

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE**

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**Decentering Nationalism: Representing and Contesting Chimurenga in  
Zimbabwean Popular Culture**

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**Thesis submitted for the requirements of the**

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### **DECLARATION**

I, TINASHE MAWERE, declare that ‘Decentering Nationalism: Representing and Contesting Chimurenga in Zimbabwean Popular Culture’ is my own work and that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Tinashe Mawere

November 2015

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Prof. Desiree Lewis

November 2015

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to Zvitutamatzvi (Dung beetles)



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## **ABSTRACT**

This study seeks to uncover the non-coercive, intricate and insidious ways which have generated both the ‘willing’ acceptance of and resistance to the rule of Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe. I consider how popular culture is a site that produces complex and persuasive meanings and enactments of citizenship and belonging in contemporary Zimbabwe and focus on ‘agency,’ ‘subversion’ and their interconnectedness or blurring. The study argues that understanding nationalism’s impact in Zimbabwe necessitates an analysis of the complex ways in which dominant articulations of nationalism are both imbibed and contested, with its contestation often demonstrating the tremendous power of covert forms of resistance. The focus on the politics of popular culture in Zimbabwe called for eclectic and critical engagements with different social constructionist traditions, including postcolonial feminism, aspects of the work of Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault. My eclectic borrowing is aimed at enlisting theory to analyse ways in which co-optation, subversion and compromise often coexist in the meanings generated by various popular and public culture forms. These include revered national figures and symbols, sacrosanct dead bodies and retrievals, slogans and campaign material, sport, public speeches, the mass media and music. The study therefore explores political sites and responses that existing disciplinary studies, especially politics and history, tend to side-line. A central thesis of the study is that Zimbabwe, in dominant articulations of the nation, is often constituted in a discourse of anti-colonial war, and its present and future are imagined as a defence of what has already been gained from previous wars in the form of “chimurenga.” I argue that formal sites of political contestation often reinforce forms of patriarchal, heterosexist, ethnic, neo-imperial and class authoritarianism often associated only with the ZANUPF as the overtly autocratic ruling party. In turning to diverse forms of popular culture and their reception, I identify and analyze sites and texts that, rather than constituting mere entertainment or reflecting organized and party political struggles, testify to the complexity and intensity of current forms of domination and resistance in the country. Contrary to the view that Zimbabwe has been witnessing a steady paralysis of popular protest, the study argues that slogans, satire, jokes, metaphor, music and general performance arts by the ordinary people are spaces on which “even the highly spectacular deployment of gender and sexuality to naturalize a nationalism informed by the ‘efficacy’ of a phallogocentric power ‘cult’ is full of contestations and ruptures.”

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>ACCZ</b>    | Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe             |
| <b>AIPPA</b>   | Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act |
| <b>BSA</b>     | Broadcasting Services Act                           |
| <b>DA</b>      | Democratic Alliance                                 |
| <b>DANIDA</b>  | Danish International Development Agency             |
| <b>EFF</b>     | Economic Freedom Fighters                           |
| <b>FLORIZI</b> | Front For the Liberation of Zimbabwe                |
| <b>FTLRP</b>   | Fast Track Land Reform Programme                    |
| <b>GNU</b>     | Government of National Unity                        |
| <b>ISA</b>     | Ideological State Apparatuses                       |
| <b>MDC</b>     | Movement for Democratic Change                      |
| <b>MLF</b>     | Matebeleland Liberation Front                       |
| <b>MPC</b>     | Mthwakazi People's Congress                         |
| <b>NYS</b>     | National Youth Service                              |
| <b>PF</b>      | Patriotic Front                                     |
| <b>PHD</b>     | Prophetic Healing and Deliverance                   |
| <b>POSA</b>    | Public Order and Security Act                       |
| <b>RBZ</b>     | Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe                            |
| <b>SAPES</b>   | Southern African Political Economy Series           |
| <b>SWAPO</b>   | South-West Africa People's Organization             |
| <b>UMR</b>     | United Mthwakazi Republic                           |
| <b>ZANLA</b>   | Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army           |
| <b>ZANU-PF</b> | Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front     |
| <b>ZAPU</b>    | Zimbabwe African People's Union                     |
| <b>ZBC</b>     | Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation                   |
| <b>ZCTU</b>    | Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions                   |
| <b>ZDF</b>     | Zimbabwe Defence Forces                             |
| <b>ZFTU</b>    | Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions                 |
| <b>ZICOSU</b>  | Zimbabwe Congress of Students Union                 |
| <b>ZIFA</b>    | Zimbabwe Football Association                       |
| <b>ZINASU</b>  | Zimbabwe National Students Union                    |
| <b>ZIPA</b>    | Zimbabwe People's Army                              |
| <b>ZIPRA</b>   | Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army                |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>ZNA</b>    | Zimbabwe National Army                                |
| <b>ZNLWVA</b> | Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association |
| <b>Ztv</b>    | Zimbabwe Television                                   |

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## **CHAPTER 1: DECENTERING ZIMBABWEAN NATIONALISM**

### **(Re)Thinking Zimbabwean Nationalism**

Nationalism in Zimbabwe has become increasingly prescriptive and violent in its impacts on citizens. At the same time, 'nationalism' has become a site of growing contestation within popular culture. The escalating intensity of state and elite-driven articulations of nationalism has been matched by equally intense and complex forms of resistance to it. Expressions of and resistances to dominant expressions of nationalism pervade popular culture within the mass media, on television, radio and in public and everyday 'performances.'

Yet studies of Zimbabwean nationalism have tended to be historical or political analyses of its origins and implications in creating and reinforcing certain groups' power and others' subordination. There is limited interdisciplinary scholarship on the complex and rich expressions of nationalism in public life or popular culture. Moreover, there are limited studies on the inter-play of gender, sexuality and nationalism.

In this study, I make a general use of Judith Butler's concepts of gender 'performance' and 'performativity' in exploring how gender and sexuality discourses and gendered meanings are 'made real' through 'performances' of the nation that are embedded in public texts (Butler, 1990, 1988). Butler argues that in practice, gender and sexuality are codified by activities, practices and cultural meanings that make gendered and sexual identities and discourses 'meaningful' to subjects. This means that gender identities are imaged as 'performances' or 'acts' where different social subjects perform 'scripts' involving their participation in social 'plots.' As I show, these 'plots' can include discourses of nationalism, citizenship and belonging. Thus, certain expected sexualized and gendered subjectivities, behaviors and actions are actually 'rehearsed' in certain discourses about the nation. Although these behaviors and subjectivities may not be explicit, they are situated in the shared language of certain groups in ways that powerfully 'naturalize' and enforce them. This makes nationalism a 'theatre' of gender and sexuality. I also find Homi Bhabha's (1993)

study on nation and narration and Kelly Askew's (2002) study on performance very important to this study.

I turn to cultural texts such as music, galas, bashes, funerals/burials, images, metaphors and public pronouncements to deepen existing studies which tend to universalize and homogenize nationalism.<sup>1</sup> My study is concerned with exploring sites of nationalism that existing disciplinary studies, especially politics and history, tend to sideline. I am strongly persuaded that history, politics and therefore nationalism is also located in 'unconventional' texts that have been grossly sidelined by researchers because of 'lacking' disciplinary impetus. The study therefore, is also an attempt to rupture existing disciplinary boundaries and problematize knowledge construction.

To explore the noted rich neglected spaces, I deal with selected cultural texts that are readily available to the broader public so that they absorb, internalize and reproduce the meanings intended by dominant regimes. For example, in Zimbabwe the soccer metaphor 'team' exemplifies a politically charged 'text' that emphasizes and instils a sense of 'unity' and unquestioned loyalty. However, as Robert Muponde & Kizito Muchemwa (2011) argue, soccer offers space for 'planting' and spreading symbols that carry contested discourses. An analysis of the 'theatre' of soccer demonstrates interesting contestations around Zimbabwean nationalism. I am interested in analysing ways in which these same texts and others unsettle or create alternative or subversive meanings to the dominant ones. The particular articulation of gender, sexuality and nationalism within the Zimbabwean state, offers subject positions – both in confirming and contesting nationalism. I explore ways in which dominant and oppositional discourses of national un/belonging become recognizable and real through 'performance' as well as how they are destabilized or subverted.

My interest in this study is in discourse and textual analysis and in the ideological and social construction of the meanings of the texts under study as they fictionalize and 'perform' Zimbabwean nationalism. I aim to explore how they re/construct or challenge patriarchal, patriotic, militaristic, xenophobic, nativist and hetero-normative

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<sup>1</sup> Norma Kriger (2003) asserts that Zimbabwean nationalism is scripted around the specific party slogans, symbols, songs, and regalia made use of by national bodies at national ceremonies.

nationalism. I explore the language (syntax and pragmatic), visual, aural, nasal, memory appeal and effects of the afore-mentioned texts. I intend to explore how these texts under study employ the techniques of cultural persuasion to construct a certain package of Zimbabwean nationalism. I focus especially on ‘agency,’ ‘subversion,’ and their interconnectedness or blurring. In doing this, I indicate how an understanding of nationalism in Zimbabwe necessitates an analysis of the complex and often indirect ways in which dominant definitions and articulations of nationalism are both imbibed and contested.

In this study, I do not exclusively reserve separate chapters for each group of texts or genre. The aim is to demonstrate how different media texts and ‘performances’ collectively work to reinforce certain themes and discursive processes. My own reading and analysis of these cultural texts will also rely on historical narratives and the works of other relevant researchers and related actual processes taking place in Zimbabwe. It will also invoke certain literary texts that deal with the issues in question. I am aware that my analysis of these texts might be limited by my interest in their engagement with particular issues. As the growing body of criticism on Zimbabwean literature indicates, prose fiction since the end of the twentieth century critically explores various aspects of Zimbabwean society and culture. Outlining the ways in which aspects of public culture intersect with literary culture is therefore important to my attempt to consider how complicatedly individuals, groups and texts ‘talk back’ to official and authoritarian ideas about ‘un/belonging’ to the Zimbabwean nation.

### **Theorizing Power, Culture and Nationalism**

My methods and modes of analysis draw on cross-disciplinary approaches as I incorporate concepts, paradigms and strategies from various fields such as literary analysis, gender, cultural, political, media and performance studies. My approach to theory is eclectic to allow a free and flexible play of analytical methods from different

traditions. In developing this methodology I deploy an analytical framework that draws from different traditions and cross references theoretical approaches.<sup>2</sup>

My selection of texts is guided by on-sight analysis of their prominence in the Zimbabwean society. I have observed and analyzed the effects of texts on certain audiences through participatory methods. Living in Zimbabwe allowed me access to this period of ‘hyper-Zimbabweanness.’ My concern was with making sense of how texts function in contexts that include audiences.<sup>3</sup> I refer to how groups and individuals ‘perform’ belonging, for example through songs, watching television, or listening to speeches, or consuming national symbols and spectacles. However, I focus mainly on analyzing these different texts in relation to the construction of Zimbabwean nationalism. In so doing, I show how they re/acquire meanings in Zimbabwe.<sup>4</sup> Ideally, the study pursues reader-response approaches in the absence of ‘empirical’ work involving interviewing human subjects. This gives the study some form of participatory action research, which allowed me to observe audiences while positioning myself as part of the ‘world’ they are negotiating.

On the one hand, I focus on texts meant to construct and reproduce the dominant narrative of the nation as crafted by the Zimbabwean state and the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). On the other hand, I turn to texts that explicitly or directly destabilize dominant state-driven narratives of nationalism. As I show, these include messages intended to confirm official versions of the nation as well as those created and circulated by groups and social subjects to rupture dominant narratives of the nation. I reflect on how the subversive impact of the latter is manifested in diverse and interesting ways, often opening up other multiple readings of the nation. I also show how texts reveal fissures even within the hegemonic

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<sup>2</sup> In the Zimbabwean context, a number of scholars such as Robert Muponde, Kizito Muchemwa and Brian Raftopoulos have used such cross disciplinary approaches to produce rich analyses of Zimbabwean history and politics (Wendy Willems, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> In the South African context, Anne McClintock (1995) analyses symbols, parades and spectacles that were invented to fabricate ethnic identities by both Afrikaners and Africans to authenticate their identities as national citizens. She also looks into issues of symbolism and performance in the manufacturing of identities. Kelly Askew (2002) also analyses the everyday lives of people as performing national identities in her work on Swahili music and cultural politics in Tanzania. She does this by analysing everyday life experiences of citizens and ceremonies amidst state surveillance. In Zimbabwe, Kizito Muchemwa’s (2010) focus on galas, biras and state funerals and Joost Fontein’s (2009) analysis of bones and bodies have also employed a similar approach.

<sup>4</sup> Among others, Joost Fontein (2010, 2009) and Moses Chikowero (2008) have used a similar approach in analysing cultural texts in Zimbabwe.

constructions of Zimbabwean nationalism associated with the ‘ruling party’ and dominant gender and authoritarian regimes. Firstly, I show how certain state-driven and state-supported texts, especially those promoted by ZANU-PF, are simultaneously sites of reproduction and subversion. Secondly, I deal with texts that are produced by non-state actors and the ways they offer multiple meanings (from reproduction to subversion) arising out of specific experiences and contexts. My argument is that the fluidity of time and space brings discontinuities and ruptures of the above texts and therefore influencing how they are read and the meanings attached to them by different people and groups in different contexts.<sup>5</sup>

These text messages effectively constitute cultural texts that ‘perform’ Zimbabwean nationalism. Kizito Muchemwa (2010), Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Wendy Willems (2010, 2009) and Moses Chikowero (2008), examine how some national public holidays, events, traditional songs and dance, heroes and other national iconographies have been re/invented. Invested as cultural capital, they create differential ‘senses’ of belonging within a ‘nationalism’ that entrenches the authority of particular classed, gendered and sexualized groups. This is often done in a persuasive manner that ‘silences’ and ‘marginalizes’ other narratives of the nation that fall out of the ‘normalized’ package of stories of the nation.

The texts I focus on can broadly be situated in four flexible categories which I will deal with under certain subtitles. Although these categories describe dominant ideas about the Zimbabwean nation, they also produce an oppositional discourse as ‘ordinary’ people play around with them in a manner that defies and defiles state and elite pretensions. ‘Icons and symbols of the nation’ include selected figures, artefacts and images narrativizing the nation. A second category, ‘public enactments of reform and national control’ focuses on popularized texts reflecting the transition from an ‘imperial’ and ‘colonial’ identity to a ‘sovereign’ one. ‘Public pronouncements and displays of national loyalty’ demonstrate subject interpellation, thus showing how individuals and groups ‘willingly’ position themselves as subjects of the nation. Lastly, ‘public celebrations of citizenship’ generally reveal the ‘glories’ of interpellated subjects in a manner that both ‘traps’ others into subjectivity and

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<sup>5</sup> Media texts may be overlooked or engaged, spurned or appreciated, critiqued or endorsed depending on the context, audience and audience temperament (Edward Mcquarrie & David Mick, 1999).



publicize that their positions are a result of ‘free will’ and are ‘rewarding.’ Among the various textual performances and subversions of the nation, musical performance has been a recurring characteristic.

Texts that confirm dominant imaginings of the nation are made accessible to the public through organized and elaborate ‘performances’ and or intensive and excessive coverage by the media. These texts include a number of organized national events such as musical galas, bashes, funerals/burials, commemorations and the public speeches accompanying them. Such texts speak to Zimbabwean nationhood, not simply in a direct way, but also in highly circuitous and covert ways. How these texts are created, who creates them and for whom, how they circulate, where and when they circulate is very significant to my study. I find Jacques Ranciere’s profound rethinking of the relationship between politics and aesthetics through his notion of the ‘distribution of the sensible’ highly significant to my reading of popular cultural texts. The notion provides “...the system of divisions and boundaries that define, among other things, what is visible and audible within a particular aesthetic-political regime” (Ranciere, 2006:1). For elaboration, Ross Birrell (2008) posits that Ranciere’s notion of the distribution of the sensible refers to the boundaries of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, and *of the speakables and unspeakables* (my addition) that concurrently determine the locations and the stakes of politics as a turn of experiences. The overall effect renders politics as a ‘performance.’ What has been regarded ‘sensible’ has been the carefully re/constructed ‘sensual’ material that easily instill particular thoughts, emotions, behaviors and actions that tally with prevailing elite ideologies.

In post-2000 Zimbabwe, one may argue that elaborate instruments were mobilized to enjoin ‘citizens’ to partake in what was regarded as a common narrative of nationhood, based on their prescribed roles in time and space. Thus time and space became locations and interlocutors for correctness. For example, cultural texts that tended to critique the Zimbabwe state, ZANU-PF and President Robert Mugabe<sup>6</sup> were labelled counter revolutionary and were denied space in the ‘formal’ narratives

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Mugabe is the current president of Zimbabwe and has been at the helm of state power from 1980, when the country attained ‘independence’ from Britain. He has also been holding the reins of power in his party, ZANU-PF.

of the nation. They were linked to foreign attacks on national sovereignty. At the same time, texts supporting and publicizing state policies, programs and linking ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe to the 'struggle history' and defense of national 'sovereignty' were, in an emotionally and psychologically compelling way, made public narratives of the nation. This was done, for example through media coverage and appearances as well as their involvement in national activities and ceremonies. This again speaks to that distribution of the sensible – what the public had to consume and what had to be kept away from it.

I consider how these cultural texts have functioned in Zimbabwe in similar ways to other class contexts where ruling classes are especially repressive and have taken exclusive ownership of the liberation struggle. Such ruling factions have made considerable investments in culture to guarantee hegemony, and have given rise to the masses' absorption of elite worldviews and discourses as their own (Antonio Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci posits that culture, as an indispensable yardstick in the reproduction of power requires not only coercion to survive, but also consent. Culture is crucial to such consent because of the emotional, unconscious and psychological attachments that usually travel along with it. This speaks to Larry Grossberg (1989) who sees popular culture as a fundamental aspect of affective investment for people since it 'touches' their hearts and minds as well as aid their imagination.

Determinist explanations of how elites instrumentalize culture and ideology have often been criticized by scholars such as Mikael Karlstrom (2003) and John Storey (1994) as shall be discussed below. While my study's attention to resistance is alert to the limits of these determinist arguments, Gramscian theorizations of power remain, for me, crucial in explaining the covert violence of certain states' deployments of culture and the extent to which they can permeate consciousness among many citizens within nation-states.

Gramsci (1971) notes how culture is instrumentalized by the state to ensure that there is domination by consent, since overt force needs to be supplemented by covert control and can prove to be more effective. Thus, in some cases, the ruling regime in Zimbabwe offered a carrot to the people through both tangible and intangible purchases of their appeals. This speaks to Stuart Hall's sentiments which

acknowledge areas of cooperation as well as cleavages between the interests of the state and those of ‘ordinary’ people in a hegemonic situation (Hall, 1994). Implied here is that there are moments when those in power and those occupying subject positions engage to achieve a certain end. However, this achievement may be for different benefits and might have diverging meanings.<sup>7</sup> There are also moments of disengagement if what is meant to be achieved does not benefit the other. This is why Gramsci argues that hegemonic struggle assumes that considerations be made of the physical welfares of the governed even when those concessions may not in all cases be economically significant.

Running parallel to my reading of the instrumentalization of culture and ideology is a reading of both officially-driven texts and others as troubling hegemonic narratives by offering multiple imaginations or contestations of national belonging. My interest is not only in texts that project different ‘nationalisms,’ but also in those that destabilize without necessarily outlining other subject positions. Here, I follow various cultural studies scholars like John Fiske (1987) and Stuart Hall (1980). These scholars critique Gramsci’s conclusions and demonstrate that ‘mass culture’ is not inevitably hegemonic and that ideology is not totally state-centric. I show that subjects of the nation have agency and do not necessarily submit to dominant discourses or share dominant meanings of texts. Furthermore, I show that the meanings attached to texts are not uniform among subjects, and are not totalizing. Instead, they are continuously affected and redefined by subject positioning, by time and by space. For example, texts situated in certain contexts can encourage readings, linked to emerging social struggles, that shake and resist the very ideologies that initially promoted them (Storey, 1994). I work from the premise that individuals and groups do not blindly and passively consume popular culture, but on the contrary, use it in their lives in innovative ways that relate to their circumstances (Cameron McCarthy, 1998; Paul Willis, 1990; Hall, 1973).

I am therefore concerned not only with texts in themselves, but also with the ways in which individuals and groups actively engage with them, and with how they function as messages at specific historical and political moments. In thinking around this, I am

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<sup>7</sup> For example post-2000 government sponsored land reform, promotion of local artists on the media, and general affirmative action programs, in the case of Zimbabwe.

motivated to a certain extent, by Mikhail Bakhtin's (1994) notion of spatio-temporalities which deals with how specific moments, and spaces define how people interact with power and how texts are interpreted.<sup>8</sup> In many ways, this echoes Ranciere's (2006) thinking of power as a process of an event, and not a tool or instrument in the hands of an individual or a group. These understandings of how discourses are actively read and defined, rather than understood in any sense of their innate meaning helps to counter theories of reproduction where power is seen as an instrument rather than as a constantly contested and negotiated process.

Since my project deals with representations, performances and subject formations in the public sphere, I also make reference to literary texts that deal with the representations and constructions of identities. My reference to literary works is based on the view that literary works are discursive projects with discursive effects. They therefore often provide multiple and open-ended writings and readings of history, identities and meanings that go beyond the limited scope, for example, of official and grand discourses.<sup>9</sup> In the literary text, *Nehanda*, Yvonne Vera (1993) reimagines Nehanda, the legendary figure in Zimbabwean history and rethinks central themes, symbols and myths in a manner that challenges her re/presentation in dominant historical, nationalist and male-written literary texts (Desiree Lewis, 2004). This is especially so because representations and identities of the same historical subjects in literary works and 'official' texts may differ.<sup>10</sup> This divergence also exists across literary works, offering differing versions, varying identities and multiple meanings of subjects, space and time.<sup>11</sup>

As a Zimbabwean myself, from the start of 2000, I have experienced the important 'performative roles' of the state media and a range of media texts, public events, particular forms of dress and certain public speeches by the elite. While discourses of

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<sup>8</sup> See Mikael Karlstrom (2003).

<sup>9</sup> Many writers, especially women writers such as Buchi Emecheta, Yvonne Vera, Bessie Head, Ellen Kuzwayo and Emma Mashinini have subverted canonized, specialist historical knowledge and dominant nationalist narratives by factoring in non-scholarly interventions into history and marginalized narratives like personal narratives and fiction (Desiree Lewis, 2004, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> Desiree Lewis (2004) points to the limitations of cultural nationalism imbedded in the patrilineal myths, fictions and histories. She sees some writing by women like Yvonne Vera as debunking this phallicism.

<sup>11</sup> The figure of Nehanda is presented different in works such as Solomon Mutsvairo's (1988) text, *Mweya WaNehanda* and Yvonne Vera's *Nehanda* (1993).

nationalism took centre stage, these performative acts of the nation were powerfully gendered and sexualized. In particular, they clearly conveyed gender and sexual roles and expectations and re/definitions of femininities and masculinities for the ‘true’ and ‘legitimate’ citizen of Zimbabwe. In all these texts of nation, the centrality of gender and sexuality cults have been phenomenal. This confirms the views of scholars such as Anne McClintock and Floya Anthias & Nira Yuval-Davis that discourses of the nation cannot be adequately understood outside discourses of gender and sexuality (McClintock, 1995; Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1989).

The ideas of McClintock and Anthias & Yuval-Davis about the affect functions of nationalism resonate with the claims made by analysts of Zimbabwean nationalism from the start of the present century. Although scholars such as Muchemwa (2010), Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems (2009) and Chikowero (2008) assert that cultural performances were adopted by ZANU-PF from 1980, they make it clear that they became more intense from the 2000s when they populated the national media. Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems (2009) go on to argue that a form of nationalist politics that spoke to the heart, the politics of affect, emotion and drama, which can be called the politics of performance, became necessary in the face of an insider-outsider divide that characterize Zimbabwean nationalism from the 2000s. Chikowero (2011) posits that from 2000, the state-sponsored music and songs were an invaluable yardstick to construct and disseminate nationalist narratives summed the ‘Third Chimurenga.’ He notes that specific cultural texts that narrate Zimbabwean nationalism correspond to specific circumstances, allowing a particular and usable construction of Zimbabwean nationalism. It is in illustrating this that Thomas Turino (2000:14) states that Zimbabwean nationalism banks on cultural and artistic domains, with language, music-dance, sports, food, religion, and clothing style often being central. It is interesting how these cultural and artistic domains speak to Zimbabwean nationalism in various ways and the kind of responses that different people make with regard to these articulations. The question that is therefore raised is how Zimbabwean nationalism is mediated in the cultural domains I have already identified, and this is a central subject within my study.

## **Conceptualizing Zimbabwean Nationalism: Repression, Subversion and Performance**

As has been noted earlier, the nature of this study requires an eclectic borrowing from different social constructionist traditions. However, in understanding the state's production and reproduction of Zimbabwean nationalism, and consequently, gendered and sexualized subjects of the Zimbabwean nation, I draw extensively on Louis Althusser's (1971) perspectives on ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) as well as Michel Foucault's perspectives on bio-power (Foucault, 1983, 1978, 1977). Although persuasive critiques of these theories have been offered, I argue that they offer an understanding of the production of meanings in contexts where states are hegemonic. As my analysis demonstrates, their value in understanding nationalism, subjectivity and culture varies and is context-specific.

It is necessary to note that reproduction theories such as that of Althusser, although so often heavily criticized by recent theories of power and resistance, are useful in explaining particular moments where oppressive regimes have survived despite the obvious weaknesses of their rule. Althusser (1971) argues that for the state to govern its subjects in an effective and persuasive manner, it uses ideology and ISAs which create present conditions as rational truths, and therefore enabling the subjects of the nation to enact them willingly (subjective consciousness). He argues that it is this subjective consciousness that constructs the citizen/national(ist) subject by organizing social life so that the dominant ideology can create subjects who reproduce the social order. He argues that nationalist ideologies construct national consciousness by inventing national history and culture. Althusser goes on to posit that the subjects of the nation who are produced by ideology and ISAs and concretized as free, in turn reproduce the nation or the system that has produced them by willingly and ritually 'performing' it and therefore, being instruments of its reproduction (interpellation).

As such, the relationship between the nation and its subjects becomes a complex network involving giving and receiving normalized thoughts and practices. This ensures both continuity and normalcy of the system to such an extent that throughout their lives, subjects are continuously learning and performing actions, practices and characteristics that facilitates their respect, acceptance and promotion of the existing

order. In this case the subjects think they are in control and free, unaware that they are actually being controlled and that control is made possible by creating an illusion that positions them as free and in control. It is this illusion that makes them reproduce (interpellate) the very systems of control, thereby enabling continuity for the system. Ieva Zake (2002) asserts that this demonstrates the regulatory and disciplinary abilities of modern power. Althusser's interpellation supposes that power is wielded by the state over its subjects in the Marxian superstructure-base relationship. This is crucial in regulating and shaping subject positions.

Relatedly, Foucault's concept of bio-power could be seen as amplifying Althusser's discussion of ISAs. This concept offers more understanding on how reproduction is enabled and how verifiable evidence is available to guide thoughts and actions. In some sense, Foucault's 'reason' and 'scientific' knowledge may be read as ISAs, which allow the flow of dominant ideas, albeit with more vigour because of the more readily available 'evidence' around 'naturalized' embodied subjects. Foucault (1983) posits that power enables the creation of 'scientific' knowledge of the subject's body. He also sees power as not having a clear 'source' in modern technologies of control. This provides a rationale for self-discipline and self-surveillance, leading to the construction of a 'national' body. He argues that this is more effective than openly coercive means since it is based on 'scientific' knowledge and 'rationality' around bodies. Thus, power uses reason and scientifically based knowledge to make the subject willingly and reasonably yield to its system. This results in the subjects performing the system as well as reproducing it through bodily effects of discipline and self-surveillance.

Foucault (1983, 1978) therefore argues that power constructs the national body using related scientific and expert knowledge about individuals as both social and biological beings. This extends and complements Althusser's ideas which focus primarily on represented knowledge such as history, religious dogma, culture, morality and language. Foucault's understanding of the unrelenting impact of discourses in all forms of knowledge (such as sexuality, science or morality) draws attention to the

numerous sites in which subjectivity is produced.<sup>12</sup> This perspective sees institutions and social structures as actively producing citizens of the nation. From this perspective, the family becomes a very important policing space as it is rendered a miniature of the nation. In the Zimbabwean context, this makes sense since family and kinship have been implicated in discourses of the nation. An analysis of the texts under study in Foucault's sense helps understand the nature of Zimbabwean nationalism better. McClintock (1993) suggests that the family is the focus because it offers a natural figure for prescribing social stratification within an organic unity of interests and also because it offers a natural trope for figuring historical time. As such, the sexual and gendered dichotomies which characterize the family and the domestic space become apparent in the nation.

Zake (2002) explains that it is not only the subjective consciousness that is produced and produces nationalism but also the material bodily aspects of national subjects. Many scholars, among others, Lewis (2008, 2004), Joane Nagel (1998), McClintock (1995, 1993), Anthias & Yuval-Davis (1989) and Rob Nixon (1993) have posited that ideal nationalism has a much greater interest in establishing the boundaries of a national body by using metaphors of physical bodies, familial relationships and family tropes. Thus, issues about the behaviour, actions, thoughts, regulations, duties and all practices of the national body are important in differentiating it from other bodies as well as in marking its uniqueness and purity. Emphasis is on the well-being of the body which is made possible by how the body manages self-discipline. Zake (2002:237) argues that this:

...is an ideologically based political process of interpreting and treating national belonging as a literal aspect of human bodies. Thus, nationalism may not metaphorically describe nation as an organism, but also directly identify nation as a collective of purely national bodies.

In light of the above, the Foucauldian theory of bio-power can be employed to unravel how the ideology of nationalism allies itself with scientific reason and rationality about bodies to construct well-disciplined bodies of the nations who in turn concretize and reproduce this knowledge and consequently, nationalism. Foucault argues that effective power operates by substituting force and coercion with subtle control of self-

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<sup>12</sup> See Michel Foucault's *The history of sexuality, Vol. 1* (1978), and *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (1977).



discipline and self-surveillance. This self-discipline and self-surveillance usually thrives on the affective lives of bodies (Ben Anderson, 2012).

Keyan Tomaselli (1988) presents ways in which successive South African policies for regulating films and film censorship were used by the apartheid government to reproduce and 'naturalize' the racial and class divisions of the country, showing how media control was at the heart of the apartheid regime. As Tomaselli argues, it is noteworthy how the media was used to convince the governed that a system of racial separation was for the benefit of all races. The Christian religion was also used to stir support for the status quo and to convince the governed that the system was ordained. This was done in a manner that enabled the governed to reproduce the state's ideas. In Zimbabwe, during colonial rule, all state media were tailor made to convince the black population that their interests were best served by the colonial state rather than all those elements fighting against the settler regime (Sam Moyo, 2004). The nationalists were presented as terrorists, bandits and carnivals bent on disrupting the benefits that the population was enjoying from the settler regime.

However, the relevance of Althusser's ideas is not limited to the colonial period. Particularly, in the case of Zimbabwe, they significantly help to explain the constructions of the Zimbabwean nation and how structures within the Zimbabwean state have helped to ensure and maintain ZANU-PF's hold on power. Ezra Chitando (2005:220-1) posits:

Once in charge of the government, the ZANU nationalists continued with the previous regime's policy of harnessing the media to further their own agendas. This aspect was to be perfected after the year 2000 as popular discontent threatened the nationalists' grip on power.

There is consensus among scholars such as Elaine Windrich (2010), Diane Thram (2006), and Willems (2004) that when Jonathan Moyo<sup>13</sup> was appointed Minister of Information, the media was transformed to levels more or less akin to those of the colonial era.

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<sup>13</sup> Jonathan Moyo was the Minister of Information in the Zimbabwean government from 2000 to 2005. Formerly a critic of the Zimbabwean state, he has helped the Mugabe regime survive from 2000 after being absorbed into ZANU-PF and the government. However, his character and role remains controversial both within and outside ZANU-PF.

I also argue that Althusser's ideas partly aid an understanding of how ZANU-PF, despite the odds, has managed to survive, not only by the use of force, but also, by consent which has been necessitated by the complexities of ideology. Some academics and researchers have concluded that ZANU-PF's control of state media won the hearts and minds of Zimbabweans, enabling it to succeed in creating a patriotic citizenry (Michael Bratton, Annie Chikwanha & Tulani Sithole, 2005). However, how the hearts and minds were actually won and the gendered and sexualized aspects of the 'language' that appealed to the hearts and minds are areas worth scouting.

Although Althusser's analysis of power helps to explain many aspects of Zimbabwean nationalism, I draw attention to its limitations in explaining power struggles in Zimbabwe. Althusser's theory of the working of ideology has been heavily attacked for a number of reasons. Among others, critics such as Joao Ferdandes (1988), Hall (1985), Karlstrom (2003) argue that it focuses more on ideology as repeating, maintaining and reproducing state power and offers little on what may disrupt state power or empower the underdogs. It implies an unchanging consensus within the state or among those in power (Storey, 1994). This view of power is clearly simplistic and does not show any disruption of the ruling class but instead, a steady continuation of the status quo (Hall, 1985). This in turn, gives no room for the presence of dissenting voices within and outside the state.

As indicated above, on the one hand, the theory homogenizes power and 'untroubles' dominant positions while on the other, locates subjects' entrapment in hegemonic meanings. It tends to view the condition of the weak as futile. The weak are robbed of any ability to struggle and are rendered passive recipients of dominant groups' hegemony. It is vital to uncover the agency of subjects even in the midst of incessant instruments of control.

Arguably, reproduction theories, such as exemplified by Althusser's ISA:

...usually embody a super-determinist and functionalist perspective of the reproduction of power relationships...since they are in general elaborated at a level of abstraction that does not consider the practice of concrete interaction of the relationships of domination/subordination (Ferdandes, 1988:169).

As Ferdandes (1988) indicates, human agency always comes into play despite the presence of regimes of power. Ferdandes points out that within power, there are always fissures that are triggered by the availability of multiple tensions, divergences and contradictions between the various layers, divisions and practices of domination. This is supported by Masipula Sithole's (1999) analysis of the war of liberation in Zimbabwe. It is the above framework that informs my analysis of gender, sexuality and nationalism.

Rick Wilford and Robert Miller (1998) contends that discourses on the origins of nationalism and the nature of its manifestations are broadly contested from two major perspectives, i.e the 'traditionalists/primordialists' and modernists/constructionists. Modernist works on nationalism include Eric Hobsbawm (1990), Benedict Anderson (1983), Ernest Gellner (1983), Hans Kohn (1967) and Karl Deutsch (1966). Traditionalists' works are exemplified by Walker Connor (1994), Anthony Smith (1983) and John Armstrong (1982).

The traditionalists locate nationalism in primordial attachments and consider the significance of ethnic roots in the creation of nationalisms and nations. Smith (1983) urges a rethinking of nationalism and nations that includes the preservation of older or traditional attachments and sentiments. Connor (1994) points out that in the construction of nationalism, the material aspects and a greater awareness of commonalities do not supplant the significance of affective affiliations that move along with traditional links and an ethnic consciousness. In this sense, the 'past' provides an affective archive ensuring allegiance to one's state or country and its current political establishment. In the case of Zimbabwe, Blessing-Miles Tendi (2010) reflects on how some public intellectuals drew on certain selected ethnic discourses that had an illusory and affective effect on the people and therefore giving an advantage to the dominant versions of the nation. He goes on to argue that those public intellectuals opposed to this did not offer any affective alternatives. This became problematic in a situation where affective sensibilities are associated with "...myth, symbol, communication and a cluster of associated attitudinal factors...usually more persistent than purely material factors" in the crafting of collective consciousness (Armstrong, 1982:9). In this study, I show how the 'past' is

invoked for affective and psychological manipulations in the re/making of a gendered and sexualized Zimbabwean nationalism.

As indicated in my opening discussion, my analysis of nationalism is based on constructionist understandings. A number of scholars, among others, Connor (1994), Hobsbawm (1990), Anderson (1983), Gellner (1983), Smith (1983), Armstrong (1982), Kohn (1967) and Deutsch (1966) have produced influential works on the representation and construction of nationalism. However, the works of these founding figures in constructionist studies of nationalism share a common paralysis in their underestimation or neglect of a gendered and sexual comprehension of nation building and nationalism. My aim in this study is to show how attention to the gendered and sexualized dimensions of national discourses can enrich many of the dominant constructionist ideas of nationalism and nation formation.

As a key figure in theorizing nationalism, Anderson (1983) regards nationality and nationalism as created cultural artefacts that were imagined at the end of the eighteenth century. He goes on to point out that what differentiates groups is the manner of imagination and the essence and form of manner is itself rooted in culture. For him therefore, nation should be conceptualized as belonging to the same family as ‘kinship’ or ‘religion.’ He thus defines nation as:

...an imagined political community and it is imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign...the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (Anderson, 1983:6).

The nation has fixed boundaries and the inherent inequalities and exploitations do not overwhelm the community created by a sense of ‘deep, horizontal’ comradeship (Anderson, 1983). The idea of fixed boundaries is however problematic in situations where belonging to the nation is not ‘permanent’ as certain subjects may be forced beyond national boundaries.

Anderson acknowledges that the past, which may be expressed in culture and myth, is crucial to nation formation. However, questions of what to select, how much to select, when to select and who selects, are interesting to probe, since these questions may challenge Anderson’s formulations. Oliver Nyambi (2012) argues that post-2000 Zimbabwe falls short of Anderson’s definition of the nation as an ‘imagined

community' since political and racial differences witnessed from the 2000s reveal a nation where members are intimately 'known' and under surveillance rather than imagined and distant. Thus, nationalism in Zimbabwe is manifested as an intellectual and political elites' project ensuring the formation of governable subjects with common and organized systems of knowledge, responsibilities and goals. In my study I draw on Nyambi's elaboration of Anderson, but also go further to argue that the Zimbabwean nation-building project is broadly centered on and spoken in the language of gender and sexual 'normatives.' I argue that in Zimbabwe, discourses around old homes, family, graves, land, bones, symbols and prophecies for example, that are narrated around the 'past,' are gendered and sexualized, yet they also carry deep feelings around the 'past' and the 'present.' I argue that in addition to Nyambi's formulation where members are intimately 'known' and under surveillance, the language and 'performance' of nationalism reveals that gender and sexual categories are also intimately 'known' and under surveillance.

The presence of affective sensibilities in national discourses makes sense because in most countries, nationalism is often associated with unquestioned loyalty, sacrifice, and solidarity to dominant ideas and groups. Interestingly, loyalty, sacrifice and solidarity are anchored on gender and sexuality discourses. Sentiments around gender and sexual relations are especially charged and resonant for embodied social subjects. It is because of the salience of gendered and sexualized language in nationalist discourses that factoring in a gender and sexual lens in the understanding of nationalism is called for. Faced with a day to day patriarchal socio-familial sphere where loyalty, sacrifice and solidarity are valued, the transportation of such values to discourses of nationalism is meant to inculcate the politics of affect and to invade the sphere of conscience. In this regard, the 'traitor' label in Zimbabwean politics epitomizes a situation where those who do not support dominant ideas are seen as betraying the national 'family' and like wayward children, are met with the brute but 'legitimate' force of the 'caring' father.

Another way in which nationalism in Zimbabwe requires a modification of Anderson's conceptualization is how it is linked to subjects of colonialism, imperialism, sovereignty and indigenization. In the West, nationalism arose as a result of the threats of fragmentation, pluralism and territorialism posed by the weakening of

the authority of religious communities, monarchies and long held notions that cosmology and history is indistinguishable (Anderson, 1991). In Africa, nationalism is a response to external forces with colonial and imperial ‘agendas.’ In countries such as Zimbabwe, recent evocations of collective identity as a guard against possible external threats have seen nationalism as a response to the ‘outsider’ and a claim for ‘sovereignty.’ It is because of this that narratives of the nation are created in uniquely affective and persuasive ways that dig into ‘pastness’ to make purchases on the memories and emotions of past exploitations, sufferings and even ‘achievements.’ It is also because of the ‘imaged’ outside force seeking to ‘penetrate’ Zimbabwe that narratives of the nation are mirrored in the ‘naturalized’ family troupe that move around ties, responsibilities and sacrifices. In this study, I reflect how such forms of emotional and psychological purchases and their dis/associations with a ‘naturalized’ social space have been used in political contests between, especially ZANU-PF led by Robert Mugabe and Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Morgan Tsvangirai.<sup>14</sup>

In Zimbabwe, nationalist leaders imbibed a certain skewed nationalist historiography which Ranger had largely helped to construct (Brian Raftopoulos, 1999). Terence Ranger’s (1967) version of uprisings, which remains dominant in nationalist narratives yet it has been largely contested, is used as a framework where certain figures and symbols are ‘fixed’ in order to serve certain moments. Of central importance has been the meanings attached to what has become known as *chimurenga*, the ‘historically’ based prime foundation of Zimbabwean nationhood. The First Chimurenga defeat which led to the persecution of Nehanda and Kaguvi (prominent Shona leaders) played a pivotal psychosomatic role in the Second Chimurenga of the 1960s. This is because the defeat in the First Chimurenga offered the necessary stimulus and encouragement for waging the Second Chimurenga (Paul Gundani, 2002). Both the First Chimurenga and the Second Chimurenga (1970-1980) became a usable discursive background in the Third Chimurenga of the 2000s. In many ways, these mobilizations were similar to how Tanzania’s memories of defeats of primary resistances like the *Hehe* and *Maji* wars determined the strategy of

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<sup>14</sup> Morgan Tsvangirai is a former trade unionist and current president of the MDC party. He has emerged as Robert Mugabe’s strongest opponent since independence and from 2000, has posed a significant challenge to Mugabe’s power and the ZANU-PF government.

Tanganyika's independence struggle (Julius Nyerere, 1966).<sup>15</sup> This makes Africa in general and Zimbabwean nationalism in particular, an imagined response to very distinct political and historical memories of colonialism and anti-colonial struggle. It is necessary to probe the ways in which the past offers a 'romantic' appeal that tempers with the current feelings of national subjects. I will not only explore how political and historical memories are 'dramatized' in popular culture, but also how politics, historicity and memorialization are gendered and sexualized during the 'drama.' I therefore explore the interpellation of subjects and problematize public performances that celebrate citizenship and belonging.

