is too high compared to the cost of leaving opposition parties. Magaisa (2015) posits that ZANU-PF is part of a complex web of interests and structure which he refers to as The System. It is possible to be outside the ZANU-PF party structures, but to still remain part of The System. Members who behave well can maintain their place within The System. This explains why those who get suspended or expelled choose to be contrite and to remain silent in order to keep their spaces within the system.

According to Magaisa (2015), The System can be vindictive. Since much of the wealth and assets that most ZANU-PF officials own are derived from the benefits conferred by The System – through corruption, patronage and state benefits – there is always the risk that the system can withdraw those benefits if one becomes a political nuisance. For that reason, most of those who are mistreated by ZANU-PF choose to take their punishment quietly and hope to live another day.

In addition, unlike ZANU-PF, the opposition is not part of The System which controls state machinery like the police and prosecution services that can easily be deployed to deal with those who become politically difficult. There are none of those harsh consequences for leaders who leave the opposition to form their own rival parties (Magaisa, 2015). It can therefore be argued that the cost of leaving the opposition party to form their own is much lower than the cost of leaving ZANU-PF. ZANU-PF malcontents stick around while MDC malcontents go on to form their own parties, all in the name of democracy.

### **5.5.6 Benefits of leaving**

Forming a new party might actually bring more opportunities and benefits especially if there is donor support. Arguably, with opposition parties seemingly failing to dislodge the ruling party, international donors are now sceptical in sponsoring parties. Another factor could be that continuous splits in opposition parties makes donors lose confidence and trust in them. This is worsened by media reports that senior party officials misuse funds for their own personal comforts like love scandals and purchase of lavish houses in upmarket suburbs.

Press representation on MDC-T depicts that the opposition party is now broke because the main funders such as Roy Bennett and Western donors have withdrawn their funds.

### **5.5.7 Lack of Ideological Fluency**

There is a critical need to interrogate the lack of ideological fluency within the opposition parties. Magaisa (2015) contends that people rally around causes – such as the need to end injustices, to promote human rights, to remove a leader – but without the firm ideological base upon which the traditional liberation party is often built. It can be argued that parties are formed around individuals or the need to remove individuals. When there is frustration with a leader, people find a new person and they form another party. However, this cannot be said of the main MDC when it was formed; however, the splinter parties may lack ideological base or they may not have firm ideologies that people believe in. According to Magaisa (2015:Part 2), the opposition came together with the primary mission of removing Mugabe and ZANU-PF...it was the big umbrella which united all those seeking “change” from Mugabe and ZANU-PF.

### **5.5.8 Fatigue and Frustration**

As I have alluded to earlier, the MDC was formed to remove Mugabe and ZANU-PF to pursue change but this has not happened yet, so it caused frustration. The party has been very close, especially in 2008, when Tsvangirai beat Mugabe in the first round of the elections before the sordid acts of violence that forced him to withdraw from the run-off election in June. Magaisa (2015) argues that each time the party has been thwarted, largely, through unfair means and rigging, people have been killed, some have disappeared and homes and livelihoods have been broken. All this has taken its toll on the members. Then there is the curse of July 31 2013. It was not just an unfair and controversial election defeat, it broke spirits. It has been said that some leaders were almost suicidal. It inflicted substantial trauma on the opposition and its leadership. After all that had been done, after all the promises and the expectation, it dawned on most that it seemed almost impossible to take power from ZANU-PF. Hence the thought that perhaps, it was time to change the formula and that this should necessarily involve leadership change. Rather than ZANU-PF, they began to question themselves and their leadership.

This fatigue and frustration led to impatience, serious friction, recklessness and poor judgment, which eventually resulted in the split. What is regrettable is that senior party officials who initiated the split lacked political maturity to discern what exactly had happened in the election where ZANU–PF itself was shocked it had won.

In the next section of this chapter I will analyse press representation of succession struggles and factionalism in the MDC.

### **5.6 MDC SPLIT 2005: Pro-Senate versus Anti-Senate election**



**(Tsvangirai says he will never forgive Welshman Ncube for the 2005 split)**

The real causes of the MDC split in 2005 are varied and complex depending on which one views them. Those who were pro-senate hold their own perceptions while anti-senate factions justify their own perceptions and give their reasons in not participating. Ironically, ZANU-PF and its sympathisers also have their own opinion. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that the split had negative implications for the development of opposition politics in the country. *The Daily Mirror Zimbabwe* 23 November 2005 published an article titled “MDC infighting to hand ZANU-PF victory” which was written by Patson Matsikidze. The newspaper quoted Matsikidze saying: “The MDC, the once popular party among urbanites

has become the 'sick man' of Zimbabwean politics as it suffocates in the fumes of its intra-party violence and seemingly irreconcilable differences". The depiction of violence in the opposition is contrary to its values and principles. The month-long standoff – precipitated by the heated debate over senate participation had occurred in the light of historical factions where cliques in the party represented tribal, ideological and elitist interests. Tensions within the MDC spilled into the public arena with senior party officials washing all the dirty linen in full view of everyone. Given such a scenario, ZANU-PF seemed to be riding on the wave created by the tensions within the MDC. President Robert Mugabe took advantage of his star rally in Manicaland to hammer out what he referred to as the political immaturity of the opposition. The name calling, mudslinging and character assassination that dominated the MDC was described by Mugabe as "a triumph for ZANU-PF which was getting stronger causing the MDC to break into pieces".

Tsvangirai critics lashed out at his position on the senate issue and then his unilateral blocking of a decision by the National Executive Council (NEC) to participate in election for the upper house. The impasse greatly minimised the MDC's chances of performing as well as it could have done in the senate elections. Zhangazha (2005) argues that the differences on whether the MDC must or must not participate in the senate elections are symptomatic of a serious departure by the MDC leadership from the party's founding principles and the creeping in of "political elitism" that feeds on patron-client networks. Zhangazha, cited in the newspaper above argues that "elitism has the tendency to emerge in a period where a party or organisation becomes too comfortable with itself, and negates the principles upon which it was founded. Tsvangirai gravely erred in allowing this sort of elitism to creep in, where a system of patronage about who participates in parliament or not becomes the order of the day. Or alternatively, where the "Top Six" begin to behave as though they were a ZANU-PF presidium and in the process battle for control of elite, an organ as the National Council as if that is what the party was formed for". The argument further raised was that MDC was no longer as consultative and inclusive as it was from the onset.

It can be argued that differences, especially in a big political party like the MDC, are necessary and the essence of democratic discourse, but the way the MDC leadership behaved was amateurish and retrogressive. Pasirayi (2005) lamented that the behaviour of the MDC's so called "Top Six" is no different from the way the ZANU-PF politburo behaves. "But the problem can be traced back to Tsvangirai who has forgotten the reason why the party was

formed and has made himself become too bureaucratic and elitist in his approaches and strategies” (Pasirayi, 2005:1 *The Daily Mirror Zimbabwe*, 23.11.05).

Prior to the formation of the MDC, teams were dispatched to the provinces, including areas such as Binga, Lupane, Tsholotsho, Mudzi, Nyazura, Chimanimani, and Rutenga to mention but a few, to consult with the people of Zimbabwe to speak on the Zimbabwe they wanted. The template that was used in the data gathering and consultation exercise had three questions: what is the current economic and political situation in Zimbabwe? What are the remedies to the situation? And how should the situation be resolved? The process culminated in the production of a voluminous document called the “raw data” that was used by delegates to the All Working Peoples National Convention that was held under the theme “An Agenda for Action” in February 1999. It is this convention which gave birth to a political movement that called the MDC.

It is this history that we can use to explain why things have turned out the way they have in the main opposition party. The point that Zhangazha (2005) raised about political elitism in the MDC which has fashioned out in a manner reminiscent of ZANU-PF politics is responsible for the cracks that are emerging in the opposition party. Pasirayi (2002) asserts “some of the most vocal members of the MDC today who are creating confusion may need to be lectured on how the party was formed. Some of these members had been active in opposition politics and had flirted with parties like the ruling ZANU-PF, Zimbabwe Unity Movement and the Zimbabwe Union of Democrats and failed to make an impact”.

Taking a cursory look at the MDC politics today, they resemble a completely divided movement, with the divisions taking tribal, regional and ideological lines. It can be argued that there was the existence of a faction of academics in the MDC – a faction said to be dovish in its approach to political challenges. It is alleged that this group favoured the courts and dialogue as opposed to street protests to resolve political disputes. Some MDC leaders had played squarely into the hands of ZANU-PF intelligence by trying to be legalistic or academic as opposed to being revolutionary in their conduct. This is the reading that we get from the differences that ensued as a result of the senate election. The argument I raise in this study is that opposition parties should guard themselves from infiltration, particularly from ruling party agents such as CIO.

Pasirayi (2005:3) argues:

After the death of Jongwe, there were efforts to bar Chamisa from standing as candidate in Kuwadzana because the seat had been reserved for Murisi Zvizvai, himself a late comer in MDC politics (mafikizolo in Ndebele) but also a close confidante of the MDC leader. Had it not been a screaming front page story in *The Daily News* that pre-empted Tsvangirai's motive, Chamisa would not be the legislator for Kuwadzana.

The above scenario confirms the persistence of patron-clientilism in the rank and file of MDC- a reflection of undemocratic practices under this patronage system that the MDC leader has perpetuated.

It is significant that I explore MDC leader's reasons for urging his supporters to boycott senate elections which resulted in low turnout. Tsvangirai and critics argued that the sole purpose of the senate, which can veto measures passed by the lower house, was to provide sinecures to Mugabe's allies. Tsvangirai urged the party not to contest the poll because it would be rigged by President Robert Mugabe and ZANU PF. The MDC leader also opposed the poll arguing it was a waste of resources for a country that should be focusing all its energies on addressing hunger that was threatening a quarter of its people. Against this background party secretary general Welshman Ncube, deputy president Gibson Sibanda and other top leaders revolted against their party leader insisting the MDC should contest after its national council voted for the party to do so. They also accused Tsvangirai of violating the party's constitution when he allegedly sought to overturn the decision of the national council. *The Zimbabwe Independent* of 2 November 2005 published an article with a headline "Tsvangirai denies violating constitution". In the article, Dumisani Muleya (2005) reported that MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai denied a series of allegations levelled against him by the rival faction led by party secretary-general Welshman Ncube. Tsvangirai denied accusations that he had become a dictator by "wilfully violating" the constitution, overruling the party's national council, the administrative and policy-implementing organ and unleashing youth militia on colleagues. The MDC's pro-senate faction announced that vice president Gibson Sibanda had suspended Tsvangirai after a disciplinary committee allegedly found him guilty of violating the party's constitution by issuing a call to boycott the poll.

In a letter dated 24 November 2005, Sibanda told Tsvangirai of his suspension thus:

Please be advised that the national disciplinary committee of party met 20 November and resolved to suspend you from your position as President of the party with immediate effect...

What is interesting to note is that in 2005 the dissatisfied faction expressed their voice through a letter to the party leader, a similar strategy adopted by dissident faction later in 2014 when Elton Mangoma also wrote a letter to Tsvangirai telling him to step aside. However, Tsvangirai scoffed at the suspension arguing that only the party's congress could censure him. Therefore, the party leader's response was to force the dissatisfied faction to leave the party which later formed their own political party known as MDC-N, the 'N' indicating the name of the new party leader Ncube. *The Zimbabwean situation* an online publication of 28 November 2005 reported that the two factions of MDC could engage in a war of attrition over the ownership of the organisation's name and assets. The factions were positioning themselves to unrest control of the party's assets.

There was a perception among political observes that the judges, some of whom were sympathetic to the ruling party, would grant the use of the party's name and emblem to the less popular pro-senate faction to further destabilise the opposition. However, MDC supporters and youths thronged Harvest House (the party's headquarters) to ensure that Tsvangirai was not hindered from working there. Ironically, the pro-senate faction was not allowed to set foot at the Harare House and subsequently lost the case to property rights, though they labeled their party MDC-N. *The Standard* of 14 February 2011 carried an article with a headline "We own Harvest House -MDC-T." The newspaper reported that during a public debate over whether or not public officials should declare their assets, ZANU PF and MDC-T politicians engaged in peaceful discussions on the same table. ZANU PF Goodson Nguni made stunning accusations, claiming the MDC-T headquarters, Harvest House was the property of Ian Makone the party's director of elections and also the chief secretary to Morgan Tsvangirai that time.

## 5.7 Press Representation of MDC-T splits: 2014



In April 2014, the MDC-T suffered yet another major split following the 2005 split over disagreements on whether or not to participate in the country's senatorial elections. To distinguish between the two splinter parties, the MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai was named MDC-T while the other formation was dubbed MDC-N. Mavhinga (2014) observed that the MDC-T has been slowly losing support because of this split despite the 2008 election result where it almost dislodged ZANU PF from power.

Some scholars noted that during the Inclusive Government era (February 2009 to July 2013), there was a gradual shift of public opinion and political affiliation. According to a survey conducted by the Mass Public Opinion Institute in June 2012, the support base of MDC-T declined from 38% to 20% from 2010 to 2012. Masunungure (2013) also argues that after the 2008 elections, the MDC-T lost many of its passive supporters and not a few of its core supporters.

According to ZD1 (2014), following the disputed July 2013 elections ZANU- PF effectively retained its hegemony leaving opposition political parties severally weakened and disoriented.



After the MDC failed in its legal and diplomatic bid to ensure the conduct of fresh elections, it started to battle strong internal conflicts. Disgruntled with the party's loss, some high ranking members began to call for leadership renewal, especially regarding the party presidency calling for an early congress to elect a successor to Tsvangirai in order to 'renew' the party and the leadership. In chapter two, I explored how Roy Bennet, the then party treasurer, Ian Kay, former Member of Parliament for Marondera Central; and Elton Mangoma, the then deputy treasurer expressed their voice to Tsvangirai.

Mavhinga (2014) reckons that the tension within the party fuelled violence, suspensions and counter suspensions which finally culminated in a split, with the pro-renewal team led by Sekai Holland and the secretary-general, Tendai Biti, and the other formation remaining loyal to Morgan Tsvangirai. The loss of 2013 elections was not to be blamed on an individual but the entire party was supposed to take deep introspection then map a way forward collectively. *The Standard* of December 15 to 21, 2013 published an article with a headline "MDC-T dead and buried - Mugabe". The newspaper reported that on closing the three-day conference held in Chinhoyi, Mugabe said his party was now "born again" after the elections in which the opposition party suffered a massive loss to ZANU PF in the July 31 harmonised elections. Mugabe was quoted saying the MDC-T was no longer a stumbling block following the collapse of the Government of National Unity (GNU), vowing the opposition party would never "resurrect after the loss".