The Althusserian concept of hailing, where subjects are called on to 'take on' certain identities is crucial to the politics of citizenship and belonging in the Zimbabwean nation. From 2000, Zimbabweans have been called upon to tie themselves to certain tangible and intangible 'origin' marks and markers, patriotic history and the related land and *chimurenga* discourses. The responses of many subjects to these and how they affected their responses to the call was an elementary process of defining 'insiders' and 'outsiders.' Althusser argues that it is only subjects who have been interpellated who are able to pronounce and display national loyalty in a state of self-regulation. This self-regulation involves willingly performing required roles of national service and loyalty without any awareness of simply 'performing' a given 'script.' In this case, living out the identities made available becomes the only 'thinkable' thing to do. Althusser argues that this willingness to take on the available identities is a result of an illusion of freedom and free will that has created and conscientized the subject.

Since 2000, there has been a revival of myths, songs, slogans, regalia and campaign material with the magnitude and propensity more or less akin to the liberation war period and the 1980 elections. The state-owned electronic and print media became populated with these. Notably, they were a feature at campaign rallies, national celebrations and other public platforms. *Inter-alia*, Norma Kriger (2003) and McClintock (1993) mention slogans, symbols, dressing and other campaign material

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<sup>15</sup> Terence Ranger (1968) argues that the environment of later politics is shaped by the consequences of the total defeats of earlier mobilizations and resistances since the defeats may be transformed into an instrumental psychological advantage.

as very crucial in the imagination of a nation. Althusser argues that all this is a willing narration and a reproduction of the imagined nation.

However, displays of national loyalty may not be a result of willingness or pure loyalty. It can also involve uncertainty and tactical expressions of obedience inscribed at particular times and in certain spaces. This is so principally where belonging and being a citizen is linked to access to resources and safety, as is generally the situation in post-2000 Zimbabwe. Such strategic expressions of loyalty took root when the nationalist ideology employed by ZANU-PF was altered in more totalitarian, discriminatory and racialized concepts of citizenship and belonging, instituted along the supremacy of the land issue and patriotic history (James Muzondidya, 2009). As Muzondidya (2009: 192) posits:

The government gradually abandoned both its conciliatory approach and the inclusive nationalism of the early period, and began to adopt a radical, exclusive nationalist stance. It redeployed race in the political and social arena, and tried to reconstitute the whole discourse of rights, justice and citizenship in Zimbabwe...

However, history has reflected that subversion and agency characterize the living experiences of both the dominant and dominated. Ferdandes (1988) argues that there is always a struggle between structural determinants which are largely reproductive and real human action that offers resistance. He names "...the counter-hegemonic social attitudes, behaviours and actions which aim at weakening the classification among social categories and which are directed against the dominant power(s) and against those who exercise it (them)" as forms of resistance and subversion (Ferdandes, 1988:74). These resistances may be well organized and political such as mass protests and demonstrations, but they can also be subtle and lacking any formal organization, although they basically reflect the daily struggles of people (Douglas Haynes & Gyan Prakash, 1991). Wendy Willems (2010) argues that resistance is made up of a wide range of cultural practices like rituals, gossip, humour, dress and behavioural codes. This follows Tanya Korovkin (2000) who seems to suggest a relationship between everyday forms of resistance and the rise of political organization. He suggests that these everyday forms of resistance may themselves turn into well-organized movements or some of their features may be appropriated by other well organized movements. This stems from earlier sentiments by among others,



Benedict Kerkvliet (1993) and Andrew Turton (1986) that small acts of deviance have the capacity for creating a mobilization ground for organized and elaborate resistance.

In the Zimbabwean case, Wendy Willems (2010) insists that the opposition party, MDC, would have emerged stronger if it had taken advantages of the everyday forms of resistance by Zimbabweans. James Scott (1990, 1986), posits that usually, these everyday forms of resistance have no heroes, bear no heroism and are carried out in subtle ways rather than direct political confrontation and basically deviate from and satirize the norms of elites in a manner that illegitimizes existing structures of domination. Of course, it could be argued that the MDC's insensitivity to these struggles is itself an indication of its own class and cultural orientation into a national ruling elite and global consumer capitalism.

Generally, it is quite evident that at times, Zimbabweans engaged in low risk strategies to resist the unjust demands of ZANU-PF, especially in the context where open confrontation was met with brutal force. Scott (1990, 1986) argues that fear of negative and precarious consequences are behind people's subtle resistances that bear no traces to the point of origin, or are lost in the anonymity of the crowds. This may speak to the Zimbabwean case in the post-2000. A lot of power was exerted through unscrupulous media laws, draconian legislation, security and para-security agents which made open and organized resistance almost impossible and dangerous (Chris Maroleng, 2005; Horace Campbell, 2003; Raftopoulos, 2003), hence the option for more fully masked resistances. The clean-up campaign code named Operation *Murambatsvina*, targeting the urban areas which was launched on the first of May 2005 (Thram, 2006) and administered brutally to a level that attracted attention both within and beyond the country's borders is evidence that the urban weak had for long engaged in everyday forms of struggle. The occupation of these urban spaces by the urban poor who had no formal employment and housing as well as work places chronicles the undermining of authority and available formalities for them to get such resources central to survival. It is also an avowal of belonging and citizenship rights in a situation where they had been made invisible. Gossip/rumour that some high level official had died, or was seriously ill, role-playing the characters of some prominent people, corrupting popular speeches of certain figures, corrupting names like ZBC to Zimbabwe Boring Corporation or Dead Broadcasting Corporation

(DBC), Zimbabwe Television (Ztv) to Zimbabwe *terrorvision* reflects both consciousness and resistance to domination.

The above reflects what resistant theorists have named weapons of the weak. Laura Miller (1997:32) describes them as the masked strategies that subordinates use to resist oppression from above. Similarly, according to James Ockey (1997:1):

Weapons of the weak are aimed at resisting oppression through methods like dissimulation, false compliance, foot-dragging, and sabotage. They are low-risk strategies of resisting the unjust demands of those in power...if there is an urban equivalent of the everyday forms of peasant resistance outlined by Scott, it will be found among the urban weak; in slum and squatter communities.

Adding to this, Scott (1990) and Erving Goffman (1971) contend that the relations of domination are made up of four texts, namely; the public text of the dominant and that of the dominated, and then the hidden text of the dominant and that of the dominated. They argue that the public text is what both sides present when in the presence of each other while the hidden text is what is presented when away from each other. The public text therefore, besides reproducing the expected, may be an object of ridicule and pretence, which may be offering subtle fights. The hidden transcript, however can be understood by "...scrutinizing everyday existence for clues to its character" (Scott, 1990:597).

Interestingly, Miller (1997:32) argues, "Structural analysis that divide the population into the powerful and the powerless are further limited because they do not account for coexisting multiple hierarchies of power." Privilege and underprivileged also rests on issues of race, gender, age, ethnicity, nationality and so on and in this situation, power is not fixed but a matter of temporality. Miller elaborates this when he discusses the complex, shifting power positions of junior army men and their female superiors, an analysis which urges a shift from the polarization and fixity of the oppressor and the oppressed identities. This position has been taken by a number of postcolonial theorists. For example, African feminists do not simply position their struggles on the level of gender, but also issues of race, class, nationality and so on. This therefore explains the complex relations of domination which reproduction theories fail to articulate.

As such, there are contested meanings of citizenship and belonging in Zimbabwe. Political parties and the state do not always manage to control the flow and interpretation of their texts. Moreover, they can not avoid the reworking of these texts so that they become tenable to the worlds of the different audiences. Implied here is that public performances of citizenship and belonging are far from only being reproductive but instead, reflect how different moments have created ‘subaltern’ forms of citizenship and belonging. In addition, the performances themselves also contain multiple meanings of citizenship and belonging that appeal to the worlds of different audiences. Most important, however, is how the audiences either re-work the available performances of citizenship and belonging to the Zimbabwean nation or create new ones, in multiple ways that generate resistances to the given notions but being meaningful to their own spaces and time and therefore bringing in their own understandings of citizenship and belonging to the Zimbabwean nation. Notably, such understanding of citizenship and belonging intersect with notions of gender and sexuality.

### **Gender, Sexuality and Nationalism: A Postcolonial Constructionist Lens.**

Sylvia Walby (1997) posits that the literature of nations and nationalism neglect the question of gender [*and sexuality*]. This exclusion of a gendered and sexual analysis disables a comprehensive understanding of nationalism. Gendered and sexual discourses are very instructive to the rise of nationalism and the formation of nations and ignoring them is foolhardy. This is especially so in the presence of perceptions that recognize nations as females and leaders as males. Nyambi (2012:1), states that “Zimbabwe’s history of an often masculinized violent liberation war has created post-war gendered political power configurations bordering on political misogyny.” Annah-Leena Toivanen agrees that women are presented as symbols of the nation and that national leadership, heroes and citizenship have a masculine character and practice as reflected by the notion of ‘sons of the soil’ (Toivanen, 2010). This brings to the fore the gendered and sexualized attributes of the nation and nationalism to such an extent that present nations and nationalisms only make ‘sense’ within the narratives of gender and sexuality. Yuval-Davis (1997, 1996) goes further and argues that gender and sexuality should not only be critiqued in terms of dominant and

missing voices and bodies, but also in terms of particular discourses that inscribe and naturalize particular gendered and sexed identities.

Most postcolonial literature on gender shows women's involvement in nationalist movements. This literature chronicles the centrality of gendered national identity constructions and the gender dimensions of cultural and social formations of 'nation.' Gender relations are therefore vital in understanding and analyzing nations and nationalism. Nationalism is associated with socially construed ideas of masculinity and femininity (Sikata Benerjee, 2003; Susan Brownell, 2000; George Mosse, 1985). The culture of nationalism accentuates and resonates with masculine cultural themes related to honour, patriotism, cowardice, bravery, territory and duty (Brownell, 2000; Nagel, 1998). This concurs with Cynthia Enloe's study which relates nationalism to the experiences of men as she posits, "nationalism has sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope" (Enloe, 1989:44). The ever presence of hegemonic masculinity moving along conquest, control and power, makes manliness the psychological space on which the nation is constructed as well as the space where a passive femininity is constructed. Yuval-Davis (1997) brings out different ways in which women have been located in nationalism. Firstly, women are seen as the biological reproducers of group members, locating their centrality in reproductive roles. This is rooted from the idea of a universal origin which informs the construction of most ethnic and national collectives. One may argue that linking the universal origin of ethnic and national collectives to women is to preserve the purity of the group since it is easier to trace roots from the mother, who offers evidence through pregnancy and giving birth, than the father who may not always offer that evidence. One therefore joins the collectivity by being born into it.

Secondly, she states that women are viewed as cultural carriers, thus they serve as the symbolic markers of the group or nation. In most cultures, the woman figure symbolizes the spirit of the collectivity. This emphasizes that every group member can be traced to the mother. To this extent, Yuval-Davis argues that gendered representations of the identities of collectivities have also led to the construction of women as the bearers of the collectivity's honor, meaning that the honor of the group is enriched in the honor of its women. Any form of conduct which is seen as bringing dishonor to the women is seen as doing the same to the whole group. This makes it

important to keep in check the conduct of women to make sure that they have proper behavior, which signifies the collectivity's boundaries as perceived. She points out that this is why any unsanctioned women behavior is met with severe punishment on those who go beyond boundaries. To safe guard honor therefore, women have a vital mandate in the ideological reproduction of collective identity.

Thirdly, Yuval-Davis looks at women's position in national projects and processes with regard to the concept of citizenship. She argues that although women may and do qualify as members of collectivities, and they enjoy formalized equality with other members, other modes of political, social and civil exclusions remain rife. She notes a significant contradiction on how on the one hand, women are always included in the general collective state citizens with certain responsibilities while on the other there is always a separate body of legislation and knowledge, which relates them as women rather than citizens. Yuval-Davis (1996) reflects on how women are involved in nationalism as activists at different levels, yet also in gender entrenched roles where they are implicated as nurturers of the nation akin to their ascribed significance as women/nurturers. Implied is the responsibility of women citizens primarily to reproduce the next generation of nationalists or for culturally transmitting the attributes of the nation. This tends to link with the limited recognition of women, for example, in pre-colonial Zimbabwe, as represented in history. Gerald Mazarire (2003) and Elizabeth Schmidt (1988) argue that in pre-colonial Zimbabwe, women's worth was premised on fecundity, thus the more sons she had the more respect she mastered. Age, her family of origin, how she married as well as spirit possession were also foundations for respect. I purchase on postcolonial literature to further explore the constructions of nationalism by focusing on texts popularized to propel Zimbabwean nationalism in the post 2000s.

The 1980s onwards witnessed a wide body of postcolonial literature locating women in nationalist projects and in that way, reflecting on the complex relationship between gender, sexuality and nationalism. As such, gender and sexuality became vital and indispensable constituencies in the analysis of nation building and nationalism. Feminist Postcolonial scholarship has argued that gender and sexuality discourses, in addition to defining the nation, also play a phenomenal role in the processes of both constructing and reproducing nationalism (Lewis, 2008; Kizito Muchemwa & Robert

Muponde, 2007; Oyeronke Oyewumi, 2000, 1998; Spike Peterson, 2000; Yuval-Davis, 1996; McClintock, 1995, 1993). This then suggests that a configuration of the relationship between gender, sexuality and nationalism helps to examine the gendered and sexualized nature of nationalism.

Robert Mugabe's popular and recurring sentiments that Zimbabwe came out of blood and that a mere vote cannot change how the country is run reflect a warrior-masculinist national project.<sup>16</sup> National control and protection is gendered. This makes 'sense' in Zimbabwe where those men who were not brave enough to go to the war front are feminised while those women who proved to be equal to the war task are masculinized. In order to understand Zimbabwean nationalism, it is vital to consider the feminizing and masculinizing aspects of the language, symbols and 'acts' of nationalism in a way that further interrogates Yuval-Davis' framing especially in the context of Zimbabwe. It is in this light that I find the urge to problematize the signification of male figures like Joshua Nkomo<sup>17</sup> as 'father Zimbabwe' and Simon Muzenda<sup>18</sup> as 'the soul of the nation' in the re/making of Zimbabwean nationalism. One is made to ponder the implications of projecting a nation 'fathered' by a male and a nation whose 'soul' is male. This even becomes more interesting to probe considering the 'sacredness' given to the 'father' and the 'soul' in ensuring the 'purity' of the nation.

Mugabe's sentiments that Zimbabwe needs '*amadoda sibili*,' meaning 'real men' are telling of a characteristically masculinized nationhood. The macho-idolization of Nkomo and Muzenda and the nurture-valorisation of the female figure, Nehanda in dominant nationalist narratives hint on gendered nationalism. However, the construction of masculine and feminine identities in discourses of nationalism is much more complex. Lene Bull-Christiansen (2007) through the depiction of Joice Mujuru<sup>19</sup> as the 'father' of the nation reveals how some 'masculinized' women seek to

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/mugabe-mocks-the-vote-1.404654#.Va91XPmqgko>.

<sup>17</sup> Joshua Nkomo, *aka* Father Zimbabwe was one of Zimbabwe's vice presidents from 1987 when the Government of National Unity was formed until his death in 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Simon Muzenda, *aka* Mzee was Zimbabwe's deputy prime minister from 1980 to 1987, then one of Zimbabwe's vice presidents from 1987 to 2003 when he died.

<sup>19</sup> Joice Mujuru is currently the leader of Zimbabwe People First (ZimPF). She was one of Zimbabwe's vice presidents from 2004 to 2014 when she was expelled from ZANU. She held different ministerial posts from 1980 to 2004.

perpetuate the oppression of women. This takes nation-gender relationships deeper as masculinities and femininities tend to cut across all 'sexualized' bodies depending on the context. This proves that exploring nation-gender relations in simple terms of women exclusion is inadequate. It is crucial to address the complex and hideous ways in which gender and sexuality politics shape and drive the masculine national project in Zimbabwe.

The attachment of women like Joice Mujuru to power and authority teases out discussions of the victimhood normally associated with women. Mazarire (2003) draws attention to the obviously constructed idea of women's marginal role by unearthing how women traditionally, were the basis of chieftainship formation, how they effected political hierarchies as well as determined resource distribution. By factoring in a discussion and description on the contrast between *vahosi* and *varongo* (senior and junior wives), Mazarire argues that in the Shona cosmology, some women were powerful. This includes, for example, the senior wives whose sons were used to determine heirs, women with many sons who would influence resource distribution and therefore power and women/wives from monarchies who wield some power, although its degree may be contested.<sup>20</sup>

However, the kind of women used to illustrate women's power is problematic as this often reveals masculine power and representations of masculine authority. For example, Mazarire's attention to the importance of women is linked to their adjunct roles. He also skews things by presenting women as national 'wombs' and definers of national purity. It is important to explore challenges associated with the patriarchal functions of their power. One may argue that the said women had masculinized femininities that served the interests of men and patriarchal societies and therefore could not be representative of the specific interests of women. In the constructions of femininities and masculinities in Zimbabwe, I explore Marc Epprecht's (2001) notion that powerful women do not necessarily exemplify proto-feminism or feminine

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<sup>20</sup> Stanislaus Mudenge (1988), in his history of the Mutapa dynasty also features important women such as the wives of the Mutapas. He mentions only the senior wives of the Mutapas by name since they determined power and assertion to the throne.

heroism, but are rather, masculinized honorary males.<sup>21</sup> In this regard, one is persuaded to re/think the identities of the likes of Nehanda and Joice Mujuru and what they mean to Zimbabwean nationalism.

Certain feminists have also shown how gendered narratives and symbols have also been central to historiography.<sup>22</sup> For Joan Scott (1988), gender has by and large, provided a playing field for the performance of political history especially since it makes women invisible, subordinate and passive. She argues for an examination of history to unearth gender representation as this would aid an understanding of both the absence and misrepresentation of women in historical narratives.

The depiction of history as linked to the politics of gender and sexuality is therefore crucial for analyses on the gendered and sexual constructions of nationalism. Glenda Sluga (2000:495) points out that:

...the theorization of nationalism has relied upon engendered historical narratives which reinforce depictions of nationalism, nation-building as having universal and sex-neutral significance. They have reminded us if nations are “imagined communities,” then imagining has “gender dimensions.”

Critical therefore, is the thinking of ‘performances’ of nationalism in line with how male and female subjects of the nation have to take up ‘naturalized’ and historically ‘correct’ femininities and masculinities that ‘fit’ them into national communities. Generally, history has organized national movements on gender dichotomies that link men to the defense of the nation and women to the reproduction of the nation (Silke Wenk, 2000). This, however, is not enough considering that masculinities and femininities are complex identities that cannot be polarized and that in nationalisms, not all men are man enough to defend nations. As I show in what follows, the fixity of gendered roles that align masculinities with defense and femininities with reproduction is a result of Western-centric modernity.

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<sup>21</sup> Margaret Gallagher (2001) notes that writing key women into men’s history leads to either misrepresentation or lack of representation of the histories of the majority of women, leading to male experiences and masculinities as normative and simplifying the power dynamics of gender.

<sup>22</sup> In Zimbabwe one would think of the diverging versions in the presentation of the Nehanda narrative by David Beach (1979) and Ruramisai Charumbira (2008) or how she is literary imagined in Yvonne Vera’s *Nehanda* (1993), Chenjerai Hove’s *Bones* (1988) or Solomon Mutswairo’s *Mweya WaNehanda* (1988) as well as in various songs and poetry. Still, one can think of how Nehanda’s history is re-lived in the nationalist symbols figuring her as well as her place in nationalist discourses.



Oyewumi's (2000, 1998) ideas about gender challenge the relevance of such a model in the understanding of African gender identities. There is a strong argument that the writing of African history, which was initiated and administered by the whites, was informed by the Western prototype. This gave rise to representations akin to the Western episteme rather than specific to 'indigenous' Africa (Oyewumi, 1998; Schmidt, 1990, 1988). There is also a way in which African indigenous structures and systems were altered to ensure control and domination of women. Oyewumi (1998) argues that ideology influenced the construction of African history, allowing tradition to be constantly re-invented in accordance to those interests. Basing her studies on what she calls 'a patriarchalization of Oyo history' where history inscribes gender to the non-gender specificity of Oyo names, pronouns and social groupings, she posits:

Men and women have been invented as social categories, and history is presented as being dominated by male actors. Female actors are virtually absent and where they are recognized, they are reduced to exceptions (Oyewumi, 1998:264).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) also reflects on the re/invention of history to entrench hegemonic masculinities. He shows the reinvention of the pre-colonial chiefly system of governance in colonial Zimbabwe to accommodate gendered-colonial interests. The veneration of masculinities made the colonialist's indirect rule work through authoritative and violent masculine systems.<sup>23</sup> Violent masculinities have played a big role in the contestations of nationalism in new millennium Zimbabwe. As I show later, the identification of the likes of Chenjerai Hunzvi,<sup>24</sup> Border Gezi<sup>25</sup> and Joseph Chinotimba<sup>26</sup> is part of 'writing' Zimbabwean nationalism. I also discuss the significance of the Mugabe regime's post-2000 re/invention of the masculinities of the war veterans, the National Youth Service (NYS) graduates and all 'loyal' ZANU-

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<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Schmidt (1990, 1988) poses how indigenous and colonial systems of patriarchal control anchored and transformed one another, generating into newer and worse forms of domination. She reflects on how the creation of native reserves was not only positive to the colonial administration, but also to chiefs, headmen and older men who wanted to control the mobility of women for their own interests. Interesting as well, is her reflection on how the African customary law is a hybrid of African and Western patriarchal crafts.

<sup>24</sup> Chenjerai Hunzvi aka Hitler, was the leader of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA), and one of Zimbabwe's controversial war veterans. When he died, he was accorded a national hero status.

<sup>25</sup> Border Gezi rose from being a provincial governor to being the Minister for Gender, Youth and Employment from 2000 and the National Youth Service, popularly known as Border Gezi Training was introduced during his tenure. He died in a car accident in 2001 when he was doing party business as ZANU-PF's Secretary for the Commissariat.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Chinotimba is one of Zimbabwe's controversial war veterans. He became prominent with the occupation of white-owned farms that started in 2000. He is currently a parliamentarian and is very popular in Zimbabwe as both a violent person and comical figure.

PF politicians and supporters in crafting a nationalism befitting the Third Chimurenga.

McClintock (1995:105) articulates; “[i]n the chronicles of male nationalism, women are all too often figured as mere scenic backdrops to the big-brass business of masculine armies and uprisings.” This links nationalism to masculine and patriarchal features of possession, dominance and accumulation (Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, 2000). This undermines fragments of the nations such as religious, gender and ethnic fissures, rendering nationalist revolutions and patriarchal revolutions symmetrical (Joyce Chadya, 2003).

For Peterson (1995), the making of group or communal identity of ‘us against them’ rests on divisions of masculinity and femininity. The ‘us’ is masculinized while ‘them’ is feminized in Carl Schmitt’s controversial concept of the political, in which he discusses the importance of the friend-enemy binary as the base of the ‘political’ or state (Charles Frye, 1996). For Frye, this ensures a fighting human totality conceived around notions of war, battle, death/killing and losing/winning. Interestingly, the texts under study, in different ways, mirror a Zimbabwe made up of binaries. These include foreign/native, outsider/insider, enemies/friends, man/woman, homosexual/heterosexual, Zimbabwe/the West and a recent invention of weevils/gamatox<sup>27</sup> that polarized the 2014 fallout within ZANU-PF. Exposing the gendered and sexualized aspects of such texts deepen studies on nationalism.

In Zimbabwean nationalist politics, divergence is taken as opposition and ‘opposition’ political parties like the MDC are seen as ‘prostituting’ with the whites, who are ‘outsiders.’ This calls for more nuanced discussions on how the naturalized domination of ‘us against them’ is connected to the naturalization of men/masculinity over women/femininity. It is therefore essential to explore inherent masculinities and femininities as well as the highly charged significance of sexuality in the making of the Zimbabwean nation/al family.

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<sup>27</sup> Gamatox is used to refer to the pro-Joice Mujuru faction that is said to embrace veteran ZANU-PF members. The name can imply a poisonous and dangerous chemical or an anti-pest chemical used to guard and preserve grain. The Weevils refer to a faction which the likes of Jonathan Moyo and Grace Mugabe and ‘fresh’ ZANU-PF members are aligned to. Literally weevil refers to insects which destroy grain from within, but metaphorically it implies the destruction of ZANU-PF from within.

In Zimbabwe, the language and practice of the nation and nationalism are entrenched through the treatises of gender and sexuality. Very often, the collectivity and continuity of the nation has been imagined and legitimated according to the gendered metaphors of reproduction. Robert Mugabe has often argued that homosexuality destroys nations hence discipline and control are necessary in ensuring heterosexuality and therefore, nationhood. Among others, Epprecht argues that Zimbabwe's heterosexual mantra is a manifestation of colonial inheritance:

The focus is on ways in which notions of appropriate, respectable, exclusive heterosexuality within the 'cowboy' culture of White Rhodesia trickled into, or were interpreted within the African nationalist movement. 'Cowboy' is understood here as used by both admirers and critical observers at the time – boldly macho and heterosexually lusty (Epprecht, 2005:254).

Not only are many understandings of deviant sexuality colonial, rather than traditional; so too are many notions of women's roles in contemporary African nationalist myth-making. In state-driven discourses, familial notions frequently construct women as central to the procreation of citizens and reproduction of the nation. In this case, the penchant of nationalists is to equate the nation with a nuclear family in its conventional sense. This culturally distinct notion of family assumes a single male-headed household where both men and women have differential natural roles to play. While women are subordinated politically in nationalist movements and politics, they are symbolically located as mothers of nations (Yuval-Davies, 1997). The family trope naturalizes the nation just as the biological family and consequently naturalizes social hierarchies based on women's subordination. McClintock (1993) posits that nations are recurrently figured out through the iconography of familial and domestic space. She conveys that the term 'nation' is rooted in 'natio' which means to be born, offering reason why nations are thought of as 'motherlands' and 'fatherlands.' McClintock's major point here is that the family presents an apparently natural figure for engendering social hierarchy within an organic unity of interests as well as a metaphoric figure by which hierarchical social differences could be crafted to narrate a mono-historical genesis. Discovering the nation as a family entails the acquisition of a patriarchal hierarchy within which distinct roles of members are modeled by their gender – as in the patriarchal family. Thus, for self-preservation, the nation needs both masculinity and femininity and nations are symbolically larger families.

Lynn Hunt argues that the family 'romance' provides a script for organizing political experience. Implied is the fact that most organized social relations are founded on kinship, meaning that the family is an important category for comprehending political power. She points out that:

...the most obvious material at hand for thinking politically was the family, not the family as some kind of model social experience, but the family as an imaginative construct of power relations (Hunt, 1992:196).

Complementing work such as McClintock's and Hunt's is a body of literature showing how to varying degrees, women's bodies are permeated with unique significance as markers of community and cultural preservation and reproduction. These works show how idealized metaphors and bodies of women 'act' as margins of the nation. Zillah Eisenstein (2000) states that the female and maternalized body is reduced to a space for configuring the nation. Thus the nation is a naturalized imaginary space constructed through the symbolization of the female body. She goes on to say that "it is the bordered differentiation of women's bodies from men's bodies rather than the bodies themselves that construct the fiction of nations" (Eisenstein, 2000:43). Thus, the depiction of women's bodies in nationalism makes sense only through the process of dichotomized differentiation. Since the nation locates women in a familial order "women become a metaphor for what they present, rather than what they are" (Eisenstein, 2000:43).

Noting the above, it is understandable to point out that sexuality and its associated social meanings and attributes are significant to women's national identity. The strict control of female sexuality is an essential mechanism of nation formation. Nagel (1998) makes an interesting argument: that it is very common for women's sexuality to be charged with political and symbolic meaning in relation to discourses about 'the national interest.' Nagel suggests that this is because nationalism positions woman as mother, a signification of the national hearth and home and also because women as wives and daughters transmit masculine honour and therefore, national honour.

In the 1980s, there were frequent and random raids on women who were labelled as prostitutes and vagrants in Zimbabwe (Sita Ranchod-Nilson, 2006). This reveals how women's bodies and at times, the bodies of feminized men and certain sexualities have been imagined in terms of tropes of contamination and as disturbing the natural body politic. Women supposedly represent dominated beings and therefore weak and

feminine subjects who cannot defend themselves. Moreover, their ‘frailty’ may lead them to ‘prostitute’ and pollute and dishonour the nation. If those who are strong, the masculine, make sure that the outside does not ‘penetrate’ the weak, then the nation is protected. Turning to the Zimbabwean manifestation of all this, in many incidences, Morgan Tsvangirai has been projected as weak, a coward and a ‘prostitute’ and therefore not fitting the billing of *amadoda sibili*. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 2 and 4.

On a similar note, Tamar Mayer (2000) raises the idea that nationalism, gender and sexuality are embedded in social and cultural regimes and they immensely contribute to each other’s construction by invoking the ‘us’ and ‘them’ polarities and the exclusion of the othered. Thus to her, one gender, one sexuality, one nation, is empowered only and always at the expense and the disempowerment of another. Mayer’s analysis points out that notwithstanding its narrative of equality for subjects, nation remains masculine and the material of men. Thus control over the benefits enshrined in national belonging and citizenship is grotesquely gendered. This replicates and shows the persistence of Aristotle’s philosophy that politics is the place of men (Richard Mulgan, 1974). By controlling sexuality in all its aspects, and the avenues of imaginations, men attain the authorship of, and the authority to define the nation. Using Butler’s concept of ‘performativity,’ Mayer asserts that the nation is populated with sexed subjects whose ‘performativity’ or ‘scripts’ underwrite their own gender identity and also that of the entire nation:

...through the repetition of accepted norms and behaviours – control over reproduction, militarism and heroism and heterosexuality – members help to construct the privileged nation; equally the repetitive performances of these acts in the name of the nation help to construct gender and sexuality (Mayer, 2000:5).

In addition, Mayer sees the nexus of nation, gender and sexuality as primarily a discourse about an ethical code, which rallies men and in some cases women, to become the sole guardians of the nation while women are its biological and symbolic reproducers. Thus the crafting of the nation as the hegemonic sphere of both masculinity and heterosexuality, and as a space for the institutionalization and naturalization of gender differences and the naturalization of knowledge regimes created by a reference to polarised sexualities. In this regard, Peterson (2000) argues

that heterosexuality is central to nationalism with regard to group reproduction since it presupposes a dual signification of dichotomized identities of male/masculine and female/feminine that are hierarchical. In turn, heterosexual relations are naturalized as the only sexual identity, sexual practice and social relations and the foundation of group continuity.<sup>28</sup> To Peterson, in existence is a signified structuring of polarized male-female bodies and masculine-feminine identities that is instructed by the idea of heterosexuality. To this extent, the structuring of masculine over feminine is inevitable due to the political structuring inscribed in the formation of states and reproduced through masculine discourses that rationalize the hierarchical relations of the state.

Another body of literature on gender and nationalism has very radical implications in guiding how feminist intellectual and political activism has contributed to and in some cases challenges male-centred nationalism. This scholarship therefore directly helps to explain the forms and effects of much oppositional discourse in contesting the Zimbabwean state's patriarchal authoritarianism. In most cases, nationalist and feminist practices are usually conflicting rather than harmonious. Generally, nationalisms endeavour to prioritize the two practices, consequently removing feminism from the agenda until nationalist goals are achieved. Sometimes, even when nationalist practice appears to engender feminism, any resulting feminist practice is limited to narrowly defined spheres by nationalist insistence on the importance of women's traditional roles for the nationalist project as a whole (Charlotte Davies, 1996).

Suad Joseph (2000) sees gender as central to state-building enterprises. To her, nation-building and state-building projects have not necessarily given rise to the same and attuned results for women who have been caught between the conflicting demands of nation-building and state-building projects. She does not refute some reforms underpinning patriarchy, but contends that the reproduction of gendered and sexual dichotomized power relations that have institutionalized gendered and sexualized citizenship in state building projects are anchored in the relationship of woman/mother to the nation and man/father to the state. The above position is shared

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<sup>28</sup> Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPpme0-U9vk>.

by Jean Elshtain (1981) who notes a paradox on how women are disallowed civic identity training, yet expected to transmit to their sons, a passion for exemplary families needed to foster that identity and as such, disqualifying mothers from citizenry but making them mothers of citizens.

A small but lively body of feminist intellectual work was produced by scholars, academics, journalists and artists, with some of this being co-ordinated by SAPEs in Harare. This includes work by Patricia McFadden, Everjoice Win, Terry Barnes, Rudo Gaidzanwa and Yvonne Vera working both as a fiction-writer and as the head of the national gallery in Bulawayo. Much of this work, however, thrived before, rather than after 2000. In the post-2000, many feminists and radical women, just like other intellectual activists outside of Zimbabwe (like Patricia McFadden, Terry Barnes and Everjoice Win) turned increasingly to more focused and less radical intellectual work in their respective working sites.

To explore the above issues, I identify the following central themes in Zimbabwean nationalism: Origin Stories of the Zimbabwean Nation and their Contestations, The 'Land Question' and its Symbolic Meanings and Narratives and Performances of Struggle in the Zimbabwean Nation. Notions of citizenship and belonging as well as metaphors of the Zimbabwean nation cut across the above themes. Origin Stories of the Zimbabwean Nation and their Contestations deals mainly with the performances of icons and symbols of the nation. I trace and critique the founding stories, figures and symbols of the Zimbabwean nation and how different texts work to reflect these and how they shape the present and the future. The 'Land Question' and its Symbolic Meanings focuses on how subjects are hailed mainly through public enactments of reform and national control. I delve into the land question and its material and immaterial or metaphorically charged meanings. Narratives and Performances of Struggle in the Zimbabwean Nation focuses on national identity and its purchase on a genealogy of unyielding revolutions and revolutionaries in the nation's becoming. In exploring the above thematic aspects, I discuss the dominant expectations marking citizenship and belonging and the various forms of acceptances and resistances that people have been making. I also discuss the gendered and sexualized dimensions of Zimbabwean nationalism. My focus especially on Zimbabwean music is to show

decentred notions of struggles, ones that have moved from a monolithic and untroubled centre.



## CHAPTER 2: ORIGIN STORIES OF THE ZIMBABWEAN NATION AND THEIR CONTESTATIONS

### Roots, Triumphs and Destinies

The relevance of Zimbabwe's rich store of pre-colonial Shona and Ndebele symbols and stories to the imagining of contemporary nationalisms is phenomenal. One can note the significance of pre-colonial Shona symbols and stories such as Sororenzou Murenga, Nehanda, Chaminuka, Kaguvi, Mapondera, the Great Zimbabwe, the Great Zimbabwe birds and *chimurenga* narratives. Among the Ndebele pre-colonial symbols and stories, one can think of Mzilikazi, how he rose to fame in King Shaka's kingdom, and how he built the Ndebele nation. Lobengula's fame, the *Imfazo Yokuqala* or *Mfazo* 1 (Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893), and the British's failure to capture the Ndebele King, Lobengula are also rich Ndebele 'pasts.' The recently 'acknowledged' heroism of Gwasela and Gaigusvu, who had been labelled dissidents in the 1980s also provide rich symbols of resistance against the usurpation of Ndebele 'nationhood.' Related to the above, there are among others, stories of colonial brutalities, callous deaths, prophecies and unyielding hope for restoration. These symbols and stories are 'archives' from which origin stories of the nation are retrieved, reinvented and reconfigured. They mark how subjects of the nation are hailed, and help determine notions of citizenship and belonging, exclusion and inclusion both to the social and political sphere. Notably, these 'pre-colonial' archives have also been instrumentalized as ideological platforms, and also as discursive repositories for resistance and alternatives for national imagining and imaging.

This provides a narrative of the nation that is ambivalent in Homi Bhabha's (1993) sense, especially because of a multiple and disturbed reading invoked by these archival texts. Bhabha argues that language is ambivalent and so is the discourse of the nation. He points out that "To encounter the nation as it is written displays a temporality of culture and social consciousness more in tune with the partial, overdetermined process by which textual meaning is produced through the articulation of difference in language..." (Bhabha, 1993:2). This results in a contested Zimbabwean nationalism that locates citizenship and belonging in a fluid space. I do not see these texts only as a distribution of the sensible in the Ranciere[an] sense, but also as going behind and beyond the sensible. There is a way in which looking

beyond the sensible, the unsaid spaces and the ways in which texts are received across time and context may bring in new questions and new understandings on the notions of citizenship and belonging. In the Zimbabwean case, different iconographical figures, stories and symbols have been used by different people and groups at different times to 'act out' the Zimbabwean nation. Important to note here are the ambivalences, acceptances and subversions and the convergences and divergences that emerge as figures, stories, symbols and meanings get mediated by contexts.

More often than not, stories about a peoples' origin usually have important roles to play in how people conceive their identities, loyalties and relations with others outside their group. As such, it is often argued that origin stories are reference points for commonalities, uniqueness, authenticity and expectations, all of which are crucial in the imaginings of nations. In fact, nations cannot be imaged without stories of their origins, although which stories are narrated at what times, who narrates the stories to whom and the 'originality' of the stories are complex and contested issues. Zimbabwean nationalism is by and large, predicated on stories of origin as these answer to calls of attachments and dis-attachments, recognitions and lack of recognitions and acceptances and rejections. In the imagining of belonging through origins, the coding of individuals and groups as occupying an outside zone makes their social identification, and therefore their very lives very precarious. This is because 'insiders' defend their right to authenticity through 'othering' and make sure that boundaries between belonging and not belonging are not crossed. Also created is a situation where the 'others' created by grand Zimbabwean nationalist projects become threats to those inhabiting the inside sphere. A context where origin determines authentic citizenship and belonging, with certain advantages and disadvantages bestowed on those who belong and those who do not belong, usually gives rise to heated and at times, fatal confrontations between these polarities. Thus, there are strong connections between stories about the past, origins and 'authenticity' and citizenship and belonging. Gerald Mazarire (2009:1) claims that "...in its more recent assertions of sovereignty, reclamation, restitution, the return to tradition, and even anti-imperialism, the Zimbabwean state perceives the pre-colonial period as..." the foundation for national rebirth.

The above makes it clear that there are always attempts to go into the past to define Zimbabwe's presence and future. It is crucial to look at how a sense of 'pastness' is 'extracted' as well as how it is re/packaged, re/distributed and received or contested. Interesting are the ways in which this past is a 'present' past in Mazarire's sense, that is, a creation of the past that is imagined basing on present and future needs (Mazarire, 2009). Joseph Mtisi, Munyaradzi Nyakudya & Teresa Barnes (2009) argue that in addition to race, discourses of origin were central to the nationalists in their construction of the nation. Discourses around the First Chimurenga became a useful mobilizing tool during Zimbabwe's following struggles and also became instrumental in their coding. The liberation war starting in the 1960s and the post-2000 national reforms became known as the Second Chimurenga and the Third Chimurenga respectively, thus making *chimurenga* central in Zimbabwean nationalist myth-making.

It may be difficult to think of the possibilities of writing Zimbabwean history outside the *chimurenga* narrative. This is because of the emotional attachments the term carries. Katherine Verdery (1990) makes sense when she argues that the human universe always has affective and meaningful dimensions and these are attained through complex symbolic processes. As such, in the Zimbabwean case, it might be impossible to move out of the *chimurenga* narrative, but it is possible to see how people constantly give new or revised sense to what *chimurenga* means to them.

The *chimurenga* discourse has been naturalized and turned into part of Zimbabwe's 'common sense.' This sense-making, however, emerges as contextual and temporal as struggles over meanings and significations are waged in different universes that people experience and imagine. If Zimbabwean history cannot be written outside the *chimurenga* narrative, then it raises questions whether it can possibly be written outside the Shona language, especially Zezuru ethnicity. It is almost clear that the *chimurenga* myth, which currently underwrites Zimbabwe's patriotic history and consequently, Zimbabwe's dominant nationalist narratives, is ethnically rooted. Fungai Muchirori points out that the revolutionary concept of *chimurenga* is situated in the Shona language (Shereen Essof, 2013).

Essof (2013) agrees with Muchirori's observation, but adds that it is not just Shona language, but also principally Shona history. Maurice Vambe (2012) posits that historically, the word *chimurenga* antedates the colonial encroachment and originates from the Shona ancestor, Murenga Sororenzou, who was a hunter, great warrior, war genius, war-song composer and nation-builder. This adds to Vambe's (2004:167) description of Murenga Sororenzou as "... a huge man with a head (*soro*), the size of an elephant's (*renzou*)..." What complicates the idea of national coherence, then, is how there are sub-texts of ethnic nationalism with the overarching narrative of Zimbabwean nationalism. An equally interesting element that fragments a sense of national unity is the construction of 'manliness' and masculine authority in how Vambe (2004) describes Murenga Sororenzou.

Considering how nationalism determines citizenship and belonging, it is crucial to disentangle how the appropriation of this gigantic, masculine, Shona legend with fighting prowess spills over into ethnic, race, class and gender identities in the Zimbabwean nation. One is tempted to suspect an attempt to imagine Zimbabwean politics analogous to the dominant narratives of Western politics that lauds manliness and militancy. Terence Ranger (1967) argues that religious leaders adopted and adapted the pre-colonial era myth founded on a millenarian revolution and assured their people of a novel nation free of whites.<sup>29</sup> Murenga or Mulenga was then drawn into the struggle as one who administered medicine that made Ndebele and Shona fighters untouchable and immune to the colonialists' weaponry. Ranger notes how this myth of the 1896-97 African resistances was named *chimurenga* in nationalist historiography. However, Julian Cobbing (1977) and David Beach (1979) undermine the role of spirit mediums and the unified and integrated struggle waged by the natives, respectively, as narrated by Ranger. Nevertheless, despite the presence of a critique of Ranger's account, it still remains very popular in discourses of the Zimbabwean nation.<sup>30</sup> This is because the narrative is very useful in constructing

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<sup>29</sup> Such kind of 'Afrocentric' positioning that has been taken by a number of Southern African historians, exemplified by John. D. Omer-Cooper's *Zulu Aftermath* (1966), a seminal work on African 'nation-building' processes such as the *mfecane*, that romanticize African pasts and glorifies African military rulers such as Shaka and centralized military states has been seen as reproducing colonial knowledge systems and has been revisioned by writings such as Bessie Head's *A Bewitched Crossroad* (Desiree Lewis, 2002).

<sup>30</sup> Representations of the African past are more concerned with presenting the past in particular ways than with the 'actual' past (Desiree Lewis, 2002).

particular identities and a particular version and vision of nationalism. Such narratives re/produce and maintain masculinist, militarized and gendered national narratives and projects (Desiree Lewis, 2002).