The newspaper further quotes President Robert Mugabe vowing that "They will never rise again... We dug graves for them and interred them in those graves". The depiction of Mugabe seems that during the four years of the GNU tenure ZANU PF was being hamstrung by the inclusive Government, hence the failure to improve the economy, yet the parallel structures that were created by both parties were meant to destabilise each other in struggle for hegemony and control of the soul of the nation. *The Herald* of 29 April 2014 carried an article titled "MDC-T split engineered in the west" by Panganai Kahuni. I have argued in both chapter two and four that Zimpapers always reflect the ruling party's ideology and views. Their allegiance to ZANU PF can be very disturbing through blatant unprofessional bias.

The state-owned newspapers representation is that the ‘west’ sponsors intellectuals and academics to front its national interests. Kahuni (2014) alleges:

Political organisations that are formed under the guise of academic freedom and whose so-called intellectual members use universities and university students to front their political agendas are bound to fail. Political organisations that are formed under the asymmetric cover of the need to uphold tenets of democracy, human rights, rule of the law and corporate governance are destined for serious troubles such as happened with the MMD in Zambia, and is happening with the MDC formations in Zimbabwe.

It can be argued that state owned newspapers use column writers disguised under different names and designations to express the ZANU PF official line of thinking. Some of these writers are local while others write from abroad under categories of political commentator, analysts, and staff reporter among others. I agree that all the parties in the GNU acted undemocratically by suspending members from the party before holding their elective congress. Important to note is the agenda-setting role of the state-owned press which is reflected in their headlines, discourse, tone and vocabulary; arguably intended to fuel conflict in the opposition.

*The Herald* of 14 March 2014 carried an article titled “MDC-T on the verge of splitting”. The article reported that internal squabbles characterised by violence against senior officials were fomenting a split in MDC-T as revealed in the Guardian Council of the party report written by Sekai Holland, Samuel Nkomo, James Makore and Cephass Makanyana. The council is mandated with offering guidance to the party. It was alleged that Tsvangirai attempted to block the report from being presented to the national council as it contained issues of leadership renewal. It was alleged that exactly 10 days after the report was prepared, Elton Mangoma, Promise Mkwanaenzi and Tendai Biti were attacked at Harvest House but MDC-T spokesperson, Douglas Mwonzora disowned the report.

The newspaper representation was that Tsvangirai was becoming a dictator who fuelled violence on his colleagues, such representation from ZANU PF aligned press does not come as a surprise as it has always negatively reported MDC from 1999. The article further portrayed that Tsvangirai was losing in grassroots structures, thereby confirming analysts’ assertions that internal conflicts and splits weaken the party.

The guardian council said MDC-T had lost its grip of local, regional and international politics since its heavy defeat to ZANU PF on July 31 2013. The council further said there was rampant violence, vote-buying, factionalism and manipulation of voting processes during internal polls. *The Standard* of 29 June 2014 carried an article with a headline “Renewal team wooed by ZANU PF: Tsvangirai”. In the article Tsvangirai is quoted saying, “While we think we are moving together, we get some other people rebelling. Others have started chickening out yet we have not achieved what we wanted to achieve. They are saying Tsvangirai must go but have we achieved our goal of removing Zanu PF?” He further alleged that the 2005 rebellion by Welshman Ncube was a rebellion to support ZANU PF, and that the rebellion by Biti and Mangoma was no renewal but also strengthening ZANU PF.

Another article in *The Standard* of 2 May, 2014 titled “MDC-T split pre-planned: Moyo” depicts dissent faction was rather impatient in voicing their grievances before congress. According to Lovemore Moyo (2014) in an interview with the reporter, the letter by Elton Mangoma to Tsvangirai to step aside was unprecedented as he was supposed to wait for congress although some analysts argue it was his democratic right to express his views on any issue including the performance of his party leader, especially in private, as Mangoma did in this case.

However, it was alleged that the letter was part of a process leading up an attempted palace coup. But why write to someone instead of approaching them? It would seem that Mangoma had a hidden agenda, especially given that MDC-T offers a ‘surgery platform’ within the standing committee at the beginning of every year for the presentation of concerns for evaluation. Nevertheless, the nature of internal conflicts is always controversial and complex to resolve as members offer conflicting views to what would have been their motives. “Absolute power for Tsvangirai was ill-advised,” read the title of an article in *The Standard* of September 21 to 27, 2014. This shows that “unlimited power is apt to corrupt the minds of those who possess it’. This is what William Pitt, Earl of Chatham and British Prime Minister from 1766 to 1778 said in a speech to the House of Lords in the United Kingdom sometime in 1770. Yet another thinker, Lord Acton said in 1887: “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”. Sadly, these famous pieces of wisdom appear to have escaped some officials in MDC-T who called for a constitutional review to grant more powers to party President Morgan Tsvangirai.

The newspaper reported that the officials...wanted the party's constitution to be amended so that Tsvangirai could become an imperial president with powers to cherry - pick national executive members, as opposed to having them directly elected by the membership. For their self-serving scheme to be successful, they also wanted to water down the powers of the secretary-general, leaving the party more or less like a personal chiefdom. It can be argued that the post of secretary-general was targeted for obvious reasons. Previous office bearers - Welshman Ncube and Tendai Biti - who both broke away from MDC and formed splinter formations, had prevented Tsvangirai from doing whatever he liked in the party. They were too powerful for the president and his men's liking. I argue in this study that there is similarity between MDC and ZANU PF where in 2014 ZANU PF amended the party constitution to empower President Robert Mugabe to appoint his two deputies and members of the politburo thereby creating one centre of power. This has also been done in MDC-T constitution, incidentally amended in 2014 where Tsvangirai is now the centre of all powers. Could it be argued MDC-T was taking notes or cue from the ruling party?

*The Standard* of November 9 to 15, 2014 published an article "Tsvangirai emerges weaker from congress?" The writer of the article, Silence Charumbira (2014) asserts that whenever the going gets tough, in the face of fierce opposition; leaders of political parties often call for congress to measure their popularity and consolidate power. That appears to have been the same tactic employed by MDC-T leader, Tsvangirai who called for congress a year earlier than scheduled to fill the void in positions left after the party suffered a second split in April 2014.

The newspaper representation is that Tsvangirai used the congress to entrench his powers, assuming authority as the custodian of all assets and to supervise all leadership. He also got powers to suspend any national executive through the national council. I concur with Masunungure who was quoted by the newspaper saying "...from a democratic perspective Tsvangirai has ceased to be a democrat due to the constitutional amendments that have made sure he has amassed power. Tsvangirai has literally become owner of the party as the amendments have allowed him to privatise the party instead of it being a public institution". The irony in the headline is that when the article depicts that "Tsvangirai is not stronger when the amendments give him more power. However, the MDC-T party spokesperson, Obert Gutu defended the amendments claiming MDC-T came out stronger and more united after the congress.

## 5.8 Election boycott: A survival manual for MDC-T?

This study argues that the political drama that grips the nation through power struggles and factionalism in both ruling party and main opposition is a cause for concern to Zimbabweans. As ZANU PF is engulfed in the fluid succession inferno logic should have dictated that the political pendulum swings in favour of the opposition as the former liberation movement is on the verge of a split. But even staunch opposition supporters are astonished by the prevailing narrative from the Harvest House, in particular the glorification of election boycotts at a moment when Mugabe appears to be more vulnerable than ever before. It is significant to point out that in its last Congress, the MDC-T agreed not to contest on any elections in the country until electoral reforms are implemented by the government. Muchayi (2016) asserts that historical evidence has proved that election boycotts are a suicidal weapon to fight an entrenched dictatorship and more so in a terrain littered with landmines. In fact, the strategy has never proved to be effective. It can undermine the legitimacy of an election but never alter its outcome. According to Muchayi (2016:2)

Historical evidence drawn from the Jamaican general elections of 1993 widely believed to be the most successful election boycott in history...allowed the ruling party to win all seats in the House of Representatives, with the sitting incumbent retaining his post for another seven years... In Ethiopia, opposition parties boycotted the 1994 parliamentary elections and the strategy fired back as the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front romped to victory...Several Ghanaian opposition parties boycotted the 1992 parliamentary elections, protesting the re-election of the incumbent Jerry Rawlings as president, only to regret as the dictator never budged and his party pocketed 189 of the 200 parliamentary seats as stake...The Cameroonian opposition also tested their own medicine in 1997 when they decided to boycott presidential elections which the incumbent Paul Biya won with a landslide, garnering over 92 % of the votes.

Given such precedents one wonders whether opposition parties in Zimbabwe and the MDC-T in particular, are aware of this damning historical evidence. In fact, far from being an appealing weapon to fight dictatorship, election boycotts are often loathed by many, for opposition parties cannot achieve success by avoiding competition however flawed the rules governing such contests maybe. All the above evidence proves that it would be naïve for the opposition in Zimbabwe to overestimate the backing of the international community in the event that they decide to boycott all future elections, for boycotts do not always garner the international attention necessary to allow the boycotting parties to gain some benefits.

As I argued earlier, if the opposition failed to force Mugabe to implement the needed reforms while they were still in the inclusive Government, how can they dream of overcoming this obstacle through election boycotts? Muchayi (2016) further argues that the idea of boycotting elections is flawed in that its proponents assume Mugabe to have retained some decency in him to succumb to external pressures.

The argument of this thesis is that the consequences of boycotting all future elections on the political landscape of Zimbabwe will ensure the survival of the incumbent's regime as they empower the existing establishment. It is significant to note that ZANU PF strategies of winning elections have evolved but the opposition fails to keep pace with this trend. Muchayi (2016) reckons that in 2007-2008, the ruling party relied on open violence against its opponents but today it relies on the manipulation of the electoral process. All these are weapons at the regime's disposal to cling onto power. By boycotting elections, the opposition leaves a political vacuum that needs filling.

### **5.8 MDC-T not Contesting in Elections: Faces another Split**

This section attempts to analyse press representation of MDC-T resolution of not participating in by-elections, then interrogate consequences of such a position. *The Herald* of 18 March 2015 carried a story titled "MDC-T MPs KICKED OUT...By- elections loom as 21 seats vacant". The newspaper reported that parliament expelled the legislators after MDC-T wrote disowning them, saying they were no longer representing its interest in the House of Assembly after they joined the recently formed United Movement for Democratic Change (UMDC). The new party is a merger between former MDC-T secretary-general Tendai Biti, who broke away to lead MDC Renewal Team, and Welshman Ncube, who lead the MDC. The newspaper reported that Tsvangirai faced MDC-T rebellion if he decided to boycott the impending by-elections as some senior members in his party were eyeing constituencies left vacant following Parliament's decision to expel 17 MDC Renewal Team members from the National Assembly.

The speaker of the assembly, Jacob Mudenda expelled the MP's after confirming that there was no longer any dispute in the courts concerning the leadership of the party. It is important to note that this decision sparked a fresh fight over party assets and properties between the two rival MDC factions. However, Tsvangirai camp occupies the party headquarters at Harvest House in Harare and most of the provincial offices except in Manicaland.

After court decision MDC-T retained ownership of party assets, property, name, symbols and finances. The *Daily News* of 25 March 2015 published an article titled “MDC NOT CONTESTING IN BY-ELECTIONS”.

The bold headline suggests emphasis of MDC-T’s position of not participating in the by-elections for the 14 seats. Ironically, the party was quick to replace the seven MPs whose seats fell vacant under the Proportional Representation platform, itself a form of participation in the election process (as many critics argue), while shying away from facing ZANU PF in the 2014 contested constituencies. However, MDC-T party spokesman, Obert Gutu said the party had upheld its October 2014 congress resolution not to participate in any general or by-election before the implementation of key electoral reforms. It is important to underscore the fact that Tsvangirai was reportedly under pressure from senior party officials who wanted to take up the vacant seats to bring vibrancy to parliament and this fuelled potential rift in the party.

*The Sunday Mail* of 22 March 2015 carried an opinion piece titled “Again, why should I vote for you?” written by Joram Nyathi (Group Political Editor). Nyathi (2015:10)’s view is that the multi-partyism often does help to keep the ruling party in check. The fear of losing power in elections is an incentive for any government to do better. I also argue in this study that for a political party to become a serious contender for power it must have distinguishable policies; it must have something to sell to the electorate. It must go beyond the protest vote and lay out programmes of action to challenge those of the incumbent.

Nyathi’s opinion is that Tsvangirai leadership raises a lot of questions. The party has been thrown into turmoil over the decision to recall the 21 MPs who broke away with Tendai Biti. So why get people out of parliament if you are not ready to replace them? To vote or not, that is the question which split the original MDC in October 2005. The same hypothetical question could have been raised in 2014 when MDC-T leader was adamant his party would boycott by-elections. Although Nyathi’s (2015) views largely sound cynical on MDC-T and its leader Tsvangirai, there are some valuable arguments he raises in the article. Based on what I have reiterated, state-owned newspapers invite ZANU PF sympathisers to write articles in favour of ruling party while scathing opposition parties. What is interesting to note is that state controlled press portrays sympathy towards the splinter faction of the MDC-T while depicting Tsvangirai as a dictator.

On the other hand, the private press representation is that of sympathy for Mujuru as victims of Mugabe's ruthlessness. Such press reportage confirms the polarisation of media environment in Zimbabwe.

*The Herald* of 11 April, 2015 published a story titled "MDC-T faces potential split," in which Tsvangirai was portrayed as undemocratic and that MDC-T is losing support even from within. I concur with the representation that MDC-T is losing support base from the grassroots which may cost the party in 2018 elections unless the party changes strategy and policy. The contents of the story in *The Herald* of 11 of April 2015 were the same verbatim with that of *The Sunday Mail* and even privately-owned press - reflecting lack of creativity and originality on the part of reporters who seem to use the same template despite belonging to different media houses. The agenda for state-owned media is largely to portray opposition parties, particularly MDC-T as ridden with conflict.