Regardless of how *chimurenga* narratives conceal fragmentation and differential forms of belonging to the Zimbabwean nation, the myth-making surrounding *chimurenga* should be fully understood in the sense of giving hope, patience and perseverance to the fighters. It also links up well with a cosmology that does not believe in ultimate death but a different world of the living dead where fighting continues. In that sense, Zimbabweans, despite the physical death of some, become invulnerable to the white settlers' weapons. In the 2000s, after several decades of battling against various forms of settler and neo-colonialism, although suffering is acknowledged, there is hope that is fostered by nationalist discourses and the Third Chimurenga was said to give rise to a positive revolution.

From the start of the new millennium, the state media's coverage of the deaths and burials of national heroes and heroines as well as presentations of the suffering figures of the First and Second Chimurenga became very crucial. State newspapers, almost on a daily basis, from the death to a few days after burial, carried articles on and around the late national hero/heroine. This was also the case with the electronic media. Although it is usual for the deaths of prominent people to attract media attention, it is interesting how after death, biographies of individuals are selectively crafted into narratives of the nation by the state media. Interesting as well is the recycling of colonial brutalities and revised liberation war discourses during this period of death and burial to justify claims to the hero status.

Discourses of origin feature especially prominently in the conceptualization of Zimbabwean nationalism in the 2000s. In fact, from 2000, the intensity of the ruling party's efforts to monopolize the state led to its almost frenzied appropriation and reconstruction of 'the' story of Zimbabwe's origins. Strong foundation myths around struggles are used to inform Zimbabwean nationalism. These foundation myths are circulated through performances of icons and symbols of the nation. Nevertheless, they are characterized by ambivalences that range from acceptance and re/production to rejection and re-imagining as instructed by time and space. Among other examples

is Robert Mugabe's speech calling for reconciliation soon after independence, which is then followed by the continuous labeling of Zimbabweans of foreign descent as aliens and totem-less. The prevalence of Shona myths and symbols in national imaginations in the context of an 'inclusive' national project is ambivalent. Also paradoxical is Mugabe's argument that the white man is not indigenous and that Africa is for Africans. Most interesting is the racialization of the MDC political party, particularly its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai as 'white.'<sup>31</sup> Mugabe's construction of Morgan Tsvangirai makes one to understand 'whiteness' as a political construction within the Zimbabwean 'body-politic.' The above helps to reflect on the contestations around national belonging. In the discourses of nationalism, certain bodies have been associated with national defilement while others have been associated with nation/al purity and nation/al being.

Notwithstanding the fact that there are several definitions of nation, I find it appropriate from the onset, to argue that generally, 'nation' is a socially constructed concept. Just like 'gender' and sexuality, it is associated with notions of unity and differentiation which are internalized and 'naturalized' through various affiliations that people have. Ernest Renan (1996), for example, defines nation as a soul, a spiritual principle. He asserts:

Two things, which, strictly speaking are just one, constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is past, the other is the present. One is the common possession of a rich legacy of memories; the other is actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to continue to value the heritage that has been received in common (Renan, 1996:57).

Being a spiritual principle, it is associated with the elusive and the abstract; it calls upon faith and belief rather than 'logic.' This spiritual sense carries and gives meaning to existence. In the case of Zimbabwe, it creates feelings of guilt if one's faith withers and one ceases to believe. It also builds 'hope' and loyalty if one continues to hold onto faith and belief. The spiritual sense therefore, is very forceful because it is founded on 'irrational' belief. Brian Osborne (2001:1342) indicates that state nationalist construction relies on elicitation "...of the ideas, myths, and dreams that comprise the non-rational core of national identity. That is, old nations and modern states alike cannot exist or function without symbolic underpinnings."

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<sup>31</sup> This alludes to among others, Foucault's formulation where 'race' is not simply biologically determined, but also based on the polarities of those who belong and those who do not belong.

Community members have to believe in the existence of this soul; hence the need to have in place, systems and instruments inculcating belief, the absence of which destroys the 'soul' and therefore 'nation.' Such a language producing feelings that are extremely persuasive and defying logic is very important to nationalist projects.

Edward Matenga's (2011) analysis of the events around the return of revered Zimbabwean artefacts such as the lower part of one of the Great Zimbabwe bird carvings from foreign countries where they had been taken to interestingly describes the relevance of the 'soul' in representations of Zimbabwean nationalism. As he shows, traditional leaders as well as politicians have often mobilized this idea for their own interests. This is evident in the way part of the Zimbabwe bird carving has been received and interpreted. The recovery of part of the bird carving has been seen as the restoration of the 'soul,' the recovery of the 'nation.' ZANU-PF leaders read the return of the artefact alongside discourses of land recovery as exemplified by the compulsory acquisition of white-owned land from 2000. The spiritual echoes here are even more evident when one considers that in many pre-colonial African world views, artefacts are not just simple works of art, but sacred and invested with 'life' and divine meaning (Matenga, 2011). The presence of the spiritual in Zimbabwe is not limited to crafts, but extends to certain human figures as witnessed especially in the 2000s. Thus, the spirituality of artefacts has also been greatly augmented by the spirituality of specific revered national leaders in whose selves the living fabric of the nation has been formulated. This is done in a way that invites subjects of the nation to sense the nation in line with the narrativization of the revered figures whose 'bodies' are taken as pure repositories of the national soul.

Since 2000, the late Zimbabwean Vice President, Simon Vengesayi Muzenda has been regarded as the soul of the nation, establishing an umbilical cord with the spirit medium Nehanda. Thus, Muzenda is imagined as the link between Nehanda, one of Zimbabwe's valorised spirit mediums representing the ancestral world, and contemporary Zimbabweans. Notable here is Muzenda's popularized recitation of Solomon Mutsvairo's poem '*Nehanda Nyakasikana*'<sup>32</sup> which transformed him into something approximating an actual 'essence,' the personality and life of the Zimbabwean nation that could not survive without Nehanda's intervention. This

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<sup>32</sup> See Solomon Mutsvairo's *Feso* (1982) on page 35-36 for the poem.

deviates from the rationalist post-enlightenment notion at the heart of nation-states where the rational purposefulness of language, ethnicity, war, history and political affiliations are central to the idea of nation. The deep veneration of personality and spirituality that gives life to the Zimbabwean nation is located in Muzenda. He is taken as a repository of the nation's memory by fondly being labelled 'Mzee,' meaning an old man. In most African societies, old men are revered as sacrosanct and seen as bearers of invaluable wisdom and a country's memory bank. In Zimbabwe, however, dominant nationalist discourses purports that not all old men fall into this category, but only a few unique ones, as evidenced by the selection of those to be honoured. The figure of Muzenda is selected to symbolize traditional wisdom which guides the 're/writing' and 'rehearsal' of the Zimbabwean nation. In the representations of Muzenda, is a re/packaging of the Zimbabwean national identity that shows belonging and performs nationalism as rooted in the constructed Zimbabwean past, particularly the *chimurenga* ideology.

In post-independence Zimbabwe, the *chimurenga* ideology has been instrumental in perpetuating Robert Mugabe's hegemony and by extension, that of ZANU-PF and resultantly ensuring the political safety of Mugabe and ZANU-PF. At the same time, the same ideology has been used as the foundation for a critique of Mugabe and ZANU-PF. This has resulted in complex, contested and fluid national identities that make purchases on symbolic underpinnings to ensure affective affiliations.

### **Origin Stories: The (Un)Making of a Nation**

Origin stories, by their very nature, are fraught with ambivalences and contestations. This is so because they rely on myths, legends and historical accounts which are especially fluid and polysemous forms of narratives. They are often narrowed and instrumentalized, making one recall Beach (1999:6) who posits:

...history is the memory of humanity. Just as any human from childhood to second childhood has memories of its experiences of varying degrees of accuracy, so humanity retains by one method or another evidence about its past. This may be based on the discipline of history itself or upon archaeology, linguistics, sociology, political science, law, commerce.

Thomas Beidelman's (1970) analysis uses a Kaguru traditional text to reflect on the intersections of the history of Kaguru, Bantu speaking people in east-central Tanzania



and their myths and legends. This also speaks to issues around representations of historical events in ‘imaginative’ discourses such as epics, folk tales, myths and legends as well as the idea that history has a figurative level of meaning (Hyden White, 1987, 1984, 1975). As articulated above, origin stories are selected and dis/remembered in a certain way that creates a certain world and particular movements of time, answering to a projected reality. When pointed to, they trigger feelings of betrayal, isolation, resentment, rebellion and re/imagining, giving rise to struggles that can be extremely intense. Characterized by such temporal affective reactions, origin stories are the foundation for the un/making of nations. Louis Althusser (1971) advances that the invention of history and culture, including stories of origin, is necessary in the creation of national consciousness. It is this collective consciousness of beginnings that is at the heart of nationalism (Benedict Anderson, 1983; John Armstrong, 1982). As such, origin stories, icons and symbols of the nation have the ability to set common experiences, common destinies and therefore unity. Walker Connor (1994) argues that the capacity of origin stories, icons and symbols of the nation to set common experiences, common destinies and unity enables an affective affiliation to imaginations of the nation which Althusser sees as necessary for subjects to become controllable and mobilized to a particular project that is offered in the name of the nation.

However, the evocation of origin stories, icons and symbols of the nation is not a closed package as there can be erasure to these, leading to newer stories, symbols and experiences. Nor are the meanings rigid and clear-cut as time and space tend to bring rupture effects. Thus, origin stories, icons and symbols of the nation have an ability to both set and expose fissures in the ‘nation.’ As a result, they also allude to numerous ripples and contestations in the re/constructions of citizenship and belonging in a nation. At certain moments, there are always questions around the narrator of the stories, the content of the stories, icons and symbols that are favored as well as the ones that are undermined or buried and at certain moments. Thus, although revolutions are linked to the formation of the Zimbabwean nation, there are contestations on how the revolutionary stories are told.

The trend to remove the primacy of certain groups, for example the Ndebele, women, non-combatants, dissenters and the so called ‘born-frees’ in *chimurenga* narratives

has been very prevalent in Zimbabwe. James Muzondidya (2009:184) points to “...PF-ZAPU’s disgruntlement over ZANU-PF’s use of party slogans, songs and political speeches that portrayed ZANU-PF as the authentic liberator while disparaging Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) and its supporters as villains.” Muzondidya adds that the government’s narratives emasculated and marginalized PF-ZAPU and other parties’ contributions. He says this was achieved by narrations, memorializations and performances of Shona pre-colonial heroes, artefacts and historical monuments and peripheralizing those of the Ndebele and other minority groups. The poor electoral performance of ZANU-PF in Matebeleland, the re-invention of ZAPU and the emerging of a number of pro-Matebeleland movements and pressure groups with Ndebele particularities among others, are struggles meant to redeem *chimurenga* from state-centrism. More recently, in 2015, ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe have re/written the histories of popular figures like Joice Mujuru, Didymus Mutasa<sup>33</sup> and Rugare Gumbo<sup>34</sup> as a result of the infighting between the ‘Gamatox’ and the ‘Weevils’ factions.

In view of the complex contestations around Zimbabwean founding myths and narratives of beginnings, Althusser’s perspective on the state becomes obviously simplistic as it fails to account for the existence of multiple struggles within nation-states that cut across citizens’ experiences of origin. For example, origin stories, icons and symbols of the nation usually carry sub-texts of race, ethnicity, class, politics, gender and sexuality. To suppose that they are smoothly ‘given’ at the level of power or smoothly taken up by ‘dominated’ groups is naive. A linear trajectory of a war based origin in dominant accounts of the nation that is simplified to the binary divisions of enemy/friend villain/hero and loser/victor is challenged by research. Such research include; Tanya Lyons’ *Guns and Guerrilla girls: Women in the Zimbabwean liberation struggle* (2004), Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi’s *For better or worse? Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle* (2000) and Masipula Sithole’s *Zimbabwe: Struggles Within the Struggle* (1999). It is also destabilized by

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<sup>33</sup> Didymus Mutasa became one of the founders of Zimbabwe People First (ZimPF) after being expelled from ZANU-PF in 2014. From 1980 to 1990, he was the speaker of parliament. He also held various ministerial posts. From 2009 to 2014, he was Minister of State for Presidential Affairs. When he was expelled, he was also serving as ZANU-PF’s Secretary for Administration.

<sup>34</sup> Rugare Gumbo is one of the founders of Zimbabwe People First (ZimPF) after being expelled from ZANU-PF in 2014. He had held positions such as Minister of Economic Development and Minister of Agriculture.

autobiographies such as Edgar Tekere's *A lifetime of struggle* (2007), Fay Chung's *Re-living the second Chimurenga: Memories from Zimbabwe's liberation struggle* (2006), and Wilfred Mhanda aka Dzinashé Machingura's *Dzino: Memories of a Freedom Fighter* (2011). Novels like Alexander Kanengoni's *Echoing silences* (1997), Charles Samupindi's *Pawns* (1992), Shimmer Chinodya's *Harvest of Thorns* (1989) and Valentine Mazorodze's *Silent journey from the East* (1989) add to texts that problematize linear war narratives.

The above texts reveal the contradictions within the liberation struggle and after and provide evidence of people's varying benefits and disadvantages that characterize Zimbabwe's liberation struggle. The texts question the celebratory and laudatory narratives given to certain moments, events and people and in the process, debunk power. They re/visit and re/narrate certain moments, events and people. This invites a discursive narrative of the nation and problematized belonging and citizenship, thereby opening up envisioned possibilities. This renders a critique of a conceptualization of ideology as something enabling fixed power and undying positionalities.

As Laura Miller (1997) argues, at the level of domination, there are multiple spaces and hierarchies that unsettle power. Scholars such as Mark Bevir (1999), James Scott (1990), Joao Ferdinandes (1988) and Stuart Hall (1985) concur that there is always agency in human experiences. To them, this agency unsettles and shifts power, thereby giving it temporality and continuous uneasiness, rather than a smooth continuum as suggested by Althusser's role of ideological state apparatus. Implied are the limitations that dominant groups or dominant narratives have in retrieving, creating, transporting or giving meaning to the stories of origin. The kind of nationalism that is created therefore is one that is contestable, slippery and frequently revised. In Zimbabwe, dominant discourses have located origin stories in what Ranger (2004) calls patriotic history, which he argues is envisioned to assert the continuity of the Zimbabwean revolutionary tradition along ZANU-PF ideologies. Founded on the nation's struggle history, which Robert Mugabe (2001) says is 'necessary to retell,' *chimurenga* becomes a definer for someone's place in the nation.

The numerous utterances related to nation-state presidency by security generals such as Vitalis Zvinavashe,<sup>35</sup> Paradzai Zimhondi<sup>36</sup> and Augustine Chihuri,<sup>37</sup> as well as some high profile individuals in Zimbabwe like Didymus Mutasa, chronicles the connections between one's *chimurenga* history and one's national position.<sup>38</sup> Thus *chimurenga*, although it may be put in phases, is often taken as singular, a single war or war over an almost single issue. It is taken as a war that is unitary, uniform and uncomplicated as testified by Robert Mugabe's disqualification of Tsvangirai's presidential ambitions. Speaking at a ZANU-PF Congress that was covered by the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), Mugabe rhetorically asks; "*Tsvangison...aah ko anoziva nezvehondo yechimurenga kana kuti akatotiza. Akatiza aenda kunze. Kutya hondo asati atrenwa. Pfocho!!*" [Tsvangison...what would he know about the war? He ran away...fled the country, scared of fighting without even being trained].<sup>39</sup>

To Mugabe, Tsvangirai's absence in the actual combat disqualifies him as someone worthy. He did not get any military training and did not fight in the liberation struggle and therefore, has not been 'initiated' into the masculine space which is impermeable to cowards. In this sense, Tsvangirai cannot be traced to pre-colonial heroes like Murenga Sororenzou and is unable to fulfill the prophecies of Nehanda, a pre-colonial legendary figure representing colonial resistance in nationalist narratives. He is denied the struggle history and a sense of Zimbabwean origin and this is emphasized by the Anglicization of his surname to *Tsvangison*, as an attempt to take away his indigeneity and discard him into the white troop besieging Zimbabwe.

The Anglicization of African names is a way of showing a person's twisted and confused identity, a sarcastic gesture and a way of dis/association and de/linking someone. I draw on the sarcastic nature of Ayi Kwei Armah's characters such as Koomson, Fentengson, Blankson and Binful in his novel, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1988). The text deals with, among other issues, the mimicry of Western life by Africans in 'post-colonial' Ghana. In Tsvangirai's case, this perception is further

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<sup>35</sup> Vitalis Zvinavashe was Commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces from 1994 to 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Paradzai Zimhondi is the current Commissioner General of Prisons.

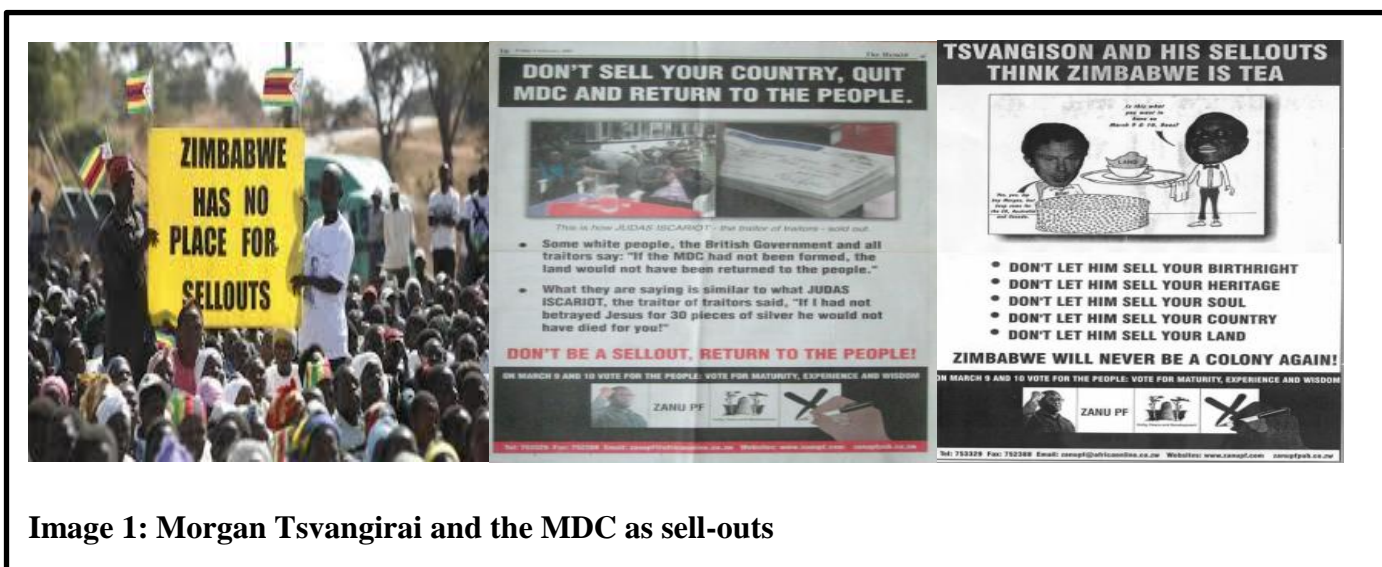
<sup>37</sup> Augustine Chihuri is the current Commissioner General of the Zimbabwe Republic Police.

<sup>38</sup> Documentary, Fighting for Rights. Zimbabwe before the 2002 Election Pre-poll, DANIDA, 2002.

<sup>39</sup> Documentary, Fighting for Rights. Zimbabwe before the 2002 Election Pre-poll, DANIDA, 2002.

buttressed when he is castigated as an imperialist ‘puppet,’ ‘stooge’ and ‘tea boy.’<sup>40</sup> As the image below reflect, Morgan Tsvangirai, the MDC party leader is regarded as a sell-out, alienated from Zimbabweanness, and an agent of recolonization and therefore a misfit in Zimbabwe and its political and nationalizing projects.

Interestingly as shown above, in the Third Chimurenga era, the indigene and the citizen acquire new meanings as they are defined in racial, ideological and political terms. One may think of a situation where race is defined in terms of political affiliation rather than in biological terms, colour and origins. Those opposed to the state and ZANU-PF are de-racialized as black and in a sense, flung into ‘the white race.’ For example, the MDC is not seen as indigenous, but as a ‘white’ party and its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, as said earlier, is Anglicized to ‘*Tsvangison.*’ In South Africa, the introduction of seemingly radical and populist policies in the South African political space by the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party has led it to be labelled a ZANU-PF machinery seeking after a ZANU-PF agenda as the EFF policies are associated with ZANU-PF policies. The Democratic Alliance (DA) party has also been labelled a front for the racist whites on a number of occasions, with Hallen Zille specifically being ‘Europeanized.’



**Image 1: Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC as sell-outs**

Moreover, Tsvangirai’s first name, Morgan is sometimes re-invented to ‘*Moregay*’ so as to associate him with homosexuality, which Mugabe terms unAfrican and ‘a white

<sup>40</sup> See Image 1

man's sickness,' never to be tolerated on Zimbabwean land. *Moregay* offers a seductive onomatopoeic quality that 'attracts' the 'gay West.' This 'visualizes' Tsvangirai as a 'point' of Western 'penetration' and therefore disqualifying him 'to father' the Zimbabwean nation. The image of 'homosexual' is therefore a message about his 'selling out' – of 'offering' his anus, his 'feminine' body for 'penetration' by 'gay' Britain and its allies in their bid to re/conquer Zimbabwe. Thus, the 'selling out' indicated by the above image 'performs' the feminization of Tsvangirai as he is associated with 'prostituting' the nation as well as 'performing' a gendered role by serving the nation to the West.

Referring to the impermissible existence of 'national-pollutants,' the then Zimbabwean Minister of Education, Sports and Culture, Aneus Chigwedere, in a 1995 parliamentary debate, makes a turn to the body-politics of nationalism as he articulates:

What is at issue in cultural terms is a conflict of interest between the whole body, which is the Zimbabwean community and part of that body represented by individuals or groups of individuals... When your finger starts festering and becomes a danger to the body you cut it off. The homosexuals are the festering finger (Scott Long, 2005:88).

In the context of the above, the association of homosexuality with the West and the 'colouring' of Tsvangirai as homosexual is a strong psychological manoeuvre that situates him as unZimbabwean, unAfrican and 'unnatural.' The double identity that Mugabe and ZANU-PF give Morgan Tsvangirai as homosexual and the West's puppet seems to plagiarize the Fanonesque analogy that homosexuality among Blacks was fundamentally an echo of black men's debasement by white men (Frantz Fanon, 1967). Thus homosexuality is taken as symbolic of a neo-colonial presence while heterosexuality signifies Zimbabwean nationhood, belonging and sovereign citizenship.

To Mugabe, Morgan Tsvangirai's identity as a Western front with an agenda to destroy the Zimbabwean nation and nationhood is graphically symbolized by an agenda to accept homosexuality, an 'abnormality.' Mugabe's homophobia theatrically conflates masculinity with virility, respectability, 'Zimbabweanness' and the right to power. According to Mugabe, if homosexuality was to be allowed, the land would be aggrieved and never forgive the people. Articulated here is a polarized discourse that

naturalizes and cements positions in addition to resembling colonial state-craft. While in colonial Zimbabwe, heterosexuality was upheld and associated with a pure defence of white superiority, in post-2000 Zimbabwe, the homosexual is anyone who opposes the nation, ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe. The feminine-sexualized Tsvangirai's 'marriage' with for example masculinized 'gay Britain' attest to the female-male or woman-man relations of domination, subsequently prospecting a Zimbabwe 'sexually' dominated by the 'gay West.' This materializes as preposterous in a context where sexual domination is analogous to all other forms of domination – political, social, cultural and economic.

In some adverts on Zimbabwe Television (Ztv), Tsvangirai's face was shown undergoing some reversible transformation where it metamorphosed into that of Blair, then to that of Bush and thus categorizing him as white. The highly 'theatrical' display of deviant bodies is very pronounced here. The presence of a 'white' body is seen as Western defilement of the racially pure 'black' land and body. The transformation from his natural 'blackness' to an artificial 'whiteness' seems not only to give Tsvangirai a 'race,' but also to locate him within a particular gender. Skin lightening creams and a number of facials are associated more with femininity than with masculinity. Tsvangirai's change of colour is taken as reminiscent of the erosion of his masculinity, and his re/location into an 'unstable' and feminine gender ready to be 'penetrated' by white masculinity. Arguably, the feminized and sexualized Morgan Tsvangirai or the MDC can easily be 'polluted' and are rendered unfit to lead Zimbabwe. It is interesting to note that in addition to the racialization, feminization and connoted instability of Tsvangirai, there is also a corresponding discourse on the instability and impurity of women national subjects especially if they are seen as traitors of the ruling party. The depiction of individuals or groups who voice against the 'norm' as 'national threats' has also befallen the feminist scholar and activist, Patricia McFadden in the mid-1990s.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> In her article on the connection between feminism and sexual pleasure, Mc Fadden says "...the Zimbabwean government issued me with a deportation order, in which accusations of my betrayal of "Zimbabwean culture" and "family values" featured prominently. I was identified as a lesbian (and therefore automatically vilified), on the grounds that I wrote about women's rights to choose their intimate partners, and because I defended the rights of gays and lesbians (see [http://agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/fa\\_2\\_standpoint\\_1.pdf](http://agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/fa_2_standpoint_1.pdf)).

Many performances of belonging and citizenship in Zimbabwe have been synthesized into a persuasive script that naturalizes and normalizes a patriarchal model of Zimbabwean belonging and citizenship. Lene Bull-Christiansen (2007) alludes to this gendering of the nation as a Machiavellian power preservation ploy, as well as part of ZANU-PF's culture of the spectacular. The President with macho elegance is presented as and seen to be embodied as the 'father of the nation' and also as the head in a re/invented Zimbabwean Africanist traditionalist logic. With nations presented as females and the states as males, Mugabe as head of state is sometimes given the position of husband of the Zimbabwean nation, giving him the natural 'right' to crush any adversary who endeavors to 'steal/rape' his wife; that is, the nation's people.

Mugabe is also presented and presents himself as the father and husband of the Zimbabwean nation in the Western inclined oedipal sense where he is seen to deal with covetous and disloyal sons who seek to dispossess him of his rights to his feminized people. This perhaps explains why some prominent ZANU-PF figures almost compulsively pronounce their allegiance to Mugabe from time to time using the language of filial loyalty. Concluding his letters to Mugabe, Obert Mpofu<sup>42</sup> says "Your Ever Obedient Son, Obert Mpofu,"<sup>43</sup> making one recall the biblical Jesus's loyalty statements to God. Offered here is a power-based relationship between a deity and a vassal. A similar quest to be Mugabe's son is made by Webster Shamu,<sup>44</sup> who publicly posits:

Kudai ndaibvunzwa kudenga kuti pawakuenda pasi apa saka woenda kupi? Chatunga ndaimutangira ini. Ndaiita nhamba hwani kuFirst House kwaPresident Mugabe kuti ndo kwandinoda ikoko.<sup>45</sup>

[If I had been given the option to choose my father before birth, where would I have gone? I would have been Chatunga's elder brother. I would have been number one at First House, at President Mugabe's house. I would have said that's where I want to be born].

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<sup>42</sup> Obert Mpofu is currently the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Development. Previously, he was Minister of Mines and Mining Development.

<sup>43</sup> <http://mg.co.za/article/2014-06-20-loyalty-is-all-mugabe-demands>.

<sup>44</sup> Webster Shamu *aka* Charles Ndlovu was Minister of Publicity and Information and ZANU-PF Political Commissar from 2009 to 2013. In 2014, he was associated with the Joice Mujuru faction and lost favour with ZANU-PF.

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-10971-Minister+wanted+Mugabe+for+father/news.aspx>.



The above utterances by Shamu conjures Lucifer Mandengu, a character in Charles Mungoshi's *Waiting for the Rain* who sees his birth in Manyene, an 'impoverished' rural village as a biological and geographical error. Lucifer says:

I am Lucifer Mandengu. I was born here against my will. I should have been born elsewhere – of some other parents...I have been born here but is that a crime? That is only a biological and geographical error (Mungoshi, 1981:162). It is evident that Shamu belongs to the Lucifer generation which is fed up with its own identity and has a great quest for an 'alien' identity which makes them worship what they presume to be their heroes and help construct personality cults. Shamu's case presents some form of dramatic irony as prior to being known as Webster Shamu, he was known by his liberation war name, Charles Ndlovu (even well after independence from colonial rule).

Oliver Nyambi (2012) argues that the prevailing tendency to conceive of the nation figuratively as an extended family with a permanent power hierarchy elucidates the problems confronting any efforts to delineate the post-2000 Zimbabwean nation in Anderson's definition of a nation as an imagined community. Nyambi posits that the Zimbabwean 'family' is strictly patriarchal, consisting of "fathers" (the ruling elite/the state) overseeing the rest of the family members (women, some men and children) – that is, the nation. The national family, then, is a community under surveillance and the community that is available and observable, not imagined. This is echoed by Annah-Leena Toivanen (2010) who says that post-independent Zimbabwe is problematic in the sense that while women carry the emblematic meaning of the violated motherland, Zimbabwean agency is defined and directed as distinctively masculine. This also applies to the Zimbabwean freedom fight where the war is represented mainly as a struggle by real men, 'sons of the soil.'

The above speaks to what has been raised by Desiree Lewis and Patricia McFadden (n.d) that:

Where communities perceive themselves to be under threat, ascendant manhood can come to signify the reclaimed pride of the entire community. Consequently, men and women can become complicit in venerating men's preeminence in the household and the wider community. This explains the unwavering popular support for leaders whose actual contribution to nationalist or communal struggles may be far outweighed by evidence of their

abuse of power. The symbolic meaning of their authority may be perceived as being far more important than their unjust or exploitative uses of power.<sup>46</sup> Although the above analysis has been made with reference to the South African situation with reference to Zuma's power, the same can be said about Zimbabwe's prominent leaders such as Mugabe and even Tsvangirai.

Itai Muwati, Gift Mheta & Zifikile Gambahaya (2010) indicate that there is a recurring patriarchal model of nationalist history and therefore, of Zimbabwean nationalism and citizenship. This is expressed as *amadoda sibili/varume chaivo* (real men-meaning there are men who are not men) and 'Father Zimbabwe' with no corresponding 'Mother Zimbabwe' to proffer a matriarchal model. This gives sense to how some critiques allude to questions of Joice Mujuru as 'father of the nation' (Bull-Christiansen, 2007) when she gets the post of Vice President. Her heroism is measured by how she has managed to join and do service to the masculine world. Although it has been recently contested, it should be noted that Joice Mujuru has been constructed as a fearless warrior famed for shooting down an enemy helicopter during the liberation struggle. Her recently alleged corruption reveals the masculine 'primitive accumulation' and her public utterances that wives should be subservient to their husbands<sup>47</sup> are reflective of the re/invented African traditional ethos. Problematic is that her conceptualization of womanhood, motherhood and fecundity rests within the imbalanced patriarchal world tainted in the politics of dependence rather than on autonomy. I argue that Joice Mujuru's rise and fall should be contextualized in the premises of masculine nationalism. To Muwati, Mheta & Gambahaya, the *amadoda sibili* model is premised on respectable, responsible and flawless males. I add here that the standard of behavior defined here does not refer merely to biological males, but to manliness in a behavioral gendered sense. Muwati, Mheta & Gambahaya (2010) however reflect how women historians in works such as *Women of resilience: The voices of women ex-combatants*, provide counter narratives which show patriarchs who have very little respect for tradition and culture, and violate the women and children they claim to protect.

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<sup>46</sup> Desiree Lewis and Patricia McFadden's unpublished work, 'Beyond National Belonging: Re-envisioning Citizenship and Justice in South Africa.'

<sup>47</sup> See Christiansen (2007).

It is evident that the most important role of the male rulers is projected as defending the country by any means possible as what has been historically done by earlier generations and in past wars. This narrative of justified defense asserts that men should be able to shed blood for the sake of the nation. In the song *Muri Musoja* (You are a Soldier/Warrior),<sup>48</sup> Mbare Chimurenga Choir sings of pools of blood (...*pane dhamu reropa revana*) at various places like Chimoio, Nyadzonya and Mboroma. It may be said therefore that the dead are taken as live texts where meaning is mediated at different time spaces. Those who sacrifice their lives for the country are connected to Nehanda, a symbol of colonial resistance and the margin for un/belonging. After the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2006 Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) nationwide strike, the then Secretary General, Wellington Chibebe claimed that during his beatings, the police proclaimed “This country came after a lot of people had died and for it to change hands, people had to die first.”<sup>49</sup> This means that loss of blood or war is the kind of ‘ritual’ needed for the change of governance, thereby making Zimbabwe a nation founded on blood.

The Third Chimurenga era also witnessed the re-surfacing of the song:

*Zimbabwe ndeye ropa baba*  
*Zimbabwe ndeye ropa ramadzibaba*

[Zimbabwe came by blood-sacrifices, father; Zimbabwe came by the blood-sacrifices of fathers].

The song deliberates not only that the nation has emerged as a result of the blood that was shed during the struggle, but also states that the blood that was shed was that of fathers. This denies femininity an active space in the liberation struggle and therefore makes matriarchal characteristics of nationalism and citizenship unthinkable. This denial of patriarchy and women’s agency is ironic in view of women’s well recorded participation in the liberation struggle, both in combat and at home. A similar trend is reflected in a number of Shona novels and narrated experiences of the Second Chimurenga where terms referring to freedom fighters such as, *vana mukoma* (brothers), *vakomana* (boys) and *macomrades* (comrades) more often than not, refer to men. What comes to mind with regard to this is *Hondo YeChimurenga* by the Literature Bureau (1984), which is a collection of twelve narrations of the Second

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<sup>48</sup> See Song 1, Appendix A.

<sup>49</sup> Documentary, A Patriotic Force, Solidarity Peace Trust, 2006.

Chimurenga by different authors. Here almost all the stories refer to freedom fighters coming into the villages or in the bush as *vakomana* or *vana mukoma*. Again, in almost all the stories the characters performing the role of freedom fighters are males. The fact that all the contributors won in the *Hondo-Impi Experiences* competitions marks the standards of their narrations as expected and acceptable, reflecting how the naturalization of Zimbabwe's liberation war fighters as 'male' is deeply entrenched.

Novels and plays such as *Nguo Dzouswa* (1985), *Kuridza Ngoma nedemo* (1983) by Aaron Chiundura-Moyo also exemplify many others that portray Second Chimurenga liberation fighters as male and therefore, war as a boys' club. This positioning is cemented by the naming of heroes in Robert Mugabe's *Inside the Third Chimurenga* (2001). The third part of the text is titled, 'Remembering Our Fallen Heroes.' In this part, Chapter 17: 'Remembering our Fallen Heroes of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Chimurenga,' is followed by chapters for individual male heroes, without any for the heroines. The chapters are as follows; Chapter 18: 'Cde Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo, An Illustrious Son of the Soil' and Chapter 19: 'A Nation in Morning' focuses on Joshua Nkomo. Following are; Chapter 20: 'The Story of a Gallant Fighter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chimurenga, Cde Border Gezi'; Chapter 21: 'Cde Moven Mahachi,<sup>50</sup> A Gallant Hero'; Chapter 22: 'The Story of a Dedicated War Veteran, Cde Chenjerayi Hunzvi' and then the last chapter of the book, Chapter 23: 'Our Achievements' gives a conclusion to the text. Thus the only female hero who is named is Nehanda, whose interventions in the colonial set up are more spiritual than anything else. The rest of the heroes that Mugabe names and acknowledges are male. The given male narratives of heroism are based on the speeches made at their burials at the National Heroes Acre and are linked to the narratives of *chimurenga*.

Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011) argues that the ideology of Chimurenga situated the birth of the Zimbabwean nation within a series of nationalist revolutions. This adds to Mazarire's interesting critique of the projection of Zimbabwean history as the rise and fall of empires which undermines the vital contributions of marginal settlements in shaping Zimbabwean history. A wide range of texts in Zimbabwe therefore indicate that Zimbabwean nationalism and the contestations around it draw richly on origin

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<sup>50</sup> Moven Mahachi was Minister of Defence died in 2001 in a car accident.

stories. To that extent, they are usually turned to as mobilizing tools and ‘terrains’ of attachment by different groups during certain moments, and are also used as benchmarks for those who belong as well as the unbelonging.

However, the limitation of fighting to those who ‘crossed the border’ or were in combat after some military training is contested. Dread Reckless and Sister Fearless’s song ‘*Hondo*’ (War)<sup>51</sup> brings in the important roles played by non-combatant individuals and groups such as the cooking which was done by women. Dread Reckless and Sister Fearless go on to critique the sexual abuse of women and the assassination of fellow fighters as a result of power struggles during the liberation struggle. Raymond Majongwe, in his song ‘*What is a Patriot?*’<sup>52</sup> also highlights the narrow and senseless definitions of fighting, patriotism, sellouts and citizenship that are contained in ZANU-PF narratives of the nation and used to benefit certain people at the expense of others.

This narrow and senseless definition of fighting, patriotism, sellouts and citizenship is chronicled by the contradictions behind the characterization of Joshua Nkomo, Zimbabwe’s former Vice President. The name Chibwe chitedza (the stone that is slippery) that is coined on him may be used in relation to his well-known evasion of arrests by the colonial white regime, reflecting his invulnerability to the instruments of white rule. Such a notion may implicate the spiritual influence of Murenga, a Shona legendary figure said to have possessed and administered war medicine that made Ndebele and Shona fighters untouchable and immune to the colonialists’ weaponry.<sup>53</sup> However, the meaning of the name Chibwe Chitedza was reordered in the 1980s during the *Gukurahundi* period<sup>54</sup> when stories circulated that Nkomo had ‘escaped’ the country putting on a petticoat, thus disguised as a woman. This kind of

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<sup>51</sup> See Song 2, Appendix A.

<sup>52</sup> See Song 3, Appendix A [Song transcribed from a Documentary, A Patriotic Force, Solidarity Peace Trust, 2006].

<sup>53</sup> This finds space in nationalist narratives that blur Nkomo’s Kalanga identity and his Matebeleland origin or Kalanga and Ndebele ethnicities in a bid to capture Ndebele-Shona unity during both the First and Second Chimurenga. Brian Raftopoulos (1999) posits that Ranger’s analysis of the 1896-97 uprisings became dominant as it provided rich grounds from which to select usable moments and symbols, as well as heroes and heroines whom nationalists would emulate and make available during the struggle as well as in the post-colonial future.

<sup>54</sup> Gukurahundi refers to the killing of suspected ‘dissidents’ in the Midlands and Matebeleland provinces by Zimbabwe National Army’s Fifth Brigade from 1983 to 1987, when the Government of National Unity was formed.

reconfiguration of the name reordered the world, moving Nkomo from an acknowledged nationalist to a feminized coward. It is important to reflect on some sentiments by one of Zimbabwe's early nationalists Ndabalingi Sithole featuring as Obed Mutezo, who says:

...clearly, the honourable choice is the life of hardship, even death, than to go down in the annals of a nation as a collaborator or indeed a woman. The choice before me is simple; am I a man or a woman? (Sithole, 1970: 144-145).

Thus the depiction of Nkomo did not only mean that he was a collaborator and a coward, characteristics that are pathologized as feminine in patriarchal societies. It also communicated a strong message that in patriarchal polities, the feminine should be silenced, have no voice and remain silent in order for the masculine such as the voice of Robert Mugabe to be heard. This presentation of Nkomo may be seen as symptomatic of the Zimbabwean ruling regime's chief ingenuity of nationalizing state lies through gendered discourses. This is done to construct a particularly resonant shared collective memory that glorifies patriarchal masculinity and takes femininity as suspect and a possible 'pollutant' of the nation. Nkomo's feminization and depiction as a coward gradually changes after 1987 and reaches its climax in nationalist narratives post-humously when he is formally depicted as 'Father Zimbabwe.'

### **Glories and Re/presentations**

Most of the symbols and stories of origin reveal and glorify the military skills and nation-building abilities of pre-colonial figures that are obviously, even though sometimes implicitly masculinized (Ifi Amadiume, 1997, Lewis, 2002). Zimbabwe's dominant narratives of the nation that sing-praises Murenga Sororenzou, Chaminuka, Mzilikazi, Lobengula and others fall into the same colonial and imperial trap that befall John Omer-Cooper (1966) who uses Zulu masculinities to parallel Western masculinities. Lewis (2002:270) argues that such a representation is a reproduction of Eurocentric notions of progress which adds to "...a gendered production which selectively celebrates particular subjects and processes with the aim of asserting masculinized African agency in the face of colonialist myth-making" that dismisses African heroes and 'civilized' structures. Thus Lewis diverges from Omer-Cooper's historical analysis which proves African glories using autochthons and military glory.

She aligns herself with Amadiume (1997), and Cheikh Diop (1987), who see such historicization of Africa as a Western figment and universalization of civilizations since in pre-colonial African societies, militarized, masculinized and autochthons were not central. I find it prudent to bring in Mazarire (2009) who argues that the study of peoples, nations and civilizations should not be sacrificed for a monolithic study of grand kingdoms such as the Great Zimbabwe, Mutapa or Rozvi state as it simplifies notions of struggle.

To problematize an attempt to limit the meaning, space and time of struggle to a single and linear version, Mtisi, Nyakudya and Barnes articulate:

It is important to avoid a narrow definition of ‘fighting’ the struggle, which can privilege particular groups to the exclusion of the majority. Many ordinary people did not cross the border or ‘take up arms’ but made significant sacrifices for the liberation of the country (Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, 2009:155).

There is need to critique and complicate the dominant definitions, the interests of those who define and the purposes these definitions serve. This reconstitutes *chimurenga* as configured by different lived experiences across time and space, constitutions which themselves are temporal because of the shifting spaces, times, experiences and meanings. It is in this context that it is important to problematize *chimurenga* as the backdrop of Robert Mugabe’s ‘militancy’ and his idolization as the ‘maker’ and ‘defender’ of Zimbabweanness.

Numerous bottom-up versions have redefined *chimurenga* as an active and fluid struggle for human rights and justice and autonomy hence removing it from its ‘boxed’ definitions that are narrowed to masculinized and militarized political struggles. This project of redefining *chimurenga* is characteristic of among others, literary works such as Yvonne Vera’s *Nehanda*, music and the everyday lives of ordinary people. As I shall show in the following chapter, the land question has been central to the dominant stories of origin and citizenship and belonging. However, it also offers a very different kind of fluid space for narrations of origin and consequently ways of thinking about struggle as well as belonging and citizenship.