*The Chronicle* of 13 April 2013 a sister paper to *The Herald* had an Editorial Comment: "Khupe faces political Waterloo". The newspaper representation was that MDC president Morgan Tsvangirai has always viewed himself as the embodiment of his party and the near cult status attained at the height of the country's economic challenges between 2001-2008, which left him convinced that the opposition party was nothing without him. The Editorial Comment stated that "This delusion of grandeur knows no bounds and woe be to anyone who dares oppose him. His latest fight with Khupe is therefore not surprising given the brutal manner he dealt with dissent in the past". This indicates that Tsvangirai's unilateral reversal of a national council decision to participate in the 2005 senatorial elections precipitated the first split where Welshman Ncube and his group left to form a splinter MDC. It is argued that Tsvangirai has always used whatever means necessary to hold onto power and neutralise opponents.

The 2005 split was likely fuelled by strains caused by Tsvangirai's treason trial and tribalism, as revealed by an unpublished report which was compiled by the party. The report compiled by a three-men commission comprising Tichaona Mudzingwa, Moses Mzila Ndlovu and Giles Mutsekwa into violence that erupted at the party's Harvest House in May 2005 suggested the party was inexorably heading towards a split, plagued by tribal, mistrust and competing political ambitions.



The report said fears that Tsvangirai would be jailed at the end of his treason trial split the party, with one faction of senior officials unprepared to have Tsvangirai's deputy, Gibson Sibanda, an Ndebele-leading the party.

*The Herald* of 14 April, 2015 carried an article titled: "Renewal MPs Court Challenge Fails". The newspaper reported that a bid by 21 members of the breakaway MDC Renewal Team to challenge their expulsion from parliament hit a brick wall after the Constitutional Court threw out their application. The court found no fault on the actions of speaker of parliament, Advocate Jacob Mudenda and Senate President Edna Madzongwe in announcing the 21 vacancies.

Mudenda argued that the former MDC-T MP's:

Knew, or must have known or should have known, or ought to have known that the natural or probable consequences of them receiving the letters(s) of expulsion from a political party was to be followed by the concerned members' recall from Parliament (*The Herald*, 13 April 2015).

It would seem the Constitutional Court acted correctly, but perhaps knew the seats were destined for the ruling party. Chances were that even if MDC-T was going to contest for the 14 seats, ZANU PF was going to grab some fairly or unfairly because the electoral base for MDC-T was dwindling due to infighting. Ironically, Tendai Biti, a 'competent' lawyer himself, a recipient of the fateful letter, could not fathom his fate too. The state controlled *Herald* quoted Mudenda cynically arguing:

All these important events have already taken place and what is now left for the applicant is simply to accept his/her fate, because, to use the language of a rancher, the horse has bottled out of the pen, and to use Shakespearean language, it is a high-sounding application but signifying nothing or, to use biblical language, this application is no more than a noisy gong or a clanging bell which will not produce the desired results (*The Herald* 13 April, 2015).

The newspaper representation is that the expelled MPs had their 'marriage' with MDC-T and parliament ended. It should be noted that on 4 March 2015, the first applicant, William Madzimore had received a letter from MDC-T expelling him from the party and instead of rushing to court to protect his alleged fundamental rights he went to Tendai Biti.

One can only conclude that what is was to be – it was one way of paying the price for immaturity and impulsive manner of expressing dissent when the disagreement arose. It seems state owned press agenda was to continue reporting MDC-T conflict with the sole aim of vilifying the party leader, Morgan Tsvangirai. What is of interest to note is that the newspaper published articles which were written by Alex Magaisa on Tsvangirai.

*The Herald* of 9 May 2015 had a headline “Ex-advisor speaks on Tsvangirai.” Magaisa (2015) alleged that MDC-T leader, Morgan Tsvangirai lacks strategy to unseat ZANU PF and that his decision to boycott elections is ill-timed as the party does not have a viable alternative. He told *The Herald* in a wide ranging interview that MDC-T failed to pursue purported reforms during the inclusive Government era because it had been “comforted by luxuries of office”.

According to Magaisa (2015):

You have to say you are boycotting, but you are also doing A, B, C, and D to ensure that your demands are met. Otherwise you will remain in a perpetual state of boycott. Or if you eventually change your mind after many boycotts, people will say, but why did you waste all those opportunities boycotting elections?

The argument being raised by Magaisa is that MDC-T should always have a backup plan. The depiction we get is that MDC-T has no formula against ZANU PF - a seasoned opponent. *The Herald* of 12 May, 2015 published an article titled “Zim opposition politics now in the mortuary,” written by Susan Chipanga. Chipanga (2015) posits that Zimbabwe opposition parties are in a crisis and that none of the political leaders inspire confidence in the voters. The reporter based her arguments from survey results by Afro barometer that people no longer have confidence in the opposition parties as confirmed by the July 31, 2013 elections in which MDC-T lost ZANU PF. The newspaper representation of opposition parties in general and MDC-T in particular, sounds biased as it echoes the usual discourse that MDC-T called for sanctions which have resulted in the economic meltdown. The article suggests there are new subtle ways being mooted and put into action by the opposition to dislodge Mugabe. One way is to destroy ZANU PF from within which was tried in the 2008 presidential elections through Simba Makoni but proved to be a dismal failure.

Chipanga (2015) fails to realise that had Makoni established a grand coalition with MDC-T, ZANU PF would have been defeated. However, she cynically alleges that Joice Mujuru is another character being touted as the favourite to fill the opposition vacuum as per “the daily song of her foot soldiers, Rugare Gumbo, Didymus Mutasa and the rabid private media.” I concur with Chipanga’s projection on the possibility of a grand coalition being mooted as the panacea to removing President Robert Mugabe from power in 2018 as doomed. If the grand coalition comprises Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn led by Simba Makoni, MDC-T led by Tsvangirai, ZAPU headed by Dumiso Dabengwa and Lovemore Madhuku’s National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), then it may not go far. Arguably, these are power hungry and narcissistic individuals who cannot go past their own imagined self-importance for them to consider choosing one amongst them to lead the coalition. The fact that Simba Makoni could not form a coalition with Tsvangirai’s MDC-T in 2008 is evidence of this. While there is a likelihood of a demise of ZANU PF, it yet does not point to a rise of the opposition given its ego-dominated politics of refusing a coalition, confirming Magaisa’s (2014) argument that the fundamental challenge within opposition parties is that of “big egos and delusions of grandeur”.

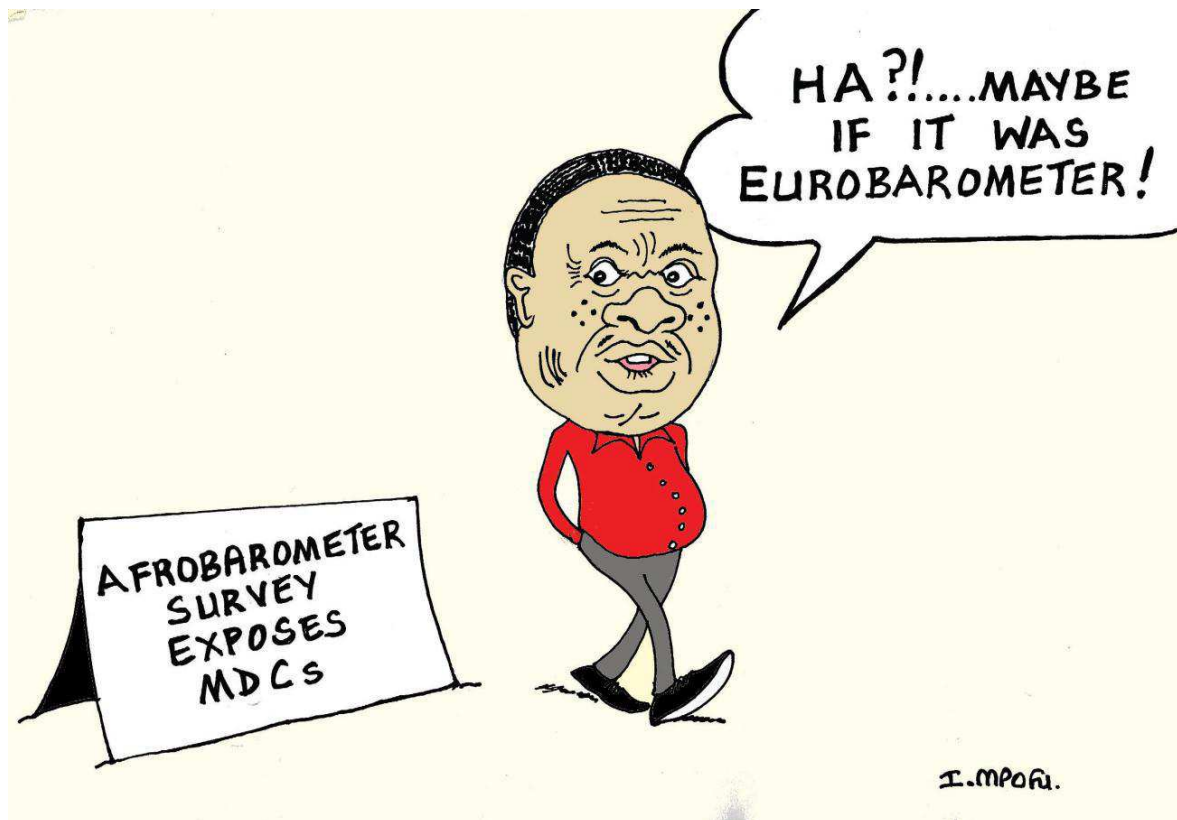


Simba Makoni, Morgan Tsvangirai and Dumiso Dabengwa

Will these opposition leaders (in the photograph above) form a grand coalition to dislodge ZANU PF the system; or join Mujuru’s People First towards the 2018 elections? In this study, I disagree with Susan Chipanga (2015) when she depicts opposition parties’ ‘death’ based on a survey by Afro barometer conducted in November 2014.

She paints a gloomy picture that the main opposition party, MDC-T is doomed yet she fails to consider events that occurred in MDC-T soon after they lost to ZANU PF on July 31 2013 election. Politics is dynamic and it is dangerous to pronounce the death of the opposition on the basis of this survey. I agree with Magaisa's (2015) views when he was interviewed by *The Herald*, 9 May 2015. Magaisa argues "...it is common cause that the opposition has gone through some difficult times in the past two years. These challenges were more prominent last year and, at the time that the survey was conducted, in November 2014, the main opposition party – the MDC-T – was dealing with a messy internal split, after some of its senior leaders broke away to form the MDC Renew Formation".

It is this study's contention that there was a lot of confusion and uncertainty among the ranks and all these problems afflicting the opposition may have contributed to its poor showing in the survey.



*The Herald* of 9 May 2015 published a cartoon by I Mpofo pertaining to the Afro barometer survey. One section of the cartoon says: "Afro barometer survey exposes MDCs" then the other part portrays Tsvangirai – MDC-T leader laughing off: "HA?!...MAYBE IF IT WAS EUROBAROMETER!"

The cartoonist tries to make a caricature of Tsvangirai by echoing the ruling party narrative. The implication and reading we get is that Tsvangirai scoffs at surveys by locals but may only subscribe to Western projections – the sponsors of opposition parties according to ZANU-PF. The cartoonist and Afro barometer survey depict political attitudes and perceptions which are subject to scrutiny. Zimbabwe needs a strong opposition because it is a necessary part of the checks and balances that are critical in a democracy. Magaisa (2015) contends that ZANU-PF itself knows that a firm opposition is necessary. It is in Zimbabwe's interest to have a stable opposition that performs its democratic function or mandate. But it is important to have unity among the opposition's numerous formations. The opposition needs to address this issue of fragmentation as this is unhelpful especially when dealing with a formidable opponent like ZANU-PF, which is not only older and has considerably more experience but also has the advantage of incumbency.

My theory, which concurs with Magaisa (2015), is that post 2013, there was a lot of frustration and fatigue in the party (I have discussed this in Section 4.4.7 of this chapter). MDC-T and, arguably the majority of Zimbabweans, were hopeful the opposition would form the next government but after the shocking loss opposition supporters were shocked and traumatised. This frustration and fatigue also led people to ask questions and to think that it was necessary to explore new channels. According to Magaisa (2015), after July 2013, people did not know what to do. They looked at what had happened in shock and asked what else do we could do to win power that we have not done before?

### **5.9 Another split imminent in MDC-T: Tsvangirai versus Chamisa?**

I argue in this section that MDC-T is not free from internal strife, with the fear for the democratic movement always being whether or not it will splinter again. Conflict around specific personalities persists much to the threat of unity within the party. I concur with views of Zimbabwe Peace Project (2015:3) that “unless and until the parties (both ZANU-PF and MDC-T) have considerable unity of purpose and basic tolerance for diversity, peace within their movements will always be at threat”. The main opposition party, the MDC-T had its share of internal turmoil in October. Conflict, albeit milder than it is in the ruling party, showed that the unity of purpose is under threat in MDC-T. Known for splintering and re-splintering, the opposition party's propensity for possible split is always present with the party leader, Morgan Tsvangirai being pitted against Kuwadzana legislator, Nelson Chamisa. Although the party still denies any rift, instances in certain areas, for example in Bulawayo

following the death of Nkulumane legislator, Thamsanqa, among a few others, illuminate turbulences and power struggles within the party (ZPP, 2015). Both the state-owned and the privately-owned press were awash with stories of internal strife between Tsvangirai and Chamisa.

It can be argued that the former made screaming headlines for obvious reasons – to fuel and exacerbate conflict in the opposition party so as to instigate a third split in the main opposition – MDC-T – ahead of 2018 harmonised elections. An online post on 13 June 2014 published an article titled “Chamisa vs. Tsvangirai”, ‘constitutional renewal’ row, daggers drawn”. The lead paragraph of the article depicts Tsvangirai in a real battle for his survival in the leadership of the MDC-T against Nelson Chamisa. The *Daily News* of 5 November, 2014 published an article with a headline “Tsvangirai speaks on Chamisa ouster”. This article comes after Chamisa lost to Douglas Mwonozora, who became the MDC Secretary General. Tsvangirai told the newspaper in an exclusive interview that Chamisa’s sudden fall does not mean he stops taking a prominent role in the MDC and that he could be co-opted into the MDC National Executive. *Daily News* quoted Tsvangirai saying Chamisa’s loss was a repeat of the stunning upset at the 2011 MDC congress in which party veteran Elias Mudzuri lost the organising secretary post to Chamisa, but Mudzuri was co-opted into the executive where he performed effectively.