## CHAPTER 3: THE 'LAND QUESTION' AND ITS SYMBOLIC MEANINGS

### Re/Scaping Zimbabwe: 'Motherland,' 'Son of the Soil' and 'Sovereignty.'



Image 2: ZANU-PF Election Posters linked to Land

Dawa Norbu (1992) posits that colonialism evoked most of the nationalist movements witnessed in the Third World. In Southern Africa in particular, land dispossession became a very strong marker of colonialism, since apart from losing a vital means of production, Africans became vulnerable to labor exploitation as they were proletarianized. Francis Chitsike (2003) has a similar view as he argues that the issue of land ownership between blacks and colonialists was one of the prime issues that led to liberation struggles across colonized territories. The fact that in Southern Africa, land fell under the control of colonial powers meant that even the people formerly controlling the land became controlled subjects. The anti-colonial stance therefore needed to take land as an emotive and mobilizing instrument. Rather than being understood as a geographical and economic space, land became a powerful symbol of mobilization on which African nationalism began to be written. Talking about the significance of land to the nation, Robert Mugabe (2001) narrates how it has given rise to different *chimurenga* phases of struggle. In his book which was used as a primary text during the NYS training, he makes it clear that everyone should take inspiration from *chimurenga* heroes and heroines.

Thus, Zimbabwean nation/alism is understood as contained in land-centric struggles/wars known by a Shona word as '*zvimurenga*' as well as their narrations. The emotions generated around land ownership and rights formed group identity and



loyalty as well as the identity of the other. The colonialist came to be imagined as the other who had to be resisted through nationalist movements. This imaging of the colonized's otherness made possible the primary goals of anti-colonial nationalist movements. These movements rejected the colonizer and established or re-establishment a 'sovereign' nation-state with control over the territory and people within its national boundaries. Nevertheless, the struggles have not been smooth and their narrativization has been a complex and continuous process.

Although I agree with Michael Neocosmos (2004) that African nationalism was not equal to agrarian revolts since there were other factors including loss of sovereignty and human rights issues, it is vital to realize that in dominant Zimbabwean narratives, land is not limited to agrarian spaces. Instead, land constitutes and is constituted in discourses of national sovereignty, (Our Land, Our Sovereignty), humanness (*ivhu kuvanhu, vanhu kuvhu*/land to the people, people to the land), identity (*mwana wevhu*/child of the soil), making it a space constituted by and constituting *zvimurenga* (struggles). The centrality of land both as a tangible and intangible space and attachment to it reflects the extent to which it has been a political aesthetic.

While the previous chapter has dealt with origin stories of the nation, this chapter deals specifically with the land question and its symbolic meanings. Land, in its physical and symbolic sense, has, to a great extent, been galvanized in order to create national consciousness and consequently, craft nationalism in Southern Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular.

In Zimbabwe, land manifests as a major politico-aesthetic rather than simply something economic or a means to a just and equal society. The complexities of the land question in Zimbabwe have enabled converging and diverging versions of land narratives and their meanings. Although the state has, through nationalist narratives, disseminated certain meanings of land at specific moments, other narratives have emerged. In most cases, these narratives answer to certain individual and group identities that are often sidelined. These narratives around land have been linked to struggles, which have given way to gendered discourses of nationalism which have given women bodies the very character that land has or is imagined to have. Thus land, despite it being a physical space, has garnered a significant deal of mythical

significance and political aesthetics. The tagging of Zimbabwe with familial notions, the evocation of the land takeovers and the violence associated with it as Third Chimurenga, give moral justification to ZANU-PF. As in war situations and family defense, ‘enemies’ have to be vanquished. Land narratives have been worked together with narratives of origin and stories of struggle to become ‘fields’ on which discourses of citizenship and belonging explode. The soil or land manifests as an active agent of identity. *Kutoravhu/kutora minda* (taking back soil/land) symbolically entails a re/negotiation of one’s place and one’s identity. To be with the soil is ‘equal’ to having an identity and belongingness. The soil/land is an identity, it is Zimbabwe. As echoed in Last ‘Tambaoga’ Chianga’s lyrics ‘*Ivhu iri ramunoona ndiro rinonzi Zimbabwe*’ (This land that you see is what is called Zimbabwe).<sup>55</sup>

In Zimbabwe, state narratives have linked the land issue to Robert Mugabe’s rule and ZANU-PF hegemony.<sup>56</sup> Thus, it has largely been in sync with stories of origins and struggle associated with Mugabe and ZANU-PF’s political dominance. The incessant presence of the land issue and its ‘synonyms’ (Mugabe’s rule and ZANU-PF dominance) has provided a persuasive discourse and mythology for a party encountering strong political competition. Through the media and popular culture, ZANU-PF has harnessed land to stories of origin and narratives of struggle, and consequently to ambiances of citizenship and belonging. The land issue has featured prominently in elections and election manifestos. In fact, all the ZANU-PF election manifestos from 2000 had an aspect of land. The presence of the land issue in the media and popular culture is significant as these avenues relate to people’s everyday lives and therefore, are crucial voices of dominant narratives. However, the chapter also raises the ways in which land has been a focus for voices from below or oppositions to state and Mugabe-driven discourses.

Besides it being a physical resource, land has offered a symbolic language to talk about ownership, belonging and identities, hence its association with the bodies of women and the excessive popularization of *mwana wevhu* (son of the soil/land) claims. This makes land enter an intangible space where it is de/linked with certain ‘realities’ and calls. Mugabe (2001:93) has this to say about land:

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<sup>55</sup> See Song 4, Appendix A.

<sup>56</sup> See Image 2.

We knew and still know that land was the prime goal for King Lobengula as he fought the British encroachment in 1893; we knew and still know that land was the principal grievance for our heroes of the First Chimurenga, led by Nehanda and Kaguvu; we knew and still know it to be the fundamental premise of the Second Chimurenga and thus a principal definer of the succeeding new Nation State of Zimbabwe. Indeed we know it to be the core issue and imperative of the Third Chimurenga which you and me are fighting, and for which we continue to make such enormous sacrifices.

As seen above, Mugabe draws a genealogy of land struggles that starts from the colonial encounter to the now availed Third Chimurenga. This follows Sam Moyo's (2000) sentiments that the direction on land reform was and continues to be mystified by playing to the gallery of historical land injustice. In this sense, the land issue rests and is entwined within issues of socio-economy, power, justice and empowerment as well as issues of injustice, disempowerment and alienation (Kenneth Gora, 2008; Chitsike, 2003; Paul Gundani, 2002; Patrick Bond & Masimba Manyanya, 2002). However, this is mostly done in terms of colonizer-colonized relations and rarely across colonized relations. Referring to Zimbabwe, Chitsike (2003) and others correctly point out that land is central to the socio, economic and political lives of the majority of Zimbabweans. Land is therefore seen as a space for struggle – it is an incredibly charged political signifier.

In Zimbabwe, tracing the primacy of land also involves considering a configuration of the female body politic in the founding of nations. There are also connections about the symbolism of production and reproduction that are represented by land and women. This is especially significant in a context where women are the majority who work the land and make it productive. In Zimbabwe, dominant treatises on land and nationalism move around the feminized figure of Nehanda in a way that links femininity to land. For most African Zimbabweans, land was understood as tangled and mingled within their cosmology of cultural and traditional norms and values. Thus, before colonialism and land dispossession, land was regarded as an integral part of the African Zimbabwean culture. It was taken as the basis for sustenance of the entirety of one's life, source of food and wealth, associated with security, identity and dignity and a link between ancestors and gods, as evidenced by the Africans' intrinsic affection with their place of origin (Gora, 2008; Gundani, 2002). For Gundani (2002), the inalienable nature of land and its people could be evidenced by the fact that the

umbilical cords and those who passed on were buried on the land, libation was performed on the land and snuff was smeared on the land during traditional prayers. This rendered land as an inimitable sanctified space of colossal religious, social, economic, political and psychological value. Connections to land are therefore powerfully figured in terms of gendered, biological reproduction and the fecundity of the female body.

In the light of this strongly gendered imagining, contests over land could not be reduced to a struggle over a physical place, but a special almost mystical affiliation to a space that inhibits history, identity and livelihood. Gora (2008) and Ikubolajeh Logan (2007) agree that Zimbabwe's liberation war was primarily a war for land. Therefore, in the minds of most Zimbabweans, independence and control over land are inextricably linked. In many ways, alienating land is an 'act' of alienating Africans from their roots. Mugabe (2001) has a chapter focusing on the land question. The chapter ends with the slogan, "Forward with our independence! Forward with land reforms! The struggle continues! *Aluta continua!*"

Gundani (2002) points to the central nature of the land issue as validated by the numerous wars that were fought to alienate the 'native' population, to protect land from colonial grabbing or recover lost land from settlers. This marks the land issue as principal to the socio-economic, political and cultural history and current Zimbabwean situation. This, however, does not take away the fact that the narrations of these wars and the character of the socio-economic, political and cultural facets are troubled. For example, Chitsike (2003), although stating the political and economic nature of land, admits that in Zimbabwe, ZANU-PF took advantage of its relevance and significance, claimed it as its own and used it for political expediency in the face of vibrant opposition. He explains that after evidence of diminishing support provided by the constitutional referendum defeat and:

With parliamentary elections coming on later the same year the ruling party found itself increasingly under pressure to deliver on the land question. It was now twenty years since gaining independence and there was not much to show in terms of access to land for the majority of Zimbabweans residing in the communal areas. The ruling party adopted as its slogan "Land is the economy and the economy is land" (Chitsike, 2003:9).

The above is also echoed by Brian Raftopoulos (2002) who images how opposition to ZANU-PF was seen as similar to opposing land reform fast-tracking, which in turn was equated to being in support of Zimbabwe's enemies and their agenda to destroy its national sovereignty. The post-2000 land reform appears to signify and reveal obscene abuses of historical issues by ZANU-PF as it tried to hide its post-independence failures. Jens Andersson's (1999) study of land disputes in the Murambinda area of Save Communal Land in Zimbabwe may be reflective of the political nature of struggles over land even at a national level. He argues:

...land conflicts do not necessarily focus on the productive value of land for land has not only an economic meaning, but combines multiple meanings. Therefore, land disputes cannot be reduced to economically motivated struggles... (Andersson, 1999:555).

Andersson (1999) shows that the litigation process in land disputes revolved around a struggle of diverging interpretations of historical events and circumstances. The conflicting parties referenced historical events such as past settlement patterns and the colonial conservationist land policies, without any consensus or clearly showing how the events occurred. He concludes that conflicts over land were mainly a political struggle among village heads as they negotiated their village powers. It is also possible to locate the Zimbabwean land struggles after 2000 in power politics. Raftopoulos (2002) argues that the use of the land issue to reclaim political support for ZANU-PF in the context of the breakdown of law and order ultimately shattered the link between the land question and the quest for a just, rights-based post-colonial society.

The relationship between land ownership and power calls for a more careful deconstructive critique and analysis of land narratives in Zimbabwe. The post-2000 politics around land in Zimbabwe which emphasizes on individual land ownership and control is an elite construction and akin to an evolving political economy based on capitalist appropriation rather than a turn to the 'pre-colonial' politics. Equally important for the purposes of this study, the ways in which land has been configured in discourses of belonging and citizenship work powerfully to confirm feudalistic and patriarchal constructs of tradition and authenticity.

In Zimbabwe and most African countries, patriarchal fabrications characterizing a lot of the so-called traditional claims and reconstructions by those in power locate land as a key marker of identity and this is why Zimbabweans are referred to as *vana vevhu* (children of the soil) (Horace Campbell, 2003; Gundani, 2002). This suggests that ‘Zimbabweans,’ defined in racial terms, can only gain a complete identity by being in touch with their land and so, vindicating the government’s efforts. In this logic, land marks statehood and to an extent nationhood, and its absence signifies the absence of both.<sup>57</sup>

Interestingly, in the above case, race is not defined simply in the biological or physical sense, but according to Ladelle McWhorter (2004), in the Foucauldian sense where it is seen as a social construct. This is done to distinguish between those who have to live (thus those supporting the state and ZANU-PF) and those who have to die (like all those opposed to the state and ZANU-PF). Following this logic, the MDC is figured as the alien appendage of ‘white race’ and an enemy of reform which, because of its ‘polluting’ nature, needs to be ‘flushed’ out from the land.<sup>58</sup> The powerful symbols of biological origin and natural families are closely associated with land and distinguish between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ in the Zimbabwe national project. This brings to attention a ZANU-PF campaign poster which appeared in *The Herald* which praised Mugabe and linked the opposition party, MDC to the then British Prime Minister Tony Blair who is reduced to a toilet.<sup>59</sup>



**Image 3: Flush Them Down: The Only Good Blair is a Toilet**

<sup>57</sup> Palestinians are stateless because they continuously lose land to Israel.

<sup>58</sup> See Image 3.

<sup>59</sup> See Image 3.

The above campaign message is linked to one of Tambaoga's jingles called 'Agreement'<sup>60</sup> where he sings:

*Musatinetse musatishupe maBhirishiti*

*The Bhuleya that I know is a toilet*

[Do not irritate us, do not give us trouble you 'Brishit,' the Blair that I know is a toilet (pit latrine)].

The message here, which attempt to bank on nasal sensory effects for feelings of disassociation, is that voting for ZANU-PF, thus voting against the MDC is seen as voting against the whites who are symbolized by Tony Blair who is a blair toilet (a pit-latrine common in rural areas). Linked to a well-known rural landscape, Tony Blair, the then Prime minister of Britain sensualizes a depository and sum-total of the 'shit' that the West is. The 'blair' is a space for filth that is obviously full of stench. It is located at the margins of the African rural homestead where normal human beings do not play around. It is a place where only the 'filthy,' such as Tsvangirai, are deposited after being extracted from the process of national clean-up.

However, the disposal of filth into the rural pit-latrine is coated with the imagery of the 'urban' flush toilet for an 'acoustic' sensual. The flush toilet is instrumentalized as a technology of violence to the rather 'soft' disposal of filth characterizing 'blair' toilets. Thus 'flushing' the MDC down is violently forcing them into a blair toilet, where they will not be seen or recognized. It is throwing them into a filth bank, registering them as politically irrelevant. The flushing 'performance' also means removing them from the land and driving them to the margins, to their 'kith and kin,' to Blair and the British. To ZANU-PF, this would bring back the 'purity' and freshness of the land which has been endangered by those who 'prostitute' with foreigners. In the case where land is politicized, a political defeat means that one's claims to land rights are taken away also. More importantly, it means that one is alienated from all entitlements associated with belonging to the land, including citizenship and belonging within naturalized 'families.' The above points to naturalized ideas about those who legitimately belong and those who do not belong to the 'biologically' pure national body.

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<sup>60</sup> See Song 5, Appendix A.

An Althusserian analysis would argue that the struggle history and the symbolism of land as enshrined in *vana vevhu* is a platform for giving and receiving normalized thoughts, actions and practices that create subjects of the nation who are distinct from the rest. Subjects are hailed or called upon to re-establish links with the soil/land for them to participate in the nation, something that is regarded as a necessity and their duty. This is well-articulated in the jingle, *Rambai Makashinga* (Remain Resolute)<sup>61</sup> by Tambaoga. Some of the most revealing lyrics include:

*Ivhu nderako iri mwana wevhu*

*Kohwa pakuru Zimbabwe*

[This is your land child of the soil, produce in abundance Zimbabwe]

The singer identifies the land with ‘Zimbabwe’ and in a manner that motivates *vana vevhu* (reducing land politics to a familial trope) to take claim for it and make it productive. Considering how *ivhu* (soil/land) can be interchanged with *nyika* (nation), one notices how discourses of re/production conjure heterosexuality as Zimbabwean national identity. Tambaoga also links land re/possession to sovereignty and therefore marks the land issue as a national question through the lyrics:

*Shingirirai, gadzirirai, ivhu rava redu, zvino tava kutonga, Zimbabwe ndeyedu*

[Be resolute, get prepared, the land now belongs to us and we are now in control, Zimbabwe is ours].

Thus, land ownership is associated with sensual feelings of power in a way that parallels how women are controlled and ‘owned’ through a patriarchal hold that enables an ordered life. This obviously shows how ‘land’ is feminized. In precolonial societies, although it was vital to the economies, land ownership did not necessarily translate into masculinized but into non-gendered autonomy since it was divorced from masculine and patriarchal appropriation (Ifi Amadiume, 1997, Cheikh Diop, 1987). Amadiume and Diop agree that pre-colonial rulers did not base their rule and authority on patriarchal or gendered land ownership and did not privatize land.<sup>62</sup> Thus, when Zimbabwean authorities talk of the return to the land, they are actually making the entrenched coloniality naked rather than re/engaging with a Zimbabwean ‘past.’

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<sup>61</sup> See Song 6, Appendix A.

<sup>62</sup> Such a situation is characteristic of ‘Western’ post-Enlightenment structures and Western-centric discourses of gendered authority.



In Zimbabwe, state narratives do not restrict the land issue to a Zimbabwean agenda, but an African agenda. This is because the narratives invite other southern African countries to take possession of their land as has been done in Zimbabwe. The message is explicitly articulated in Andy Brown's song, '*Uya uone kutapira kunoita kurima*'<sup>63</sup> which is part of the popular *Chave Chimurenga* commercials around reform which frequented the state media in the post-2000 period. The message generated in the following commercial extract is that positive land reform in Zimbabwe can be contrasted with its absence in South Africa, with Mozambique being warned about its failure because of the promise of land to farmers dispossessed of their land in Zimbabwe. Part of the commercial goes:

*South Africa uchakamirirei kurima mumunda mako?*  
*Mozambique usambofa wakatengesa ivhu rako*  
*Namibia kutapira kunoita kurima*  
*Zambia kutapira kunoita manhanga*  
*Africa usafa wakanyengerwa*

[South Africa why are you waiting to farm your land, Mozambique never sell/betray your soil/land, Namibia, farming is sweet, Zambia pumpkins are sweet.]

In Zimbabwe, land is viewed through the politics of reproduction. Since land is feminized, giving it away is as impermissible as giving away the nation's women to foreigners. Other countries like Namibia and Zambia are also invited to witness the benefits of land ownership from the Zimbabwean case since Zimbabwe is now a land of 'plenty' as reflected by the lyrics:

*Tapi tapi tapi tapi*  
*Kubva kumabvazuva kumadokero*  
*Hapana kana chatinoshaya*

[Sweety, sweety, sweety sweety, from the North to the West, there is nothing we do not have]

Other Africans are instructed to have trust in their land, get united and shun the negative theories postulated about Zimbabwe's land reform. The idea of 'development' in relation to land affiliation is given emotional meaning in the slogan, 'Our Land is our Prosperity.' It is worth pointing how the land's link to prosperity makes one recall how women are hailed as central to nation-craft and how women's fecundity is glorified. The message of abundance and prosperity are obviously distorted considering how the majority could not 'taste' the sweetness because of

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<sup>63</sup> See Song 7, Appendix A.

continuous years of poor rains, lack of agricultural inputs and the record breaking hyperinflation that had grounded almost everything in Zimbabwe. But the emotional underpinnings of this slogan give it a distinctive logic, one that often does appeal to many of Zimbabwe's citizens.

The timing of land repossession in Zimbabwe should not be simply seen as the repossession of lost ancestral lands. Jocelyn Alexander (2003) sees land as an outstanding political resource for the state and for different actors at different geographic levels. Around this resource, ideas of legitimacy and territoriality are always at interplay. This politically based approach has a purchase on abundant symbolisms in myths and origin stories so as to gain affect and 'truth' yet re-telling a naturalized order of power, gender and sexuality that propels belonging and citizenship. Beyond the materiality of land, deeper and affective symbolic discourses ensuring regime survival are capitalized.

As indicated in the emotional meanings associated with feminized land in nationalist narratives, the issue of 'attachment' to ancestral land characterizing land reform discourses has been crucial. Among others, Tendai Murisa (2007) and Prosper Matondi (2005) reflect how chiefs and traditional leaders were at the fore-front in areas such as Chiweshe communal area in Mazowe district, in mobilising themselves into groups such as Hwata and Mbari clans for land occupations in the context of repossession of ancestral lands especially due to land shortages. In this case, their struggle was that of restitution, on the basis that they had been removed from such farms in the past, making land possession or its lack of, a writing of the past. Bevlyne Sithole, Bruce Campbell, Dale Doré & Witness Kozanayi (2003) argue that in the post-2000 land occupations, the theory of attachment to ancestral lands is nothing but a dominant state narrative. This is because many of those people who have occupied land remain attached to their previous communal areas. Also, many of them did not abandon their communal homes but instead, left some family members to continue taking care of them. But seeing the notion of attachment purely as evidence of state manipulation means failing to acknowledge how powerfully land figures in Zimbabweans' understandings of their belonging and social identification. This is revealed in *Ancestors*, where Chenjerai Hove (1996) chronicles the emptiness and

alienating nature of the new farm lands through the character Mucha, hence exposing the discourses of attachment that are associated with land re/possession.

In post 2000 land occupations, not all who went for resettlement did so because they wanted to practice farming. Others took advantage of the opportunity to acquire land that they would later on sell to those who genuinely needed it or they would plunder the resources on the land. In a context where land and femininity are associated, this plundering is telling of how femininity and women are preyed on in patriarchal nationalisms. Phides Mazhawidza & Jeanette Manjengwa (2011) posit that some new occupants resorted to the sale of firewood, gold panning and poaching of wildlife instead of farming. In a context where land is feminized such plunder provides images of the 'plundering' of female bodies.

It is also important to focus on the land issue in respect of the actual bodies of women, and the representation of women. This is very crucial considering the highly patriarchal society that Zimbabwe is. It is probable that where issues around land become central, issues around gender are also laid bare. Irene Mahamba (1984) in *Woman in Struggle* expresses that during the war, freeing the land or nation was also freeing all the oppressed including women who were oppressed by both the colonial system and some cultural elements.

The post-2000 land reform programme appears to have made the situation of women land access even worse owing to its political nature and the Western model of land ownership that it took after. Considering the association of women bodies with land, one is persuaded to think of their control and 'privatization' under patriarchal power to such an extent that from the 2000s, more and more calls to control land are linked to more and more calls to control certain gendered and sexualized bodies. The control of land is associated with plenty and therefore land emerges as a revered entity that is equated to the bodies of women, which are associated with respect, taboos, fecundity and the growth of nations.

Thus, capitalist appropriation of land resembles the appropriation of women by the Western focused African patriarchy, reflecting the extent to which African women in general and Zimbabwean women in particular have been erased of autonomy and

colonized by patriarchy. When one talks of land in nationalist terms, one has a feel and passes on feelings of naturalized gender and sexual discourses, thus making patriarchal based relations ordained. Through the narrator's father, Hove's *Ancestors* (1996) interestingly reveals a patriarchal hold on the land, which ironically is aided by the Western culture (as symbolised by Western Agricultural interventions) and its resemblance to the father's macho-hold on the family.

It is important to underline that in former settler societies, Zimbabwe in particular, issues around land, especially those that are pro-state, have given rise to an overt pristine past that is free of 'foreign' impurities. This pastness is seen as the foundation for a new nation. The 'newness' of nationalism in the new millennium Zimbabwe has largely been fashioned around the charged significance of land ownership, with land ownership being an emphatically colonial capitalist manifestation. It is contradictory that although the spiritual significance and 'past' attachments to land are constantly invoked, by and large, land has taken on colonial tags related to 'private ownership.' Thus, in many ways land has been located within a charged discursive context and the rhetoric and claims around it have provided the language with which to talk of securities, resistances and wars as well as the material and immaterial ground where these are played out. The discursive context has also provided symbolic resources for defining the self and morality.

### **After the Litmus Test: Tightening the Leash and Loosening the Grip**

A number of events and developments from the start of 2000 testify to how official discourses in Zimbabwe have been enforcing nationalism. Zimbabwean nationalism has been marked as a cocoon that wards off division, imperial domination and pervasive Western immorality. It has also been conceptualized as a stepping-stone for the country's development. Moreover, the ZANU-PF government has emphasized that people maintain and preserve what is termed 'their culture,' 'nationhood' and 'identity' (Amy Tsanga, 2004; Bertha Chiroro, 1995). Interesting is that this thrust for nationhood bellies Eurocentric models and therefore produces colonial constructs, hence an antithesis of the nation-state's claimed inward looking philosophy. The terms 'culture' 'nationhood' and 'identity' have been perceived as homogeneous, authentic, originary, clear and positive for everyone named as a citizen. This is

regardless of overwhelming evidence that the idea of ‘nation’ is very recent and part of the colonial package.

The above sentiments do not also take into cognizance that culture and identity are dynamic and prone to displacement, and that what is generally regarded as Zimbabwe’s cultural identity is a concoction of Western and African patriarchal hegemonies rather than anything representative of a ‘purely’ African or Zimbabwean culture. Dissenting voices have gained labels as enemies and outsiders and the government has been able to rationalize its being and has been very firm and vicious towards perceived enemies and outsiders. This is evident in Mugabe’s public pronouncements that the police have the right to arrest and beat up those seen as militating against the state.<sup>64</sup> The heavy armourment and readiness to quash dissenting voices is exemplified in events of national consolidation such as the occasion of the ‘Save Zimbabwe Campaign’ prayer meeting of 11 March 2007 where leaders of competing political parties and civic societies were arrested and ruthlessly assaulted. At this event, Gift Tandare (One of the participants in the Save Zimbabwe Campaign and arguably an MDC member) was shot and killed by security forces and mourners at his funeral were randomly shot at. It is crucial to read the above as state messages of readiness to control and discipline citizens and a display of state power meant for citizens’ sensual uptake. After the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2007 incident, Mugabe firmly asserts “We don’t want people to start, now provoking us into a situation where we would have to deal them...deal with them in a manner which they would regret.”<sup>65</sup> The above vindicates Oliver Phillips (1997) who argues that in contrast with a post-apartheid South Africa that institutes the accommodation of difference and an open, heterogeneous society in the form of a rainbow nation, Zimbabwe is imaged as a homogeneous community whose existence is threatened by diversity and disunity.

The arrival of the MDC into Zimbabwe’s political arena marked a serious turning point with regard to the relations between the state and its subjects (Lloyd Sachikonye, 2011). The situation provided a fertile ground for the assertion and re-assertion of both aggressive and persuasive nationalism by the state. According to

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<sup>64</sup> Documentary, A Criminal State, Solidarity Peace Trust, March, 2007.

<sup>65</sup> Documentary, A Criminal State, Solidarity Peace Trust, March, 2007.

Raftopoulos (2003), beginning with ZANU-PF's defeat in the 2000 constitutional referendum, the era also saw violent farm takeovers, unprecedented inflation, economic collapse, industrial closures, and rampant unemployment *inter-alia*. This caused further discontentment on a people who had already been impoverished through a plethora of unfavorable economic policies, corruption and general neglect. It is this robust discontent that largely became a litmus test of ZANU-PF's political dominance since the advent of Zimbabwe's independence from settler rule. On the one hand, a number of opposition parties and civic organizations have interpreted Zimbabwe's dire situation as a reflection of ZANU-PF's dismal failure in governance. On the other, the ZANU-PF party and its loyalists implicate some punishment orchestrated by Britain and its allies on the ZANU-PF led government for its stance on economic reforms and rejection of imperial subjugation.

More importantly, this period has witnessed increased pro-state machinations and discourses on nationalism as ZANU-PF fights tooth and nail for political survival as it faces the MDC, its greatest challenge since independence. ZANU-PF has labeled the MDC an imperial instrument. Mugabe rhetorically questions "*Saka tosapota MDC muine ruzivo rwekuti MDC yakarongwa nemabhunu, nemaSelous Scouts, maRhodesians, vasingade kuti vanzi maZimbabweans vachibatsirwa nemaBritish kukanganisa matongerwo enyika?*" [How can we support the MDC when you know that the MDC was formed by Boers, Selous Scouts and Rhodesians who do not want to be called Zimbabweans? They are aided by the British to disrupt the politics of our people].<sup>66</sup> Mugabe's use of terms such as '*mabhunu*,' '*maSelous Scouts*,' '*maRhodesians*' and '*nemaBritish*' is well calculated. The terms are charged with affective displeasures that make the past a present whose harshness can be felt, smelt, heard, tasted and seen. The purpose is to transport the present into the past war zone where the above terms are derogatory and used to curse enemies and where one 'experiences' the enemy's tormenting presence. The objective of such a recall of the past is to re-establish territorial politics and reconnect with origin stories and narratives of struggle and thereby motivating ZANU-PF's relevance.

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<sup>66</sup> Documentary, Fighting for Rights. Zimbabwe before the 2002 Election Pre-poll, DANIDA, 2002.

*Inter-alia*, in this period, the media has been increasingly hegemonic. Moreover, security organs have become highly partisan as evidenced in 2002 when security chiefs led by General Vitalis Zvinvashe announced that they would not support and salute a president without liberation war credentials (Sachikonye, 2011). The service chiefs under General Constantine Chiwenga<sup>67</sup> repeated this in the run-up to the 2008 elections (Martin Rupiya, 2009). Added to this, there has been training for a semi-military brigade under the auspices of the NYS and the graduates are unleashed on the population to disseminate their acquired ‘patriotic’ knowledge and practices.

All of these instruments or technologies of new millennial nationalism have been highly masculinized and militarized. Interestingly, the NYS training manual titled “Inside the Third Chimurenga” was authored by Robert Mugabe. The text gives a ‘patriotic’ history of Zimbabwe, the progress that has been made, challenging moments and future aspirations. The text also names Zimbabwean heroes of the First Chimurenga, the Second Chimurenga as well as the heroes of the ‘Third Chimurenga’ and justifies the government’s land reform. The NYS graduates, largely male, have taken first employment preference in government-controlled institutions. While in these institutions, they pay back the favor by spreading nationalist dogma and mobilizing support for the so called authentic, liberationist and nationalist party, ZANU-PF. In addition, parallel workers, students and other organizations aligned to ZANU-PF mushroomed. Evident is the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU) and Zimbabwe Congress of Students Union (ZICOSU), which emerged to counter the ZCTU and the Zimbabwe National Student Union (ZINASU) respectively. More striking even, has been the role of security forces in civilian spheres. There was also the introduction of National Strategic Studies as a subject in technical and teachers’ colleges to foster ‘patriotic’ history. All this has been done in defense of the land.

Of particular interest also, is the structure of the war veterans’ organization and its close linkages with ZANU-PF and government, as well as to the security and military organs of the state. In the 2000 parliamentary elections, war veterans were reportedly

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<sup>67</sup> Constantine Chiwenga has been the General and Commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces from 2004. He is also the chairperson of the Joint Operations Command which comprises all security forces in Zimbabwe.

given Z\$20 million to campaign for ZANU-PF (Norma Kriger, 2003). Also, the President, Robert Mugabe, who is the Commander-in-Chief of the Zimbabwe Defense Forces (ZDF), is the patron of the Zimbabwe National War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) (Tapera Chitiyo & Martin Rupiya, 2005). They go on to argue that the link between war veterans and the army again lies in that senior army personnel are largely war veterans of the Second Chimurenga and are members of the ZANU-PF politburo, central committee and other structures. Besides, from 2001 war veterans have been made a reserve army of the state under the direct command of the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) structures (Rupiya, 2005). The war veterans' involvement is strategic and central to thinking through what land has meant and continues to mean in Zimbabwe. Their presence is important to the politics around land. They provide physical evidence of past and present struggles and have been instrumental in the *jambanja* (forceful) occupation of land in the 2000s. Narrating the story of the nation and of land from the point of view of those who had 'performed' in its becoming is crucial and the veterans' individual narrations are extensions of national birth. I argue that the war-veterans have been instrumental in producing attitudes that are intended by 'patriotic' history.

In this tirade of what James Muzondidya names 'grotesque nationalism' (Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni & James Muzondidya, 2011), the government has claimed to be safeguarding independence, sovereignty and national interests – seen to be achievable only through the repossession of land and then ensuring its security. Thus, 'nationalism' has been put at the center of everything, marginalizing and sacrificing the other multiple and diverse identities, narratives and struggles that Zimbabweans have. In this kind of nationalism, land and its symbolic meanings as enshrined in dominant discourses has emerged as one of the primary reference points and a means for justification. Muzondidya (2009) advances that the prerequisite and urgency to emasculate the organizations and support of the opposition largely influenced and controlled the politics of land from 2000 and a pivotal element of this process was state restructuring as noted above. This supports Alexander's (2005:152) argument that nationalism is "...about the establishment of a bureaucratic state able to discipline its citizens, both through technocratic prescription and state backed custom."



## **Hailing Subjects: Public Enactments of Reform and National Control**

As reflected earlier since the 2000s, the state has been calling for and instituting reform and national control through a total control of institutions and the economy. According to Logan (2007), the land issue was repackaged and resold as the core of Zimbabwean nationalism.<sup>68</sup> This meant that all institutions and policies had to be aligned to this core issue. To ensure this, there was need to rid institutions of all elements that militate against reform and put in place those that work towards ‘meaningful’ reforms. Parallel to the above developments and actual or direct processes, cultural texts around land re-surfaced to articulate Zimbabwean nationalism. These texts have been diverse and carrying a range of shifting meanings that either imbibe or subvert state narratives of the land question and Zimbabwean nationalism.

These texts and their circulation have been evident from the 2000s, with the measures that were directed towards land reform and control summed up as the ‘Third Chimurenga.’ Reflecting on the incessant presence of land related slogans Chitando (2002) brings forward the slogan:

*Ivhu* (land)  
*Kuvanhu* (To the people)  
*Kuvanhu* (To the people)  
*Ivhu* (land)

In this case, there is a forceful call that the land should be given to the people, here referred to as *vanhu*. It should be noted that in this context, *vanhu* (people) does not simply mean people in the conventional sense of humanness. Here, it refers to those who are regarded citizens in the context of the Third Chimurenga. This articulates the inseparable relationship or loyalty between land and the people and land and Zimbabwean citizenship. Those people without such a relationship with the land bear no claim to citizenship and therefore, do not belong to the Zimbabwean nation. It should be noted that this slogan has been used a lot during ZANU-PF campaigns, showing how *vanhu* (people) is re/defined in line with political affiliation. This kind of position, however, is countered in some circles. In their album, *Nharembozha*, at times the artists, who are sympathetic to the MDC sometimes feature putting on T-shirts inscribed, ‘*Handinete! 100% Zimbabwean. Angikhathali!*’ (I will never

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<sup>68</sup> This is buttressed in Robert Mugabe’s public speeches; see Mugabe (2001).

give/tire-up! 100% Zimbabwean. I will never give/tire-up!), expressing full Zimbabwean citizenship despite ZANU-PF denial and militantly indicating their determination to fight for a better life.

The ZANU-PF slogan above has also been appropriated in Christian circles. The land/*ivhu* has been replaced with heaven/*denga*. However, even here the meaning remains unstable. It may mean that the church has embraced ZANU-PF's land reform by equating land to heaven, meaning that the land is very important and that owning land ensures happiness and a life free of suffering for citizens. A different meaning nonetheless, would be that churches are refusing ZANU-PF's idea that sets what is material as supreme and instead, urging people to work towards heavenly happiness instead of earthly possessions such as land. In this logic, the church's position is that Zimbabwean citizenship and belonging is not as important as being a member in heaven.

The 2000s also saw the emergence of the slogan 'Zimbabwe will never be a colony again.'<sup>69</sup> Implied is that the national body shall not be 'penetrated' by foreigners. Maurice Vambe (2006) argues that such slogans became the guiding ideological discourse to alienate those Zimbabweans who fail to admit the threats posed by the former colonialists to the territorial integrity of Zimbabwe. However, Vambe (2006:266) disputes that Zimbabwe will never be a colony again and advances that literary works such as Solomon Mutswairo's *Feso*, Raymond Choto's *Vavariro* and David Mutasa's *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* "...in some ways confirm that 'Zimbabwe can be a colony again,' but this time of the nationalist elites who have grabbed most of the productive land." Vambe brings to attention a wealth of literature on the land question that is present in some Shona novels. He argues that although this literature advocates land redistribution to benefit the black majority as promised during mobilizations and the war, it also glares upon land appropriation and booty by those in powerful positions. To Vambe, land is used both as a political signifier and a physical space where violence is performed.

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<sup>69</sup> See Image 1 and 2.

This slogan, however, is sometimes contested or twisted in a number of spheres. Paul Madzore’s song ‘*Gumbazvose*’ (One who takes everything)<sup>70</sup> reflects the plight of the poor as new ‘colonialists’ in the name of ZANU-PF amass wealth for self-aggrandizement. To do this, they use the language of reform and indigenization. This kind of view resists the temptation to think of colonizers only from the insider/outsider distinctions. Madzore argues that there are colonizers within the messianically propelled nationalist party. This is supported by the track, ‘*Mitsetse*’ (Ques) which is on the same album. The song features video footages taken at a number of rallies. One of the footages shows a poster reading ‘Mbare will never be ZANU-PF,’<sup>71</sup> again collapsing ZANU-PF’s above slogan. The promise made is that Mbare, one of Harare’s oldest suburbs will not succumb to ZANU-PF machinations. There is a way in which other parties see ZANU-PF as having colonialist mentality and practices that forestall people’s freedom. There are therefore resistances from other spheres, against ZANU-PF’s colonialist dominance.



**Image 4: ‘Mbare Will Never Be ZANU-PF’**

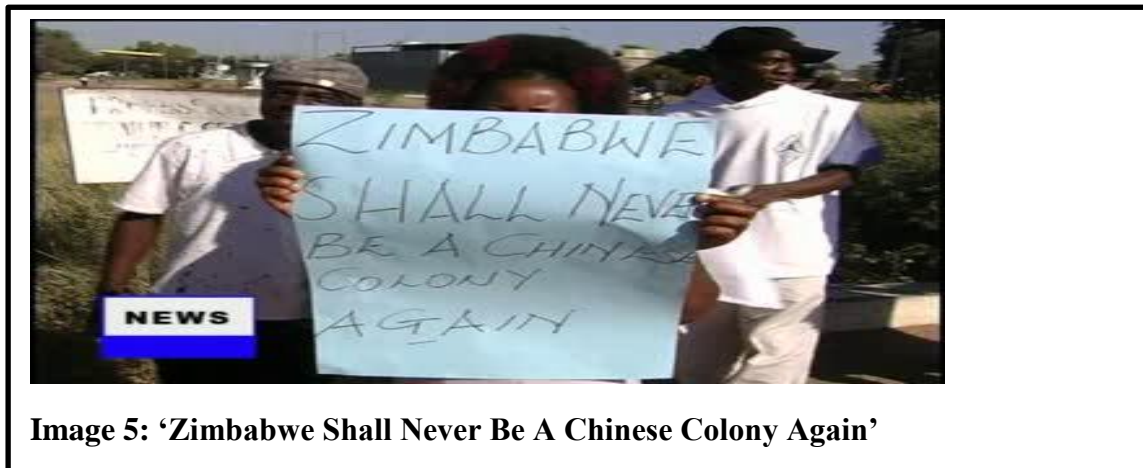
Another poster which appears on the song ‘*VeZANU*’ (ZANU-PF Stewards) by Happison Mabika and Patience Takaona, is inscribed ‘Zimbabwe shall never be a Chinese colony again.’<sup>72</sup> This mocks ZANU-PF’s ‘Look East Policy’ that gives for example, the Chinese some kind of unchecked economic dominance in Zimbabwe. This kind of discourse offers some questioning on the definition of colonisers and imperialists that is directed only towards the British and opens up for new colonisers

<sup>70</sup> See Song 8, Appendix A, watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzaw0PmSLVw>.

<sup>71</sup> Image 4 [A screen shot from the song ‘*Mitsetse*’ by Solomon Madzore], watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrvUbflaKQM>.

<sup>72</sup> See Image 5 [A screen shot from the song ‘*VeZANU*’ by Happison Mabika and Patience Takaona *aka* Dread Reckless and Sister Fearless].

who are also amassing national resources and causing impoverishment on the people. The above modifications of slogans shows how the state's instruments of repression and confinement are turned against the state itself, attesting to the subversive ways that people deal with state ideology. Revealed here is that in the midst of repression passed through the media and popular culture, germinates interesting and forceful voices of resistance and subversion. Thus audiences have the capacity to read and refine given texts to suit their changing and lived experiences.



**Image 5: 'Zimbabwe Shall Never Be A Chinese Colony Again'**

In qualifying an understanding of the use and effects of slogans, it is important to acknowledge that what people say or do in public may not be an expression of what they say or do in their private spaces. Instead, it may simply be the performance of a 'script' that has already been written and is expected by the dominant. Partaking in the slogan therefore, might be a way of fooling ZANU-PF into believing that they are loyal rather than being an actual echo of loyalty. James Scott (1990, 1987) argues that the public script that both the dominated and the dominant groups perform in the presence of one another is different from the text that each produces in the absence of the other. This is because the presence of each part has an influence on the performativity since each part is conscious of both itself and of the other. The meanings of the above public pronouncements and displays of national loyalty may not necessarily be reflective of interpellated subjects. Instead, they could reflect a form of 'trickster' politics, which involves doing the expected in order to evade any suspicion of the subversion that they put in motion in the absence of the public eye of the dominant.

To substantiate the above, I draw on Kelly Askew's (2002) narrative on the politics of performance in Tanzania. Upon approaching a roadblock, passengers aboard a lorry travelling at night in an area under curfew spontaneously take on different roles in a funeral 'script' meant to outwit an extractive and disciplinarian state instrument. Askew's (2002) narrative of a performative act vividly explains the Zimbabwean context during the post-2000 crisis. Living in an environment characterized by scarcity, corruption and violence, the ordinary people came up with 'performative' acts to ensure survival. These included the use of empty coffins to obtain fuel and acting disabilities to jump long queues and get preferences to access basic commodities. In the case of Zimbabwe where certain acts/inactions may be regarded as politically wrong, people are conscious of issues about discipline and punishment. Similarly, in a situation where participation determines the distribution of resources, the participation of subjects might not be reflective of interpellated subjects, but a survival tactic benefiting the subjects while giving the dominion wrong perceptions.

In many ways, land ownership has been drawn in as an act of reform and national control. More strikingly, subjects' reaction to hailing has at times been misunderstood especially by failing to read 'public' texts and at times resistances have opened up even where subject control was thought to have been total. I argue that the identity of land as a political signifier and a space where violence is performed has been, to a great extent, 'acted' out through gendered and sexualized national bodies. Thus, the discourse around land 'performs' surveillance and discipline on the genders and sexualities of national bodies.

### **Femininity, Land and Nationalism**

In her provocative study of post-apartheid nation building in South Africa, Meg Samuelson (2007) discusses the 'remembering' of the South African past and the 'membering' of the post-apartheid nation through new myths, symbols and political structures. She explores how this is done through the 'disremembering' of historical women's experiences and at the expense of 'dismembering' their bodies in the construction of the modern South African nation. Thus the re/construction of the South African nation is done through twisting women's contributions and experiences. Samuelson examines the extent to which current representations of

women in post-apartheid South Africa subvert or reproduce the apartheid and colonial pasts.

Using the present figuring of the historical women like Krotoa-Eva, Nongqawuse and Sarah Bartmann, through ‘performances’ of the nation including literary works, Samuelson delves into the ways in which the South African past is tied to its present interests of nation/al construction. After re/crafting their identities and experiences, the afore-mentioned women are cast into idealized forms that symbolize the imagined national body (Samuelson, 2007).

Samuelson explores interesting ways in which Krotoa-Eva, a Khoisan woman interpreter is robbed of her ‘past’ voice and power, which manifested among others, through her linguistic abilities. She is then reproduced in terms of a gendered emphasis on her intermarriage. This has been done to biologically and nationally identify her as ‘rainbow Mother.’<sup>73</sup> Interesting also, is Samuelson’s exploration of the ‘sacrificial-redemptive’ narrative characterising the Xhosa prophet Nongqawuse and also, Sarah Bartmann’s burial which was an ‘emotive spectacle of nation building’ giving images of a mother’s return to the ‘family.’ For Samuelson, the above cases articulate how the South African nation building project domesticates women, especially black women by reproducing them as passive embodied subjects. This is done by an erasure of their complexities and experiences, the foundations of their agency, in favour of the domesticating identities positioning them as ‘wombs’ that give birth to citizens, bearers of redemption, unifiers and mothers that nurture the nation (Samuelson, 2007). Samuelson reflects the diverging re/presentations of historical women in both historical and literary texts. The fragmented stories destabilize the teleological nationalist narratives and works against the unitary narratives favoured by nationalist narratives (Samuelson, 2007).

The nationalist representation of the above figures is reflective of the gendered nature of national imaginaries and opens up the complex nature of the relationship between gendered symbolism and nationalism. This fits in well in a context where land has

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<sup>73</sup> This equates to attempts by the Zimbabwean state to domesticate Nehanda by emphasizing on her identity as *mbuya* (grandmother/nurture), her prophetic words *mapfupa angu achamuka* (my bones will rise) and the naming of a maternity ward at Parerenyatwa hospital ‘Mbuya Nehanda’ in order to foreground her in the spheres of care, home and reproduction.

been feminized. It is imperative to explore ways in which the bodies of women have been symbolised in relation to land. This has a long colonial legacy, but as Samuelson (2007), Desiree Lewis (2002) and others have shown, it is continued in liberationist and postcolonial nation-building and nationalist discourses. It is crucial here, to talk of the reproductive nature of the land as enshrined in the '*vana vevhu*' (children of the soil/land) concept that identifies those who are citizens. This gives sense to how lands and nations have been feminized. The point is that land is reproductive but also attractive to outsiders, yet very sacred to an extent that it needs to be guarded and protected at all costs. In a situation mediated by the ZANU-PF idea of 'Land to the People and People to the Land,' there will be '100% Total Control' which would ensure that 'Zimbabwe Will Never be a Colony Again,'<sup>74</sup> ensuring autonomy since 'Our Land is Our Sovereignty,'<sup>75</sup> leading to full belonging and citizen benefits because 'Our Land is Our Prosperity' since 'The Land is the Economy and the Economy is the Land,' making it imperative to mark land as reproductive. Implied is that there is no belonging and citizenship when people are alienated from the 'motherland,' at once a figure of reproduction, heterosexual penetration and nurturing.

Men and women are hailed differently as subjects in the body politic of nations. In Zimbabwe, men are basically hailed as 'sons of the soil.' This locates men in the politics of belonging since they are 'sons of...' and in stories of resistance since as sons, they are called upon to defend or protect where they come from. They are positioned in a masculine discourse and are supposed to perform masculine roles. On the other hand, the soil or land that gives birth to the sons is naturalized in the discourses of motherhood. The feminization of land and the depiction of the Zimbabwean nation as a female body characterize people's everyday language, literary works and even songs. In Zimbabwe, it is common to hear some women saying "...*uya murume anoda kurima mapurazi evamwe!!*" [That man likes farming other people's lands] when referring to men who are unashamed to seek sexual relationships from women who are already married. In this case, *mapurazi* (plaas) or land refers to women who already 'belong' to other men. Thus the character of land is stamped on to the feminine figure, which already has been characterized as pure, private, sacred, productive and needing protection. This means that land attains the

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<sup>74</sup> See Image 1 and 2.

<sup>75</sup> See Image 2.

same standard characteristics that are inscribed on women's bodies. Thus, the land or the nation should be pure, sacred, revered and protected. The land's production becomes positive if it is 'cultivated' only by those who rightly own it. This is why in the song '*Sendekera*' Tambaoga associates land repossession with plenty.<sup>76</sup> If the land is cultivated by 'aliens,' it becomes an invasion; similar to a sexual assault on another person's wife. Thus considering how the plough reaps through the soil during *kurima* (ploughing) and how seed is buried inside, *kurima* metaphorically shows how the penis goes through *mapurazi* (female bodies) in an act of symbolic territorial invasion.

In Patrick Chakaipa's Shona novel, *Pfumo Reropa* (1961) which is set in the pre-colonial era, despite evidencing the sexual commodification of women by patriarchy, Mambo Ndyire, also illustrates the depiction of land as woman. Reflecting his uncontrollable lust for women, the reigning king asserts "*Pane munhu ane munda kana gombo zvaro zvisiri zvangu muno munyika here? Ndiani ane simba rokundirambidza kurima pandinenge ndichida? Gombo iri ndarida ndinoririma chete ndione chinouya?* [Is there anyone who has a field or even virgin land that is not mine in this territory? Who has the power to stop me from ploughing anywhere I choose to? I have been attracted to this land, and I will plough it and await the consequences!!] (Chakaipa, 1961:1). The literary meaning is that the king is attracted to Shizha's wife, Munhamo and that he would make sure he satisfies his sexual appetite and also that all the women in the territory are his. Munhamo's body is viewed as one with Ndyire's possessed land.<sup>77</sup> Interesting is that the King has seen the woman while she is in the fields. This gives a visual imagery that sees the land as one with her.

In the eyes of the King, the land that Munhamo is standing on is an extension of her own being; hence the king likens the *gombo* to her. Lewis (2004) has also observed how Nehanda is presented as an extension of her physical environment in Yvonne Vera's *Nehanda* (1993). However, unlike in *Pfumo Reropa* (1961) where the woman, Munhamo is a 'passive' victim of patriarchal excesses, in Vera's *Nehanda*, women's agency is not erased as "Nehanda possesses extraordinary powers and autonomy"

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<sup>76</sup> See Song 4, Appendix A.

<sup>77</sup> This reflects how the conquering of land or territories is symbolically mirrored by the conquering of the bodies of subject women. Such an issue is covered in Heike Schmidt's (1995) 'Penetrating' foreign lands: Contestations over African landscapes. A case study from Eastern Zimbabwe.



from her connectedness to land (Lewis, 2004:198). Noting the missionary influence on most of the early Zimbabwean novelists who attained missionary education, one may argue that the story line in the novel has been influenced by the biblical story of King David and Uriah's wife, Bathsheba.<sup>78</sup>

However, one does not fail to notice how language has been used to reveal the way land is symbolic of women bodies. *Gombo*, which is land that is already in ownership but has been left to rest, and therefore not currently being cultivated, is interchangeably used with woman. The occupation of 'claimed' land equates to a takeover of another man's wife. Such kinds of images achieve significant impacts when it comes to struggles over land. Indeed, the powerful King invades his targeted village, kills all the men and grabs the *gombo*.

The abuse of power and authority shown in *Pfumo Reropa* is also illustrated in Clive Malunga's song, *Sabhuku* (Headman).<sup>79</sup> Malunga displays powerful lyrics questioning obscene power as he says;

*Ndakarima munda wangu, ukadyiwa nemombe, mombe dzacho ndedzambo,  
ndichaita seiko? Tine mutemo mumusha uno, tine mitemo mumuusha uno.  
Mutemo wokutanga mambo haatongwe, mutemo wechipiri mambo haaripe,  
ndichaita Seiko?*

[I cultivated my land, it was invaded by cattle, and the cattle belong to the headman, what then is my recourse? We have rules in this village; the first one is that the headman is immune to prosecution, the second is that the headman is immune to compensatory justice, what options therefore do I have?]

In the song, Malunga seems to suggest that his only option is to fight the king since he can never get justice from the prevailing system. Noting how the land is likened to a woman, the excessiveness of the king becomes evident and they warrant a violent repossession.

The above cases do not necessarily take the struggles over land as an insider-outsider dichotomy, but in actual fact, as people's ordinary struggles as they experience life. It is in this sense that limiting nationalism to anti-colonial repertoires distorts people's actual struggles. It seems the above narratives on struggles over land are more

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<sup>78</sup> 2 Samuel 11 vs 1-17.

<sup>79</sup> See Song 9, Appendix A.

sensible if they are read as struggles for justice and fairness in any unjust and unfair system. The obsession with ploughing other people's land is a sign of greed, selfishness and lack of satisfaction. In *Pfumo Reropa*, there is evidence that greed, selfishness and despotic power and authority do not last forever and that even the most powerful can fall. Interestingly also, Clive Malunga's song reveals that struggles are not just about the insider and outsider, but are also fought within. The song reveals a society untouched by the *Ubuntu* philosophy<sup>80</sup> where people have power, where leaders observe what is expected to be observed by any other person, where human security and justice is for everyone. The common village dispute is used to mark national disputes where ordinary people are at the mercy of the powerful leaders who are immune to prosecution.

Zimbabwean laws and courts have been implicated in being ineffective to the excesses of the powerful leaders, yet very harsh on the people from the margins. In typical traditional systems where rulers were uncouth and their power untamed, dispossessions were common as the situation created room for subversion and resistance. Considering that land is feminized, and a social context pervaded by rumors of high ranking officials snatching women from the ordinary, Malunga's *munda* may be referring to the ladies who are snatched by the powerful from the less powerful. Land and women become similar in that they are feminized, they are embodied spaces for masculine penetration, they are regarded sacred, protected and contested spaces, and they are symbolic of masculine victory, honor and power.

### **Land and its Mythical Resonance**

There is no doubt that land is a crucial issue in Southern Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular since it is central to historical commonalities, identities, sovereignty, well-being, religion and world view. In Zimbabwe, land has been signified and linked to echoes of precolonial cosmology in ways that makes it affective and appealing to people. However, it is crucial to underline how such an important resource may be used as a divisible tool especially if it is creatively linked to selective historical moments that are in turn linked to a selected religious and

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<sup>80</sup> See Mogobe Ramose (1999).

spiritual cosmology. As has been shown earlier, land is believed to link the living dead (ancestors) and those living and thus making it a strong sacred space of enormous spiritual significance (Gundani, 2002) and therefore, its ownership arguably determines the proximity between ancestors and the living. The Zimbabwean state has banked on the religious cosmology that the control of land gives rest to all who died in the revolutions and brings a form of closure and ease to those who have suffered because of the revolutions. This kind of religious argument is strongly founded on the iconography of Nehanda and her prophetic words (Tabona Shoko, 2006; Ezra Chitando, 2005). Nehanda's prophecy that her bones would rise from the soil and defeat the whites needed to be fulfilled. In the 2000s, it has been emphasized that colonialism could only be dispensed of if the black majority get land ownership, and so the relevance of the Third Chimurenga.

In Zimbabwean particularly, and most African cultures, a person's last words before death are highly valued and have lasting effects on the memory of the living (Shoko, 2006). As such, what the person says before death has to be taken seriously and accorded meaning by the living, otherwise the living would experience the anger of the dead person's spirit. The myth about Nehanda's last words played a central role in the Second Chimurenga as they encouraged the colonized people to rise against the settler regime. Banking on the popularity of the prophecy, and knowing the 'magic' it had played in mobilizing support for the Second Chimurenga, ZANU-PF appropriated it in the 2000s. Its appropriation was meant to produce a continuum of *zvimurenga* (revolutions) to the extent that the controversial land reform was both inevitable and justified. It has been professed as influenced by ancestral spirits who would not rest until the land is restored to the black majority. In this sense, the front-runners of the Third Chimurenga have been seen as instruments in the hands of the ancestral powers of Nehanda, Kaguvi, Chaminuka and others.

Arguments are also raised that even those who lost their lives during the Second Chimurenga would not rest if what cost them their lives, which is land, was still in the hands of the whites. Fear and responsibility to the 'irrational' supernatural are crucial in the creation of disciplined subjects of the nation. According to Chitando (2005), ZANU-PF portrayed Mugabe as fulfilling ancestral demands. In this case, individual actions and bodies are seen as functional parts of larger actions and a larger national

body. This means that thoughts, actions, practices and functions contribute to the shaping of the larger processes at play, failure of which affects the whole well-being.

Chitando looks at how in the 2000s, the nationalists even appropriates the Christian religion to show the centrality of land. This has been largely due to the fact that Christianity has become a popular religion in the country. Chitando provides an interesting account of how the land issue is theologized by linking it to the Deuteronomic history, giving Mugabe a prophetic role that entails adhering to God's plans and leading his people to their promised land in a 'Mosaic' way while enduring suffering for the sake of his people in a way synonymous to 'The Suffering Servant.'<sup>81</sup> He also mentions the drawing of biblical verses on land, wealth and possession, turning of popular church songs to political songs and having a big wave of gospel musicians composing songs on hope, patience, accepting suffering and urging perseverance and hope for the future, all of which were based on certain biblical verses.

It can be argued that there has been a grand effort to locate Zimbabwe's land issue within the universal and popular narratives of land dispossession and suffering. This justifies any means possibly used to repossess land. This kind of discourse is sensible in Zimbabwe where Christian fundamentalism has established itself as the last straw of hope in a nation whose people have experienced prolonged suffering to the point of seeing no logic in 'formal' politics. ZANU-PF has capitalized on a religiously knowledgeable population to drive its politics. Drawing parallels between religion and ZANU-PF themes on land enables an intersection between ZANU-PF and religion. This marshals a spiritual sense that equates loyalty to ZANU-PF to loyalty to a deity. Zimbabwean politics is constructed on the polarities of righteous/evil, God/ungodly, heaven/hell, free citizens/slaves, ZANU-PF/Anti-ZANU-PF, powerfully influencing political allegiances.

Land has become the material, psycho-religious and social space of national reform and control moving from the colonial legacy to sovereignty. This is clearly articulated

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<sup>81</sup> See Isaiah 53.

in ZANU-PF campaign posters that associate land, sovereignty and ZANU-PF.<sup>82</sup> What is reflected is some kind of ‘holy trinity’ of the land, sovereignty and ZANU-PF. A ZANU-PF vote is seen as a defense and claim to land that ultimately installs national sovereignty. Both the Zimbabwean ancestral tradition and Christianity have provided theological foundations and justifications to land reform and defined it as a divine will that could not be avoided and meant to empower black people. Chitando claims that this has given Mugabe’s pronouncements on land reform a popular appeal.

Such popular appeal is evinced by the once prominent figure, Tony Gara’s<sup>83</sup> claims that Mugabe is ‘the other son of God’ (Chitando, 2005). This equates Mugabe to the biblical Jesus Christ who came to save humankind, but only through suffering and unjustifiable blame which nevertheless, failed to shake him. This locates the anti-Mugabe and anti-ZANU-PF campaigns as part of the tribulations and perils that ‘the son’ should experience and endure to the end so as to accomplish his mission. Similar utterances have also come from another prominent ZANU-PF figure, Emmerson Mnangagwa<sup>84</sup> who says, “I want to tell you that President Mugabe is Devine. He is our Moses from the bible who salvaged Israelites from captivity in Egypt.”<sup>85</sup> An equally divine eulogy has also come from the leader of the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ), Bishop Johanness Nyamwa Ndanga who declares, “Mugabe is our king and kings are not elected, they are installed by God.”<sup>86</sup> Praises on Mugabe have also been sung by Simon Khaya Moyo<sup>87</sup> and Absolom Sikhosana<sup>88</sup> who respectively say, “His Excellency you are a liberator of unparalleled audacity. You are a useful and amazing leader”<sup>89</sup> and “...we celebrate the birthday of the genuine conqueror of the British Empire.”<sup>90</sup> Mugabe also takes himself as one who continues to make huge sacrifices and suffer at the hands of the West and their

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<sup>82</sup> See Image 2.

<sup>83</sup> Tony Gara was the Harare mayor from 1995 to 1996.

<sup>84</sup> Emmerson Mnangagwa is one of Zimbabwe’s current vice presidents. He attained the position in 2014. He has held various influential positions in the government and in ZANU-PF.

<sup>85</sup> See <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/2013/07/mnangagwa-praise-worships-mugabe/>.

<sup>86</sup> See <http://nehandaradio.com/2013/10/07/top-8-mugabe-bootlickers-in-zimbabwe/>.

<sup>87</sup> Simon Khaya Moyo is the current ZANU-PF chairperson.

<sup>88</sup> Absolom Sikhosana was ZANU-PF secretary for youth for more than 15 with his age way above the 35 years limit for the position.

<sup>89</sup> See <http://nehandaradio.com/2013/10/07/top-8-mugabe-bootlickers-in-zimbabwe/>.

<sup>90</sup> See <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2014/02/28/mugabe-birthday-celebrations-show-opulence-praise-singing/>.

sympathizers because of his unwavering dedication to retrieve the land and save his people (Mugabe, 2001).

The jingle, ‘*Muri Musoja*’ (You are a Soldier/Warrior)<sup>91</sup> by Mbare Chimurenga Choir appropriates a poetic form and praise sings Mugabe as the only one who has supported land reform and offers unequivocal support to him for giving people the land that had cost a lot of lives during the struggle:

*VaMugabe, murimusoja,  
Musambotya,  
Ndimwi chete makagona kutsigira, kutorwa kweivhu,  
Saka isu vana veZimbabwe,  
Takakutsigirai,  
Ivhu rakafirwa nevana*

[Honorable Mugabe, fear not, you are the one and only who supported the repossession of land, the land that cost the lives of children, so we the children of Zimbabwe, are in full support for you].

Thus land is considered as very essential especially because some people have suffered for it. Mugabe is seen as a unique person, a gallant warrior who has stood up to address the land issue when others have faltered. In a way, this portrayal of Mugabe fulfills the doctrine of land repossession that characterizes the Second Chimurenga. President Robert Mugabe is therefore seen as masculine and one who protects the land and the nation in the same way that women are alleged to be protected by patriarchy.

Tambaoga, in the song, ‘*Agreement*’<sup>92</sup> utters:

*Patakavhota takasainirana agirimende  
Kuti mutungamiri weZimbabwe ndi Gabhuri*

[Our vote was a signed agreement that Zimbabwe is led by Gabriel]

The lyrics herald an ‘angelic’ nature of Mugabe’s leadership as there is a deliberate choice of his second name. The choice of Gabriel over Robert, his first name fits in well with attempts to give him a divine identity that links him with the head angel Gabriel, a biblical character bearing positive and important news as well as symbolizing the existence of God.<sup>93</sup> The use of this ‘spiritual-scape’ ‘authenticates’ Mugabe as chosen by a divine will, and locates his past, presence and future as a ‘spiritual journey’ which mortals cannot change. Mugabe’s land articulations on land

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<sup>91</sup> See Song 1, Appendix A.

<sup>92</sup> See Song 5, Appendix A.

<sup>93</sup> See Luke 1:19 and Luke 1:26-33.

have been rendered a symbolic manifestation of God's presence. How this is effective to the largely Christianized Zimbabwean population is self-telling. However, the very fact that Tambaoga brings in the vote as a mandate given by the people reflects his recognition of democratic means to power. This makes him divert from Mugabe and other high ranking officials who claim that the vote can only be recognized if people vote 'correctly.'

Without land in the hands of the black majority, it is argued that Zimbabwe would always have a moral debt to the ancestors and all those who have passed on in the name of the land. Richard Werbner (1995:116) considers a moral debt as "...a ritual debt offending the dead and God." On its campaign literature,<sup>94</sup> the land issue became ZANU-PF's trump card owing to its traditional religious significance. In his speech, on the return of part of the Zimbabwe bird carving, which was covered by *The Herald* on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2003 Mugabe says:

The Great Zimbabwe Birds are our nation's prized cultural treasures, a symbol of our nation whose meaning defies time and place. The return of the pedestal of this national symbol is, therefore, cause for celebration because it fits into our ongoing programme of national identity and restoration. Like our Land Reform Programme today's ceremony allows us to assert ownership over our national resources and treasures (Edward Matenga, 2011:161).

The same sentiments were echoed by Alois Mangwende, the then president of the Chiefs' Council who expressed gratitude that the return of the bird fragment coincided with land repossession allowing the bird to land on a freed space (Matenga, 2011). Matenga claims that Chief Jonathan Mangwende<sup>95</sup> links the return of the sacred bird fragment to the vindication of the bird's aggrieved spirit, which had been restless in foreign lands and had troubled its abductors until they surrendered it to its land. In this sense, Mangwende personifies the bird and reads its return as symbolic of ancestral support for Mugabe's land acquisition and national independence (Chitando, 2005). This is supported by the popular slogan, 'Forward with our Independence! Forward with Land Reform!' There is a physical, historical and spiritual connection between the 'flight' of the bird fragment from Germany and land reform that is drawn by the state and is negotiated through time and space. It would seem that the return of the bird portion to its land and its other half is symbolic of the return of the people to their land and also their ancestors. This is because land is taken to be the umbilical

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<sup>94</sup> See Image 1 and 2.

<sup>95</sup> Jonathan Mangwende was the Zimbabwe council of chiefs president from 1991 to 2005.

cord tying the living and the living dead, hence marking land reform as unavoidable and the only possible form of justice. In this context, Matenga points to the impact that heritage may exhibit on state politics and how state politics paradoxically affect the meanings and uses of that heritage in a way that shows the uses and abuses of history and heritage.

The *Chave Chimurenga* (It's now War time/The War/Revolution has taken off) advertisements or jingles which became frequent on both radio and television therefore have become summaries of performances of reform and national control in the post-2000. These commercials have been featuring state sponsored musicians such as Last 'Tambaoga' Chianga, Andy Brown and Tendai Masunda, aka 'Nonsikelelo.' Maxwell Sibanda (2004) posits that by 2004, there were nine advertisements related to reform which were produced and released under the series *Chave Chimurenga*. Namely, these are; *Chave Chimurenga* (Its now War time/The Revolution/War has taken off), *Kwedu kumachembere* (Our Traditional Wisdom), *Sisonke* (We are a United Force/We are Together), Our Future, *Siyalima* (We will Engage in Agriculture/Farming), *Mombe Mbiri nemadhongi mashanu* (Two Oxen and Five Donkeys), *Uya Uone Kutapira Kunoita Kurima* (Come and Witness how Exiting/Enjoyable/Beneficial Farming is), *Rambai Makashinga* (Remain Resilient), and *Sendekera Mwana Wevhu* (Hold on, Child of the Soil/Keep on Fighting/Struggling Child of the Soil). These advertisements were given excessive air play on both television and radio and presenters and disc jockeys played them during certain time intervals. For example, in 2003 *Rambai Makashinga*<sup>96</sup> was aired about 288 times a day on radio (8 640 times per month) and 72 times (2 160 times) on television (Sibanda, 2004).

Taking into cognizance that the themes of these jingles oscillate around issues of reform and national control, in a country where colonial structures and machinery still exists and in which the resources of the nation are owned and enjoyed by a few, one may argue that they achieved some degree of appeal to certain audiences at particular moments. This is because a significant number of the population still relies on radio and television for entertainment and information. In a situation where the air waves

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<sup>96</sup> See Song 6, Appendix A.



are largely monopolized and censored, the effects of the jingles have been significant. Since the jingles were worked between programs on Ztv programming, they took the nature of and served the functions of advertisements. In the context of their poetic nature and their positioning as traditionally persuasive discourses, the jingles have been very powerful and promoted, persuaded and emphasized 'patriotic' identities and loyalties to ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe. Whanda Wallace (1991: 239) acknowledges the effect of the jingles as he argues:

First, consider how difficult it can be to get a jingle out of your head when you have heard it several times. Whether or not you like the jingle is irrelevant; you just can't seem to stop humming it [...] Second, jingles seem to be easily recalled even if they have not been heard for years.

Thus there is a significant degree of attachment to state texts and state meanings of land that have been fostered by the use of jingles to narrate the subject of land in Zimbabwe. Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) places meaning-making within the context of the multitude of 'voices' or texts on the same subject in a way that plays around with attitudes, emotions and opinions. However, the fact that the jingles reached people experiencing the realities of life means that receptions of these texts have been complex, diverse and vulnerable to various alterations at different moments. In some ways, Wallace's (1991) effects of jingles overlook the audience's potential to vulgarize the jingles in ways that subvert initial meanings and 'perform' people's lived experiences.

Important to note is that in Zimbabwe, land is not something that became an issue in the 2000s. Land has always been a contentious issue as reflected by actual events such as 'invasions,' as well as through being a topical issue in music. Prior to 2000, a number of musicians had composed and performed songs expressing dismay over how ordinary people got almost nothing out of the liberation struggle. Examples include Thomas Mapfumo, Simon Chimbetu, Leonard Zhakata, Hosiah Chipanga and Oliver Mtukudzi. The discourse of land in the 2000s therefore may be seen not as an effort to redress the suffering of the landless, nor as answering to the call of ancestors and or God. On the contrary, the land discourse may be taken as the only available resource for the state to create a new flair of revolutionaries and rejuvenate its paralyzed nationalism. To do this, land, not only as a tangible resource, but also as an intangible and symbolic resource became very handy in 'hailing' subjects. Thus land became a useful tool in guarding power.

Interestingly, in her novel *Without a Name*, Vera (1994) reflects that the violent effort to gain the ancestral lands is similar to the violence directed on a woman's body. This is based on how the woman's body signifies land or territories. Vera, therefore, shows that the struggle for land is attached to the rape of women. This is especially so if we consider that the land and indeed, countries and lands are feminized in discourses of nationalism, thus they are referred to as 'she,' 'her,' 'mother land,' 'mother country' and so on. This is true to the Zimbabwean case, but it is also vital to note that patriarchy is in control of this feminized land. In the Zimbabwean case, in the post-2000, Joshua Nkomo is posthumously named 'Father of the nation' and Muzenda 'Soul of the nation.' It is Nehanda, a female figure though, who represents land. Vera's overtones make sense in the post-2000 Zimbabwe. The term *jambanja*, which means violent force, has been used as the process of land occupation. With the land imaged as female, this visualizes the 'raping' of the land in a 'game' of power. This phenomenal approach by Vera therefore, confronts nationalists narratives that locate Zimbabweans on the same space when discussing the benefits of the liberation struggle and the relationships that people have with land. To those who have been pawns in the struggle, the land discourse as a performance of reform and national control leaves them as outsiders and victims. This denial of citizenship and belonging has led to contested stories of origin and contested narratives of land and its significance. Thus, post-2000 Zimbabwe is characterized by problematized narratives and performances of struggle in the making of the Zimbabwean nation.

## CHAPTER 4: NARRATIVES AND PERFORMANCES OF STRUGGLE IN THE ZIMBABWEAN NATION

### Struggle and Space

The post-2000 era has been phenomenal with regards to the various ways in which subjects are inscribed in Zimbabwe's stories of origin, the politics of land and how this has allowed them to make or be given claims to citizenship and belonging. However, this inscription has often been possible only within the discourses or narratives of struggle in terms of particular connotations of *chimurenga*. The contested origins of the Zimbabwean nation have given rise to competing narratives and performances of struggle.

Innumerable narratives of struggle have emerged as individuals and groups seek to position themselves and others in Zimbabwe's socio-political and cultural life. From time to time, these narratives and performances of struggle have been contested and recycled so as to answer to contingent calls for gendered, ethnic class or other forms of belonging. In this chapter, I deal not only with a single, uniform, unitary or complete narrative and performance of struggle. Instead, I deal with multiple-narratives and performances of struggles that continuously fragment and coalesce as enabled by situations and strategies.

### The Dead, Burials, Bones and Retrievals

In Southern Africa in general, struggle histories and discourses on ancestors, graves, dead bodies, blood, bones, burials, shrines and the territorial space/land/soil offer profound sites for the imaginations of the nation.<sup>97</sup> In South Africa, for example, the remains of figures such as Sarah Baartman, have been brought back to the South African soil after years of dislocation and have garnered considerable national and international significance (Clifton Crais & Pamela Scully, 2009; Zola Maseko, 2003). Baartman was a Khoisan woman who was taken from South Africa and displayed as 'the Hottentot Venus' in England and posthumously made an object of science in laboratories as well as a museum object (Crais & Scully, 2009; Scully & Crais, 2008).

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<sup>97</sup> See works such as, Heike Becker (2011), Kizito Muchemwa (2010), Joost Fontein (2010, 2009), Clifton Crais & Pamela Scully (2009) and Sabine Marschall (2008).

Today, Sarah Baartman has become symbolic in various struggles nationally and internationally.

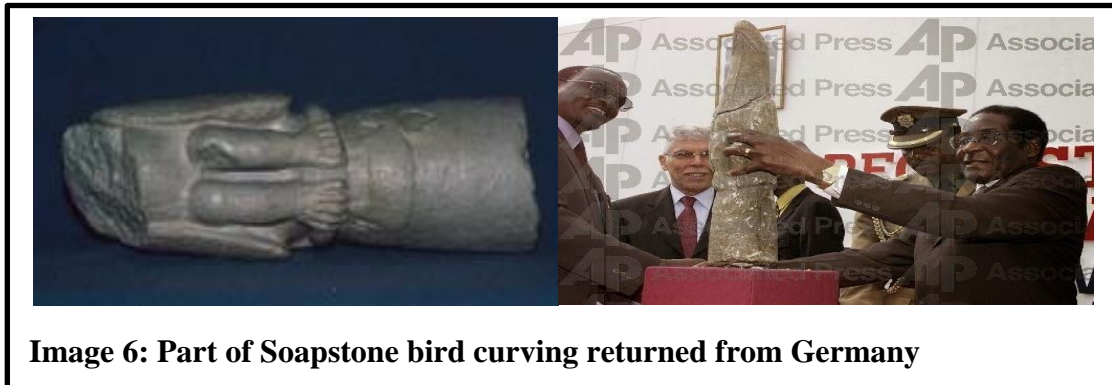
Baartman has taken on a gender/sexual, national, Pan African, cultural, racial and human rights centered identity. This is regardless of the fact that in her life, she belonged to a specific collectivity, came from a specific region and had not previously been imagined in terms of the identities she is currently associated with. She has been claimed by different groups who have named themselves differently, for example, 'colored,' Khoisan, feminists, women, blacks, South Africans and has been invoked in the legal fraternity with regards to issues of democracy and identity, ethnicity, citizenship and a whole corpus of human rights (Crais & Scully, 2009). Although she or her contemporaries probably had no imaginations in relation to the 'political,' after her death and 'discovery,' she has been thrust into national, regional and international political spaces in a manner that registers her strong presence in the political, not only in her after life, but even during her life time. One can argue that her current identity is tailor-made to fit into some of the current stories of the South African nation, Africa and the international world. In this way, therefore, the writing of her past, and the reclamation of her remains has served the needs of the present.

Similar examples of the 'politics of return' or the repatriation or burial of symbolic national 'subjects' include the return of cultural-spiritual and personified artefacts like the *Vigango* in Kenya (Monica Udvardy & Linda Giles, 2007; Monica Udvardy, Linda Giles & John Mitsanze, 2003). Another example is the return of the lower part of one of the Great Zimbabwe soapstone bird carvings in Zimbabwe <sup>98</sup> (Edward Matenga, 2011; Dawson Munjeri, 2009; William Dewey, 2006; Ezra Chitando, 2005). These 'returns' have been catapulted to national significance. As these examples reveal, the dislocation of venerated artefacts and or persons is equated to the dislocation of African people from their resources such as land. As such, the artefacts and remains of people are personified and given life during the whole process that takes them back to the land of 'origin.'

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<sup>98</sup> See Image 6.

The bones and the cultural symbols, their return to the geographical spaces of ‘origin,’ their burials or preservation and the grandiose events associated with their travel to spaces of origin deserve attention. The whole ‘episode’ should not be narrowed to an ‘act’ of giving decent burials and humanizing the formerly dehumanized or preserving mere artefacts. Instead, this should be seen as pervaded by multiple and complex discourses around the nation. These include discourses of origin, identity formations and reformations and imaginations of nations. As such, they should be looked at in the context of a people’s histories, presences and futures. In studies centring on Namibia, Heike Becker (2011) shows how master narratives, through the visualization and iconography of the Heroes Acre, locate Namibian nationhood in the struggle history that privileges the revolutionary movement South-West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO).



In Zimbabwe, the National Heroes Acre <sup>99</sup> has also been extravagantly used as a performance of Zimbabwean nationalism. Since 2000, the National Heroes Acre has featured in a number of televised productions and songs, in addition to the numerous references to it that have been made. In Mbare Chimurenga Choir songs, the national shrine features in almost all the songs. It is essential here, to reflect more on the Zimbabwean National Heroes Acre as a struggle narrative and a site where the dead find symbolic expressions. Since the ideology of nationalism was, by and large, used to topple colonialism and bring independence, the National Heroes Acre as well as those buried there has been turned into symbols of Zimbabwean nationalism. Following this, Zimbabwean nationalism is defined in terms of ‘self-determination’ and freedom from ‘colonial influence.’

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<sup>99</sup> See Image 7

The burial of a national hero/ine is turned into a major national event. On this day, the national flag is lowered, the day is declared a public holiday and citizens are given free transport and encouraged to attend. The funerals are also given an exclusive coverage especially by the ZBC, the national broadcaster and *The Herald*, a state newspaper. In addition to this, the dead body is taken to different locations of symbolic significance before it is finally taken to the National Heroes Acre. More often than not, President Mugabe gives a speech exalting the hero/ine and situating him/her in a struggle narrative that responds to and appeases prevailing ZANU-PF themes and strategies. For example, the death of Joshua Nkomo has focused much on the theme of unity and commitment to the struggle. This relates well to ZANU-PF's identification of the MDC as divisive, a traitor party and an antithesis of Nkomo's legacy. Border Gezi's death at the peak of the 'Third Chimurenga' has been made useful in showing how resistance is a continuous process since Gezi, who did not participate in the Second Chimurenga represents the 'post-independence' struggles. Chenjerai Hunzvi's death has been largely used to speak to the land issue.<sup>100</sup>



**Image 7: National Heroes Acre (Zimbabwe)**

On the surface, texts about the death and burials of national hero/ines seem to be an acknowledgement of certain individuals' contributions to and definition of *chimurenga*. At a deeper level, however, they are actually used to 'perform' the relationship between the subjects of the state and the nation-state. For example, the increasing number of heroines at the National Heroes Acre from the year 2000 coincides with the state's lectures on loyalty, commitment and sacrifice. To 'act out' such discourses, the spouses or wives of high profile nationalists have been providing the available fit. One can think of the presentation of Johanna Nkomo, the wife of

<sup>100</sup> See Chapter 2 on how heroes have been named in nationalist narratives.

Joshua Nkomo, the late Zimbabwe's Vice-President. Johanna Nkomo's marriage to Joshua Nkomo is taken as symmetrical to the relationship between an individual and the nation. The nation is seen as a living body that enters into marital relationships and obviously desires qualities such as commitment, chastity, obedience and sacrifice (Michel Foucault's discipline and self-surveillance), without which the marital relationship becomes strained or collapses. When Mugabe refers so much to qualities displayed by Johanna Nkomo and other heroines in their marriages, *inter-alia*, commitment, sacrifice, loyalty, resilience, quietness and dignity, he means much more than this. The issue goes beyond individuals or personal marital relationships to become the micro of the macrocosm. The bigger picture here is how individuals and groups are 'hailed' and should commit themselves to the fundamental ideals of *chimurenga* and live within them without any blemish, especially in the post-2000 period where those who oppose ZANU-PF are seen as traitors.

In Zimbabwe, the deaths and burials of hero/ines are texts written into 'national history,' current themes and the future of the nation. They are texts 'performing' state politics of the day. A funeral is turned into and rehearses a grand narration of Zimbabwe's origins and nationhood because in addition to the eulogy, the 'patriotic history' of the nation is retold. The funerals collapse time, space and memory and bring Zimbabwe's past into a narrated present and future. Zimbabwean nationhood is perceived and imprinted in a past struggle, with present and future struggles being interconnected. In this way, the First, Second and Third Chimurenga feed into and become continuous with one another. This constructs an image of a struggle-nation that is triumphant because it gains victory against otherness and outside forces through the spiritedness and perseverance of its nature. The National Heroes Acre and those buried on the site therefore, have been turned into cultural texts that are products of, as well as producers of Zimbabwean nationalism. This is why, during the period from when a hero or heroine dies till burial and thereafter, the nation is usually taken back to the contributions not only of the fallen hero/ine, but to all the Zimbabwean hero/ines and the liberation struggle in general. In addition, the 11<sup>th</sup> of August has been set aside to commemorate and appreciate Zimbabwe's fallen hero/ines. The death and burial of an individual hero/ine therefore, is always an evocation and commemoration and ritual appreciation and celebration of all hero/ines. Congruently, it is a celebration, an enactment and a commemoration of a particular

kind of Zimbabwean story of origin, the build-up to the moment of its birth following decolonization. It also marks an association with the land which guarantees citizenship and belonging.

Added to the above, a considerable amount of anthropological work exists on the nationalization of and contestations over dead bodies in Southern Africa. This includes Becker (2011), Ian Fairweather (2001), Sabine Marschall (2008), Richard Werbner (1998), Terence Ranger (2009), Fontein (2010, 2009). Anthropologists contend that a commemorated dead body has much more power and influence than a dead corpse since it is a material symbol of history with a capacity to re-order the world of meaning and establish cosmic order (Tabona Shoko, 2006). Katherine Verdery (1990) postulates that dead bodies have certain properties that make them symbols and since they are not verbal, words can be put into their mouths or what they would have said prior to death may either be misinterpreted or interpreted out of context.

Notably, contestations over dead bodies are rife in Zimbabwe. These include dead bodies of the First Chimurenga and Second Chimurenga as well as the dead bodies of specific figures who have died in the post-independence era. It is significant that the value accorded to the dead body in Zimbabwean culture rests largely on the belief that the dead body can influence, define and interpret the living and their world as well as direct their future.

What is obvious here is that the meanings of dead bodies are complex and fluid. The meanings depend on the prevailing politics and therefore are subject to power-politics. It is not surprising that Verdery points out that in politics, what gives a dead body effectiveness is ambiguity. This is because as possible political symbols, they are spaces of very diverse and contradictory meanings. For example, in Zimbabwe, after his death, Joshua Nkomo's body has been turned into a symbolic site for struggles around national identity by different people. His post-humus presence in Zimbabwe's body-politics has generated conflicting meanings among different people.



In Zimbabwe, especially from the start of the current century dead bodies that have been elevated as heroes are taken as texts defining Zimbabwe's origin in struggle and its 'centeredness' on land. In a number of nationalist narratives, for example in those conveyed during funerals and national functions as well as in songs, liberation war heroes are referred to. As such, the said aspirations and messages of the dead have a considerable impact on the thoughts and actions of the living. Dani Nabudere (n.d)<sup>101</sup> brings in the concept of transformative *ubuntu* (humanness) where African philosophy organizes life from birth, the living and the living dead narration and the relationship between the stages. The living dead are both feared and respected. This makes them a formidable instrument for mobilization. When for instance, there is mentioning of the bones of ancestors, the dead bodies, national shrines, and when there is live coverage of exhumations and re/burials of dead bodies, something else is taking place. Issues of morality, suffering, blame and justice arise but interwoven with that, some discourses of power and authority are being un/written. At certain times, burials, dead bodies, bones, blood and shrines have been directly and indirectly used to inculcate a common history, a national consciousness, a national identity and a kind of uniqueness that calls for some form of sovereignty.

At the same time, they create fissures and shake the very foundations of nationalist sentiments. As studies have shown,<sup>102</sup> certain dead bodies and the burial, heritagization and memorization of particular dead bodies build into certain narratives of the nation which tally with particular spaces and times. The narration of all this transcends individual lives to the narration of the story of a group. The bones that were disinterred in Chibondo/Monkey William Mine, Shamva in the Mt Darwin district of Zimbabwe<sup>103</sup> in early March 2011 reflects how ZANU-PF has tried to fit in dead bodies into its own political agenda. Nevertheless, this also carried subversive messages as the way the bones were treated differed from earlier human methods that had been used in other cases as well as from international protocols.

In early March 2011, the ZBC-TV reported the exhumations of hundreds of bodies from a site in Chibondo Mine and claimed the bodies were those of people killed by

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<sup>101</sup> <http://www.doc-txt.com/Ubuntu-Themes.pdf>.

<sup>102</sup> See Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Wendy Willems (2010), Joost Fontein (2010), Clifton Crais & Pamela Scully (2009), Meg Samuelson (2007) and Katherine Verdery (1990).

<sup>103</sup> See Image 8.

Rhodesian forces during the country's war of independence. The country's sole broadcaster, in news bulletins and repeated interruptions to regular programs, persuaded ordinary citizens to visit the site to observe colonial atrocities. School children were also bussed to the mine. Exhumations were initially carried out by members of the Fallen Heroes Trust, a group linked to ZANU-PF, before government officials took over. During the exhumations, militants sang *chimurenga* songs, shouted ZANU-PF slogans and denounced whites and the then Prime Minister and leader of the MDC party, Morgan Tsvangirai. This connected the occasion to the prevailing politics of the country. The association of Tsvangirai with both the 'whites' and the emotional 'spectacle' of bones is very compelling. This overtone turns Tsvangirai into an 'object' of hate through the mobilization of 'whiteness' as a source of 'national' pain. Morgan Tsvangirai's 'invasion' into Zimbabwean politics is conceptualized as symbolic of the 'penetration' of the national body. The consequence of the 'invasion' is national 'death' as signified by the 'drama' of the Chobondo bones.<sup>104</sup>



**Image 8: Chibondo/Monkey William Mine Bones**

<sup>104</sup> See Ahmed (2004) for a discussion on the role of emotions in the creation of collective bodies.