However, supporters of Chamisa allege that the legislator resisted a raft of constitutional changes that had been proposed by Tsvangirai, which were meant to dilute the powers of the Secretary-General and centralise power in the MDC leader’s office. This allegedly did not sit well with Tsvangirai and his supporters although Tsvangirai denied that there was a rift between him and Chamisa. Tsvangirai describes his relationship with Chamisa as a ‘father – son’ relationship.

Responding to the issue of centralising power in his office, Tsvangirai said sometimes instability arises because of confusion of roles. “And you need role clarity to ensure there is more coherence than situations where there appears to be competition rather than cooperation” (Tsvangirai quoted in *Daily News*, 5 November, 2014). It is interesting to note that newspapers have been reporting that Chamisa and others wanted to form a party and that he wanted to remove the leadership by calling for another congress but Chamisa asserted that people should work towards strengthening the party in readiness to take power from ZANU-PF.

*The Herald* of 4 November, 2015 carried a story titled “Chamisa takes a dig at ‘guilty’, ‘afraid’ Tsvangirai”. The state owned newspaper which is the main mouthpiece of ZANU-PF had its sustained agenda of fanning conflict in MDC-T leadership in its lead paragraph: “Top opposition MDC-T politician and Kuwadzana East House of Assembly member, Nelson Chamisa, who is reportedly leading a faction seeking to torpedo leader Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai...made a thinly veneered dig at the latter saying he was running scared, barely a fortnight after a local newspaper reported him as saying his boss was “seeing shadows”.

It should be pointed out that the newspaper based its opinion on Chamisa’s statement which he had posted on a social media page whose followers immediately situated it in the internal fight within the opposition camp. This was a far-fetched misrepresentation of what maybe going out in real life - Chamisa’s posted statement read. It would seem the media has become the battlefield for ideas between the ruling party and opposition. *Daily News* of 20 November, 2015 published a story with a headline “ZANU-PF trying to derail Tsvangirai”. I have argued earlier in many instances that the privately owned press in general, and *Daily News* in particular is sympathetic towards MDC-T; and by extension downtrodden opposition parties such as the emerging People First with its ranks.

It is not surprising therefore; that the newspaper alleges ZANU-PF is meddling in MDC-T affairs. The lead paragraph of the article confirms my view, “with ZANU-PF arguably at its weakest point ever due to its deadly factional and succession wars, there are claims that the ruling party is working to weaken the MDC ahead of the 2018 elections by manufacturing divisions among opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai’s leadership team”.

The sources suggested that President Robert Mugabe’s ruling party was “hell-bent on stirring animosity” between Tsvangirai and former MDC organising secretary, Nelson Chamisa. It can be argued that there is a massive propaganda and disinformation campaign against Tsvangirai and the MDC by ZANU-PF, with some MDC bigwigs biting this misinformation blitz by the CIO. The reading we get from the article is that senior colleagues were allegedly and “willingly participating in the plot as they felt that with Chamisa out in the cold their own political careers will fly” - as they know that after Tsvangirai few can stand against Chamisa who has a strong support base. Although Chamisa is not a member of the MDC’s standing committee – its top decision making body (synonymous to the politburo of ZANU-PF) – some of MDC-T officials have accused him of allegedly leading a party faction that wants Tsvangirai out, a claim that Tsvangirai himself is said not to support.

*The Herald* of 25 November 2015 published an article titled “MDC-T ‘splits’ yet again”. The newspaper reported that a split was looming in the opposition MDC-T party due to power struggles between leader Morgan Tsvangirai and Nelson Chamisa. The state owned press’ tone and intention is to depict a sense of loss to Chamisa when it describes him as “...reduced to an ordinary card-carrying member...”. The newspaper was trying to fan conflict when it alleged Chamisa’s loss was “...engineered by Tsvangirai”. The newspaper further exacerbates and sows animosity when it claims that “... a serious rift has grown between the two politicians which is feared to soon culminate in a split”. *The Herald* sought to authenticate its views by quoting Zimbabwe Peace Project’s report titled: “Internal Strife:

A cancer in Zimbabwe’s main political parties,” (October 2015). The reporter cites that “factionalism has led to clashes in Harare and Chitungwiza, leading to disruption of meetings” of MDC-T. *The Herald* extensively quotes the ZPP (2015) report, only selecting sections which refer to MDC-T but ignoring those which concern ZANU-PF. The concept of selection and emphasis in state-owned party press only serves to demonstrate its allegiance to ZANU-PF and adversity to opposition parties. In 2016 the state owned press continued to paint a bleak picture in the relationship between Tsvangirai and Chamisa but the youthful legislator shamed their detractors. The *Daily News* of 2 January, 2016 carried a story titled “Tsvangirai is my father: Chamisa”. In the lead paragraph, the article states: “Kuwadzana East legislator, Nelson Chamisa has rubbished what he calls “persistent but patently false” state media reports that he is engaged in an escalating power struggle with MDC President, Morgan Tsvangirai”. Chamisa told *Daily News* that he could never fight with Tsvangirai whom he affectionately referred to as “my father” – echoing Tsvangirai’s words which I described earlier as “father-son” relationship. Therefore, one can argue that state media and other detractors were determined to make a good relationship appear sour.

It should be acknowledged that the claims that the two were at war have made headlines for weeks on end in pro-ZANU-PF state media. *The Herald* of 20 January, 2016 published a story titled “MDC-T fights escalate”. The state newspaper reported that MDC had allegedly suspended two district chairpersons in Masvingo over the alleged feud yet the chairpersons were suspended ostensibly for attending a meeting organised by the yet to be launched People First party fronted by deposed former Vice-President Joice Mujuru.



It can be argued that the two may have been suspended for alleged defection although state media claimed that they were Chamisa allies. The opposition party was also said to have been forced to abandon disciplinary proceedings against Bulawayo Senator, Matson Hlalo, an alleged Chamisa ally, after Hlalo was suspended for dragging the party to court over a leadership dispute in Bulawayo.

It is imperative to underscore the fact that as long as the Zimbabwean society and media landscape are polarised, in an environment of political conflict between ruling ZANU-PF and opposition parties, press representation will be characterised by hegemony and counter hegemony. Political parties employ media as mouth piece for their ideologies, policies, campaigns and propaganda purposes. ZANU-PF uses state controlled media while MDC-T depends on privately owned press.

### **5.10 Conclusion**

This chapter analysed power struggles in the opposition, Movement for Democratic Party. The chapter explored the causes of the splits in the MDC formations. The chapter also analysed the representation of succession struggles in the state-owned and privately-owned newspapers. The chapter contends that the future of politics is in the hands of the electorate and citizens in Zimbabwe. The chapter also argues that endogenous factors contributed to the split of the MDC. The endogenous factors include dissenting and ideological conflicts over selective benefits which might threaten party unity in case their disagreement resolves around the legitimacy of party leader. The chapter also found out that endogenous factors such as the refusal of a party leader to accommodate dissenting voices and the refusal by them to step back in the factional fight escalate into conflict.

## **Chapter 6: Political Conflict between ZANU-PF and MDC**

*“Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely”* (Lord Action).

*“We can easily become like that which we oppose or hate most”* (Desmond Tutu).

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines representation of political conflict in the ruling party ZANU PF and main opposition MDC. This chapter discusses the betrayal of liberation movements in Africa in general, and Zimbabwe in particular, which gave rise to opposition forces, thereby culminating in political conflict. The chapter draws parallels between colonial rulers and liberation-movements. Further, the chapter discusses decolonisation as a method of consolidating rule that is maintained through processes of rhetoric and national unification. This is followed by press representation of political parties in Zimbabwe.

Whilst the ruling parties born out of these liberation movements insist that they have fulfilled people’s expectations from independence, I argue in this study that the majority of citizens feel disillusioned; hence opposition parties are formed to offer alternative governments. That power corrupts is by no means a solely African truism. Nor that giving up power - even in democratically anchored and regulated conditions with a long tradition - is difficult for many once they have had a taste of it (Melber 2002). The challenge Zimbabwe has faced since 1980 is that neither the country’s nor the ruling party constitution prescribes presidential term limits like what other Southern African countries do. This resulted in President Robert Mugabe holding onto power for 36 years and still shows no sign to relinquish power as he insists he will be the presidential candidate for 2018 elections. Although he claims leadership is chosen by people the ugly factional and succession struggles in ZANU PF suggest that some feel he must hand over power to a younger person.

When liberation movements overthrew imperialist forces starting from the 50s, there was a pervasive sense of promise and hope among Africans. The role of these liberation movements should be to transform African nations to uphold the democratic principles they strived for (Melber 2010). However, this role change is rarely realised as ruling parties morph into a new elite replacing the former oppressors.

## 6.2 Post-Colonial Leadership

The post-colonial realities have not met the expectations of those who considered the fight against colonialism as a fight for the implementation of positive values (Saul 2010a: 2). Instead, the post-colonial reality reflects the contradictions and challenges of revolutionary optimism turned into the self-righteous entitlement culture of new elite: a 'predatory elite'. (Naidoo, 2010). In this chapter, I argue that political conflict in Zimbabwe was a result of many and complex factors including political dominance by the ruling party, corruption by the elite, gross abuse of human rights, lack of democracy and individual freedom as echoed by Saul (2010) above. Some far-sighted scholars and writers on the African continent had seen this coming. Helliker (2010:137) reminds us that the Durban based social scientist Rick Turner, who was assassinated by the apartheid-regime in the mid-1970s, already foresaw "the rise and consolidation of statism". More than 40 years ago Turner foretold that:

The political party as mediator between the individual and government tends to take on the characteristics of the system itself, the 'party machine' dominates the membership and the rank and file becomes increasingly divorced from policy making. ...The political arena becomes polarised between an atomised mass and a number of small groups trying to manipulate the mass in order to get political jobs. The result of this is to move the source of power in society out of the political arena and into the control of functional power groups (Turner, 1971:81).

It is an undeniable fact that ZANU PF government has monopolised strategic jobs and posts both in government and parastatals leading to mismanagement and collapse of the latter mainly due to corruption. If one dismisses the most commonly conventional explanations for Africa's failure to live up to the potential that its valuable natural resources and youthful population would predict, then how can the continent's dismal political and economic performance be explained? Meredith (2006:13-14) in his book titled "The Future of Africa: From the Hopes of Freedom to the Heart of Despair – A History of Fifty years of Independence" points the finger at the failure of post-colonial leadership.

He focuses in particular, on the role of a number of African leaders whose characters and careers had a decisive impact on the fate of their countries, which are “the reasons why, after the euphoria of the independence era, so many hopes and ambitions faded and why the future of Africa came to be spoken of only in pessimistic terms”. Many elderly Zimbabweans often speak of the glory of the past; sad enough, referring to colonial because all their hopes and aspirations were shattered by the new government. It is imperative to note the critical post-independence period when, after an all - too-brief “honeymoon”, the pattern for the future was set with the transformation of the leaders of liberation movements into tyrants:

As founding fathers, the first generation of nationalist leaders – Nkrumah, Nasser, Senghor, Houphouet-Boigny, Sekou Toure, Keita, Olympio, Kenyatta, Nyerere, Kaunda, Banda – all enjoyed great prestige and high honour. They were seen to personify the states they led and swiftly took advantage to consolidate their control. From the outset, most sought a monopoly of power; most established a system of personal rule and encouraged personality cults (Meredith 2006:162).

President Robert Mugabe and Angola’s Eduardo dos Santos are some of the longest serving leaders in Africa, and continue with their authoritarian rule at all odds. However, these two leaders have been criticised, not necessarily for their long stay in power, but because of monumental failures after the first ten years of rule. Critics can only talk of advanced age in despotic rulers due to dismal economic and political blunders.

Not surprisingly, during the entire period from the beginning of decolonisation with the independence of Ghana to the end of the Cold War and the beginning of what Samuel Huntington calls the “third wave of democratisation”, only one African leader, President Adan Abdulle Isman of Somalia (1967), ever peacefully relinquished his office following electoral defeat (Peter Pham 2008:130). He adds that over the course of the same time frame, only three African heads of state retired voluntarily: Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal (1980), Ahmadou Ahidjo of Cameroon (1982), and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania (1985) – and Ahidjo, apparently underwent a change of heart and subsequently tried (unsuccessfully) to shoot his way back into office a year after vacating the presidency (Diamond 1997).

Meredith's chapter-long study of the tragic evolution of Ghana's Nkrumah who, in 1966, also became one of the first African leaders to be overthrown in a military coup d'état, is especially illustrative of what would become a recurring pattern:

Surrounded by sycophants and praised daily by the press, he became increasingly remote from the realities of the crisis that Ghana faced, resenting even mild criticism, refusing to believe that anything had gone wrong. Every setback he attributed to imperialists and neo-colonialists plotting against him. When ministers arrived bearing reports of economic difficulties, he was impatient and dismissive. Palace intrigues swirled around him (Meredith 2006:188 cited in Pham 2008:131).

The flawed leadership in Zimbabwe under Mugabe's ZANU-PF which has been in power since 1980 reflects the same, if not worse tragic scenarios of all African states. As demonstrated in previous chapters, the ruling party's strategies to remain in power included tight control of the state-owned media and clampdown on the opposition. The ZANU-PF leadership completely resent dissent voices from within the ruling party, which is considered taboo. Those who had the audacity to publicly criticise the President were dealt with in a brutal manner and humiliated. The opposition has been subjected to a surfeit of abuses and has been labelled agents of the West, stooges, puppets, sell-outs, and unpatriotic elements. The private press has also been vilified and accused of being vehicles of destabilisation and agents of the erstwhile colonialists.

### **6.3 Liberation Movements as government**

Post-Colonial governments in Africa were born out of protracted and violent liberation struggles. Melber (2010) asserts that these governments took control of the state machinery and reorganised themselves as political parties. Their legitimacy to rule stemmed from their participation in the liberation struggle (in Angola and Mozambique this claim was based on the relative military success in fighting the Portuguese occupation and taking control of the state). In Zimbabwe and South Africa the legitimacy was secured more visibly through general elections. Since then, with varying results (and sometimes with the use of further organised violence as illustrated, most spectacularly in the case of Zimbabwe), they have been able to maintain their political dominance and control over the state apparatus.