Saviour Kasukuwere, the then Minister of Black Empowerment announced that no forensic tests and DNA analysis of the remains would be done and instead, rituals would be carried out by traditional African religious figures. In line with Kasukuwere's utterances, it is essential to think of the implications of a shift from the 'rationality' of DNA analysis to the 'irrational' traditional African rituals in this narrative of bones. However, Morgan Tsvangirai criticized the exhumations for bringing hatred during a time of national healing and bringing sad memories to those people who had lost relatives during the Gukurahundi massacres and political violence since independence.<sup>105</sup>

There were some claims that some of the bones could have been buried there after independence in the 1980s. These claims have been supported by the likes of Maryna Steyn, a forensic anthropologist at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, who argues that human remains should not retain a strong stench after 30 years.<sup>106</sup> Steve Naidoo, a pathologist at South Africa's University of KwaZulu-Natal adds, "Bearing in mind that the bodies are exposed to an open environment, albeit in a mine shaft, scavengers can access them quite easily. In 30 years, one would expect complete and advanced skeletonization."<sup>107</sup> However, Shari Eppel an expert in exhumations, explains that the presence of soft tissues "is not necessarily an indicator that these bones entered the grave more recently, although it could be" because when bodies are piled on top of each other in large numbers, the process of mummification can occur and mummified flesh is alike rotting soft tissues on a recent dead body, showing the need for experts to do the exhumations.<sup>108</sup>

While this could be used as campaign material by both ZANU-PF and opposition parties, experts have pointed to how exhumations done by unskilled people and for the wrong reasons, defy the rights of the dead. Such exhumations destroy the necessary information contained in the bodies, leaving a lot of questions unanswered.

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<sup>105</sup> This brings subversions to the state and ZANU-PF centric version of suffering that is linked to the grand liberation war against the colonial regime. There is a move towards marginalized forms of suffering that are part of the neglected narratives of the nation.

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1372034/Zimbabwes-killing-fields-Mass-grave-600-bodies-shaft.html>.

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1372034/Zimbabwes-killing-fields-Mass-grave-600-bodies-shaft.html>.

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-4855-JudgetoruleonMtDarwinexhumations/news.aspx>.

Shari Eppel argues “What is happening ... is a travesty. Bones speak quietly and in a language only an expert can hear. Let’s not silence them forever, but bring them the help they need to be heard.”<sup>109</sup> The court order by the ZIPRA Trust, which was granted by Judge Nicholas Mathonsi, finally stopped the exhumations as it pointed out that they violated all international protocols on investigating suspected human rights violations and was therefore an interference with crime scenes.<sup>110</sup> This has been supported by Michelle Kagari, Amnesty International’s deputy director for Africa who points out, “This is a crime scene and exhumations require professional forensic expertise to enable adequate identification, determination of cause of death and criminal investigations.”<sup>111</sup> The Chibondo case, therefore, reflects how the dead can be referred to in the ‘performance’ of nationalism and the inherent contradictions and messages that arise out of their use.

The literal ‘mining’ and re/covering of the Chibondo bones exemplifies a charged ‘spectacle’ of Zimbabwean nation construction. It demonstrates the ‘mining’ of particular ‘past’ stories to shape ‘present’ stories as the hi/story of the bones has been linked to hi/stories of colonial dispossession and brutality by ZANU-PF and to ZANU-PF brutality by the MDC. For ZANU-PF, re/covering the bones marks a point of national recovery, which associate well with its current theme of land repossession. The fact that the bones have been found in a mine, both a ‘spectacle’ of Western extraction and exploitation of black bodies also build into ZANU-PF’s prevailing anti-West discourses and struggle over citizenship and belonging.

However, Chenjerai Hove’s *Bones* (1988) describes a subversive national consciousness around bones, one that complicates the war of liberation and its gains. The experiences of war, dispossession and oppression of ‘subject’ classes take a bottom-up narrative form as reflected by Marita, a poor village woman and farm worker who has experienced many losses because of the liberation war. As such, the ‘pasts’ and the intertwined struggles do not simply romanticize the grand liberation war, but question its achievements from the point of view of the ‘ordinary’ people. This leads to a deeper interrogation of the war and key events in a way that produces

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<sup>109</sup> <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-4855-JudgetoruleonMtDarwinexhumations/news.aspx>.

<sup>110</sup> <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-04-08-court-orders-halt-to-zimbabwe-grave-exhumations/>.

<sup>111</sup> <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-4861-Judge+halts+Mt+Darwin+exhumations/news.aspx>.

multiple and diverse narratives from the often glorified linear and ‘complete’ trajectory favored by ‘nationalist’ narratives.

Zimbabwe’s signified dead bodies and retrieved bones are buried at national monuments in a spectacular style that ‘scripts’ and ‘performs’ Zimbabwean nationhood. The monuments are rendered into visible physical hi/stories of the valorized dead bodies. In this regard, there is reason to assert that monuments play an important role that shows the indebtedness of the people to the spirits (Paul Gough, 2000). They serve as a spiritual link with the fallen heroes. However, in the case of Zimbabwe, the shrines have been tainted by controversy. As some groups argue, a number of people who have been buried at the National Heroes Acre are not worth it and cannot stand as icons of Zimbabwean nationalism.<sup>112</sup> One may argue that the presence of certain figures is reflective of the forceful, militaristic, masculinist and dichotomized identity of Zimbabwean nationalism. However, the state, through its invention of the Third Chimurenga (the third war), locates them in the context of its specific war heroes, the Third Chimurenga heroes (who had to continue the struggle from where the Second Chimurenga had left). The state blesses the Third Chimurenga heroes as *vana vevhu* (true sons and daughters of the soil) with Zimbabwean/African indigeneity, who defend territorial sovereignty and struggle for indigenization.

Still, others argue that some people deserving burial at the shrines, such as Ndabaningi Sithole<sup>113</sup> have been sidelined. The state, however, argues that the likes of Ndabalingi Sithole did not struggle to the end, but turned sell-outs and so do not deserve any honor. This reflects that Morgan Tsvagirai’s identity as a sell-out has a long genealogy that includes Ndabaningi Sithole. Also, some prominent people have publicly or through relatives, made clear disinterestedness to burial at the shrines. In a number of cases, the state has either fought with or persuaded relatives over bodies accorded space at the shrines.

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<sup>112</sup> Examples which can be given are Chenjerai Hunzvi, Border Gezi, Sabina Mugabe and Elliot Manyika, who have been accused of mobilizing terror groups to attack those opposed to the state and ZANU-PF.

<sup>113</sup> Ndabaningi Sithole was one of the leading figures of Zimbabwean nationalism who has been denied the hero status by Robert Mugabe’s government after being labelled a sell-out.



In the context of the above cases, the monuments, dead bodies and burials become contested spaces that offer multiple meanings. Theories of resistance challenge theories of reproduction for supposing that meaning is always singular and consensus and instead, reflect on complex processes that are behind and involved in meaning making and therefore, refuting the singleness and fixity of meaning. Problematized here is the extent to which discourses of sacrifice and heroism ‘perform’ Zimbabwe’s struggles.

### **Heroes, Performativity and Chimurenga**

Zimbabwe’s state-driven narratives of the nation make frequent reference to patriotic ancestors of the First Chimurenga, who sacrificed themselves and faced death in defense of land and people. The narratives also make reference to patriotic Second Chimurenga heroes, who have shed their blood for the nation. The figures of Nehanda, Chaminuka and Kaguvi, who were active in the First Chimurenga, feature prominently in nationalist discourses and have become very central in the construction of the Zimbabwean nation. They have been made a template on which the Second Chimurenga has been crafted. The popular narratives around these figures have also generated ideological, psychological, physical and material resources for earlier, current and future struggle narratives in Zimbabwe. Their recognition chronicles a patriotic element and a spiritual realm that is central to Zimbabwean nationalist history, and this often plays both political and psycho-social roles for citizens who are encouraged to emulate them.

Also central to the imagining of the nation in Zimbabwe, are heroes and heroines of the Second Chimurenga who are laid to rest at district, provincial or national shrines, depending on their accorded status (Dorothy Goredema & Percyslage Chigora, 2009). Many African states, emerging from a protracted struggle against colonialism, have built shrines in honour of those who participated in the liberation struggles. In Zimbabwe, shrines have been constructed at the district, provincial and national level.

The National Heroes Acre is where those conferred with the highest honour and named national heroes/heroines are laid to rest. Mandima clarifies, “National heroes or heroines are those that led the national liberation struggle” (Goredema & Chigora,

2009:77). The hero status is determined on a case by case basis, which perhaps reflects inconsistency in the criteria employed. However in the article “President Mugabe clarifies hero status” (The Herald 1 October, 2010) Mugabe makes it clear that the National Heroes Acre is a preserve for those who fought the liberation struggle. However, credentials of being a combatant have not been used as a consistent criterion since a number of well-known liberation war fighters have been excluded. When he was still in ZANU-PF, Didymus Mutasa claimed that this is because they lacked consistency as reflected by their desertion of ZANU-PF and joining other parties (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, n.d).<sup>114</sup> This questions the distinction between ZANU-PF and the state, and also illustrates the blatant fictionalization of the process of hero construction. What is clear is that the conferring of hero status hinges on whether ‘heroes’ remain loyal to ZANU-PF and Mugabe in particular.

As significant as the question of which heroes are included in the National Heroes’ Acre, is the symbolism associated with its placement and architecture.<sup>115</sup> The national monument stands on 57-acres (230,000 m<sup>2</sup>) of land and is situated on a hill. An aerial view of the monument reflects a design akin an AK-47 rifle which is split in two along its length from the barrel to the butt. This is the rifle which was very popular with the liberation fighters. The terraces which people sit on resemble the butt of the gun. The murals resemble the handle and the terraced graves resemble the magazine. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier stands for the trigger, while the steps to the tower are the nozzle barrel and the tower pictures the bayonet or the knife. The visuality of the National Heroes’ Acre manifests as symbolic of resistance against colonialism and ‘undisputed’ heroism. A look at the National Heroes’ Acre visualizes loyalty, sacrifice, struggle, suffering, death and victory. However, it is also a strong public ‘spectacle’ of a national identity constructed on militarized masculinities. This ‘sensual’ experience feeds into certain knowledge/s that may hinder a dialogic exchange between the shrine, its audience and context in favour of a *tabula rasa* kind of knowledge transfer where the gaze is one that aligns with the dominant narrative.

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<sup>114</sup> In 2014, Mutasa and a number of prominent members of ZANU-PF were expelled from the party after being accused of plotting against Robert Mugabe.

<sup>115</sup> See Image 7.

Such a vastly militaristic architecture mirrors the significance of struggle in Zimbabwean nationalism and may also be read as emblematic of the militaristic statecraft characterizing Zimbabwean nationalism. Heroism is reduced to militaristic prowess that is overtly masculinized and combative, signifying how militancy is inscribed on Zimbabwean nationhood. There is a way in which visualizing the shrine invites symbolic actions of respect and loyalty to the status quo. The materiality of the National Heroes Acre enables a transportation of subjects to a world of struggle and sacrifice, hence partaking in the burial ceremonies induces affective feelings.

On the day of burial, the national flag is lowered. Late heroes are frequently referred to as symbols of nationalism and are commemorated annually on Heroes Day. Here, patriotic history and the memorization of the struggle become useful everyday instruments for the creation of knowledgeable national subjects. Fontein (2010, 2009) argues how state burials and the memorialization and heritagization of heroes are texts that narrate the nation. The same is echoed by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (n.d) who reflects, as said earlier, how Joshua Nkomo, Zimbabwe's former Vice President was posthumously constructed as the father of Zimbabwean nationalism even though in the 1980s, he had been named father of dissidents. This is reflective of the shaky and negotiated processes of hero, victim, villain discourses.

Posthumously, Muzenda, who had been the country's second Vice President, has been constructed as the soul of the nation. It is important to note that the 'soul' represents something inner and distinctive and therefore is a place where nationalism claims superiority and autonomy to 'others' (Partha Chatterjee, 1993). Thus, a turn to figures like Muzenda is a 'performance' of Zimbabwe's imagined inner identity where its autonomy and sovereignty is located. This is to say without the soul, without figures like Muzenda, the nation cannot survive. The nation is therefore imagined as alive through certain figures. I find it interesting that numerous jokes in Zimbabwe have caricatured Muzenda as far off from Western 'civilization.' Ironically, this presents him as a 'pure past' that is uncontaminated by some threatening 'poison.' This is further buttressed by his association with Nehanda, Zimbabwe's valorized spirit medium through his popular narration of Solomon Mutsvairo's poem centering on Nehanda.



Both the First and Second Chimurenga figures have featured in artistic compositions such as songs, poems, plays and novels (Chitando, 2005). To provide some kind of continuity to heroism, there is an invention of the Third Chimurenga heroes such as Chenjerai Hunzvi and Border Gezi who were accorded national hero statuses. Robert Mugabe (2001) talks of the militant nature of the Third Chimurenga heroes as enabling national reform and control and reflects on the centrality of resource re/possession. The land becomes one of the most physical, economical, psychological and spiritual resource which has to be re/possessed.

The physical and sensual presence of origin stories and struggles over land can inculcate forms of consciousness that very powerfully position subjects in national imaginations. It is in this sense that history and culture are instrumentalized in the shaping of consciousness. The depiction of Joshua Nkomo as ‘Father Zimbabwe’ situates the origin of Zimbabwe in the struggle narratives, where Nkomo is said to have been instrumental and a leading figure in the Second Chimurenga revolt against the colonial regime in the 1960s. From the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some years after Nkomo’s death, Zimbabwe has been commemorating his life in what became known as the Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Gala or simply the *Umdala Wethu Gala*. This gala has been meant to mirror a nation unified by struggles against colonialism and imperialism. However, in other cases, a retrogressive consciousness is set as a result of these performances of remembrance. For example attempts to honor Joshua Nkomo and marking him as an icon of the nation, by putting his statue for public visualization at Karigamombe center in Harare were resisted.<sup>116</sup>

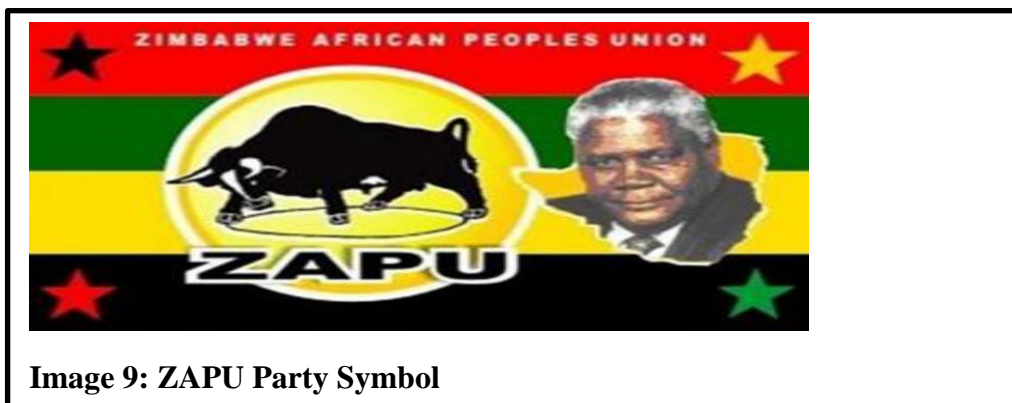
Having Nkomo’s statue at Karigamombe can be ‘dramatizing’ that Nkomo as the Matabeleland ‘bull’<sup>117</sup> had been subdued by Mugabe’s army. Considering the patriarchal underpinnings of Zimbabwean culture, *kuriga mombe* which entails the removal of one’s manhood to ensure loyalty is catastrophic to the masculinized identity of a collective whose leader has been ‘emasculated.’ Arising here are multiple readings of this act of honor which may include honoring him as a national symbol,

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<sup>116</sup> Resistances were associated with the link that the Karigamombe Centre has to the Gukurahundi massacres that occurred in Zimbabwe’s Matabeleland and Midlands provinces in the 1980s. The military strategies were done at Karigamombe centre. See <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-2940-Anger+rises+over+Nkomo+statue/news.aspx>.

<sup>117</sup> A bull was the ZAPU party symbol, see image 9.

using him to preserve the unity accord and undermining him politically. Again, the redeeming invention of ZAPU leaders as heroes from their villain status of the early 1980s reflects the slippage of both heroism and nationalism. For example, Joshua Nkomo has moved from the identity of ‘Father of dissidents’ requiring purging from the land hence the jingles such as *Huya uone zvaita Nkomo, warembera pamuchinjikwa* [Come and witness what has happened to Nkomo, he is hanging on the cross],<sup>118</sup> to being ‘Father Zimbabwe’ requiring great national honor and deserving a yearly commemoration gala.



**Image 9: ZAPU Party Symbol**



**Image 10: Anti-Joshua Nkomo Poster**

Realizing the disillusionment of the post-colonial Zimbabwean era, a current struggle, which has a link with the struggles in the past focuses on Ndebele particularities. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (n.d.) attributes such resentments to the formation of some Ndebele pressure groups and political parties like Vukani Mahlabezulu, Imbovane Yamahlabezulu, ZAPU 2000, Mthwakazi Action Group on Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in Matabeleland and Midlands and Mthwakazi People’s Congress (MPC),

<sup>118</sup> See Image 10 [A screen shot from Panorama BBC Video on Gukurahundi].

the Matebeleland Liberation Front (MLF), and the Dumiso Dabengwa led ZAPU. These formations undermine the construction of a nationalism based on a pro-Shona national inclusiveness.

An example of a dispersed oppositional group beyond Zimbabwe is the MPC which has utilized its diasporan base to evade censorship in Zimbabwe. Based in the United Kingdom, the group has established an imagined-independent United Mthwakazi Republic (UMR), complete with its own national flag,<sup>119</sup> radio station and other ceremonial symbols to contest the Zimbabwean state's construction of nation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, n.d). Interestingly, the flag has black, white, blue and red colors as well as a shield, spear and knobkerrie. The black color represents all black people and hence inclusiveness and hybridity which stands contrary to the Zimbabwean state's formation which is inward-looking and based on separateness. In this mixture, authority, fairness, equality and justice are valued. The white color tells the integration of white people and therefore racial inclusiveness and humanity. This contradicts the dominant nationalist narrative where 'whites' are non-belonging and Zimbabwe is constructed as a 'black' nation. The blue color which resembles the sky reflects peace, life and stability. The red color is symbolic of sacrifices made and lives lost not only during struggles against colonial oppression, but also during Mugabe's oppressive government. Thus, the construction of nation is not based only on discourses of colonialism but all forms of oppression and injustice. The shield stands for defense, hence reflecting not a struggle for existence, but a struggle for the survival of an established nation. Lastly, the spear and knobkerrie narrates the extraordinary militancy of the Ndebele army, especially in the context that they fought equally well against those with advanced weaponry. The symbolism attempts diversity and integration rather than the singleness and inward focus of ZANU-PF.



**Image 11: The Mthwakazi People's Congress (MPC) Flag**

<sup>119</sup> See Image 11.

Some sections in Matabeleland have re-conceptualized the identities of the so called dissidents of the 1980s, such as Gwasela and Gaigusvu. In the midst of direct and indirect exclusions, these figures have been re-invented, based on the current lived experiences and are now seen as heroic figures. They are now conceptualized as continuous with the struggle against Matabeleland domination by any other people, including the Mugabe-led government. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (n.d.) notes how in 2009, Ibhetshu LikaZulu, a Matabeleland based organization, attempted celebrations of the controversial figures, Gwasela and Gayigusvu as regional heroes during the National Heroes Holidays. This destabilizes the Zimbabwean state's 'formal' heroes, heroic monuments and heroic stories.

The performative form and impact of alternative bottom-up narratives of *chimurenga* is also evident in contestations with the ruling party from 2000. From this time, ZANU-PF conflicted with relatives of some deceased figures over bodies that the state wanted buried at national shrines, with the relatives saying that they had received instructions from the deceased rejecting burial at the shrines. Since people's last words are respected and taken to be mediated by ancestral spirits, refusals to burial at the national shrines offer alternative voices to the meaning of national shrines and heroism. This caricatures dominant nationalist figures like Robert Mugabe who venerate national shrines. As discussed earlier, some well-known figures who contributed to the Second Chimurenga have openly announced that they do not want to be buried at any of the national shrines when they die. Another interesting way in which dominant narratives of heroism have been destabilized is when certain groups of people declare their own dead members real heroes worth remembering while castigating the national shrines as full of murderers and thieves.

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has offered its own heroes. Sam Wilkins (2012) explores the heroism of Tonderai Ndira among the MDC youths to make an interesting analysis of how heroism is imagined differently even among people regarding the same person as a hero. In his analysis, the features making Ndira a hero are situated within individual life experiences and struggles, personalities and philosophies of those who project him as a hero. During his funeral and during the

local narrations of his stories, Ndira is unequivocally an MDC hero,<sup>120</sup> but what makes him one is contestable.



**Image 12: Tonderai Ndira: A Zimbabwean Hero**

This shows the complex way in which people receive the hero status and reflects that people do not just accept dominant meanings that make no sense in their lives. Tonderai Ndira's funeral is turned into a 'spectacle' of heroism that destabilizes the dominant one associated with the national shrines. As the image below reflects, Ndira is a Zimbabwean hero. Ndira's funeral invites the audience's gaze to turn away from grand sites such as the National Heroes Acre where those with 'big' names are buried, to simple grave-yards where the ordinary people are laid to rest. Also important is a location of heroism that goes beyond the liberation struggle to the everyday struggles of people.

Popular repudiations of state-driven representations and performances of heroism are reflected in the popular mockery of Gideon Gono, the former Zimbabwe Reserve Bank Governor (RBZ)'s intervention measure to fight inflation in Zimbabwe. As part of RBZ's 2006 intervention to curb hyperinflation, which then was at over 1000%, Gono popularized the 'Zero to Hero' advertising campaign. The 'Zero to Hero' campaign accompanied 'Operation Sunrise'<sup>121</sup> which was established to restore the value of the Zimbabwean currency and therefore 'empower' it. This project led to the

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<sup>120</sup> See Image 12 [A screen shot taken from documentary, State sponsored violence against MDC Members.

<sup>121</sup> See Image 13.

removal of three zeros from the Zimbabwean dollar denominations. Visualized in this case was the Zimbabwean currency's *chimurenga* against the 'enemy' propelled weakness. The fact that the new denominations were effected on the first of August is not accidental. In Zimbabwe, the month of August is generally regarded as the month of heroes since Heroes Day is on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August.



The above is an indication of how currency is a charged symbol and how in Zimbabwe, the control of currency is an expression of anti-imperialism. The initiative therefore, was not only related to the 'masculinization' or strengthening of the dollar, but was also a sensual appeal and effort to 'restore' the 'value' and superiority of national heroes and state narratives of nationalism in a situation pervaded by disillusionment. Restoring the value of money became an affective and insidious reorientation on the 'value' and masculinity of national heroes and Zimbabwe's 'past.' This was seen as urgent in a context where their relevance has been increasingly 'threatened' by the 'scourge' of colonial and imperial forces whose 'running dogs' were seen in the MDC in general and Morgan Tsvangirai in particular.

Following this simplistic measure against inflation and the erosion of the presumed Zimbabwean heroism, some people satirically called Gideon Gono *Giden Gn*, after removing the three Os (the likeness of zeroes) on his names. This iconoclastic humor (analogous to Bakhtin's Rabelaisian laughter)<sup>122</sup> 'visualizes' how the ordinary people see the glaring irrationality, preposterousness and vulgarity of their 'leadership.' Ideally, this demystifies the leadership's power and authority. The ordinary people make efforts to undress the government's simplistic economic control measures

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<sup>122</sup> See Mikhail Bakhtin's (1994) *Rabelais and his World*.

which also parallel the lack of complexity in defining heroism and narratives of the nation.

In addition to this satire, 'From Zero to Hero' may also mirror the 'fictitious' way some individuals have risen from nothing to become national icons just like how the weak Zimbabwean dollar 'gained' value. Names that would come to mind include Joseph Chinotimba, Chenjerai Hunzvi and Border Gezi, whose contributions or levels of contribution to the liberation struggle are controversial even within ZANU-PF. This mocks and destabilizes dominant and narrow meanings of struggle and heroism, especially if we consider how the RBZ's initiative dismally failed to deal with inflation. Such a failure 'dramatizes' the ordinary people's rejection of heroism as defined by dominant narratives.

In some of their songs, musicians like Oliver Mtukudzi have lamented why the hero status is accorded after death. One may refer to Mtukudzi's song '*Andinzwi*' (I do not get it)<sup>123</sup> where he critiques the association of heroism with death and the war against colonialism. He mentions a multi-disciplinary artist, Safirio Madzikatire *aka* Mukadota, a singer, song writer and actor specializing in comedy as a national heroic figure. One may consider Oliver Mtukudzi himself as one who has created his own national heroic status through music. Mtukudzi's lyrics in '*Andinzwi*' as well as his usual rupturing of masculine authoritative figures characteristic of most of his songs and his own legacy as an international icon represent alternative heroism.

Subversive and dissenting bottom-up heroism has also accrued around the philanthropist Jairos Jiri, whose representation diverts from the masculinist and militarist one associated with the Zimbabwean state. Thomas Mapfumo, in an interview with Moses Chikowero bemoans how he had been seen as a national hero when his songs tended to 'support' ZANU-PF ideology during the struggle against colonialism, but stripped of the status when his songs became critical of Mugabe and ZANU-PF.<sup>124</sup> In the interview, Mapfumo maintains he is still up to date with people's struggles and that it is ZANU-PF that has diverted from people's struggles.

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<sup>123</sup> See Song 10, Appendix A.

<sup>124</sup> <http://www.afropop.org/6938/mhoze-chikowero-a-historians-take-on-thomas-mapfumo-and-robert-mugabe/>.



Linked to that, Hosiah Chipanga in the song ‘*Baba Nkomo,*’ (Father Nkomo)<sup>125</sup> has questioned the criteria for conferring hero status. He claims that some of the figures accorded the heroes’ status such as Joshua Nkomo, Herbert Chitepo, and Chief Tangwena had asked him why figures such as Ndabalingi Sithole, James Chikerema and Canaan Banana are not at the National Heroes Acre. It is interesting that Chipanga considers himself a prophet who sees what the authoritative state and ordinary people do not see. In a way, this undermines the limited ‘political’ constructions of heroism by the state. One is made to suspect that above all issues, ZANU-PF patronage is used to determine hero status and certain dead bodies are used to show what is acceptable while others are used to show what is unacceptable in thinking of national belonging and citizenship.

Another example of how the heroic nature of national heroes is undressed is reflected in Petina Gappah’s short story, ‘At the Sound of the Last Post’ in Petina Gappah’s *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009) which mirrors how the burial of a national hero is simply a performance of the dominant meaning of nationalism rather than the life that he really lived. What is remembered about the deceased is a selected and ‘rehearsed’ material that fits into the dominant ‘script’ of heroism and constructions of nationalism. The meaning of struggle emerges as very narrow to bring completeness to his life.

The declaration of the hero status in Zimbabwe therefore, has always been highly problematized (Goredema & Chigora, 2009; Werbner, 1998; Norma Kriger, 1995) in the public domain, in the sphere of popular culture through jokes and music. The above discussion reflects how heroes have been constructed around notions of *chimurenga*. Notions of *chimurenga* have however, greatly ‘acted’ and favoured a patriarchal ‘script’ to mark citizenship and belonging.

### **‘Jenderized’ Performances of Citizenship and National Belonging**

Defensive, commandist, selective and militarized masculinities became the definer for *amadoda sibili/varume chaivo-chaivo* (real men) and only those men characterized as such could stand for the nation. After losing popular support in the first round of the

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<sup>125</sup> See Song 11, Appendix A.



2008 elections and ahead of the June 2008 presidential run-off, Robert Mugabe expressed his unwillingness to leave office even if he were to lose. Addressing a rally in Silobela which is in the Midlands province, he argues, “We fought for this country and a lot of blood was shed. We are not going to give up our country because of a mere X. How can a ballpoint fight with a gun?”<sup>126</sup> The pen/democracy/ballot represents the feminine while the gun/war/struggle history represents the masculine that will not yield to the feminine. It is important to underline that war is exaggeratedly associated with the masculine as well as a demonstration of masculine power. This is a crucial element of the political as understood in Schmitt’s sense of the political being marked by the distinction between friend and enemy, life or death, whereas democracy is seen to lie outside the political (Charles Frye, 1966). In this sense, one understands the deep symbolism in reference to Tsvangirai as a coward, one who has run away from being trained to fight, as a tea boy, as a gay and as being prostituted by the West. It is clearly a way of emasculating and feminizing him and pointing out that his democracy discourses, which are outside the discourse of war and the political, will never lead him to head the Zimbabwean state. This is because the state’s interests can only be protected by masculine figures, the ones who are men enough (*amadoda sibili*). ‘True’ subjects of the nation therefore, tend to turn themselves to submissive and loyal citizens – they define themselves as weak and needing the guidance and blessings of the great leaders, they feminize themselves as reflected earlier by those who build personality cults around leaders. It is in this sense that Margaret Dongo<sup>127</sup> refers, pejoratively, to the spineless politicians in Zanu PF as Mugabe’s ‘wives,’<sup>128</sup> indicating also Dongo’s own internalization of the patriarchal model. These become the influential models for particular kinds of national belonging and citizenship.

Although Itai Muwati, Gift Mheta & Zifikile Gambahaya (2010) have argued that Mugabe’s *amadoda sibili* narrative refers to respectable and responsible males, it is crucial to problematize how respectability and responsibility is constituted in the post-2000 period. I agree with Kudakwashe Manganga (2011) that according to ZANU-PF,

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<sup>126</sup> <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/2032314/posts>.

<sup>127</sup> Margaret Dongo is a war veteran, a former parliamentarian and current critic of Mugabe and ZANU-PF. In 1999 she was nearly beaten by Solomon Mujuru, the late former General of the Zimbabwe National Army during a parliamentary argument when she shouted ‘*muri vakadzi vaMugabe*’ (You are Mugabe’s wives) to the male members of parliament who were present.

<sup>128</sup> <http://allafrica.com/stories/199902190212.html>.

in a new millennium Zimbabwe, male respectability and responsibility is enshrined in protecting ‘national interests’ by any means necessary and it would mean eliminating enemies. This makes sense in a situation where the nation has been feminized, and therefore needing masculine protection since it is under attack. It is crucial here to think of the *amadoda sibili* narrative as a redefinition of femininities and masculinities. After Tsvangirai got more votes than Mugabe in the 2008 elections one ZANU-PF youth who was leading a pro-Mugabe campaign team was assertive that Mugabe did not need the vote to govern Zimbabwe. He bulldozed into a bar where I was among some patrons and wielding a big Okapi knife declared “*Mugabe panyanga zvejende!!*”<sup>129</sup> The declaration, which borders on ‘*jenderized*’ politics (politics of the balls), meant use of violent masculinity to ensure Mugabe presidency. This kind of politics is reinforced through the techno-politics of ZANU-PF jingles such as ‘*Tinoda kudeleta Machinja ose*’ (We want to wipe off all MDC members).<sup>130</sup> The highly technical term ‘delete’ offers visual images of violent annihilation of people supporting the MDC as one can easily relate the act to how one gets rid of unwanted texts from the popular mobile cellphones.<sup>131</sup>

Pro-Mugabe narrations present him as the Zimbabwean *jongwe*,<sup>132</sup> which is always in control and whose position cannot be taken by any small chicken because of its ‘maturity, experience and wisdom’<sup>133</sup> as articulated in some of ZANU-PF’s campaign literature. This is why post-2000 ZANU-PF electoral campaigns have been demanding *jongwe mudanga* (Mugabe should remain in power). Zimbabwean nationalism is therefore premised on fowl-run politics where a single male dominates and crushes dissent and threats whenever that appears. In most rural households in Zimbabwe, the dominance of a single rooster is common. Usually, rural families keep a single mature rooster to avoid some vicious fighting for supremacy in a situation

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<sup>129</sup> Panyanga literally means at the horns. In the Zimbabwean everyday language it means being at the top/helm and *zvejende* literally means using testicles but in the Zimbabwean everyday language it means use of brute and masculine force to demonstrate one’s manhood.

<sup>130</sup> See Song 12, Appendix A, Watch [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1\\_mMYWsz\\_mE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_mMYWsz_mE).

<sup>131</sup> This is closely related to images of ‘flush them down,’ see Image 3.

<sup>132</sup> Jongwe is a Shona name for a rooster chicken which was Mugabe’s and ZANU-PF’s political symbol before the current image of Great Zimbabwe. Although the rooster chicken was replaced by the magnificent Great Zimbabwe structures its politics strongly re-emerged after MDC supporters had suggested that an old and weak rooster should be killed and eaten to allow another one to succeed it and therefore, allowing the succession of roosters (succession of masculine leaders). Even the new official symbol, the Great Zimbabwe structures still visualize Zimbabwe as a Kingdom with magnificence and masculine power.

<sup>133</sup> See Image 3.

where there are many roosters. Thus if such cases arise; power and dominance are earned through fighting and bullying. The other roosters are forced into silence if they do not match the dominant one. Their masculinity is erased and they are relegated to the status occupied by the rest of the fowls and they cannot mate with the females especially in the presence of the dominant rooster. What is figured here is the ‘naturalization’ of Mugabe’s power. However, African families do not keep a dominant rooster forever, but replace it when the time is convenient and therefore erasing notions of absolute power.

Absolute power is also emptied by the Shona idiom, *kubata jongwe muromo* (Silencing the rooster/cock) which has been popular in MDC’s political discourses. The idiom means waking up very early even before the cock crows. By urging people to wake up early and register to vote as well as to vote during 2013 elections, the MDC, was also talking of silencing Mugabe, who in Zimbabwe’s political sphere has been crowned a noisy and bully rooster. Apparent is how Robert Mugabe has been using fowl-run politics to naturalize his hegemony. Fowl-run politics emanate as the microcosm of the patrilineal and masculinized Zimbabwean state.

To counter those who had ideas about the replacement of the rooster, during some political campaigns, Mugabe’s supporters would question people about what would be done with an old *jongwe* (rooster/cockerel at an African homestead). In Shona, the rooster chicken is traditionally the most respected domestic animal at any household. Those who answered that it gets killed and cooked were subjected to beatings or death as they were associated with MDC supporters who had popularized *kubata jongwe muromo* and *jongwe mupoto*<sup>134</sup> discourses. This was ZANU-PF’s way of disordering village life.

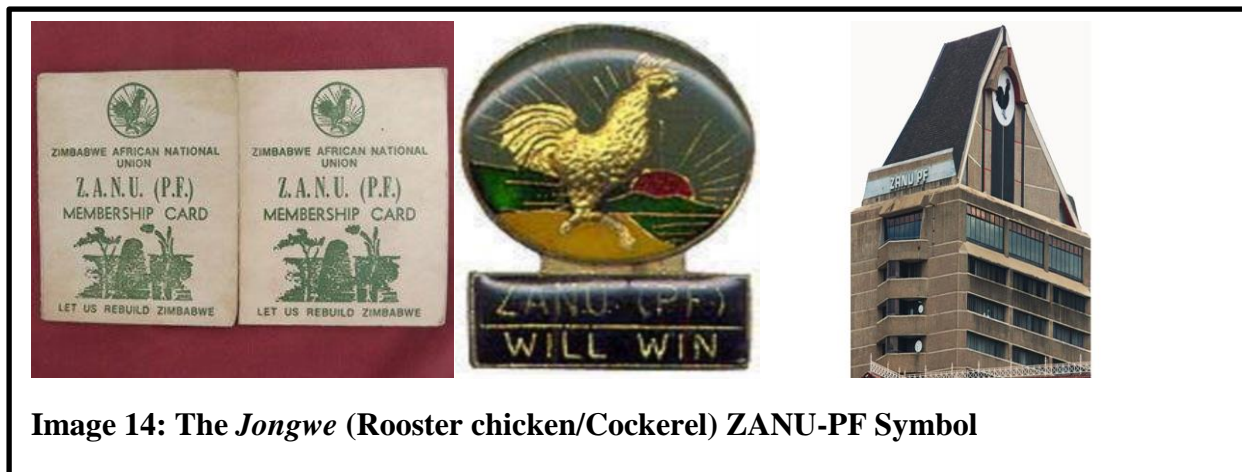
Interestingly, when the *jongwe* was officially replaced by the Great Zimbabwe as the ZANU-PF party symbol, after casting their votes during elections, some voters jokingly said that they had not seen the *jongwe*<sup>135</sup> which they were used to, and therefore had cast their votes on its footprint (*jongwe hatina kuriona, saka taisa X*

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<sup>134</sup> *Jongwe mupoto* literally means putting the rooster in the pot or cooking the rooster. Literary, it refers to getting rid of Robert Mugabe.

<sup>135</sup> See Image 14.

*paratsika*).<sup>136</sup> The message was that they had voted for the MDC whose political symbol, the open palm<sup>137</sup> looks similar to a chicken footprint. This joke exemplifies the ambivalences of political texts and the abilities of ‘dominated’ groups to convert the elite’s instruments to their own use. Also, Sebastian Nyamhangambiri<sup>138</sup> reports that on 3 February 2011 at a funeral ceremony at Tsvingwe cemetery, in Penhalonga, three residents, Patrick Chikoti, Faith Mudiwa and Phillip Dowera craftily turned the Mbare Chimurenga Choir song, ‘*Nyatsoteerera*’ (Listen carefully/Pay great attention)<sup>139</sup> that praises Robert Mugabe into a slanderous funeral hymn. Some of the ‘slanderous’ material included; ‘*Nyatsoterera unzwe kupenga muhofisi mune mboko nyatsoterera unzwe kupenga*’ [Listen carefully to the madness coming from Mugabe’s office]. In the Shona ‘street’ language, the word *mboko*, which in this case refers to Mugabe or *Bob* denotes someone who is useless, stupid, out-dated, tired and insane. People can therefore expect to hear nothing less than craziness from such an individual]. This idea of subversion is buttressed by Susann Baller & Martha Saavedra’s (2010) assertion that although sport and football can be instrumentalized by politicians, parties and governments for self-benefit, the results of this use is unpredictable and control is slippery. Humor and the ‘everyday life’ are part of the marginalized’s constituencies of subversion and resistance (Willems, 2010; Achille Mbembe, 2001).



**Image 14: The Jongwe (Rooster chicken/Cockerel) ZANU-PF Symbol**

<sup>136</sup> A similar joke relating to the subversion of ZANU-PF’s notion of ‘team’ and ‘scoring the ball’ was ‘I looked for the ball on the ballot papers and couldn’t see it. Looked for the goal posts and could not see them again. I therefore had to choose goalkeepers’ gloves which I found. The team has been beaten’ (Ncube, 2014:14).

<sup>137</sup> See Image 15.

<sup>138</sup> <http://freemuse.org/archives/1691>.

<sup>139</sup> See Song 13, Appendix A.

The song, ‘*Ndimi Mega*’ (You are the One/You are the Only One) <sup>140</sup> by Mbare Chimurenga Choir makes it crystal clear that Zimbabwe is under the rule of one great, magnificent and ‘able’ patriarchal figure. The noun *baba* [father] conjures a national disciplinarian and authority figure, hence speaking of the nation is also a way of speaking of the family. One’s senses are drawn to a phallic family order that should replicate the national order.



**Image 15: MDC Open Palm Symbol**

Mbare Chimurenga Choir’s song, ‘*Changamukai*’ (Awaken/Be Vigilant) <sup>141</sup> affirms that Mugabe is the one who is ruling the country, as indicated by ‘*VaMugabe varikutongawo...*’ (Mr. Mugabe is the one ruling/in power). The same affirmation is made in the songs ‘*MuZimbabwe*’ (In Zimbabwe),<sup>142</sup> ‘*Nyika Yedu*’ (Our country/Land) <sup>143</sup> and ‘*Timhu*’ (Team),<sup>144</sup> which are on the same album. The song ‘*Nyatsoteerera*’ <sup>145</sup> supposes that if one listens, one can actually hear Mugabe’s rule.

The song is a repetition of the lyrics:

*Nyatsoteerera unzwe kutonga*  
*Aaah muhofisi, muna Bhobho nyatsoteerera unzwe kutonga*  
*Unzwe kutonga nyatsoteerera unzwe kutonga*  
*Aaah muhofisi, muna Bhobho nyatsoteerera unzwe kutonga*

[Listen carefully and hear Bob/Mugabe’s rule/power while he is in his office/on his throne].

<sup>140</sup> See Song 14, Appendix A.

<sup>141</sup> See Song 15, Appendix A.

<sup>142</sup> See Song 16, Appendix A.

<sup>143</sup> See Song 17, Appendix A.

<sup>144</sup> See Song 18, Appendix A.

<sup>145</sup> See Song 13, Appendix A.

Suggested here is a firm kind of rule which can be felt by everyone and cannot be interrupted. Reference to Mugabe as *Bhobho*, among others, is also noted in Last ‘Tambaoga’ Chianga’s song ‘*Agreement*.’<sup>146</sup> Tambaoga says:

*Patakavhota takasainirana agirimende*  
*Kuti mutungamiriri weZimbabwe ndiBhobho*

[Our vote was a signed agreement that *Bhobho* (Bob/Robert Mugabe) is the Zimbabwean leader].

In the above cases, *Bhobho* may be taken to be a Shona version for Bob, which familiarly refers to Robert Mugabe but also cordially refers to Robert Nesta Marley. The song links Robert Mugabe to the popular Reggae legend, Robert Nesta Marley who graced Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980. The iconography of Bob Marley strongly invites one to love and appreciate Mugabe in the manner that approximates the love, appreciation and affection one has for Marley. Also, since Marley made a performance at Zimbabwe’s independence celebrations, remembering ‘Bob’ Marley ‘enforces’ a re/membrance of Robert Mugabe as a ‘legendary figure’ inseparable from Zimbabwean independence. However, it is also possible to see this ‘diffusion’ of affect in a negative sense. One may think of a possibility where hatred for ‘Bob’ Mugabe diffuses to one’s hatred of ‘Bob’ Marley and or Reggae music.

On a different note, *bhobho* may sensualize the most powerful piece on a game of draught (*tsoro*), which is common among Zimbabweans. The game shares some eliminatory features with games such as chess. This game is based on eliminating the opponent’s pieces. The *bhobho* is vested with more power and space to maneuver than any other piece. While *bhobho* might be used to ‘visualize’ or showcase Mugabe’s invincibility, it also identifies him as a bully and a cruel ‘leader’ who uses his power and space to eliminate those who challenge him. The fact that the singer calls for one to attentively listen (*nyatsoteerera*) may suggest that Mugabe’s rule is far off from the people. This means that it is something that is limited to the office and is alienated from the people. The signed agreement in Tambaoga’s song may be used to authorize his despotism and cruelty. The above songs have extensive video footage and pictures steeped in the Chimurenga wars, land and national iconography. The songs contain lyrics revealing a cultic worship of Mugabe’s rule despite the fact that the album was released after Mugabe had lost the first round of the 2008 elections

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<sup>146</sup> See Song 5, Appendix A.

which led to power-sharing with the ‘opposition’ parties, popularly known as the Government of National Unity (GNU).

The aim of the Mbare Chimurenga Choir songs is clearly to invisibilize other parties and visualize Mugabe’s power. The song, ‘*Changamukai*’<sup>147</sup> goes on to address Mugabe as *baba* (father) which in the Shona context, positions him as both the father and the husband who is the family’s central figure. As the father, he protects and provides for his children as enunciated in Mbare Chimurenga Choir songs that he is the only one who has dealt with the land issue, hence playing a father figure. As the husband, he always voices how ready he is to protect his territory. Mugabe as *baba* (father/husband) is also reverberated by the song ‘*Timhu*.’<sup>148</sup>

The choreography of both lyrics and visuals in the above song is very interesting and highly spectacular. There is a way in which the song stresses the presence of a single *baba* (father/husband) who is the head of the family. What is interesting is that Mugabe is referred to as *baba Mugabe*, reflective of a patriarchal head, while another male figure, John Nkomo<sup>149</sup> is simply called *VaNkomo* (Mr Nkomo). The song has audio-visuals of Mugabe, Mujuru and Nkomo on a football pitch.<sup>150</sup> Mugabe receives a ball from an invisible character, probably a divine one. When he skillfully receives the ball, he holds it and does not pass it on to his team mates, showing how the *baba* (father/husband) title cannot be shared. Mugabe is positioned as strong, active and ‘ballness’ while Nkomo’s image appears weak, passive and ‘ball-less.’ The idea of team work, which is associated with combined efforts, is disfigured. In this team, only one player is visible and holding the ball, the others are invisible since they occupy a passive presence. While one may argue that the singers wanted to position Mugabe as the head of the state, the metaphor of a football team which they use produces a counter discourse that positions him as very selfish, a characteristic that is intolerable where team work is emphasized such as in a game of football. The major irony is that in professional teams, team members retire and get replaced. In this team, however, replacements have largely been possible only in the event of death. This explains why

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<sup>147</sup> See Song 15, Appendix A.

<sup>148</sup> See Song 18, Appendix A.

<sup>149</sup> John Nkomo was one of Zimbabwe’s vice presidents from 2009 to 2013 when he died.

<sup>150</sup> See Image 16, watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKCxy7at4L4>.



Mugabe is still the central and masculine player in the team. His team mates have come as replacements not for those who had retired, but for those who had died.

Mugabe's powerful position is further stressed in the song 'Makorokoto' (Congratulations)<sup>151</sup> which articulates that Mugabe, both in his capacity as *mwana waBona* (Bona's son) and *baba vaBona* (Bona's father) has the prerogative to rule from the ancestors and the people of Zimbabwe, which is a way of naturalizing Mugabe's power along a patriarchal monogenesis. On another level, it points to women as mothers to the sons who become the expected rulers. Zimbabwe's masculine nationalism has been factionalized in sports, especially through the use of football imagery.



**Image 16: ZANU-PF 'Team' (Mugabe, Mujuru and Nkomo)**

It is essential to mention here that in Zimbabwe, sport is increasingly used as a political aesthetics demonstrating the hyper masculinities characterizing Zimbabwean state-building. ZANU-PF adopted football treatises and constructed its political narratives around the image and imaginations of 'the game' in an effort to make its

<sup>151</sup> See Song 19, Appendix A.



‘brand’ affectionate and appealing to Zimbabweans. <sup>152</sup> One can site the use of phrases such as *Bhora musango* (kick the ball off the pitch) or *bhora muggedhi/ibola egedhini* (score the ball). <sup>153</sup>

Drawing on the violence that followed Mugabe’s 2008 defeat, I find it prudent to think of *bhora musango* as a symbolic call for war. In the narratives of the Zimbabwean war of liberation, *musango* (bush/forest) is basically the space from where the liberation war was operated. Kicking the ball off the field (not voting for Mugabe and ZANU-PF) is entrance into the bush, a masculinized space of war. With its ‘bush’ experience and history, ZANU-PF is prepared to extend the ‘game’ into the bush if any team member or opposing team decides to play *bhora musango*.



On the other hand, *bhora muggedhi* is a desperate attempt to win a game by ignoring all other aesthetics, fairness and skills of football and concentrating on winning by any means. The *bhora muggedhi* tactic became a very popular ZANU-PF slogan during the 2013 elections. Even the ‘*Gushungo gonyei*’ (Mugabe’s big haulage truck) <sup>154</sup> which frequented Mugabe’s rallies had very big inscriptions of the *bhora muggedhi*

<sup>152</sup> The obvious association of national football and national politics can be exemplified by the former Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah’s rule and the exploits of the Ghanaian national football team during his rule (Pannenberg, 2010).

<sup>153</sup> See Image 17, watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5s0Vd4Wi7g>.

<sup>154</sup> See Image 17, watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfUF-Mry7UA>.

slogan and always carried along goal posts for ‘performing’ *bhora muggedhi*. All efforts have been focused on scoring and it has been a ‘make sure’ kind of situation associated with other phrases like *bhora mberi* (kick the ball forward). As such, the emphasis put by *bhora musango/bhora muggedhi*’ is on ensuring either losing or getting eliminated or winning and eliminating. The contest is very masculine, especially if one takes into cognizance how instructive and commandeering the phrase ‘*bhora muggedhi/bola egedini*’ is, and thus demonstrating the masculine nature of Zimbabwean nationalism. Anyone who plays an individual game instead of having the ‘team spirit’ or the ‘family’ at heart is seen as reactionary and deserving some form of punishment.

During elections, ZANU-PF and MDC candidates have been presented as ‘Teams.’<sup>155</sup> It is important to associate notions such as ‘team’ and ‘*bhora muggedhi*’ with powerful controls that are meant to ensure that human bodies are disciplined and obedient in a certain way that guaranties team survival. Taking into consideration “the effects of fandom, for example, the violence and aggression, which may result from being a fan” (Manase Chiweshe, 2011:174) and which characterize Zimbabwean soccer, it would be interesting to imagine a national project that adopts such characteristics.



**Image 18: MDC and ZANU-PF Football Metaphors**

<sup>155</sup> See Image 18.

It is also important to mention the red cards as part of MDC symbols which have been raised during party rallies, printed on regalia, on pamphlets, raised during musical shows, for example during Oliver Mtukudzi's shows especially during the performance of his song '*Wasakara*.'<sup>156</sup> On a similar note, Robert Muponde & Kizito Muchemwa (2011) give reflections on how, during the colonial period, Africans used football stadiums as political 'fields' on which they 'performed' their disgruntlements through protest songs, symbols and gestures deriding the colonial and racist regime.

The whistle also became symbolic of the perceived ZANU-PF and Mugabe's rough play in managing the nation as well as during electoral participation. This rough play warranted not only a warning, but total removal. During one of his rallies, after the first round of the 2008 elections which he had won, Morgan Tsvangirai is said to have dismissed the possibility of winning a return league after being defeated in one's own home ground, further reflecting the relation between politics and sport.<sup>157</sup> Tsvangirai, however, was proven wrong as Mugabe won the second round of the elections by making use of 'rough' play, resulting in a lot of 'injuries' on the side of the opposition team and its supporters.<sup>158</sup>

Knowing the love that Zimbabweans have for sports, the loyalties that they have for certain teams and the sacrifices that they make in the name of their teams, sport becomes a very useful political aesthetic that nurtures affective 'diffusions' across 'teams.'<sup>159</sup> Through sport, Zimbabweans are persuaded to relate to a particular political party as they would relate to a club of their choice. It is difficult to disassociate sport from rivalry, a sense of national belonging and masculinity.

In Zimbabwe, throughout the years, stadiums, which are basically built as sport-fields for sporting activities have been used as political-fields for political performances.<sup>160</sup> One is tempted to probe if Zimbabwe's first independence ceremony held at the Zimbabwe Grounds foretold the politico-aesthetics of sport in Zimbabwe. Sport and

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<sup>156</sup> See Song 20, Appendix A.

<sup>157</sup> <http://maravi.blogspot.com/2008/05/tsvangirai-vows-to-defeat-mugabe.html>.

<sup>158</sup> Documentaries, A Criminal State, A Patriotic Force, Fighting for Rights. Zimbabwe before the 2000 Election Pre-poll, Documentary On State Sponsored Violence Against MDC Members.

<sup>159</sup> The relationship between individuals and groups and the teams or clubs they support 'scripts' the relationship between individuals or groups with particular political parties.

<sup>160</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5s0Vd4Wi7g>.

politics are imagined and ‘performed’ as aggressive, masculine pre-occupations defined by wins and defeats, where ‘team members’ are supposedly guided not by rationality, but by affective feelings for their ‘teams.’ Metaphorically, Zimbabwe is a ‘stadium’ in which intense ‘political games’ ensuring victors and losers are ‘played.’ It is worthwhile to imagine what it would mean for political parties, especially ZANU-PF, to position as soccer teams in a context where soccer administrators, fans, spectators, players and even the language/s of soccer are masculine. Sport metaphors invite team fans or members to see and ‘act’ themselves as extensions of their teams; hence they may invest a lot of emotions into them and be flexible to team ‘discipline.’ In line with the above, Noam Chomsky (1988) points to sport as a major hegemonic instrument in the hands of elite classes. Chien-Yu Lin, Ping-Chao Lee & Hui-Fang Nai (2008) shares the same sentiments and pictures a contiguous relationship between sport and politics. I argue that sport, and football in particular, has been made use of as a ‘political language,’ a conduit for politically charged and robustly masculinized discourses, especially in post-2000 Zimbabwe. Arguably, the resonance of this political aesthetic has a lot to do with the ‘ordinary’ people’s affinity to sport and their ‘popular knowledge’ of the ‘landscape’ of sport. In this sense, the ability of sport, especially football to ‘carry’ sensual effects makes it useful to the political ‘landscape’ in general and issues of power and struggle in particular, especially in this case when the language of sport is very forceful. However, as the above discussion reflects, sport, like any other site of popular culture, is not a space monopolized by ‘dominant’ groups. Instead, it is a complicated space for both reproduction and subversion.

It is not only ZANU-PF that has resorted to violent and militarized masculinities and the re/definition of politics as war or the association of heroism with war/struggle. At Tonderai Ndira’s funeral, almost all the funeral songs are buried in war discourses and profoundly offer a militarized definition of heroism. What is evoked during the funeral ceremony is a war situation which has already started claiming the lives of some of the renowned combatants. The song ‘*Tipeiwo nguva yokuchema gamba redu*’ (Give us time/space to mourn our hero) <sup>161</sup> locates Ndira as heroic. Although it contests the conferring of the hero status to ZANU-PF loyalists by articulating the

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<sup>161</sup> See Song 21, Appendix A, Watch Documentary On State Sponsored Violence Against MDC Members, Movement for Democratic Change Information and Publicity Department, 2008.

heroism of Ndira, <sup>162</sup> there is a way in which both the song and the poster maintain the ZANU-PF discourse that Zimbabwe is at war and that heroism is associated with war. Narrations about Tonderai Ndira show that he fearlessly defended his party against ZANU-PF ‘thuggery’ (Wilkins, 2012). Ndira was nick-named ‘Serge’ (Sergeant) and was seen as a soldier and commander as reflected by another song ‘*Anga ari Commander*’ (He was an army commander) <sup>163</sup> and a militaristic and political term ‘assassinated’ rather than murdered is chosen to describe his death. The song *Iva Gamba* (Be a Hero/Warrior) <sup>164</sup> is also a popular one that calls for people to be resolute, brave warriors who are on the lookout for enemies. The strong military terminology inherent in these songs is self-telling and this is evident that the MDC has failed to move out of the militarized and war ethic in naming heroes and in defining politics as well as in imagining citizenship. Removed from the privileged position associated with the war that ushered in the black ruling elite, it sets its own war zone, recruits its own combatants and crowns its own heroes as evidenced by the image below. <sup>165</sup> This shows that the MDC has continued with the grandeur narratives of heroism and nationalism.



**Image 19: MDC Heroes**

On the same funeral ceremony, an army structure which is disciplined enough to consult with its leadership for the action to take, yet ready for war is mirrored by the lyrics:

*Tonobvunza kuvakuru veChinja  
Tonobvunza tochibvondora here*

<sup>162</sup> See Image 12 and 19.

<sup>163</sup> See Song 22, Appendix A.

<sup>164</sup> See Song 23, Appendix A.

<sup>165</sup> See Image 19.



*Tonobvunza kuvakuru veChinja*

[We are going to inquire from the leaders of change whether or not to retaliate].

In Zimbabwe's street language which is popular with the youth, although *kubvondora* (ripping open) may refer to unexpectedly and publicly exposing the whole truth, it usually refers to an unexpected and immense violent action. Even in cases where it refers to the revelation of the hidden truth. Such exposition of the truth is usually meant to initiate or is followed by, very violent action against one side by another. This kind of language is used as part of the evidence by ZANU-PF to reveal the violent nature of the MDC. Locating the MDC as a violent party, Mugabe says, "The nonsense that the MDC has resorted to; the acts of violence, can be brought to a sudden end."<sup>166</sup>

The MDC slogan, which in many ways is similar to the ZANU-PF *Pamberi/Pasi na/ne* (Forward/Down with) slogan in terms of violent exclusion, also situates the MDC in a space of violence. The slogan goes:

*Mugabe mudenga*  
*Uyoo*  
*Mudenga mudenga*  
*Uyoo*  
*Tenderedza*  
*Uyoo*  
*Rovera Pasi*  
*Pwaaaaa*

[Lift Mugabe up very high, turn him round and round, throw him heavily on the ground]

It is clear that the slogan is a merciless 'act' of totally breaking one's enemy with no hope of the enemy rising again. The enemy is raised high up so as to be brought down to the hard ground with a fatal thud since *pwaaa* is a sound that is produced if something shatters. The same is also expressed by the party's red card symbol, which is an adoption of sport jargon. In sports, a red card is a rare and harsh punishment symbolizing a player's total exclusion from the game. There is no room for negotiations and the decision cannot be revoked. It also makes sense to associate MDC's 'Final Push'<sup>167</sup> within the same language of total force and violence, which is very much masculine and linked to war. The MDC has managed to problematize ZANU-PF's concept of the enemy as an outsider. It has also managed to play around

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<sup>166</sup> Documentary, Fighting for Rights. Zimbabwe before the 2002 Election Pre-poll, DANIDA, 2002.

<sup>167</sup> <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2005/02/04/mdc-botched-final-push-civic-groups/>.

on the space that has given ZANU-PF a claim to rule, which is the struggle space. However, the MDC has also appropriated 'going to fight' as the basis for heroism, thus the focus is on those who leave for war, those who are masculine. This simply becomes a displacement rather than a change.

The foregoing demonstrates how citizenship is mediated in the Zimbabwean nation. Notions of citizenship strongly resonate with a naturalized patriarchy that is defensive, commandist and militarized. This kind of locus answers to the war situation that has been created. Participation in this war is rendered a citizen's obligation. Kizito Muchemwa & Robert Muponde (2007) point to the above phallic-centered model of Zimbabwean nationhood and citizenship by clearly averring that their book, *Manning the Nation: Father figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society* traces the dominant cultures of violence to the devious ways in which super-phallicism grounded on physical power, has colonized Zimbabwe's spheres of life, implanting fear in women, children, and subordinate masculinities. This has shaped Zimbabwean citizenship as premised on a naturalized black patriarchy responsible for state functionaries and naturalized femininities that construct the nation.

For Muchemwa & Muponde (2007:2), in the post-2000 epoch, "...outside the war ethic, driven by an excess of masculinity, individuals whose gender does not contribute to the war economy are under threat." This is because they do not serve the projected image of the Zimbabwean nation which needs masculine figures. This is backed by Sachikonye (2011) and Horace Campbell (2003) who relate how in post-2000, even some men were feminized and brutalized if they lacked the masculinities that matched those defined by the regime in power. I argue that Morgan Tsvangirai is one such character whose masculinity has been under erasure in dominant nationalist narratives.

The feminization of certain men, however, is not new in Zimbabwean politics. In the mid-1980s, Joshua Nkomo was feminized, labeled a coward and was satirized as having escaped Zimbabwe to Botswana disguised as a woman (Joshua Nkomo, 2001). People may be given certain available genders not because they are 'real,' but because doing so meet certain projects. Gendered behavior, in an obvious sense that seems

more exaggerated than Judith Butler's explanation,<sup>168</sup> becomes 'acted' scripts that are from time to time rehearsed rather than something seemingly 'natural.' In the above case, a dramatic effect that genders Nkomo, proving his weakness and feminineness in the face of his adversaries is created through 'dressing' him as a woman. While during the liberation struggle, *pasi ne/na...* was mostly used against the oppressive white regime and 'sell-outs,' from the 2000s, it has been used interchangeably to refer to Tsvangirai/Britain/the opposition parties and all those critical of ZANU-PF. Sell-outs like Tsvangirai are regarded as very weak, cowards and therefore unmanly. They are accused of 'selling' national bodies to foreigners in a manner that calls one to think of 'prostitutes.' In the same way that certain 'polluters' of the body politic have been excluded because of the 'dirtiness' of their feminized bodies, so have certain political 'traitors' been excluded in gendered terms because of the polluting effect of their 'presence.'

It is in the above sense that Zimbabwean nationhood requires *amadoda sibili* who are prepared to get the land, a symbol of nationhood by any means possible. In this case, violence is rendered a measure of manhood. This may explain why the likes of Chenjerai Hunzvi, Joseph Chinotimba and Border Gezi have earned respectability and responsibility from the state. These are the *amadoda sibili* required in the post-2000 where citizenship is seen in one's relationship with the land, a relationship which is only possible through violence.

### **Beyond Patriarchy and Imperial Hegemony**

In pursuing the story of origins and struggle and the constructions of citizenship and belonging in literary works, one finds intricate patterns of subversions and contestations. For example, in *Nehanda*, Vera contests and re-constructs the figure of Nehanda and her socio, religious, economic and political milieu in a manner that deconstructs and discontinues the official narrative that limits her to the spiritual realm while speech and political action are given to Kaguvi, a male medium. To this extent, Vera's narration of Nehanda revises 'patriarchal nationalism' by reflecting on the central, active and leadership roles played by a woman in the nationalist struggle.

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<sup>168</sup> See Judith Butler (1988).



This subverts dominant nationalist narrations that peripherize and domesticate women's participation in the struggle.<sup>169</sup> Nehanda's heroism has remained inspirational especially among local black women and those in the diaspora (Desiree Lewis, 2004). Lewis argues that Vera's positioning of Nehanda and the Nehanda myth demean "norms of aggressiveness, conquest, and domination, and instead celebrate values and experiences that are usually marginalized and inferior" (Lewis, 2004:193). In *The Stone Virgins* (2002), she mirrors how the hyper-masculinities 'instrumental' to nationalism lead a veteran liberation war cadre to rape. This subverts the iconography of the nation enshrined in dominant narratives.

Both Vera's literary texts, and indeed many popularized and trivial texts in the public domain such as songs and jokes explicitly reveal how dominant narratives of struggle in the Zimbabwean nation – which are conventionally political – lean towards and mask the national elite and Western pretensions with their highly militarized and macho-forms. However, these narrow narratives of struggle are subverted by numerous other struggles that are waged at the so-called apolitical spheres, widening notions of struggle and re/thinking and re/locating the a/political and problematizing citizenship and belonging.

It has been shown how often *chimurenga* discourses have been premised on combat and have been narrowed to a racial and colonial/imperial issue rather than people's struggle against prevailing forms of oppression. In addition, the grand narrations of *chimurenga* have and are largely imperial and masculinist and premised on power in the colonial sense rather than on autonomy. Commenting specifically on the Zimbabwean Second Chimurenga, Joseph Mtisi, Munyaradzi Nyakudya & Teresa Barnes warns us to:

...avoid a narrow definition of 'fighting' the struggle, which can privilege particular groups to the exclusion of the majority. Many ordinary people did not cross the border or 'take up arms' but made significant sacrifices for the liberation of the country. A broader definition is consistent with the philosophy of the nationalist armies that recognized the importance of the 'masses' in the struggle, aptly captured in the Marxist analogy of combatant fish swimming in the water of the people (Brian Raftopoulos & Alois Mlambo, 2009:155).

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<sup>169</sup> See Desiree Lewis (2004).

Chapter 2 and 3 have discussed how the definition of struggle or fighting in ‘military’ terms has produced militarized politics in Zimbabwe. The definition of ‘politics as war’ in some sense helps to create a relatively affective discourse deeply rooted in the past. Paradoxically however, the feelings generated by this have possibilities to ignite dissenting voices: since even the past is not pure and people were affected differently and showed diverging loyalties. Very different memories and solutions can be imagined through ‘the politics of war.’ There is, however, evidence that ZANU-PF was banking on the discourses of insider/outsider, with insiders including all those loyal and sympathetic to ZANU-PF while outsiders referred to all those in opposition of ZANU-PF. With the notions of ‘whiteness’ and ‘blackness’ often being redefined, to symbolically mark all those opposing ZANU-PF as white, some blacks became outsiders.

The above limitation of fighting to the military world fails to make sense in the Zimbabwean case where the war was not limited to the bush, but extended to the common people who had remained home. During the First Chimurenga, the figure of Nehanda showed that the struggle is not limited to combat, since those in combat need the support of non-combatant members in many ways. It is Nehanda, a non-combatant in nationalist narratives, who is accused of rebellion and sentenced to death by the colonialists. It is also Nehanda, rather than those who were in combat who became a very useful figure in the narratives of colonial resistance. Attempts to limit *chimurenga* to combat, or to the struggle against colonialism therefore, fails to express people’s actual experiences. In addition, it takes a Eurocentric, male-centred and violent formulation of origin and struggle, one that benefits ‘power’ rather than autonomy and being in sync with the everyday. Central to the above is how politics as war takes different forms for different groups and also how the politics of war is transcended.

The above is further illustrated by the current generation of Zimbabwean musicians who have defied state narratives that disassociates them with the struggle simply because they are ‘*maborn free*.’<sup>170</sup> To the youths, *chimurenga* is significant but they

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<sup>170</sup> A term used to refer to those born after the country’s independence in 1980 who are accused of lacking the past experiences and knowledge about Zimbabwe’s past which makes them possible betrayers.

give it new meanings and come up with their own heroism. Their passion for recognition and visibility in a world that often de-links them from the second war of liberation because of being 'born-frees' pushes them to locate and claim heroism in a different space although without putting away the warrior-jacket that under-writes *chimurenga*. This relates to Jacklyn Cock's (1989) study of militarism and military culture in South Africa. She argues that militarism pervades all spheres of life. Cock reflects on how social relations have been shaped around discourses of war and armies, how war is valued and legitimized in a manner that naturalize violence as a solution to conflict, and militarism as foundational to society. In her studies on militarism in Post-apartheid South Africa, Cock (2004) suggests rising levels of highly organized criminal violence, the growth of armed, private security firms and vigilante groupings, and individual reliance on instruments of violence as evidence of a highly militarized society. In Zimbabwe, the sense of this military warfare is expressed in songs by the youth. The military language that constructs the songs testifies the extent to which militarism and violence have been naturalized in Zimbabwe. The militarism is also expressed in the pseudo names that the young musicians give themselves.

Young musicians in Zimbabwe have appropriated struggle related names for themselves or their groups and the language of struggle is very common in their music. The likes of Maskiri (Alishias Musimbe), Nox (Enock Guni), Trinta (Freddy Mazivanjira) have taken on the name 'Mhondoro' for themselves. In Shona culture *mhondoro*, refers to a powerful ancestral medium or spirit. This is a different trajectory of associating with ancestors, spirit mediums and the Zimbabwean past that goes beyond the linear patriotic history. The likes of Jah Prayzah (Mukudzei Mukombe) and Sniper (Donald Chirisa) have made themselves known as 'Masoja' (Soldiers) while the likes of Guspy Warrior (Emmanuel Manyeruke) have taken the 'warrior' identity. There is also a group led by Winky D/Bigman (Wallace Chirumiko), that has taken the 'Ninja' (*maninja*) identity and the other led by Stunner (Desmond Chideme), which has taken the name *mashark* (sharks) which again are militaristic and macho. We also have others who have taken monarchical identities such as 'King Shaddy' (Shadreck Kwirire) and others which express invincibility like 'Danger Zone.' Names such as Sniper are highly militaristic and masculinist, while many others invoke the gladiatorial iconography of unvented constructs of 'traditional

African masculinity.’ The above names are highly loaded with militarism and masochism, it is clear that they point to a passion for recognition and inclusion in the *chimurenga* narrative, where they have been excluded because of their generation.<sup>171</sup>

To the above young musicians, masculinity and one’s place in the ‘struggle’ is measured by the number of fans one has and the ability to pull crowds during shows. Nevertheless, the use of these ‘military’ forms in the entertainment industry is a theatrical expression of other ways of ‘living’ *chimurenga*. It is a way of demonstrating the possibilities of redefining technologies of violence in a way that challenges the dominant linear forms and uses of *chimurenga*. The young generation’s ‘militarism’ ruptures the dominant and state-centric one circulated in Zimbabwean nation-building.

Interestingly, women also feature in some of these ‘warrior’ groups and so defy scripts that restrict the space to men. The late Chiwoniso Maraire, one of the finest Mbira musicians Zimbabwe has produced, has generally been regarded as being alienated from patriarchal Zimbabwean ‘traditions’ and ‘moral’ codes. Having popularized the *mbira* music instrument, which was traditionally used by male musicians, one of her songs, ‘Rebel Woman’ might be telling of her struggle to escape from confined identities of domesticity. Noting the controversy regarding her death and burial,<sup>172</sup> one suspects that her life was at loggerheads with authoritative patriarchal family heads. Chiwoniso’s corpse was denied entry into the Bluffhill family home in Harare; it was not allowed entry into the family rural homestead at Chakohwa village in Chimanimani. There was no body-viewing and speeches at the graveyard. Although stories of a highly contagious disease were given, these seem to be fictitious and cover-ups for the existing family squabbles and hostilities towards her.

I argue that what was feared was the contagious possibility of her ‘rebellious’ body. It can therefore be argued that the entire ‘episode’ around Chiwoniso’s death and burial was a high level ‘performance’ of both the Maraire family and the Zimbabwean

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<sup>171</sup> The names reminds one of the liberation war period when *nom de guerres* were prominent. These war names were compulsory to hide the true identities of soldiers as well as to portray certain war themes.

<sup>172</sup> <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/07/30/drama-at-chiwoniso-funeral/>.

nation's patriarchal control of women, something which Chiwoniso had rejected up to her death. Chiwoniso Maraire was regarded as a rebel in the family and was accused of lacking morals. Restricting her body to certain places and disallowing certain processes is a powerful dramatic and embodied demonstration of punishment meted out at those who refuse to conform to the embodied prescribed roles. Avoiding body viewing and the body's entrance into family spaces was de-linking Chiwoniso from her family so that her 'contagious' nature would not 'pollute' the living and 'disciplined' bodies within the family. The punishment even undermines the 'Shona' belief that *wafa wanaka*<sup>173</sup> which entails giving respect to dead bodies. However, with the 'imprisoning' characteristics of 'home' and 'family,' refusing Chiwoniso's body entry is ironically freeing bodies from liminal spaces, making her dead body continue to 'live' freely without limiting familial 'ties,' just as her living body had done.

Chiwoniso Maraire's case is reminiscent of the circumstances surrounding the popular pole dancer and musician Junior Lizzy Zinhu who is well known as Beverly Sibanda or simply Bev.<sup>174</sup> Her erotic and raunchy dance routines and strip teasing have made her defy the official Zimbabwean imperative to privatize women's sexuality as a means of protecting male honor and the nation's honor. Beverly's shows have attracted multitudes of spectators, yet they have also attracted the policing-authoritative criticism because of breaking national 'morality.' This is especially so in the context where Zimbabwean 'black' women symbolize "an uncontaminated essence, the custodian of ancestral traditions" that co-exists with them being symbolically coded with land and its 'purity' (Lewis, 2004:198). Thus despite earning herself a name as an entertainer, Bev has also earned an identity as a rebel against the Zimbabwean state's patriarchal authority – a national 'pollutant.'

It is interesting that sexually provocative dances which 'state-craft' is uncomfortable with are actually part of Zimbabwe's 'past' instruments of attacking colonial authority.<sup>175</sup> To the state, public figures like Beverly embody all social ills; they symbolize the cosmopolitan/westernized women who are vehicles through which the

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<sup>173</sup> A Shona saying imploring that once one dies, s/he becomes faultless.

<sup>174</sup> [http://www.pindula.co.zw/Beverly\\_Sibanda](http://www.pindula.co.zw/Beverly_Sibanda).

<sup>175</sup> The *Jerusarema* dance for example which was popular during the colonial period and involving some sexually provocative body movements was used to insult colonial authorities.

West ‘penetrates’ Zimbabwe. Failing to ‘police’ such women, especially by removing them from the public arena is read as a weakness of the state and a symbolic ‘invasion’ of the national body. This is why Beverly is frequently arrested by the police. The state’s suppression and distortion of the erotic as one of the most important sources of power for women is instrumental to the reproduction of patriarchal systems (Audre Lorde, 1982: 88).

Controlling women’s bodies and sexualities through public ‘acts’ that other citizens can witness is a very powerful metaphor of cultural surveillance and state control. It is also interesting that attempts to control Beverly have also been done by ‘powerful religious’ masculinities like Walter Magaya, the Prophetic Healing and Deliverance (PHD) ministries founder. Magaya made failed attempts using his financial and religious power to ‘tame’ Beverly’s sexuality by ‘boxing’ her in a clothing shop.<sup>176</sup> The policing of Beverly and moves to remove her from the ‘public eyes’ demonstrates a “systematic suppression of women’s sexual and erotic inclinations [and seeks] the conflation of sexuality and reproduction within a hetero-normative cultural and social matrix” (Patricia McFadden).<sup>177</sup> I argue that these masculine reactions to Beverly’s performances provide rich texts on Zimbabwe’s macho state-building projects and the symbolic configuration of womanhood for masculine political projects.

In many ways, the above case resonates with Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions* (1988) where one notices the ‘nervous’ conditions around Sacred Heart, a prestigious girls only Catholic mission. The presence of this institution is highly ‘performative.’ It is to make sure that girls are kept within the boundaries and confinements of an authoritative religious, colonial and patriarchal order so that they grow into ‘respectful’ white and black women. Nyasha warns Tambu not to go to Sacred Heart, as the nuns would break her autonomy.

Just as Dangarembga presents Tambu’s possible escape from Sacred Heart’s glaring authority, I argue that Beverly’s erotic dances represent subversions and resistances to a nationalism that imposes limitations to the freedoms of women in a bid to maintain

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<sup>176</sup> <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/01/28/prophet-magaya-transform-bevs-life/>.

<sup>177</sup> [http://agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/fa\\_2\\_standpoint\\_1.pdf](http://agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/fa_2_standpoint_1.pdf).

their symbolic identities in state-craft.<sup>178</sup> As McFadden argues, such limitations are made possible by re/producing and enforcing hegemonic ideas of sexuality and heterosexist expectations. McFadden goes on to say that cultural taboos and claims that view sexual pleasure and freedom as dangerous and irresponsible womanhood are buttressed. Following this line of thought, the surveillance on Bev's performances by state authorities relates to the fear of the political significance of the performances. There are close ties between sexuality and power, making sexual pleasure and eroticism fields of political significance.<sup>179</sup> Therefore, controlling her sexuality and policing her public performances and public life extends to the control of women so that they fit into a patriarchal frame of what they should be. It is essential to think of how McFadden's work on sexual pleasure as feminist choice broadens conceptualizations of *chimurenga*. McFadden hints on the connections between women's sexual agency and meaningful liberation, an attempt that can be seen as a feminist re/construction of *chimurenga*. Beverly Sibanda's efforts to underwrite and take charge of her own sexuality in the midst of state restrictions and prescriptions demonstrate an everyday 'script' of *chimurenga*, one that deviates from the 'formalized' version and vision.

Thus *chimurenga* is a narrative of people's everyday struggles and how they are invoked, remembered, waged or narrated is conditioned by the competing currents of the day both within individuals and in the broader society. This is in line with Thomas Turino (1993) who avows that *chimurenga* is expressed through numerous histories that are based on the subject positions and diverse experiences of the people involved. The title *She-murenga*, which Shereen Essof (2013) has used for her work on the Zimbabwe Women's Movement from 1995 to 2000 is also a move towards a broader and complex struggle in Zimbabwe that has points of convergence and divergence. In her acknowledgement to the text, Essof (2013: ii) claims;

The title of the book *She-murenga* is an attempt to extend and reclaim the word from its dominant meanings. It captures the spirit of struggle against

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<sup>178</sup> Beverly's resistance to the patriarchal control of her body reminds one of the characterizations of Lucia, in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and Shug and the later Celie in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1985). Lucia, Shug and later on Celie's control of their sexualities defy patriarchal authoritative figures and restrictions and register the 'provocative force' of the erotic in Audre Lorde's (1982) sense. Just like Beverly, Lucia and Shug are regarded as social 'pollutants.'

<sup>179</sup> See McFadden's Stand point, sexual pleasure as Feminist choice ([http://agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/fa\\_2\\_standpoint\\_1.pdf](http://agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/fa_2_standpoint_1.pdf)) and Lorde (1982). Uses of the erotic: The erotic as power.

oppressive forces be it for independence, democracy, gender equality, economic justice and ultimately in the context of this book making visible Zimbabwean women's struggles for rights, equality and lives free from violence.

The text inserts the various struggles waged by women in the national and citizenship struggles that are narrated by the concept of *chimurenga*. It also reflects how these struggles have been shaped by momentous engagements and disengagements with various parties.

The many subversive messages (often associated with radical women) that include popular song, erotic dances, feminist intellectual activism and autobiographical writing on embodiment point to the multiple ways of redefining *chimurenga*. They show that a conception of *chimurenga* that maps out a pure and uncontested struggle boldly standing free of battles within, battles after battles and appearing to portray some kind of society without struggles is fallacious. This is because it “fails to recognize that social conflicts mark the lives of African masses and are often played out in contexts that are not distinctly political but have political connotations” (Vambe, 2011:4). However, it is important to note that ‘*she-murenga*’ does not give rise to the likes of “Mrs Margaret Thatcher ‘The best man in the job’” (Ifi Amadiume, 1997) or in the Zimbabwean case “Joice Mujuru, ‘Father of the nation’” (Lene Bull-Christiansen, 2007), cases where women struggles are confused with certain women who enter into the male power-centered world through masculinization.

Vambe argues that a more realistic picture of struggle is evident in Oliver Mtukudzi's music, which is known as Tuku music rather than Chimurenga music. The distinctive naming of a genre in terms of a musician who has consistently refused to kowtow to the state is significant. This indicates that freedom music should not only be associated with predicable and politically overt understandings of *chimurenga*. This is especially possible with Mtukudzi's songs as the “...inherent and yet deliberate ambiguity and instability in his songs also enables the interpreter of his music to generate a subversive narrative of *chimurenga* that is constantly aware of the transgressive nature of the meanings it authorizes” (Vambe, 2011:20-21). Vambe goes on to point that Mtukudzi's songs show that there are deep-seated contradictions [*and gaps*] that need to be exposed within the struggles of the ordinary people. These contradictions are mostly felt at the level of the unevenness of political consciousness



among the masses. In this regard, Mtukudzi's songs construct discourses of *chimurenga* that critique previous and static ways of thinking about and narrating the struggle. Thus the questioning of unitary ways of conceiving *chimurenga* and his open ended rhetoric which offers no closure allows the audience to question how they constitute and are constituted in the *chimurenga* narratives as a way of assigning local truths and experiences and thus completing the social and political examination of current situations.

In Zimbabwe, as is the case in many other countries, the home and family are usually used in national myth-making to depict the structure of the nation-state. Thus the home and family are microcosms of the nation-state. Although the family and home are usually sited as zones of normalcy, where everything goes on smoothly, Mtukudzi's music reflects how the family and home are mutating and no longer living up to the previous expectations as comfort zones and havens for family members. Figured as such, the family and home mirrors a nation-state that is dysfunctional because of its hyper-masculinities and lack of love and care. Vambe (2011) notes that the song *Yave Mbodza*' (The pap/*sadza* has been undercooked), where parents are supposed to take care of and feed the children but instead, eat all the food while the children remain hungry has a political significance.

The song acts out the post-independence betrayal of the masses which is characterized by obscene economic and power disparities where the new class of the rich and powerful 'eats' alone what it is supposed to give to the people in whose name struggles are fought. The swallowing of the medicine meant for the child alludes to the older generation's refusal to pass on power, life, and knowledge to the younger generation, and therefore problematizing generational continuity under such an order. Although his discourse involves the family, what is considered a private space, Mtukudzi manages to use that same private space to engage the public space which is political. Thus, in the comfort zone of the private family affair, he manages to join Zimbabwe's succession debate which is highly political. The rigid distinctions between the private and the public thus become very slippery. It is vital to note how the family, a symbolic site of Zimbabwean nation-building is seen as an unsafe space by Mtukudzi, bringing questions to the meanings of nationalism.

Although Vambe suggests that *Ndakuvara* (I have been hurt) points to the possibility of the opposition party (MDC) defeating ZANU-PF in the 2001 and 2002 elections, it is also possible to think of it as reflective of ZANU-PF's growing irrelevance and tactlessness to the current challenges and struggles, making *kupingudza mombe* [taming the young bulls] a very challenging task. Thus the young bulls resisting toeing the line represent dissenting voices both within and outside ZANU-PF. Thus dissent becomes another version of struggle, a *chimurenga* relational to current contexts, showing that people do not just make a blind acceptance of a single version of *chimurenga*.

The implicit disorder in the African family that is repeatedly described in Mtukudzi's song meditates on the disfiguring and erasure of matriarchal values which used to characterize African families and social systems. The crucial matriarchal-motherhood based characteristics of love, care and harmony have been sacrificed by an invented and naturalized order that leaves the debaucheries of patriarchy unchecked.

Looking at the foregoing, an inversion of gender in African families is connected to a critique of authoritarianism and state hegemony and ZANU-PF aggression. The ability of Mtukudzi and others to complicate politics and 'perform' the political on the 'everyday,' away from explicit political spaces is important. The use of the 'everyday' is in touch with the basic lives of audiences and therefore very meaningful to them. At the same time, reference to the everyday avoids elaborate or open political confrontations, while at the same time, powerfully making sense how the everyday is linked to national politics.

## **CONCLUSION: BEYOND THE PERIPHERIES**

### **Depolarizing Repression and Resistance**

As a conclusion to the study, I summarize the dialectic that I trace throughout, viz-a-viz how repression is always connected to resistance. I revisit the small and large acts of resistance that are inevitably embedded in hegemonic and authoritarian acts and discourses and articulate the need to shift attention to some of the neglected areas in the study of nationalism as well as to view historical events as having meanings in constant flux. I focus on the need to re-conceptualize Zimbabwean nationalism by focusing on cultural texts and urge a re-reading of cultural texts ‘narrating’ Zimbabwean nationalism, bearing in mind the spacio-temporalities of these texts, their meanings and the identities of both text characters and text audiences over time and space. I find it prudent to turn to the ‘everyday’ – music, slogans, funerals, sport and humour – to explain the neglected richness of the ‘voices of the weak’ in Zimbabwe. The power that these have is not erased simply because of the ideology of the composer, since this is usually altered at different levels of engagement. I have suggested that it may be in popular culture and entertainment that we find the most incisive and ingenuous responses to authoritarianism that is entrenched in nationalism, gender and sexuality.

It is interesting that some of the women musicians are very ‘un-feminine’ and refuse the model of respectable domesticity that is associated with the modern urban Zimbabwean woman. There are points of engagement and disengagement with hegemony, reflecting the limitations of Althusser and Foucault’s theories that entrench the audience as homogeneous in terms of identity, information reception, meaning making and responsiveness. Thus, the audience emerges as exhibiting some significant power to negotiate certain positions during specific contexts as they interact with hegemonic texts, and ideology as an instrument is also accessible and useful to them rather than being exclusive to those in ‘power.’

### **Cultural Performances, Instrumentalization, Fluidity and Nationalism**

As shown in the study, the dominant narratives of Zimbabwean nationalism are scripted on a patriarchal template and this has been challenged by different parties at

particular moments. In following Norma Kriger (2003), I argue that the national liberation movements of ZAPU and ZANU were patriarchal and that the current patriarchal nature of ZANU-PF is a continuum of the past which is replicated and configured in the present. In the construction of Zimbabwean nationalism, especially in the new millennium, masculine military identities have been fostered in the defence of a threatened nation.

Noting the above, the puzzle that emerges concerns the dynamics between the performances of Zimbabwean nationalism in cultural texts and discourses on sexuality and gender. As I argue, popular cultural texts perform a particular project of nationalism and national subjectivity which not only tallies with that crafted by the Zimbabwean state but which is also saturated with conventional sexual and gender images, categories and epistemic regimes. The texts position citizens in relation to ‘family’ and ‘kinship’ (at a micro level) which then extends to the nation (at a macro level), giving rise to gendered and sexualized hierarchies. This kind of structure is reified by alluding to the organization in the animal world. The *chimurenga* notion which has been recurrent in the study conceptualizes struggle not as a past but as a present and a future that is rooted in and valorizes the past. The struggle is a ‘living’ thing – it is personified. Making the struggle alive is very important as it gives sense to discourses of enemies and friends and ultimately to vigilantism and ‘crushing’ of enemies and ‘sellouts’ along a paternalistic deployment. Notably, texts that narrate ‘pastness’ draw nostalgic and melancholic sensibilities that powerfully ‘invite’ people into a selected memory lane, ‘sensitizing’ them to have a moral debt to ZANU-PF.