It should be pointed out that most liberation movements, particularly ZANU-PF, always maintain that it was solely through the barrel of the gun (not negotiations) which brought political independence in 1980. Those born free may never come to know how independence came because 'patriotic history' brings its own version in order to justify the continued hold on power by ruling party. Every sober-minded Zimbabwean appreciates the role of liberation movement but what perhaps remains as the area of controversy is ruling party's unjustified hold on to power despite losing in elections.

As Melber (2010) asserts, the social transformation of Southern African societies shaped by settler colonialism can, at best be characterised as a transition from controlled change to changed control. The result is a new ruling political elite operating from commanding heights, whose foundations are further strengthened by selective narratives and memories related to the war(s) of liberation. These create new (to some extent invented) traditions to establish an exclusive post-colonial legitimacy under the sole authority of one particular agency of social forces (see Kriger 1995 and Werbner 1998b for Zimbabwe; Melber 2002c, 2005 and 2007 for Namibia).

The mystification of the liberators plays an essential role in this fabrication. Visible signs of post-colonial 'patriotic history' include the Chimurenga (liberation struggle) music of Zimbabwe, which has been turned into a perverted form of self-adoration under the Mugabe regime. Examples include the late Elliot Manyika, Chinx Chingaira, Webster Shamu, Mbare Chimurenga Choir, among others, whose music extols the exploits of ZANU-PF and President Robert Mugabe. Their music suggest a one-dimensional linearity from early to modern anti-colonial resistance and celebrates the leaders of 'the one and only' liberation movement and government.

The situational application of militant rhetoric as a tool for inclusion and exclusion in terms of post-colonial national identity is common practice. It demonstrates that declared notions of national reconciliation and the slogan of 'unity in diversity' do not receive the appropriate acknowledgment in terms of political pluralism. Politically correct identity is defined by those in power narrowly along lines of (self) definition and (self) understanding (Melber 2010:82). As observed in the case of Zimbabwe:

(W) hilst power relations had changed, *perceptions* of power had *not* changed. The layers of understanding regarding power relations, framed by socialization and memory, continue (d) to operate. ...[Although] actors had changed... the way in which the new actors executed power in relation to opposition had not, [because] their mental framework remained in the colonial setting. Patterns from colonial rule of ‘citizens’ ruling the ‘subjects’ [were] repeated and reproduced (Yap 2001:312 – 313; original emphasis).

The independence process in Zimbabwe and Namibia resulted first and foremost in an internationally monitored and legitimated transfer of political power. That the political power exercised by and large met the definitions and expectations of a democratic political system was a desired result, but not the main goal. The liberation struggle was understood and primarily perceived as the right to self-determination of the population on the basis of free and fair general elections.

Decolonisation, not democratisation, was therefore, the priority (Melber 2010:821). ZANU-PF has become sceptical of international monitors and observers, particularly those from Europe and America, since the formation of MDC. Therefore, the ruling party has been adamant that only AU and SADC countries will be selected to monitor and observe general elections. Mugabe’s ZANU-PF enjoys solidarity from former African liberation movements, who, despite prevailing violence during campaigns, torture bases in rural areas, flawed electoral processes, lack of electoral and media reforms, among others, will endorse the elections as free and fair. This solidarity was well captured and represented in *The Herald* of 4 December 2011, in an article headlined “Liberation movements support President’s candidature”; and another one in *The Herald* of December 5 2014, headline “Liberation movements express solidarity with Zanu PF”. It is worth noting that the representation blames external enemies for the ruling party’s failures. An example of this is found in a story published in *The Herald* of 5 December 2014, which stated that:

We are aware of the deliberate strategy aimed at destroying the progressive unity and peace in the sub-region. Such events are disturbing and tragic and they have the effect to systematically decimate gains made by sister revolutionary movements. It is time for us the senior parties to close ranks and get rid of these forces and their obnoxious tactics (SWAPO Secretary-general Cde Mbuba Nangolo Mbumba, quoted in *The Herald* Dec. 5. 2014).

While it is noble for liberation movements to support each other, it is sinister to show solidarity with a sister ruling party when it loses elections or does not accept defeat.

#### **6.4 Monopoly in Political and Economic Spheres**

The post-colonial politics of the ruling parties often show a blatant lack of democratic awareness and forms of neo-patrimonial systems. The party machine serves as a vehicle of economic wheeling and dealing in favour of the political dons and their clientele (Saul 2010b: 4). Such trends of political entrenchment of particular class interests at the expense of democracy and redistributive socio-economic measures are also visible in other Southern African countries other than Mozambique. The denial of collective political participation of the majority goes hand in hand with the continued socio-economic exclusion of the politically marginalised (see Melber 2003a and 2003b).

Melber (2010) reckons that the unabated exploitation of Angola's oil wealth by a powerful oligarchy within the ruling MPLA is one of the biggest scandals on the continent. Elections in Angola were postponed several times thereby denying citizens the right to choose a government of their choice. In such circumstances, constitutionalism and the rule of law are non-existent in the political system (Vidal/Chabal 2009). Instead, those in government and state take over civil society (Messiant, 2001) and turn the country into a corporate business of those in control of the party (Marques de Morais 2010a and 2010b, Sogge, 2010). Neither the enormous revenue income generated by the exploitation of crude oil, nor the wealth resulting from the mining of diamonds improve the living conditions of the ordinary people in a meaningful way (Croese, 2010). This is the scenario which obtains in Zimbabwe, a country with a lot of natural resources.

The controversy around diamond mining at Chiadzwa and the lack of transparency about the proceeds is a case in point. Allegations of top army officials and government ministers looting of the diamonds at Chiadzwa abound, meaning that only the elite and not ordinary people have benefited from this key national resource. One minister is reported to have built an empire for himself from diamond proceeds yet ruling party leadership, besides being aware of the scandal and corruption allowed the minister go unpunished.



Like Angola, Zimbabwe's general elections (as discussed in Chapter Two), have always been disputed, particularly in March 2008 when President Mugabe lost the presidential elections to Tsvangirai in the first round of voting. Election results were delayed by more than six weeks, purportedly because ZEC had to manipulate the votes to avoid a clear MDC victory. The July 31, 2013 harmonised elections were disputed by the opposition, which alleged that they had been rigged.

Melber's observation that autocratic governments tends to subordinate the state under the party, and politically motivated social and material favours as rewards for loyalty are common coercive measures, especially where there is a likelihood of internal dissent. Such examples, particularly in the recent past are many.

The term 'national interest' means solely what they (ruling parties) say it means. Based on the ruler's (self) perception, individuals and groups are allowed to participate in, or are excluded from, nation-building. The 'national interest' therefore serves the purpose "to justify all kinds of authoritarian practice" and that the concepts of "anti-national" or "unpatriotic" can be defined basically as any group that resists the power of the ruling elite of the day" (Harrison 2001:391). Such selective mechanisms of the exercise and retention of power have little or nothing to do with democratic principles, but have much in common with the command structures that emerged during the days of the liberation struggle, especially in exile (Melber 2010:page).

A South African political activist summarized her experiences as follows:

Many of my former comrades have become loyal to a party rather than to principles of justice...Unfortunately it is true that those who have been oppressed make the worst democrats. There are recurring patterns in the behaviour of liberation parties – when they come to power they uphold the most undemocratic practices (Kadali, 2001).

Given the disturbing revelations above, it is not surprising that the opposition parties in Zimbabwe, particularly the MDC have been labelled as unpatriotic and agents of regime change, puppets of the British with an agenda to re-colonise Zimbabwe. This ruling party rhetoric has become a cliché. The majority of ZANU PF Central Committee and Politburo members observe party loyalty rather than tenets of justice and democracy.

There is a lack of (self) critical awareness and extremely limited willingness to accept divergent opinions, particularly if they are expressed in public. Non-conformist thinking is interpreted as disloyalty, if not treason. This elimination of dissent drastically limits the new system's capacity for reform and innovation. A culture of fear, intimidation and silence inhibits the possibilities of durable renewal at the cost of public good... (Pithouse, 2010b).

Frantz Fanon presciently described in his manifesto, "The Wretched of the Earth", the internal contradictions and limits to emancipation in anti-colonial resistance and organised liberation movements. Writing at a time when the Algerian war of liberation had not ended, Fanon presaged the abuse of government power after attainment of independence in the wake of establishing a one-party state. In a chapter entitled "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" Fanon predicted that the state, which should convey a sense of security, trust and stability, instead foists itself on the people in a spectacular way, harassing and mistreating the citizens and in this way showing that it is in permanent danger (Fanon 2001:132; cited in Melber 2010). Fanon criticizes the party for controlling

...the masses, not in order to make sure that they really participate in the business of governing the nation, but in order to remind them constantly that the government expects from them obedience and discipline...The political party...instead of welcoming the expression of popular discontentment, instead of taking for its fundamental purpose the free flow of ideas from the people up to the government, forms a screen and forbids such ideas (Fanon 2001:146-147).

In view of such frustrating realities, people in rural areas (ZANU-PF's major strongholds), have accepted the ruling party despite economic meltdown – they do not question Mugabe's misrule and failures. It would seem taboo to criticise ZANU-PF – there is some form of naturalisation between ZANU-PF and its supporters. Dissent is prohibited...people should endure with resilience, which is encouraged by songs and jingles which are repeated on ZBC television and all radio stations. *Rambai makashinga* (remain resilient or persevere) easily comes to mind as one typical jingle which was repeatedly aired during 2008 election campaigns. Indeed, Zimbabweans have embraced a culture of perseverance even when the economy bites.

## 6.5 Liberation Movements Solidarity?

There is need to interrogate liberation movements in power's support for each other to the extent that they endorse election results which may be flawed and rigged for that matter. The violent practices of ruling parties in Southern Africa can best be explained by ZANU-PF's history which started between early 1983 and late 1986 during the Matabeleland disturbances. Willems (2004) argues that news is always a selection of events that are taking place in the real world at a particular moment in time. News is therefore not simply what happens, but that which can be presented as newsworthy. Whereas some events will be highlighted, others will be ignored. As Foucault (1978:27) has pointed out, silence is very much part of any discourse:

Silence itself – the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers – is less than the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies.

Applying this to news production, Van Dijk (1991:114) argues that the analysis of the 'unsaid' is sometimes more revealing than the study of what is actually expressed in text. In the analysis of political conflict in Zimbabwe, the state-owned press excluded reporting any violence executed by the ruling party, yet the open violent character of Mugabe's rule has drawn world attention, specially between 2000 and 2008. This is a typical strategy of what Willems (2004) describes as selection and silence ... in news reporting.

The solidarity displayed by African leaders towards ZANU-PF and their sanction of the regime's refusal to relinquish power after losing the 2008 elections is misplaced (Melber 2010).

An example of such solidarity is when South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) in Namibia issued a congratulatory message to ZANU-PF after Robert Mugabe controversially won the 2002 presidential election. The statement said:

On behalf of the leadership and the entire membership...our elation over the resounding victory scored...Your party's triumph is indeed victory for Southern Africa in particular and the African continent at large. It is victory over neo-colonialism, imperialism and foreign sponsored puppetry. We in SWAPO Party knew quite well that despite imperialist intransigence and all round attempts by enemies of peace, democracy and the rule of law to influence the outcome of the elections in favour of neck-chained political stooges, people of Zimbabwe would not succumb an inch to external pressure. They spoke with one overwhelming voice to reject re-colonisation. Their verdict should, therefore, be respected unconditionally by both the external perpetrators of division and their hired local stooges, who have been parading themselves as democrats...As we join your great nation in celebrating this well-deserved and indeed well-earned victory over the forces of darkness and uncertainty, we wish to call upon the people of Zimbabwe to prove to the prophets of doom that they can do without their unholy blessing, through hard work. In the same vein, we call for unity of purpose among the African people as the only viable weapon to ward off outside influence (SWAPO Party 2002).

Worth noting is the language used to describe opposition parties – ‘neo-colonialism, imperialism and foreign sponsored puppetry...’, ‘neck-chained political stooges...prophets of doom...hired local stooges...forces of darkness and uncertainty...’ among others. Such language is typical of the predictable rhetoric of all liberation movements meant to mask their despotic nature.

Melber (2010:89) questions the hypocritical nature of SWAPO when he notes that:

‘...While the selective view he expressed seems unrealistic to the degree of being almost irrational, its (dis-) qualification would ignore the inner logic of the attitudes and policies displayed not only by SWAPO cadres, to an extent also by other political office bearers of other liberation movements.’

For the national liberation movements, the *secure* of power signals in their understanding something similar to what the American philosopher Francis Fukuyama (1992) dubbed as “the end of history”.

From this understanding follows that a liberation movement should stay in power forever after succeeding in its anti-colonial struggle. Johnson (2002) echoes this view when he argues that:

The NLMS (national liberation movements), share what can only be termed a common theology. National liberation is both the just and historically necessary conclusion of the struggle between the people and the forces of racism and colonialism. This has two implications. First, the NLMS – whatever senile sins they may commit – are the righteous. They not merely represent the masses but in a sense they are the masses, and as such they cannot really be wrong. Secondly, according to the theology, their coming to power represents the end of a process. No further group can succeed them for that would mean the masses, the forces of righteousness, had been overthrown. That, in turn, could only mean that the forces of racism and colonialism, after sulking in defeat and biding their time, had regrouped and launched a counter-attack (Johnson 2002).

Consistent with this view the ZANU PF leadership has declared that Zimbabwe ‘will never be a colony again.’ The security chiefs have echoed President Robert Mugabe’s stance that only ZANU PF has the legitimacy to rule Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe national discourse may be interpreted by the following quote:

Our votes must go with our guns. After all, any vote we shall have shall have been the product of a gun. The gun which produces the vote should remain its security officer – its guarantor. The people’s vote and the people’s guns are always inseparable twins (cited in Meredith 2002, iii).

ZANU PF government’s version of history that derives from a discursive development within the nationalist movement is worth noting. This discourse can be termed ‘patriotic history’, and its key elements are the struggle against colonial and neo-colonial oppression and a cultural and ideological nationalism. For ZANU PF, struggles for power should be understood from this perspective. As a liberation movement, ZANU PF is not prepared to relinquish political power and acts against the will of the people. Through its totalitarian mindset it betrays the values of democracy and popular participation the party espoused in the past, which were assumed to be among the reasons for at least some of the international support by a solidarity movement. Melber (2010) argues that in return for continued despotic rule, at the cost of the ordinary people, they (NLMs) discredit their earlier legitimacy in liberating a country and its people. Victims turn into perpetrators. The rights of all are

sacrificed for the privileges of a few. There is less progress after independence than there was during colonialism. This shows that decolonization is an unfinished business (Melber 2010: 90). Liberation movements and their leadership think that there is a conspiracy to reverse the gains of independence.

This is the view expressed by SWAPO and ANC a few months before President Jacob Zuma took office as President of South Africa. When Zuma met with President Hifikepunye Pohamba and former President Sam Nujoma on 8 December 2008 SWAPO and ANC issued a joint communiqué which stated that:

...there is a recurring reactionary debate around the need to reduce the dominance of former liberation movements on the African continent. In this regard the emergence of counter revolutionary forces to reverse the social, political and economic gains that have been made

under the leadership of our liberation movements was discussed (Joint Communiqué between SWAPO Party and the ANC, 9 December 2008).

In his “Letter from the President”, Jacob Zuma after his return summarised and repeated part of the deliberations thus:

Ruling parties often go through certain challenges after the first decade, when the interests of different strands within the broad liberation movement begin to diverge. People begin to explore other avenues, especially when they feel they are losing control and influence within the movement. The interests of people outside the movement, locally or internationally could also come into play. Political analysts and all those who claim to know Africa better than they know themselves tell us that it is good for Africa and democracy if the majority of former liberation movements were reduced. How do we as former liberation movements ensure that we do not steer away from our mandate of serving the poor and all our people, in the current climate of counter- revolution? (Zuma 2008 cited in Melber 2010).

Melber (2010) asserts that the answer would actually be an easy one – simply by showing that the former liberation movements continue to provide the best policy choices for the majority of the people. In contrast to this ‘exit option’, which is rather a window of opportunity, views like the ones expressed by Zuma and his comrades seem to suggest that there is no indication whatsoever that once they occupy office they would be unwilling to leave even if the electorate votes for an alternative political party as was the case of Zimbabwe in March 2008.

Such an electoral verdict would be tantamount to an illegitimate regime change initiated by externally influenced and (mis-) guided elements willing to sabotage the project for socio-economic and political emancipation, over which erstwhile liberation movements claim to hold a monopoly. Any attacks on the liberation movement in power border on blasphemy and are dismissed as imperialist conspiracy. The articulation of political opposition is seen as a reason to marginalise, exclude and coerce those with dissenting views as a legitimate response by those in power (Melber 2010).

When the liberation movements took power their political office bearers were shaped by military mindsets. They categorised people as winners and losers and operated along the lines of command and obedience. In the case of ZANU PF and MDC the former is always the winner whose authority should not be questioned.

According to Melber (2004) liberation movements tend to mark an “end of history” and any political alternative that does not emerge from within them will not be acceptable. This attitude explains the strong sense of camaraderie between the Mugabe regime and the government of Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa.

The sad truth is that opposition parties that stand up against such governments tend to be part of the problem rather than the solution. All too often, they only want to share the spoils of the state apparatus and its bureaucracy among their cronies once they get into government. Scholars, analysts and ordinary people have criticised the MDC during its tenure in Government of National Unity for being obsessed with wealth accumulation, thereby forgetting their mandate.

## **6.6 Representation of ZANU PF and MDC**

Media representations of the political conflict reflected the polarised political environment, thereby resulting in missed opportunities for serious national debates in a context where the performance of the economy had reached the lowest ebb since 1980 causing much suffering to Zimbabweans. The press became active participants in the conflict, instead of promoting peace. For instance, an opinion piece in *The Sunday Mail* of January 17, 2016 titled “SHARP SHOOTER: Gamatox Plot Thickens”, illustrates the adversarial relationship between the state-owned and the privately-owned press. *The Sunday Mail* reported that private press

sympathises with purged Vice President Mujuru and her ‘Gamatox’ allies with an agenda of propping up a ‘Gamatox government...’

Everything seems well orchestrated to reflect the hand of the Gamatox cabal working with the private media on a regime change agenda that seeks to eliminate all possible competition that has links to Cde Mugabe...As we watch, Gamatox is using its commissars in the private media to rubbish anything associated with the hierarchy of Zanu PF and is roping in disgruntled former members of the MDC-T to its People First coup plot. Gamatox is vainly trying to destroy Zanu Pf from within. It still has some rats from within, the rats that are spying on the Zanu PF status...The MDC-T sympathisers of the Gamatox ideology have been targeted and roped behind the scenes to grow the Gamatox support base...On the other hand, Zanu PF needs to aggressively weed out any Gamatox remnants that have survived the initial and post congress cleansing (*The Sunday Mail, 17 January, 2016*).

It can be argued that the state-owned newspaper instigated ZANU PF to continue purges of former VP allies which indeed happened. What is clear is that the newspaper links MDC-T to Zimbabwe People First - a clear indication that Zanu PF was afraid that if the opposition parties formed a grand coalition the ruling party could face a formidable challenge in the 2018 elections.

This shows that the state-owned press is used as conduit of propaganda by the ruling party whereby reporters become mouthpieces of ZANU PF in a project to portray opposition parties as hopeless. *The Sunday Mail* of September 13, 2015 published an article titled “Arrest the Build, Hope, WReNE circus” which at first sight appears meaningless because of acronyms used. Vukani Madoda, (The Sharp Shooter), author of the article sings praises on ZANU PF officials while at the same time employing language denigrating members of opposition, particularly Joice Mujuru and Tendai Biti. The newspaper’s representation gives an impression that the ruling party will be formidable force in 2018 elections. *The Sunday Mail* reported that:

Zanu PF is still in control and is not perturbed by the howling of a failed former VP, or the broken record of Tsvangirai’s voice or the rumblings of a hungry former Finance Minister.

*The Herald* of 17 December, 2014 has a similar agenda as *The Sunday Mail* and persistently denigrates Mujuru and her allies. *The Herald*’s headline, “Didymus Mutasa ropes in MDC-T in bid to subvert will of the people” depicts Mutasa as linked to the main opposition and its exhausted discourse that the opposition is funded by Western donors. This shows how reporters actively participate in fomenting political conflict.



The private media reported on how ZANU PF was brutally eliminating its perceived enemies from within the ruling party. The brutal purges of Joice Mujuru and her allies were allegedly plotted before the death of her husband, General Solomon Mujuru. ZANU PF's merciless strategy was to get rid of Solomon Mujuru first so that the wife, Joice Mujuru, would be vulnerable and become an easy target by framing her in order to brutally expel her from the party.

An article published in *The Standard* of January 13, 2013 titled "Tongogara, Mujuru: Did the revolution devour its own?" compares the mysterious deaths of ZANU PF's two army commanders, Josiah Tongogara and Solomon Mujuru who both died in mysterious circumstances. Tongogara was the ZANLA chief of defence during the war of liberation and Mujuru was his deputy.

*The Standard* reported that:

The official version is that Tongogara died in a car accident in Mozambique on December 26, 1979, a few days after the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement which ended the war of liberation. But another version said he died on December 23 1979, with the death only being announced three days later. Mujuru on the other hand, is said to have died of carbonation after a "fire accident" at his Alamein farm in Beatrice.

There are theories that both were shot and killed, and the 'accidents' were staged. However, the private press has alleged that the revolution has been devouring its own.

The *Daily News* seems to have picked the motif in its numerous articles, particularly following the ZANU PF pre and post congress purges.

"Mugabe sweats over party wars" is one article that appeared in *Daily News* of 2 February 2016 which alleges that Mugabe is caught "between a rock and a hard place" as the two ZANU PF factions battling for supremacy of the liberation movement. The newspaper quotes a politburo member saying:

I don't envy his position at all, he is being asked to choose between a faction linked to Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa, whom he has known for five decades, and the other which appears to enjoy the backing of Amai (his wife Grace) and Vice President Phelekezela Mphoko... Mugabe appeared to tread a careful, middle road as he lashed the escalating factionalism that is devouring his party...

Often quoting political analysts and academics, *Daily News* focused on Mugabe torn in between factions. The paper asked the opinion of political analysts Eldred Masunungure and Maxwell Saungweme. Masunungure argued that President Robert Mugabe would not take sides in the party's brutal wars as this would expedite its implosion. Masunungure also said that if Mugabe pronounces a successor, this would not unify the party but deepen the succession wars.

On the other hand, Saungweme argued that it would be difficult for Mugabe not to side with his wife's faction but at the same time he could not fire all his key lieutenants such as (his spokesperson George Charamba) and Lacoste (Mnangagwa). Saungweme is reported to have said, "But I think he deserves what he is facing as this is a direct result of him overstaying in power and not having a succession plan."

The newspaper blamed Mugabe for not putting his foot down to end this madness which had caused near collapse of the economy. "This is why not even the purging of (former Vice President) Mujuru in 2014 has stabilised the party. We now have Team Lacoste and the G40 tearing each other apart and taking everything down with them".

The newspaper depicts the anarchy that was ravaging the ruling party as a reflection of an organisation in an "advanced state of decomposition".

*Daily News* of 21 February 2016 published an article with the headline 'Zanu PF devouring itself'. The newspaper quoted People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader, Tendai Biti who said that 'the current debilitating factional fights within President Mugabe's Zanu PF are a sign of an exhausted regime - which is now devouring itself.'

Biti added that:

...but the spaces are narrow, the nationalist mode that does not have energies directed at the national agenda focuses its energy on internal cannibalisation but it eats everything, when it has eaten everything it starts eating its own - self now, its internal bowels and intestines...Post - 2013... there begins a wave of internal cannibalisation, which is not new. The history of Zanu PF has always been the history of these contradictions.

It is interesting to note the striking similarity in representation between the *Daily News* and *The Standard* with regard to historical references.

The image of a former liberation movement devouring itself became more prominent post-2013, particularly with the brutal purges of former VP Joice Mujuru and her allies. The privately-owned newspapers represented ZANU PF as a party which has not changed its behaviour since 1963.

The privately-owned press also showed its sympathy and support for MDC and its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai. For instance, The *Daily News* of 12 February 2016 published an article titled ‘MDC lashes Mugabe’. The newspaper’s first paragraph reads thus:

The MDC has savaged President Robert Mugabe for insulting opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai...instead of focusing on finding solutions for the country’s dying economy and Zanu PF’s seemingly unstoppable factional and succession wars.

The issue of the economy being sacrificed was a recurrent theme highlighted by the private press but was hardly mentioned in the state-owned media. If it was ever mentioned, it was through the promise of ‘mega deals’ which hardly materialized.

For instance, the *Daily News* reported that Mugabe had ‘climbed all over Tsvangirai and claimed that MDC no longer existed as a political party but the MDC argued that Mugabe should rather put his “waning energies” on Zimbabwe ‘s current economic woes and his party’s ructions, rather than talk ill of Tsvangirai.’

However, it is worth noting that the privately-owned press did not focus much on the MDC after 2013, probably because it devoted more space on ZANU PF’s factional battles as well as campaigning for the formation of former Vice President, Joyce Mujuru’s newly formed Zimbabwe People First (ZimPF). The other reason could be that the MDC was operating at a low profile due to its splits. Nevertheless, any article on MDC by the private press was sympathetic of the party and Mujuru’s party.

*The Standard* of February 28, 2016 published a story with a headline “Mugabe warns Mnangagwa faction.” The view that President Robert Mugabe cannot take a side between the two factions can be challenged if the current purges of Team Lacoste are anything to go by. Naturally, he will side with his wife, First Lady’s faction, G40. *The Standard* confirms this perspective in its reportage:

President Robert Mugabe has once again leapt to the defense of his wife, who is facing an internal revolt for trying to silence Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa’s backers in the bitter Zanu Pf’s war to succeed the 92 year old leader.

The newspaper reported that Mugabe spoke strongly against ZANU PF officials and followers that denigrate the First Lady, Grace Mugabe, but he also sang praises of the G40 faction. In a pointed attack directed at the Mnangagwa faction, Mugabe said those targeting youth leader Kudzai Chipanga for challenging war veterans were wrong. Chipanga had been a target of vicious attacks by the state-owned media, which was fighting the G40 faction on behalf of Mnangagwa.

News reporters in state-owned media have been in a crisis in relation to their coverage of the internal political conflict in ZANU PF. When Professor Jonathan Moyo was Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services, journalists toed his line. This explains the theory that Weevils (Moyo's faction then) plotted the downfall of Gamatoto (Mujuru's faction). The state funded media fuelled Mujuru's demise from 2013 till 2015. However, due to the factional struggles, Moyo was moved to Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, resulting in him losing influence on the state-owned media. As a result, Mnangagwa's faction (Team Lacoste) took charge of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Practically, Presidential spokesperson George Charamba, who is suspected to belong to Team Lacoste faction and doubles as the permanent secretary of the ministry, gained control of the state-owned media. Journalists were still confused on how to cover ZANU PF succession struggles until Charamba was interviewed on 29 January 2016 by the so-called private radio station ZiFM when he spewed vitriol on G40 faction. This interview set the tone on the faction he supported, that is, Team Lacoste.

The old adage: he who pays the piper plays the tune seems true in relation to the state-owned media. Although there is no written code, it has become a public secret fact that journalists in state-owned media take a cue from their boss, Charamba. Therefore, it is not surprising that reporters clearly show their allegiance and undisputed loyalty to the Mnangagwa faction. This further confirms that the youth leader, Chipanga, and anyone perceived to belong to G40, including Jonathan Moyo, have been a target of vicious attacks by the state controlled media. In this regard, journalists have 'shelved' professional ethics as they no longer report objectively and impartially and participate actively in political conflicts in the country.

*The Standard's* representation is that Mugabe seemed to be backing under fire political commissar, Saviour Kasukuwere who stands accused of targeting Mnangagwa supporters through suspensions.

The newspaper reported that Mugabe warned ‘misguided and unruly youths’ who were going to extremes in denigrating party leaders, including his wife. The veteran ruler said it was unheard of in ‘our culture’ for youths to attack their leaders, worse still the wife of the head of the state. Mugabe was quoted by *The Standard* saying that:

We hear a lot of misguided party members attacking my wife and that is very rude. These people do not respect us. We know there are some youths who are being given dagga to demonise their leaders and we will not accept that.