However, there is also a way in which the same texts give meanings and reactions that are subversive to the ones initially meant by the state or authority and in this way, destabilizing normative categories. As indicated, especially in chapter 3 and 4, this is often evidenced in the voices of the weak, innovative sloganeering, vulgarized music, and the trickster strategy in statecraft as well as humour. It is this kind of discussion that brings a discursive approach, a shift from the dominant narratives to other ways of seeing and imagining, allowing a decentering of Zimbabwean nationalism.

The Zimbabwean case enunciates that “Popular culture... is not a cultural space where the values of the masses are completely defiled by the ruling classes or

simplistically affirmed by the “people” (Maurice Vambe, 2011). Recognizable is that in Zimbabwe, *Chimurenga*, as a narrative of struggle is a cultural and spiritual space instantaneously moving along a private-public thread modelled out of a shifting blend of ideological features where edifices of ideological control recurrently attempt to alter, redirect and include dissenting ideals, to avert the working through of their full implications (Toy Bennett, 1994).

### **Personhood, Location, Passion and Nationalism**

What has surfaced is that a struggle or *chimurenga* is not a simple term, but a very complex one. Although people may agree in the presence of a struggle and believe in its existence, there is no consensus as to when, how and where exactly it started and the same questions arise with regard to its end. Also, though people believe in the struggle, they do not experience it the same way or the same way all the time. More so, the causes and constituencies of the struggle, how and when to struggle, as well as the gains and losses of the struggle are problematic aspects. This complex existence of struggle is very characteristic of the Zimbabwean situation. Being the backbone of Zimbabwean nationalism, struggle or *chimurenga* is characterized by complexities, hence gives rise to a complex Zimbabwean nationalism. A *chimurenga* is defined by age, sex, gender, status and specific situations. It is about one’s current circumstances and passions and is therefore always a matter of urgency and has agency. Meanings are more influenced by personal circumstances and the existing passion. These meanings and passions direct one to alliances. This direction to alliances, however, does not necessarily build into a permanent binary construction of one’s enemies and friends as is supposed by reproduction theories. It is just a direction to an alliance that answers to the current circumstances and passions and accidentally increases the distance towards where alliances were non-existent or impossible. Once the circumstances are overcome and the passion fulfilled, new circumstances and a new passion emerges and old alliances are dissolved or partly dissolved and new ones surface or old ones are revived, offering some kind of erasure in Derrida’s sense.

Althusser’s theory reflects the ways hegemony works and helps us understand the role of hegemony in Zimbabwe’s popular culture. However, the work of hegemony has been shown to be very complex and having stakes and disadvantages depending on

situations. The subjects of the Zimbabwean nation's responses to hegemony have been too temporal and complex to suit Althusser's template. What has surfaced, however, is that the notion of *chimurenga* (struggle) is significant to Zimbabwean nationalism. However, how it is defined, articulated, and the moments of articulation is a complex issue. This leads one to locate *chimurenga* and therefore, Zimbabwean nationalism in the everyday narratives of people where constructions are relative to temporal personal experiences and passions or quests. A meaningful national struggle should not have a foreclosure, but should remain open and always in the 'becoming.'

Despite the resilience of popular and subversive struggles, state narratives have circulated limited definitions and perceptions of *chimurenga*, which in turn have produced skewed forms of citizenship and belonging. In Zimbabwe, citizenship and belonging is fabricated out of the Western micro ideal of the nation. It is patrilineal, power and hierarchically orientated as it is centered on the Western family epitome. It negates the pre-colonial matriarchal formulations that balanced masculinity and femininity and esteemed autonomy instead of power in its Western sagacity.

Contrary to the Western prototype, the matriarchal formulation is household centered. Zimbabwean nationalism, which provides the 'rite of passage' for citizenship and belonging, is problematic. Although it is talked of in terms of a Zimbabwean 'uniqueness' and borrowing from sensual stories of the nation and struggle narratives in order to interpellate subjects, it is largely informed by and practiced through ideas from the Western metropolis. As such, it offers highly violent, masculinist, and polarized foundations of citizenship and belonging. Stories of origin, narratives of struggle and discourses around land are fabricated timeously to conjure people's senses so that the rather elitist power project of Zimbabwean nationalism is masked. As I have shown, the senses are a significant field for affection, yet they are also temporary, spacious and elastic, hence meaning is always under erasure and negotiated through the everyday.

In Zimbabwe, song is a very important site where nationalism is re/negotiated. The role played by music as 'popular culture' in political campaigning and in the perpetuation, sustenance of political hegemonies and generally, in interpellating subjects of the nation is a very significant one. Music and its accompaniment of

‘song and dance’ are a common and popular channel through which hegemonies are re/constructed, re/negotiated and perpetuated. Music, as popular culture, has the ability to reach and influence audiences in a very persuasive manner that is unknown to other formal modes of communication. Songs, be they state-centric or songs of the everyday, also offer an arena on which to engage with Zimbabwean nationalism and therefore, problematizing its grand and narrow standing. The songs are re/invented to suit the space.

As has been discussed in the study, the general view of nationalism and resistance as enshrined in militarized forms and grand rebellions’ are not the totality of resistances nor the better forms or choices. In fact, highly militarized resistances are masculine and construct masculine national projects and therefore play to the present imperial gallery that ZANU-PF is heading. Better forms of resistances are waged by the ordinary people through the everyday. Music therefore, also offers a space where subversion and resistance take place in very complex ways. Song is part of the everyday where *chimurenga* is waged in a non-violent manner. Maybe even more significantly, it is part of the everyday, associated with leisure and entertainment that generates great pleasure and satisfaction. And when ‘the political’ engages the minds, spirits and psyches of oppressed people, it may provide surprisingly resilient outcomes in the face of even the most formidably militarized state.

In a nutshell, in this study, I avow that most works on Zimbabwean nationalism have focused on the cohesive, obvious and perhaps simplistic ways in which Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF have maintained power. More comprehensive studies have to be done on the non-coercive, intricate and insidious ways which have invited ‘willing’ acceptance for continued rule. In this study, I invite a re/thinking of Zimbabwean nation construction; of how ZANU-PF’s dominance in general and Mugabe’s rule in particular have been naturalized and made the ‘common sense’; of how Mugabe remains the chief ideologue of Zimbabweanness; of how despite Mugabe’s obvious brutality, a significant number of voters still adore him even in the absence of any physical force.

I have attempted unpacking the complex and interesting conduits that have sustained ZANU-PF and its system, notably appeals to the sensual that lead to a rather

psychological sense of indebtedness to ZANU-PF in general and Mugabe in particular. Interesting also, is how ‘dominant oppositional voices’ have, to a certain extent, failed to debunk hegemonic narratives of the Zimbabwean nation. I have also problematized theories of reproduction that mark hegemony as total and uniquely an instrument of ‘fixed’ elite groups. My major argument is that in the construction of Zimbabwean nationalism, texts – whether pro-state or anti-state – have had fluid interpretations and temporal meanings. Even the highly spectacular deployment of gender and sexuality to naturalize a nationalism informed by the ‘efficacy’ of a phallogentric power ‘cult’ is full of contestations and ruptures. The emanating ambiguities and temporalities allow repression and subversion to exist side by side, giving human agency. By and large, I locate popular culture or the ‘everyday’ as a rich, interesting and fluid ambience on which reproduction, subversion and resistance are negotiated.



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## **Appendix A: Main Song Lyrics**

### **Song 1: Muri Musoja (You are a Soldier/Warrior) Mbare Chimurenga Choir**

*Painorira painorira musango;  
Hoo VaMugabe muri musoja musatyé  
Ve Zimbabwe takatsemura dombo;  
Ve Zimbabwe takatora mkombe;  
Mkombe wacho wekutora ivhu  
Hoo tinotenda magamba  
Tinotenda magamba emuno muZimbabwe.  
Hoo pa Chimoio pane dhamu reropa revana.  
Hoo pa Nyadzonia pane dhamu reropa revana  
Kana ndichiti magamba handireve chigamba,  
Ndinoreva magamba emuno muZimbabwe  
Kana ndichiti Nehanda handireve kahanda,  
Ndinoreva Nehanda mudzimu mukuru muZimbabwe  
Hoo pa Chinhoyi pane dhamu reropa revana  
Uko kuMboroma kune dhamu reropa revana  
VaMugabe, murimusoja,  
Musambotya,  
Ndimwi chete makagona kutsigira, kutorwa kweivhu,  
Saka isu vana veZimbabwe,  
Takakutsigirai,  
Ivhu rakafirwa nevana  
PaChimoio, paNyadzonya,  
NokuZambia chaiko,  
Mumakomo vana vakasaramo,  
Kurikutsigira kutorwa kweivhu*

[Honorable Mugabe, when the war takes off fear not, you are a soldier. As Zimbabweans, we broke the record; we set the pace for land repossession. We thank our heroes for their sacrifices, many lost their lives. Mr Mugabe you are the one and only, who supported, the repossession of land, so we the children of Zimbabwe, are in full support of you. At Chimoio, Nyadzonya, even in Zambia, on the mountains, children perished defending the land].

### **Song 2: Hondo (War) Happison Mabika and Patience Takaona (Dread Reckless and Sister Fearless)**

*Zvatakanga tarwa hondo yechimurenga wani  
Ko VaNkomo neZAPU yavo waivanetserei  
Zvatakanga tarwa hondo yechimurenga tapedza nhayi  
Tokumbira kuziva Tongogara akafa nei?  
Ko Gukurahundi wakaironga seiko wega?  
Tokumbira kuziva kuti zvakafamba sei  
Ko Gukurahundi wakaironga seiko nhai  
Tokumbira kuziva kuti pakafa vangani  
Zvaunogara uchingopopota hondo yawakaona wega  
Inga vana amai vedu vaikubikirai  
Zvaunogara uchingopopota sewakaiona wega hondo  
Inga wani vana sisi vedu vaikutandadzai  
Ko hondo yeminda, wakaironga seiko wega  
Wati wamboona kuti yakauraya nyika sei  
Ko hondo yeminda wakaironga Seiko wega nhai  
Wati wamboona here kuti yakatipa nzara sei  
Pandakafa nechando panguva yemurambatsvina  
Iwe vana vako vaiva varere mumba  
Ndikafunga vana vangu panguva yemurambatsvina*

*Misodzi yangu inoerekana yaerera  
 Tony Blair waunopomera mhosva yawakapara wega  
 Hwupfumi hwenyika hwakaparadzwa newe  
 Kuipa kweZanu, varume makakuona mega  
 Border Gezi naMahachi vakafa vasina kurwara  
 Mabasa eZanu, vasikana makaaona mega nhai  
 VaNkala vakauraiwa takangoyeva*

[Since the war of liberation had been won, why did you have to crush Nkomo and Zapu, how did Tongogara die, why did you plan Gukurahundi (the Matebeleland-Midlands massacres and how many people were killed? You always talk as if you are the only one who made sacrifices and suffered during the war and forget how ordinary people helped for example by providing food and you also forget how women were sexually abused by some guerrillas. Take note of the hunger and economic downfall caused by the chaotic land reforms and the suffering caused by ‘Operation Murambatsvina.’ Yet you blame Tony Blair for all your failures, and have turned the Zanu Pf party into a bunch of cold-blood murderers who go even to the extent of devouring own members such as Border Gezi and Mahachi]

**Song 3: What is a patriot? Raymond Majongwe**

*Is it about those who carried the gun?  
 What of those who were not yet born?  
 Those of us who were even too young to go and fetch firewood  
 What is a patriot?  
 What is patriotism?  
 Is it a fight for or an honour?  
 Who are the sell outs?  
 Who are the enemies of the state?  
 Who then are the patriotic citizens?  
 Is it about the messenger or the messaging?  
 Is it about the deed, the doing or the doer?  
 Does it solve historical, economic and social biases?  
 Does it unite or divide the nation  
 Does it enforce justice and prosperity?  
 Where is the school of patriotism?  
 Who are the patriots?*

**Song 4: Sendekera Last Chiyanga (Tambaoga)**

*Ivhu iri ramunoona machinda ndiro rinonzi Zimbabwe  
 Kana mvura ikanaya gore rino tichazadza matura  
 Iwe neni tine basa, rekushandira nyika  
 Zvinodadisa kwazvo, Ivhu ravaredu  
 Ngava gumbuke zvavo, vanewayaya, Isu tave kufara  
 Ndiyoka hondo yeminda, hondo yegutsa ruzhinji  
 Ndiyoka hondo yevanhu, Hondo yekuwana hupfumi  
 Huyayi tibatane nhasi, Tose tinzi Mushandira pamwe  
 Ndiyoka hondo yeminda – Sendekera  
 Hondo yegutsa ruzhinji – Shandira nyika iwe mwana wevhu  
 Zvinodadisa kwazvo – Sendekera  
 Ivhu rava redu – Shingirira iwe mwana wevhu  
 Ngava gumbuke zvavo – Vane waya?  
 Isu tave kufara – Tsungirira iwe mwana wevhu  
 Ivhu riye rauya – Sendekera  
 Rauya zvachose – Sendekera  
 Mhururu Zimbabwe – Sendekera  
 Vakuru gadzirai ramangwana, vadiki vawane basa!  
 Vadiki tarisai nhaka yenyu, vakuru maita basa!  
 Iye woye , Iye woye*

*Ivhu iri ramunoona machinda ndiro rinonzi Zimbabwe  
 Kana mvura ikanaya chete gore rino tichazadza matura  
 Shingirira iwe mwana wevhu  
 Tsungirira iwe mwana wevhu  
 Sendekera iwe mwana wevhu  
 Iwe neni tine basa  
 rekushandira nyika  
 Zvinodadisa kwazvo*

[This land that you see is what is called Zimbabwe. If rain falls in abundance, we shall fill silos with grain. You and I should work for the country's good; it gives all of us pride. They can be sad but we are happy. This struggle for land is one for and by the majority. This is a people's war, a war to gain economic wealth. Everyone should participate so that we are strengthened; this is the war for land, a war for the good of the majority. This gives all of us pride, the land is now ours. Let them be sad for they are mad, we are all happy that land we fought for has come, it has come for good! Zimbabweans should celebrate. Elders, should make provisions for tomorrow, the youth should witness what great achievements the elders have performed. Rain should fall so that we reap abundantly. Strive on Zimbabweans, be committed Zimbabweans. You and I should work hard for the country].

**Song 5: Agreement Last Chiyanga (Tambaoga)**

*Takabvuma kusainirana agirimende  
 Patakavhota takasainirana agririmende  
 Kuti mutungamiriri weZimbabwe ndiGabhuriyeri  
 Musatinetsa musatishupa maBhirishiti  
 The Bhuleya that I know is a toilet  
 Kuti ndishanye ikoko vanoda tsamba yokwakatsekera  
 Kuti vauye kuno havadi tsamba yokwakatsekera  
 Ende land tichangoitora chete muchida musingadi  
 Patakavhota takasainirana agirimende  
 Kuti mutungamiriri weZimbabwe ndiBobho*

[We agreed to sign an agreement, when we voted, we signed an agreement, that Gabriel is the leader of Zimbabwe, don't trouble us, don't harass us you 'Brishit', the blair that I know is a toilet, for me to visit them they need a letter from ..., for them to visit here they don't need the very letter, whether you like it or not, we will take over land, when we voted we signed an agreement, that the leader of Zimbabwe is Bob]

**Song 6: Rambai Makashinga' (Remain resolute) Tambaoga**

*Tade minda tirambe takashinga isu  
 Shingirirai, gadzirirai, rimai namasimba, tese tirambe takashinga, ivhu zvarauya  
 Murambe makashinga imwi  
 Shingirirai, gadzirirai, ivhu rava redu, zvino tava kutonga, Zimbabwe ndeyedu  
 Mumabasa murambe makashinga imwi  
 Shingirirai, gadzirirai, shandai nemasimba tichivaka nyika yedu, ivhu zvarauya  
 Makashinga  
 Rambai makashinga  
 Makashinga hoye  
 Rimai makashinga  
 Kohwai makashinga  
 Mukohwe pakuru  
 Ivhu iri  
 Takaritora nehondo  
 Ticharima neshungu  
 Tichashanda nesimba  
 Tigokohwa zvomene*

*Tigopfuma zvokwadi*  
*Mukohwe pakuru baba namai*  
*Kukohwa pakuru Zimbabwe*  
*Iro badza rima*  
*Hero gejo rima*  
*Bopa mombe mufaro*  
*Harvester iyo kohwa*  
*Ivhu nderako iri mwana wevhu*  
*Kohwa pakuru Zimbabwe*  
*Ivhu iri, takaritora nehondo*  
*Takaritora neshungu*  
*Rambai makashinga vana vadiki rambai makashinga*  
*Rambai makashinga mabornfree rambai makashinga*  
*Rambai makashinga vana amai rambai makashinga*  
*Rambai makashinga vana baba rambai makashinga*

[If we want land we should remain resolute, we should be perseverant, should prepare and put all our efforts into farming since we got the land and it is now ours, now we are ruling and Zimbabwe now belongs to us. Those who work should remain resolute, should be well prepared and work hard to build our nation since the land is now in our hands. We should be hard working and get bumper harvests, the land has been possessed after a struggle and we have to work hard to have bumper harvests and get wealthy. Here is the hoe, hear is the plough, yoke the cattle and start ploughing, get that harvester and reap, the land is yours child of the soil, remain resolute young people, the born frees, mothers and fathers]

**Song 7: Uya uone kutapira kunoita kurima** Andy Brown and Tambaoga

*Huya uone kutapira kunoita manhanga iwe muZimbabwe*  
*Huya uone kutapira kunoita zvirimwa muno muZimbabwe*  
*Aha kutapira, Aha kutapira, Aha kutapira, Aha kutapira*  
*South Africa uchakamirirei kurima mumunda mako?*  
*Mozambique usambofa wakatengesa ivhu rako*  
*Namibia kutapira kunoita kurima*  
*Zambia kutapira kunoita manhanga*  
*Africa usafa wakanyengerwa*  
*Tapi tapi tapi tapi*  
*Kubva kumabvazuva kumadokero*  
*Hapana kana chatinoshaya*  
*Zimbabwe temba nevhu rako*  
*Mozambique temba nenyika yako*  
*Vanoseka vasiye vaseke*  
*Vanotaura vasiye vataure*  
*MuZimbabwe takatobatana*  
*Africa kanhi takatobatana*  
*Mozambique ngatibatane*  
*Zimbabwe iwe kutapira kunoita kurima.*

[Come and witness how sweet farming is Zimbabwe, come and witness how sweet crops are in Zimbabwe, South Africa why are you waiting to farm your land, Mozambique never give away your land, Namibia, look how sweet farming is, Zambia look how sweet ....are, Africa never be fooled, from the North to the South, there is nothing we have in short, Zimbabwe trust your soil, Mozambique trust your land, Ignore those who laugh at you, Ignore those who criticize you, In Zimbabwe we are united, In Africa we are united, Mozambique lets be united.]

**Song 8: Gumbazvose (One who takes everything) Paul Madzore**

*Tererai tereraiwo  
Varombo tirimunhamo  
Nhamo yacho yavana Mugumbazvose  
Varombo tiri mugango  
Gango racho ravana Mugumbazvose  
Nyika yose vakatora pamadiro  
Nhasi vogovana pachavo pahukama  
Nyika yose vakatora pamadiro  
Asi chandaona chabuda hapana  
Zvitorozve vakatora pamadiro  
Mitengo nhasi vanokwidza pavanodira  
Paya dzimba vakaputsa pamadiro  
Vachiti vari pakuramba tsvina  
Gore riya vanhu vakauraya pamadiro  
Vachiti ivo kugukurahundi  
Nhasi uno nherera dzinochema  
Vehukamawo vanochema  
Varombowe tiri mugango  
Paunobuda chete unoona uri muguva  
Nhasi uno chembere dzinochema  
Nevarwerezve vanochema  
Nhasi uno zvirema zvinochema  
Nemapofuwo anochema*

[Please listen to our cries, we, the poor are suffering because of greedy and corrupt leadership. We are really in their roasting pan. They got all the land and businesses and distributed amongst themselves. However, there is no productivity and they increase costs of commodities and services as they please. They have also destroyed houses in the name of cleaning up urban areas, they once killed people in the name of wiping up dissidents and now orphans are suffering. The old, the sick, the disabled and the blind are all suffering because of these greedy and corrupt leaders].

**Song 9: Sabhuku (Headman) Clive Malunga**

*Ndakarima munda wangu,  
Ukadyiwa nemombe,  
Mombe dzacho ndedzamambo,  
Ndichaita seiko?  
Tine mutemo mumusha uno,  
Mutemo wokutanga mambo haatongwe,  
Mutemo wechipiri mambo haaripe,  
Ndichaita Seiko?*

[I cultivated my land; it was then invaded by the headman's cattle, what then is my recourse? The order of things in this village is that the headman is immune to prosecution, and also that he is immune to compensatory justice. In such a case, what options do I have?]

**Song 10: Andinzwi (I do not get it) Oliver Mtukudzi**

*Can anybody give an answer to my question?  
What is a hero?  
Do you have to die to be a hero?  
A national hero?  
To me Safirio Madzikatire is a hero*



*A national hero, our national hero,  
Yes I remember some of his lyrics in his plays, Andinzwi  
That's a hero!! There is a hero!!  
What a hero Mukadota!!  
He is a hero  
What a hero Mukadota!!*

**Song 11: Baba Nkomo (Father Nkomo) Hosiach Chipanga**

*Baba Nkomo vandibvunza  
Mandiita gamba, ko zvamandiradzika pano  
Mumwe wangu aripi?  
Baba Nkomo vandibvunza  
Mandiita gamba, ko zvamandiradzika pano  
Ndabalingi aripi?  
VaChitepo vandibvunza  
Mandiita gamba, ko zvamandiradzika pano  
Mumwe wangu aripi?  
VaChitepo vandibvunza  
Mandiita gamba, ko zvamandiradzika pano  
Chikerema aripi?  
VaTangwena vandibvunza  
Mandiita gamba, ko zvamandiradzika pano  
Mumwe wangu aripi?  
VaTangwena vandibvunza  
Mandiita gamba, ko zvamandiradzika pano  
Banana aripi?*

[I have heard voices from late heroes like Mr Nkomo, Chitepo and Tangwena, questioning the absence of their war-colleagues such as Ndabalingi Sithole, James Chikerema and Canaan Banana from the National Heroes Acre].

**Song 12: Tinoda kudeleta Machinja ose' (We want to wipe off all MDC members)**

ZANU PF rally song

*Delete delete delete  
Toda kudhilita maChinja ose  
MaChinja ose  
Toda kudhilita maChinja ose  
Delete delete delete*

[Wipe out all MDC members; we want to wipe out all of them].

**Song 13: Nyatsoteerera' (Listen carefully/Pay great attention) Mbare Chimurenga Choir**

*Nyatsoteerera unzwe kutonga  
Aaah muhofisi, muna Bhobho nyatsoteerera unzwe kutonga  
Unzwe kutonga nyatsoteerera unzwe kutonga  
Aaah muhofisi, muna Bhobho nyatsoteerera unzwe kutonga*

[Listen carefully and hear Bob/Mugabe's rule/power while he is in his office/on his throne].

**Song 14: Ndimi Mega' (You are the One/You are the Only One) Mbare Chimurenga Choir**

*VaMugabe  
Ndimwi mega baba  
Muri mukuru mukuru  
Pakutonga  
Ndimwi mega baba*

*Pakuronga  
Ndimwi mega baba  
Pakugona  
Ndimwi mega baba  
Muri mukuru mukuru*

[Honorable Mugabe, you are the one and only father, ruler, organizer and able person.  
You are magnificent]

**Song 15: Changamukai' (Wise up /Be Vigilant) Mbare Chimurenga Choir**

*Changamukai, changamukaiwo;  
Haya yei yere, yeha yeha, changamukai.  
VaMugabe varikutongawo;  
Haya yei yere, yeha yeha, changamukai.  
Ivhu redu takatora kare  
Haya yei yere, yeha yeha, changamukai.  
Changosara iwe chirimawo  
Haya yei yere, yeha yeha, changamukai.  
Baba Mugabe mamuka seiko?  
Haya yei yere, yeha yeha, changamukai.  
Baba Mugabe madoka chere?  
Haya yei yere, yeha yeha, changamukai.  
Livuka njani Baba Mugabe wo?  
Haya yei yere, yeha yeha, changamukai.  
Isu vana veZimbabwe, Ivhu takatora  
Chasara iwe neni ngatibatei mapadza tirime.  
Ivhu rakafirwa nevana pa Chimoio, pa Nyadzonia.  
Upfumi muno munyika tinahwo.  
Changamukai vana veZimbabwe.*

[Wise up, Mr. Mugabe is ruling the country, we repossessed our land and what is left is for you to farm. Good morning Father Mugabe, how has been your day? We took the land, now we have to work on it, our children made sacrifices for the land, our country has abundant resources, and we just have to be vigilant].

**Song 16: MuZimbabwe' (In Zimbabwe) Mbare Chimurenga Choir**

*MuZimbabwe  
Heee  
Tererai  
Heee  
Tauya  
Heee  
Tauya shuwa  
Tauya kuzosimudzira nyika yatakatora isu nehwushingi  
Toita sei?  
Kubatana pamwe chete  
ZANU-PF takabatana  
Tozviziva VaMugabe vari kutonga  
ZANU-PF takabatana*

[In Zimbabwe, please listen, we have come develop the country that came out of our bravery. Let us unite and work together, in ZANU-PF unity is paramount and we acknowledge Mr. Mugabe's leadership].

**Song 17: Nyika Yedu (Our Country/Land) Mbare Chimurenga Choir**

*Nyika yedu!  
VaMugabe ndivo vanotonga.  
Nyika yedu yeZimbabwe.  
VaMugabe ndivo vanotonga.*

*Ku Harare,*  
*Heee baba, vaMugabe ndivo vanotonga.*  
*Ku Bulawayo,*  
*Heee baba, vaMugabe ndivo vanotonga.*  
*Ku Masvingo,*  
*Heee baba, vaMugabe ndivo vanotonga.*  
*Kwa Mutare*  
*Heee baba, vaMugabe ndivo vanotonga.*  
*Beitibriji*  
*Heee baba, vaMugabe ndivo vanotonga.*  
*Ko ku Kwekwe?*  
*Heee baba, vaMugabe ndivo vanotonga.*  
*Ku Kadoma*  
*Heee baba, vaMugabe ndivo vanotonga.*  
*Ku Chegutu*  
*Heee baba, vaMugabe ndivo vanotonga.*  
*Ku Daruweni*  
*Heee baba, vaMugabe ndivo vanotonga.*  
*Ko ku Binga?*  
*Heee baba, vaMugabe ndivo vanotonga.*  
*Kwese kwese*  
*Heee baba, vaMugabe ndivo vanotonga.*

[In our country, Zimbabwe, Mr. Mugabe is the one who rules. He rules in Harare, Bulawayo, Masvingo, Mutare, Beitbridge, Kwekwe, Kadoma, Chegutu, Darwin, Binga and everywhere else]

**Song 18:** *Timhu*’ (Team) Mbare Chimurenga Choir

*Timhu ndikusetere timhu*  
*Heee ndikusetere timhu*  
*Pekutanga tarira pana aniko?*  
*Heee Pana Baba Mugabe.*  
*Pechi two tarira pana aniko?*  
*Heee Pana Mai Mujuru.*  
*Pechitatu tarira pana aniko?*  
*Heee Pana ivo vaNkomo.*  
*Hoo tongai makadaro*  
*Chimbo tongai makadaro*  
*Hoo mirai makadaro*  
*Chimbo mirai makadaro*

[I am setting up the team for you, first on line if Father Mugabe, the second is Mother Mujuru and the third one is Mr Nkomo. This is the team that I have set and no one else should join the game. These are the only leaders that should govern].

**Song 19:** *Makorokoto*’ (Congratulations) Mbare Chimurenga Choir

*Makorokoto matenderwa makorokoto*  
*Baba Mugabe makorokoto matenderwa makorokoto*  
*Kutonga Zimbabwe makorokoto matenderwa makorokoto*  
*Kutora minda makorokoto matenderwa makorokoto*  
*Mwana waBona makorokoto matenderwa makorokoto*  
*Baba vaBona makorokoto matenderwa makorokoto*

[Congratulations Father Mugabe, you have been given all the blessings to govern Zimbabwe and to repossess the land. Father Mugabe, the son of Bona, and Bona’s father congratulations for the role that you have been given].

**Song 20:** *Wasakara* Oliver Mtukudzi

*Bvuma ive*

*Bvuma chete*  
*Bvuma wasakara*  
*Bvuma waunyana*  
*Kumbera, chiiko kuchembera?*  
*Kuchembera mucherechedzo, wenguva yakareba*  
*Kuchembera ndizvo-ndizvo, nenguva yakareba*  
*Imi mai makwegura*  
*Hamucharugona machembera*  
*Makuraka musazoramba*  
*Nemi baba tarisai muone, mwana yava mhandara*  
*Makuraka musazoramba*

[Accept and acknowledge your old age, accept that you have lived long and can longer do the things that you used to do, mother and father, do not deny your old age, but embrace it].

**Song 21:** *Tipeiwo nguva yokuchema Gamba redu'* (Give us time/space to mourn our Hero) MDC Funeral hymn

*Tipeiwo nguva rokuchema gamba redu*  
*Hona rakapondwa*  
*Gamba redu*  
*Shuwa rakapondwa*  
*Tonde akapondwa*

[Give us time to morn our hero, our hero was murdered].

**Song 22:** *Anga ari Commander'* (He was an army commander) MDC Funeral hymn

*Anga ari commander*  
*Pavamutora*  
*Anga ari commander*  
*Ndosara nani*

[He was a commander, now that he has been taken away, who shall be guiding me?]

**Song 23:** *Iva Gamba* (Be a Hero/Warrior) MDC Funeral hymn

*Iva gamba*  
*Iva gamba utarise mhandu*  
*Iva segamba utarise mhandu*  
*Vana mai nana baba*  
*Musarambe makadaro*  
*Mukaramba makadaro munodyiwa nemunyati*  
*Zvekare ndezvekarezvakaenda naMugabe*  
*Iva segamba utarise mhandu*

[Be a hero and look out for enemies. Mothers and fathers, do not be fooled by the past, be vigilant].

## Appendix B: Image Sources

| Image | Title  | Sources   |
|-------|--|---|
| 1     | Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC as sell-outs           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <a href="http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-UOWiBGETxfg/UyxGi6ZFNvI/AAAAAAAAA PM/JGUTPJDZ8w8/s1600/sell-outs+pic.jpg">http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-UOWiBGETxfg/UyxGi6ZFNvI/AAAAAAAAA PM/JGUTPJDZ8w8/s1600/sell-outs+pic.jpg</a></li> <li>➤ Willems, W. 2009, pp. 132</li> </ul>  |
| 2     | ZANU-PF Election Posters linked to Land              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <a href="https://zimbabweelection.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/2379103021_4473d165ff.jpg">https://zimbabweelection.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/2379103021_4473d165ff.jpg</a></li> <li>➤ Vote Zanu pf. Our land our sovereignty. Cde R. G. Mugabe. Zanu pf</li> <li>➤ Punishing dissent, silencing citizens: The Zimbabwean elections 2008 pp. 60</li> </ul>   |
| 3     | Flush Them Down: The Only Good Blair is a Toilet     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ He has done all these things for you. Flush them down! The only good blair is a toilet. We thought you knew. March 9 and 10 vote for the people, vote for maturity, experience and wisdom</li> </ul>   |
| 4     | 'Mbare Will Never Be ZANU-PF'                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Screen shot, 'Mitsetse', Mhenya Mauro productions</li> </ul>   |
| 5     | 'Zimbabwe Shall Never Be A Chinese Colony Again'     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Screen shot, 'VeZanu', Freedom series production</li> </ul>  |
| 6     | Part of Soapstone bird curving returned from Germany | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Dewey, W. 2006, pp 2-3</li> </ul>  |
| 7     | National Heroes Acre (Zimbabwe)                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <a href="https://www.google.co.za/search?q=national+heroes+acre+zimbabwe&amp;tbm=isch&amp;tbo=u&amp;source=univ&amp;sa=X&amp;ved=0ahUKEwj-q7_y9qvJAhXD7RQKHbIZBOYQsAQIJg&amp;biw=1008&amp;bih=619">https://www.google.co.za/search?q=national+heroes+acre+zimbabwe&amp;tbm=isch&amp;tbo=u&amp;source=univ&amp;sa=X&amp;ved=0ahUKEwj-q7_y9qvJAhXD7RQKHbIZBOYQsAQIJg&amp;biw=1008&amp;bih=619</a></li> </ul> |
| 8     | Chibondo/Monkey William Mine Bones                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <a href="http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1372034/Zimbabwes-killing-fields-Mass-grave-600-bodies-shaft.html">http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1372034/Zimbabwes-killing-fields-Mass-grave-600-bodies-shaft.html</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/image-gallery/">http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/image-gallery/</a></li> </ul>                                |
| 9     | ZAPU Party Symbol                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <a href="http://www.zimbabweenewsnetwork.com/thumbna il.php?file=zapu_782007212.jpg&amp;size=article_medium">http://www.zimbabweenewsnetwork.com/thumbna il.php?file=zapu_782007212.jpg&amp;size=article_medium</a></li> </ul>   |
| 10    | Anti-Joshua Nkomo poster                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Screen shots, Panorama, BBC MCMLXXXIII.</li> </ul>   |
| 11    | The Mthwakazi People's Congress                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <a href="http://oeas.info/resources/mthz.jpg">http://oeas.info/resources/mthz.jpg</a></li> </ul>   |

|    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
|    | (MPC) Flag  |  |
| 12 | Tonderai Ndira: A Zimbabwean hero                           | ➤ Screen shots, Documentary on state sponsored violence against M.D.C members  |
| 13 | 'Zero to Hero' Advert                                       | ➤ <a href="http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/6835/888/320/Zero%20To%20Hero%2005.jpg">http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/6835/888/320/Zero%20To%20Hero%2005.jpg</a>  |
| 14 | The <i>Jongwe</i> (Rooster chicken/Cockerel) ZANU-PF Symbol | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <a href="http://www.thestandard.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/zanu-pf-card.jpg">http://www.thestandard.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/zanu-pf-card.jpg</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="https://adam1cor.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/zanu-pf-badge-c1985.jpg">https://adam1cor.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/zanu-pf-badge-c1985.jpg</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="http://allafrica.com/download/pic/main/main/csii/00021146:71a22e16c0553adc6f37e937dbd5da73:arc614x376:w1200.jpg">http://allafrica.com/download/pic/main/main/csii/00021146:71a22e16c0553adc6f37e937dbd5da73:arc614x376:w1200.jpg</a></li> </ul>  |
| 15 | MDC Open Palm Symbol  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <a href="https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/b0/Flag_of_the_Movement_for_Democratic_Change.svg/200px-Flag_of_the_Movement_for_Democratic_Change.svg.png">https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/b0/Flag_of_the_Movement_for_Democratic_Change.svg/200px-Flag_of_the_Movement_for_Democratic_Change.svg.png</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="https://www.newsday.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/mdc-t-stadium.jpg">https://www.newsday.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/mdc-t-stadium.jpg</a></li> </ul>   |
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| 17 | 'Bhora Mugedhi'   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <a href="http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/wp-content/gallery/election-posters-2013/zanu-pf-lest-we-forget.jpg">http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/wp-content/gallery/election-posters-2013/zanu-pf-lest-we-forget.jpg</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-7EaWIHYA80k/U707tUIP1jI/AAAAAAAAAkg/bKSIFi6PmKU/s1600/bhora+mugedhi.jpg">http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-7EaWIHYA80k/U707tUIP1jI/AAAAAAAAAkg/bKSIFi6PmKU/s1600/bhora+mugedhi.jpg</a></li> <li>➤ Screen shot, <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfUF-Mry7UA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfUF-Mry7UA</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="http://www.herald.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/campaigntruckinmarondera.jpg">http://www.herald.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/campaigntruckinmarondera.jpg</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="http://www.zimbabweelection.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ZANU-PF.jpg">http://www.zimbabweelection.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ZANU-PF.jpg</a></li> </ul> |
| 18 | MDC and ZANU-PF Football Metaphors                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <a href="http://cdn.24.co.za/files/Cms/General/d/2468/a4b2242b2b5b40e995b1ec32ec62f647.jpg">http://cdn.24.co.za/files/Cms/General/d/2468/a4b2242b2b5b40e995b1ec32ec62f647.jpg</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="https://www.newsday.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/mdc-t-stadium.jpg">https://www.newsday.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/mdc-t-stadium.jpg</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="https://www.newsday.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/zanu.jpg">https://www.newsday.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/zanu.jpg</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/zanu-pf-card.jpg">http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/zanu-pf-card.jpg</a></li> </ul>   |

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|----|------------|---|
|    |            | <p><a href="#">content/gallery/election-posters-2013/mugabe-circa-1980.jpg</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <a href="http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/wp-content/gallery/election-posters-2013/zanu-pf-lest-we-forget.jpg">http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/wp-content/gallery/election-posters-2013/zanu-pf-lest-we-forget.jpg</a></li> <li>➤ Screen shot, '<i>Same same</i>', Freedom series productions</li> </ul> |
| 19 | MDC Heroes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Screen shots, Documentary on state sponsored violence against M.D.C members</li> </ul>   |

## Appendix C: Image Inscriptions

| Image | Title  | Inscriptions   |
|-------|--|--|
| 1     | Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC as sell-outs       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Zimbabwe has no place for sell outs</li> <li>➤ Don't sell your country, quit MDC and return to the people. This is how Judas Iscariot –the traitor of traitors –sold out. Some white people, the British government and all traitors say: “If the MDC had not been formed, the land would not have been returned to the people.” What they are saying is similar to what Judas Iscariot, the traitor of traitors said, “If I had not betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, he would not have died for you!” Don't be a sellout, return to the people! On March 9 and 10 vote for the people: vote for maturity, experience, and wisdom. Zanu pf.</li> <li>➤ Tsvangirai and his sellouts think Zimbabwe is tea. Don't let him sell your birthright. Don't let him sell your heritage. Don't let him sell your soul. Don't let him sell your country. Don't let him sell your land. Zimbabwe will never be a colony again! On March 1 and 10 vote for the people: vote for maturity, experience and wisdom. Zanu pf.</li> </ul> |
| 2     | ZANU-PF Election Posters linked to Land          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Vote Zanu pf. Cde Robert Gabriel Mugabe. Defending our land and sovereignty. March 2008 general elections. Zanu pf.</li> <li>➤ Vote Zanu pf. Our land our sovereignty. Cde R. G. Mugabe. Zanu pf</li> <li>➤ Vote Zanu pf. With R. G. Mugabe, Zimbabwe will never be a colony again!</li> </ul>  |
| 3     | Flush Them Down: The Only Good Blair is a Toilet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ He has done all these things for you. Flush them down! The only good Blair is a toilet. We thought you knew. March 9 and 10 vote for the people, vote for maturity, experience and wisdom</li> </ul>  |
| 4     | 'Mbare Will Never Be ZANU-PF'                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mbare will never be Zanu pf</li> </ul>  |
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|    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| 6  | Part of Soapstone bird curving returned from Germany        |  |
| 7  | National Heroes Acre (Zimbabwe)                             |  |
| 8  | Chibondo/Monkey and William Mine Bones                      |  |
| 9  | ZAPU Party Symbol   | ➤ Zimbabwe African People's Union. ZAPU  |
| 10 | Anti-Joshua Nkomo poster                                    | ➤ Nkomo should be killed   |
| 11 | The Mthwakazi People's Congress (MPC) Flag                  |  |
| 12 | Tonderai Ndira: A Zimbabwean hero                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Gamba reZimbabwe</li> <li>➤ Tonderai 'Serge' Ndira. A hero of Zimbabwe. Assassinated 14 May 2008</li> </ul>   |
| 13 | 'Zero to Hero' Advert                                       | ➤ Zero to hero. Zuva rabuda- Ilanga seliphumile. Restore value in the month of our heroes.   |
| 14 | The <i>Jongwe</i> (Rooster chicken/Cockerel) ZANU-PF Symbol | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Zimbabwe African National Union. Z.A.N.U. (P.F.) membership card. Let us build Zimbabwe</li> <li>➤ Zanu pf will win</li> <li>➤ Zanu pf</li> </ul>   |
| 15 | MDC Open Palm Symbol  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ MDC</li> <li>➤ MDC. A new Zimbabwe</li> </ul>   |
| 16 | ZANU-PF 'Team' (Mugabe, Mujuru and Nkomo)                   | ➤  |
| 17 | 'Bhora Mucedhi'   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Team Zanu pf 2013. Lest we forget. Don't let them take you for a ride again, Vote Zanu pf. Bhora mucedhi. Ibholo egedini. Team Zanu pf. Mugabe Robert Gabriel. Zanu pf</li> <li>➤ Bhora mucedhi. Indigenisation and economic empowerment. Register to vote for Zanu pf 2013</li> <li>➤ Bhora mucedhi. Ibholo egedini</li> <li>➤ The herald</li> </ul> |

|    |                                    |  |
|----|------------------------------------|--|
| 18 | MDC and ZANU-PF Football Metaphors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 89...90...Game over</li> <li>➤ Give them the red card</li> <li>➤ Team Zanu pf 2013. Peace begins with me. Peace begins with you. Peace begins with all of us. Vote Zanu pf. Taking back the economy. Indigenise, empower, develop and create employment.</li> <li>➤ Indigenise, empower, develop and create employment. Team Zanu pf 2013. Our president. Vote Zanu pf.</li> <li>➤ Team Zanu pf 2013. Lest we forget. Don't let them take you for a ride again, Vote Zanu pf. Bhora muggedhi. Ibhola egedini. Team Zanu pf. Mugabe Robert Gabriel. Zanu pf</li> </ul> |
| 19 | MDC Heroes                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Tonderai 'Serge' Ndira. A hero of Zimbabwe. Assassinated 14 May 2008</li> <li>➤ Godfrey Kauzani. D.O.B:...D.O.D: 10-05-08</li> <li>➤ Cain Nyeve. D.O.B: 11-04-69. D.O.D: 10-05-08</li> <li>➤ Better Chokururama. D.O.B: 05-03-76. D.O.D: 08-05-08</li> </ul>  |

## Appendix D: Consent Letter from Solidarity Peace Trust

# SOLIDARITY PEACE TRUST

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24<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

### Re: Permission Letter for Tinashe Mawere.

This is to acknowledge that Solidarity Peace Trust has given permission to Mr. Tinashe Mawere, a doctoral student at the University of Western Cape, to use the visual material on its website for his thesis.

Sincerely,



Prof. Brian Raftopoulos.  
Director of Research and Advocacy.