It can be argued that the attack could have been directed at the Mnangagwa faction whose members have been taking turns to savage Grace after her Chiweshe rally where she attacked war veterans and Mnangagwa for allegedly fanning factionalism.

As argued in Chapter Four, in the squabbles between the two factions, gender stereotypes were evoked. One such stereotype was that women should be relegated to the domestic sphere. *The Standard* news article referred to above alluded to this stereotype when it reported that:

Another group of war veterans led by Francis Zimuto, who calls himself Black Jesus (itself a blasphemy) also dressed down Grace, advising her to stay at home and cook for Mugabe, while also telling her they only considered her as their step mother and, not First Lady.

Another stereotype is represented by the last statement ‘...their stepmother, and not First Lady’ all because Grace is the second wife of Mugabe after Sally Mugabe, whom she is always compared to. The privately –owned media, together with a cross-section of society view Grace Mugabe as lacking the qualities of a first lady, arguably a result of not having received proper grooming compared to Sally Mugabe who was a symbol and embodiment of a real mother and hardly known in the public domain except in charity work.

Of interest to note is that President Robert Mugabe apologised to the war veterans after they were water and canister sprayed when they had an unsanctioned meeting in Harare. The apology was meant to appease the war veterans because he needs their support in the 2018 campaigns.

It should be noted that war veterans Minister, Christopher Mutsvangwa, who did not take heed of President Mugabe to observe discipline and respect, was fired from his ministerial post and was suspended for three years from ZANU PF. Private press reportage was therefore negative on Team Lacoste and sympathetic towards the G40 faction.

I argue that media house editorial policies are not permanent, but fluid and in a state of flux usually determined by prevailing political environment as well as leadership in media. This explains why journalists were confused during Government of National Unity, pointed out in Chapter Three.

## **6.7 Conclusions**

This chapter argued that the government-controlled newspapers, namely, *The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail* and the privately-owned the *Daily News* and *The Standard*, used different representation strategies to portray political conflict in Zimbabwe. By selecting to report on a particular issue and silencing another, through choice of certain headlines, vocabulary and language, photographs and captions as well as cartoons they constructed events in a polarised manner. The newspapers became associated with diverging political opinions, showing political parties they support. The state-funded media clearly provided a positive image of ZANU PF while portraying the opposition in negative light, whereby the opposition was constructed as harbouring a regime change agenda. The privately owned press, on the other hand, blamed the ruling party for losing focus on pertinent issues such as the economy, corruption, mis-rule, abuse of human rights and an obsession with factional fights and succession. The private press showed sympathy and support for the opposition parties, particularly MDC-T and the newly formed Zimbabwe People First as presenting the possibility to form a grand coalition that could provide an alternative future government. The opposition constructed itself as focused on economic recovery and employment creation as well as tackling critical food shortages especially for rural population. This might have motivated the privately owned press to support the opposition.

The pro-government press employed propaganda techniques, particularly hate speech and inflammatory language against the opposition. It also used the anti-colonial and regime change discourses against MDC-T and Mujuru's Zimbabwe People First. By labelling members of the 'Gamatox' faction, "rats" and arguing that any remnants of Mujuru's allies who survived initial and post-congress purging should be weeded out, state-owned press fuel conflict within ZANU PF and in opposition. The pro-government press failed to critically assess the impact of factional and succession battles on the dying economy as well as the possible demise of the former liberation movement and likelihood of civil war after the departure of President Robert Mugabe. The state controlled press used officials who write under various pseudonyms as opinion and analysis pieces. However, the private press took advantage of the void created by pro-government press by digging into ZANU PF's ugly past and relating it to the present and future, particularly that it is a party notorious for devouring its own. The private press also represented the nasty factional battles in ZANU PF.

Members of the Zimbabwean public have been inundated by sensational and screaming headlines on a daily basis about factional and succession wars, as well as ever going suspensions and expulsions in political parties which has made it imperative for newspaper readers to read more than one newspaper in order to get the whole truth. With pro-government media journalists supporting one faction of ZANU PF while vilifying the other, state-owned media reporting of issues was ethically compromised. Privately-owned reporters equally faced the same predicament in the sense that it uncritically supported the opposition, former Vice-President Joyce Mujuru and her allies, and yet they represented them negatively when they were still in ZANU PF. Their coverage of the MDC-T has also been very favourable, while splinters of the party such as Tendai Biti's People's Democratic Party (PDP) were attacked. Hence political conflict in Zimbabwe has influenced media polarisation which determines representation of issues and events. This suggests that the future of professional journalism in Zimbabwe is bleak.

## **Chapter 7: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines press's representation of political conflict pre and post Government of National Unity focusing on four newspapers, namely, *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Daily News* and *The Standard*. The specific focus of the chapter was an analysis of the ideologies underpinning news reportage in the selected newspapers. It also compares the framing of power, succession struggles and factionalism in both the MDC and ZANU PF in the state-owned and the privately-owned press. The rationale was to gain insights into the intra-party conflict. The period between 1999 and 2016 witnessed the most intense struggles in both ZANU PF and the MDC. Empirical data was drawn from news articles published in *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Daily News* and *The Standard* between 1999 and 2016. It is during this period that all the selected newspapers were published consistently. However, the *Daily News* was closed in September 2003 and resumed publishing in 2010. This means that there was a void for nearly seven years. There was no textual material from the *Daily News* during this period. Had the *Daily News* not been closed down it would have sustained its critical stance as a watch dog press.

### **7.2 Analysis of Findings**

The analysis in this chapter addressed two specific questions. The first question relates to how the press represented political conflict in Zimbabwe while the second question relates to how the state controlled and the privately owned press represented power, succession struggles and factionalism in both the ruling ZANU PF party and opposition MDC formations.

### **7.3 Representation of Political Conflict**

Although election campaigns were given considerable coverage by the selected newspapers, the state-owned and the privately-owned newspapers' representation of elections was radically different. The privately-owned newspapers were pessimistic about the prospects of free and fair elections. These newspapers highlighted fraudulent activities and malpractices by the ruling party, ZANU PF. The privately-owned newspapers also gave considerable attention to coercion by ZANU PF. Unlike the privately-owned newspapers, the state-owned newspapers projected the view that ZANU PF was the 'people's party' and Mugabe the



candidate of choice. The representation of elections in the state-owned newspapers was also dominated by liberation war history or ‘patriotic history’ epitomised by the ‘third Chimurenga’ (land reform). The neo-imperialism discourse in the state-owned press was used to mask covert coercion by the government and state-sponsored violence which were taking place, particularly the land invasions. Because of its waning popularity, ZANU PF used the land issue as a campaign tool to rally the masses and to retain power by any means possible. The problematic Zimbabwean politics coincided with a series of other economic and social upheavals that the newspapers heavily represented and were perceived to have contributed to the political conflict. The representation points to the direct relationship between the electoral politics, economic downturn and social upheavals in Zimbabwe.

While the privately-owned press, which supported the opposition, appeared to endorse regime change in Zimbabwe, consistent with the Western neo-liberal ideology of human rights and democracy, the state controlled newspapers accused the opposition of supporting the sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by Western countries, Britain, Australia, and the United States. The privately-owned press constructed the sanctions as ‘targeted sanctions’, imposed on the ruling elite due to gross human rights violations, thereby implying that the sanctions would not affect ordinary Zimbabweans. The ruling party’s common rhetoric and discourse was that the opposition was a proxy of the Western powers. Consequently, the state-owned press popularised the slogan, “Zimbabwe will not be a colony again” in order to whip up popular emotions. Pro-government newspapers suggested that the Western concept of democracy could not be simply reproduced in Africa in the manner suggested by the privately-owned press, a view shared by leftist and Pan-Africanist scholars (Ndlovu Gatsheni, & Willems, 2009b).

However, the debate over whether democracy undermines African cultural values or not is open to debate. It could be argued that cultural relativism has created room for universalism regarding ideas of humanity, values and rights, values which are non-negotiable (Ogenga, 2010). The state-owned newspapers criticised the West for double standards in relation to human rights which they argued were being applied selectively to advance the West’s political and economic interests. The privately-owned press emphasised the point that something needs to be done to save Zimbabwe from the multiple crises. Their argument was that ZANU PF “must go” and be replaced by a set of new crop of leaders from the opposition in order to effect regime change. The privately owned newspapers used negative stereotypes and labels against President Robert Mugabe in order to explain his hold on to power in spite

of increasing dissenting voices calling for change. Mugabe was thus, portrayed as a tyrant, anti-white dictator, solely responsible for the socio-economic and political problems in the country. They cited misrule, poor governance, allowing corruption in all state institutions as evidence that Mugabe had failed.

An issue that received considerable attention in the privately-owned press was the issue of elections. Elections were often represented as characterised by violence, harassment, intimidation, coercion, torture, abductions and disappearances, which created an unlevelled playing field for free and fair elections. The privately-owned press also often highlighted that ZANU PF deployed war veterans, youth militia, and state apparatus agents such as police, army, and central intelligence officers during campaigns and elections in order to regain lost legitimacy and hegemony. ZANU PF was given bad press while opposition was represented as the 'saviour' and the messiah that would curb disorder, rot and decay that has been symbolic of Mugabe's reign.

It was assumed that change in leadership would automatically lead to socio-economic and political recovery in Zimbabwe. Efforts were made to scrutinise state colonial institutions that conceived and nurtured a 'tyrant' and how the opposition would cope with such inherited institutions that had monopolised power for thirty-six years. Zimbabwe's elections were therefore framed as a shame and a fiasco with no possibility that they could, in any way, be free and fair, given the assumption that they were always rigged by Zimbabwe Election Commission, through (a complex and sophisticated machinery from military and intelligent units) and Nikkuvu, an Israeli based organisation. Such representation reflected how many Zimbabweans perceived the elections to be.

Similarly, economic collapse and social upheavals characterised by high inflation and food shortages were represented as consequences of the ruling party's sponsored electoral malpractices and politics of disorder. Some scholars contend that economic collapse was, partly driven by the political uncertainty in Zimbabwe which was characterised by lack of strong democratic institutions of governance to guarantee free and fair elections. What currently constitutes the institutions are inherited from colonial apparatuses that protected partisan interests. The privately owned press' representation, however sensational or superficial, pointed out these institutional weaknesses that often increased the potential for political instability witnessed before and after elections. The privately owned newspapers argued that such institutions must change by, first and foremost, unseating Robert Mugabe,

who was viewed as the author of all economic problems in Zimbabwe. However, Willems (2005) pointed out the dangers of personalising the crisis. Although Mugabe is constructed as the major cause of the problems, there were other issues such as election violence and land invasions which were also responsible for the economic collapse in Zimbabwe.

The privately-owned newspapers tend to put Mugabe at the centre of all the socio-economic and political problems in Zimbabwe. He is also blamed for the severe food shortages and high inflation in the country. The privately-owned press's representation also suggests a link between Mugabe's actions and the multiple crises in the country, to such an extent that it is often suggested that for Zimbabwe to recover in every sphere; politically and economically, Mugabe must go because he is the sole author of the country's problems.

Against this background, the state newspapers framed Mugabe as the only legitimate leader in both the party and government. Both *The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail* echoed ZANU PF's view whereby all the country's problems were blamed on local internal and external enemies of the state, including white commercial farmers, industrialists, the British and American governments as well as the opposition MDC party. These newspapers' approach to reporting reflected a bias towards the state and the ruling party. The state-owned newspapers also failed to create an open platform to a variety of voices and their labelling of government critics as 'traitors', 'sell outs', and 'unpatriotic' does not only demonstrate their unprofessional approach and unbalanced reporting, but also their potential to promote conflict. By abandoning impartial and objective reporting, and propping up ZANU PF political agenda the state-owned newspapers defiled fundamental ethics of journalism. One would argue that the ubiquitous barrage of criticism against the MDC and its supporters for supporting the European Union's targeted sanctions ignores ZANU PF's actions that prompted the sanctions, including gross human rights violations.

The state-owned, *Herald* enjoyed monopoly as a daily newspaper between 2003 and 2010, after the pro-opposition newspaper, the *Daily News* had been closed. During this period, the state-controlled newspapers were used by ZANU PF as propaganda mouthpieces to vilify MDC. The state-owned press became conduits for spewing vitriol to the opposition who were projected as 'enemies of the state'.

There was however, a slight change in state-owned and privately-owned newspapers reportage during the Government of National Unity (GNU) (2009-2013) because the opposition was now part of government. Because the two factions of the MDC were now part

of the government newspaper representation was geared towards fostering ‘unity’ and ‘core-existence’, although analysts argued that the GNU was a marriage of convenience as both ZANU PF and MDC formations had informal parallel structures. During the Government of National Unity conflict simmered because there were many sticking points which blocked smooth implementation of GNU. Besides, the new constitution making process was carried out during the GNU, and this process escalated conflict. During this period, press representation reflected conflicts around the implementation of the GNU and reportage only changed artificially for a very limited time until election campaigns of 2013. During the GNU, newspapers largely maintained their ideological positions stance, characterised by Van Dijk’s (1998) view, that many group ideologies involve the representation of *Self* and *Others*, *Us* and *Them*. Thus, state-owned newspapers adopted the ‘*We are Good and They are Bad*’ approach. The ‘*We*’ group (ZANU PF) was presented in a favourable light and the ‘*They*’ (Opposition) group was represented unfavourably.

With regards to the role of the press in conflict, the study concludes that the press actively participated and influenced political conflict by exacerbating fragile relationships between ZANU PF and opposition parties. All the newspapers selected for this study actively participated in political conflicts one way or the other. For instance, the privately-owned newspapers extensively covered succession battles in the ruling party while the state-owned newspapers were silent until 2014 when Vice President Joice Mujuru and her allies were purged from ZANU PF. The pro-government newspapers toed the ZANU PF political agenda and initially denied that there were factions in ZANU PF. The ZANU PF leadership created the impression that there was unity and discipline in ZANU PF because of the culture of fear which precludes members from freely talking about succession, as evidenced by the victimisation of those who dared to challenge Mugabe to step down.

After ZANU PF resoundingly won the 2013 harmonised elections, President Mugabe was the first to acknowledge the existence of factions in ZANU PF. For the first time, the state-controlled newspapers extensively covered the intra-party conflict - the purging of Joice Mujuru and her allies from ZANU PF. Worth noting is the contrasting framing of Mujuru in the state-owned and the privately owned newspapers. For instance, all stories about Joice Mujuru were on the front in *The Herald* and *Daily News*, but that is where the similarity ends. In its depiction of Mujuru, *The Herald* regurgitated as ‘fact’ the accusations levelled against her. It portrayed Mujuru as dabbling in witchcraft, as corrupt, inept, a factional leader, and a coup plotter. In all articles, the allegations were repeated as fact even though

Mujuru had not been arrested and charged for the alleged plot to overthrow and assassinate Mugabe. *The Herald* quoted analysts who supported its preferred view point. The selection of analysts who toe their line was deliberate as they were sympathetic to the state-controlled newspaper's agenda.

The study found out that political news is shaped by the media's political agenda. *The Herald* also portrayed Mujuru as a sell out and a puppet of the West who undermined the ruling party by working with the MDC in efforts to stop the July 2013 national elections. Mujuru was accused of plotting with the United States to topple Mugabe; aiding the formation of opposition parties Mavambo and MDC and trying to hire assassins to kill Mugabe. This is evident in stories titled "Mujuru Hires Nigerian Sangomas (witch doctors) and "Mujuru Linked to Mavambo, MDC" (October 18, 2014) and "US Exposes Mujuru Conspiracy" (June 19, 2015). In the first two articles, *The Herald* merely regurgitated the President's and First Lady's accusations that Mujuru hired Nigerian witch doctors to kill Mugabe and that the opposition parties had been formed in her house.

On the opposition parties, *The Herald* linked Mujuru to the British by arguing that the MDC was founded in 1999 with the assistance of the United Kingdom's Labour, Liberal Democrats, and Conservatives under the Westminster Foundation for Democracy. In the same article, *The Herald* blames Mujuru for Mugabe's loss to Tsvangirai in the first round of the March 2008 elections. It claimed that Mujuru masterminded the "Bhora Musango/Ibholo ekan'eni/Kick out the ball" campaign of 2008. The impression created by *The Herald* is that Mujuru is guilty as charged. The motive was to whip peoples' emotions against Mujuru and the opposition which is linked to West.

In contrast to *The Herald*, the opposition *Daily News* was sympathetic to Mujuru in all articles analysed. The *Daily News* maintained that the accusations against Mujuru remain "untested claims" since she has not been arrested, charged, and convicted. It could be because the *Daily News*, identifies with the underdog. In most articles, the *Daily News* uses the phrase: "untested allegations: or "untested claims" when referring to the accusations levelled against Mujuru. It argues that it could be the work of her political enemies in ZANU PF. It presents Mujuru as a victim of a rival faction (Weevils) vying to succeed Mugabe as leader of ZANU PF and as a President of Zimbabwe. The rival faction, *Daily News* implies, could be taking advantage of the fact that her powerful husband, retired General Solomon Mujuru was dead. It also implies that the rival faction could be responsible for his death in a

mysterious fire in 2011. For example, the stories “Ditch Zanu PF, Support Mujuru” (May 30, 2015) and “Mujuru Fears for her life” (April 28, 2015) imply that Mujuru’s husband could have been assassinated by the family’s political rivals in ZANU PF who wanted him out of the way in order for them to be able to get rid of his wife.

In the story “Ditch Zanu PF, Support Mujuru”, *Daily News* quotes Rugare Gumbo, who was fired together with Mujuru among others, from ZANU PF, saying that Mujuru’s husband’s death was suspicious, consequently, they feared for her life. The *Daily News* mostly quoted analysts sympathetic to Mujuru and those aligned to her, and hostile to ZANU PF, and it made reference to the manner in which Mujuru’s husband died. The intention was to create the impression that Mujuru’s husband was assassinated and that the allegations against her were the work of her political adversaries. The other projection was that ZANU PF is a party that devours its own, which can be traced back to the liberation struggle and many mysterious deaths after independence. The *Daily News* also depicted Mujuru as a moderate and popular politician who could defeat ZANU PF in the next elections in 2018. It praised Mujuru’s response (and her silence) to the attacks by the First Lady, Grace Mugabe during so-called “Meet The People Rallies” as dignified.

This thesis’s findings suggest that the purging of Joice Mujuru represents gender stereotypes in many ways as demonstrated in Chapter Four. The entire textual analysis examined narrative genres such as cartoons, photographs and captions used to represent power, succession struggles and factionalism. It also looked at textual devices, specifically; headlines, metaphors, analogies and intertexts in selected stories to thematically unpack their meanings. For example, the analysis of Mujuru’s purging revealed that the representation used gender stereotypes such as the thinking that women are weak, vulnerable and a betrayal; a Biblical allusion to Delilah (who betrayed Samson). Of interest to note in all cartoons on Mujuru is the fact that women are portrayed as being at the forefront in attacking her, thereby confirming the stereotype that women are their worst enemies.

*The Standard* of November 23 to 29, 2014, in an article titled “Grace Mugabe derails gender movement”, the newspaper quoted two women Members of Parliament from the opposition who argued that the fallout between ZANU PF and Mujuru had reversed gains that had been achieved in the uplifting of women. MDC legislator Jessie Majome is reported to have said that: “This is a very disturbing gender debacle which has clearly confirmed that the country is still largely patriarchal. Men are still in control and are using women to oust other

women”. Mujuru is thus portrayed as someone who was furthering their interests by setting these women against each other, and of great concern was that other women were buying into this charade.

*The Standard* also quoted MDC Secretary General, Priscilla Misihairambwi Mushonga saying that:

This just confirms what we have always said, that space for women in politics is limited. We have been socialised in such a way that we believe that a woman can never dislodge a man from power...women in positions of power are targeted because they are vulnerable to such attacks ... The men in respective camps are quietly watching as the ladies claw at each other. I feel that even if there are issues to be cleared, it should have been done differently and not in the public domain (*The Standard*, 29 November, 2014).

The textual devices and narratives used suggest that the succession struggles in ZANU PF are as a result of intolerance to dissenting voices as well as decaying democracy due to Mugabe’s dictatorship and tyrannical tendencies.

After Mujuru and her allies were purged from both the party and government, ZANU PF thought factionalism was nipped in the bud yet worse divisions emerged. There were instances in which the ruling ZANU PF did not want to openly talk about succession due to socially constructed fear of the unknown in a party known for mysterious deaths of suspected ambitious officials for presidency. Team Lacoste (a faction aligned to Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa) openly declared Mnangagwa to succeed Mugabe and threatened bloodshed in the country if he was blocked from taking the reins from Mugabe ahead of the 2018 general elections. However, Grace Mugabe and her supporters, including the G40, insist on consolidation around Mugabe.

The projection is that if opposition parties have to wrestle over power from the ruling party, then they have to be wary of infiltration and form a grand coalition. While state controlled newspapers negatively framed opposition parties, the privately - owned press sympathised with it.

There was no indication that Mugabe was contemplating standing down. There are many around him who want him to die in office, particularly his wife Grace and the party’s Youth and Women’s Leagues. Representations by *The Herald* of 26 May, 2016 during his address of the Million-Man March signal that Mugabe is “here to stay” (*The Herald* p.1).

The ZANU PF leadership has dismally failed to use its emphatic win in 2013 ‘to address the economic problems’ that have beset Zimbabwe since independence from colonial British rule. War veterans note with concern and shock the systematic entrenchment of dictatorial tendencies, personified by President Robert Mugabe and his cohorts which have slowly devoured the values of the liberation struggle in utter disregard of the constitution, demonstrated by the deliberate neglect and abandonment of people, failure to address economic issues among others.

The current situation, whereby ZANU PF is fragmented is clearly President’s project to outfox his peers . Mugabe has always thrived on divide and rule tactics in order to protect his party presidential position. The chapter concludes that Mugabe has turned ZANU PF into his personal project whereby expulsions are the modus operandi for him to remain in perpetual power. As cartoons in chapter four depict, ZANU PF is a party that continuously devours its own members, including the vanguard war veterans who, since independence, have campaigned vigorously for Mugabe to remain in power. For decades, Mugabe and the war veterans — the force behind his continued hold on power since 1980 — had been involved in a love-and-hate relationship before it reached a thawing moment in 2016. They war veterans claimed they were ‘stockholders’ of ZANU PF and should have a say on what happens in the party, but Mugabe said they were mere stakeholders meaning that they had no control over the direction of the party. In July 2016, the war veterans fiercely attacked Mugabe, calling him a dictator, genocidal and urged him to resign, accusing him of running down the country. They regretted the role they played in the Mgagao Declaration that saw Mugabe take over power at the instigation of the freedom fighters. At the close of meeting in July, the war vets drafted an infamous communiqué that was later to characterise their hostile relationship with Mugabe until year-end.

This study agrees with Willems’ (2004) and Chari’s (2010) works on selection and silence; salience and silence and argues that Mugabe’s shocking and deliberate omission of the late General Solomon Mujuru’s key role in convincing former freedom fighters to accept him as leader after the fall out Ndabaningi Sithole is symptomatic of this silence. In his address of Million – Man March on 25 May 2016, Mugabe spoke about how other leaders during the liberation struggle, among them the late Vice President Simon Muzenda and the late Air Marshal Josiah Tungamirai implored him to take up leadership of the party to give it direction after their leader, Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole had left, Mugabe always downplays the role of cadres who challenge him. The state-controlled press takes the cue from its ‘masters’



to adopt silence in its representation of events and personalities as evident in the article titled 'Factionalism treasonous: President' (*The Herald*, 26 May 2016 p. 4).

The study also found out that Mugabe is devoid of any remorse on Gukurahundi which he maintains will never apologise about but only describe as "a moment of madness". This is evidenced when he made threats to war veterans who audaciously push for Mnangagwa to succeed him. Mugabe warned that there would be a 'second' massacre if ex-combatants threaten bloodshed. Such threats could open old wounds for the people of Matabeleland and parts of Midlands who were victims of Gukurahundi.

The study argues that war veterans' relationship with Mugabe and his ZANU PF has always been tenuous, dating back to the liberation struggle (see Kriger, 2003). Mugabe's expulsion of former war veterans' chairman, Christopher Mutsvangwa, and other 'unrepentant' war veterans and youths created an unprecedented development that is set to shack both ZANU PF and the country to their foundations, where irate ex-combatants threw down the gauntlet to President Mugabe to resign immediately in the interest of Zimbabweans. The *Daily News* of 22 July 2016 published an article with a headline "Go now, raging war vets tell Mugabe...as they pledge allegiance to Mnangagwa". Such representation means that the former freedom fighters, until now Mugabe and ZANU PF's political bulwark, declared that Mugabe's continued stay in power was a stumbling block to the country's development, in addition to allegedly being "a hard sell" for the anticipated 2018 presidential elections.

The thesis argues the succession struggle in ZANU PF had reached its climax as evidenced by war veterans' Communiqué on 21 July 2016, as reported by *Daily News* of 22 July, 2016. The study concludes that this could be the breaking point for Mugabe and war veterans, which is a huge and ominous development.

"We are saying this country will only go up when Mugabe steps aside because his management is no-longer respected by anyone, including his own ministers. If he announces his retirement date the economy will improve because there is nobody who will invest his money where the future is uncertain. Nobody will lend money to a 92-year-old and if he does not step aside, 2018 will be the most difficult year to campaign for us as war veterans. How do you campaign for someone you do not like and who does not like you either. The relationship between us as war veterans and the president has broken down" (War veterans' national political commissar Francis Nhando, *Daily News*, 22 July, 2016).

The four newspapers analysed in this thesis represent opposed ideological positions and are the reason why there is polarisation in the press in Zimbabwe. The regime's control over the state media explains its largely pro-ZANU PF stance.

However, in the case of Mujuru and her alleged 'Gamatox' faction it is arguable that state controlled newspapers' framing was influenced by ZANU PF factionalism. The faction in control of the Ministry of Information-and, by extension, the state media - dictated state media content. The reportage and framing might change with time. This was confirmed by the state controlled press' framing of the new factions, namely the G40 and Team Lacoste which emerged after the purging of Mujuru and her perceived allies. State media was pro-Team Lacoste but anti-G40. However, when Team Lacoste was under fire from Mugabe the state media quickly adopted a somewhat neutral approach in reportage of events and issues. Nonetheless, ZANU PF controlled state media maintained its anti-opposition stance. Journalists may have been sympathetic to different factions, but the views of the faction in control of state media carried the day.

On the contrary, privately owned press adopt neo-liberal stance and the hunt for profits explain their anti-ZANU PF and anti-Mugabe stance. The consideration of whether the story will sell influenced the slant given to their stories. Their framing of events was guided by their ideology. The two privately-owned newspapers claimed that they were impartial watchdogs that hold the elite to account for their actions. They claimed that they were for the underdogs and against the status quo. This explains why their farming of Mujuru and her allies was sympathetic because they were the 'underdogs'- the same way they represented opposition parties as underdogs.

This study concludes that the differences in how the newspapers framed political conflict are a result of different ideological inclinations, commercial factors, and control and ownership patterns. These factors ultimately lead to polarisation in the newspapers' representation of events in Zimbabwe. The privately - owned press' pro-underdogs stance makes it pro-opposition and anti-ZANU PF. On the other hand, the state controlled newspapers' pro-government stance largely supports the ruling ZANU PF (though torn in between factions) and is anti-opposition. Even though newspapers were polarised, they do not have fixed positions and permanent friends or foes. The *Daily News* may also still have an axe to grind with the ZANU PF government that once banned it. This thesis was a moving target because political conflict, factionalism and succession struggles continue to unfold in Zimbabwe.

## **7.4 Recommendations**

In view of the above findings this study offered the following recommendations for future research in media and how they represent political conflict in Zimbabwe:

- Newspapers should have a broader historical understanding of the context in which political conflict is obtaining.
- Since newspapers are read by many people and influence opinion, they should desist from sensationalising the framing of political parties and personalities because this will escalate the conflict.
- Media houses should encourage objective reporting of events so as to promote peace journalism.
- This thesis was limited to an examination media framing of conflict in the state-owned and the privately-owned press. Future studies could focus on the role of the broadcast media in either promoting conflict or building consensus.

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