

**Rural women as the invisible victims of militarised  
political violence: the case of Shurugwi district,  
Zimbabwe, 2000-2008.**

**Ngonidzashe Marongwe**



**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
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## DECLARATION

I, **Ngonidzashe Marongwe**, declare that **“Rural women as the invisible victims of militarised political violence: the case of Shurugwi district, Zimbabwe, 2000-2008”** is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Ngonidzashe Marongwe

September 2012





**In memory of my late dad, Robert Marongwe, and to Maleen Hoekstra**



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

## ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe was beset by militarised politically-inspired violence between 2000 and 2008. How that violence has been imagined in terms of its causes, memorialisation and impact has been far from conclusive. As a derivative of this huge question that forms an important component of the framing for this dissertation, and to “visibilise” the subaltern, so to say, and to visualise “history from below”, I ask how the women of Shurugwi conceptualise it. This question has also polarised Zimbabweans into two, broadly the human rights and the redistributive, camps. But I ask, what do either of these frameworks enable or eclipse in the further understanding of the violence? Deploying genealogical and ethnographic approaches centred on the rural communities of Shurugwi that analyse the historical, socioeconomic and political factors that have engendered human rights abuses from pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial moments, the dissertation problematizes both discourses and invites a much more troubled analysis.

As a way to complicate the reading and to attempt to open the analysis of the violence further, I draw on the theoretical insights from Michel Foucault’s theory on the relationship between power and war. Inverting Clausewitz’s aphorism of war as politics by other means, Foucault argues instead that politics is war by other means. This inversion allows for a nuancing of the connections between the violence and the Chimurenga trope in Zimbabwe. In this way, the labelling of farm takeovers and other force-driven indigenisation modes in the new millennium as the Third Chimurenga, I demonstrate, was not a mere emotive evocation, but was meant to situate the violence as the final stage in a sequence with, and in the same category of importance as, the earlier *zvimurenga*, that is the First and Second Chimurenga that targeted to uproot the colonial project. I thus argue that the violence represented, in a significant way, the continuation of war for ZANU-PF to retain power amid dwindling electoral returns. This mode further illuminates the deployment of the spectacles of punishment for the public disciplining of citizens to achieve their passivity.

Throughout the dissertation the central and animating question is to what extent were women the invisible victims of the violence? This question attempts to interrogate the political role of women in the violence. I attend to this question by privileging the narratives of women. Also, by articulating an Africanist feminist discourse that contests the dominant western one which atemporalises, universalises and fixes victimhood with females, this dissertation invites a re-looking of the violence in a way that locates agency at the site of performance. In this way I show that women were not perpetual victims, but were also important political actors whose actions, however small, greatly extended the violence.

To conclude, I propose the adoption of the “traditional” Shona practice of *kuripa ngozi* as a transitional justice mechanism to help stamp out the culture and cycles of violence and impunity that have scarred Zimbabwe especially from the late colonial to the post-colonial eras.

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# SHURUGWI DISTRICT MAP

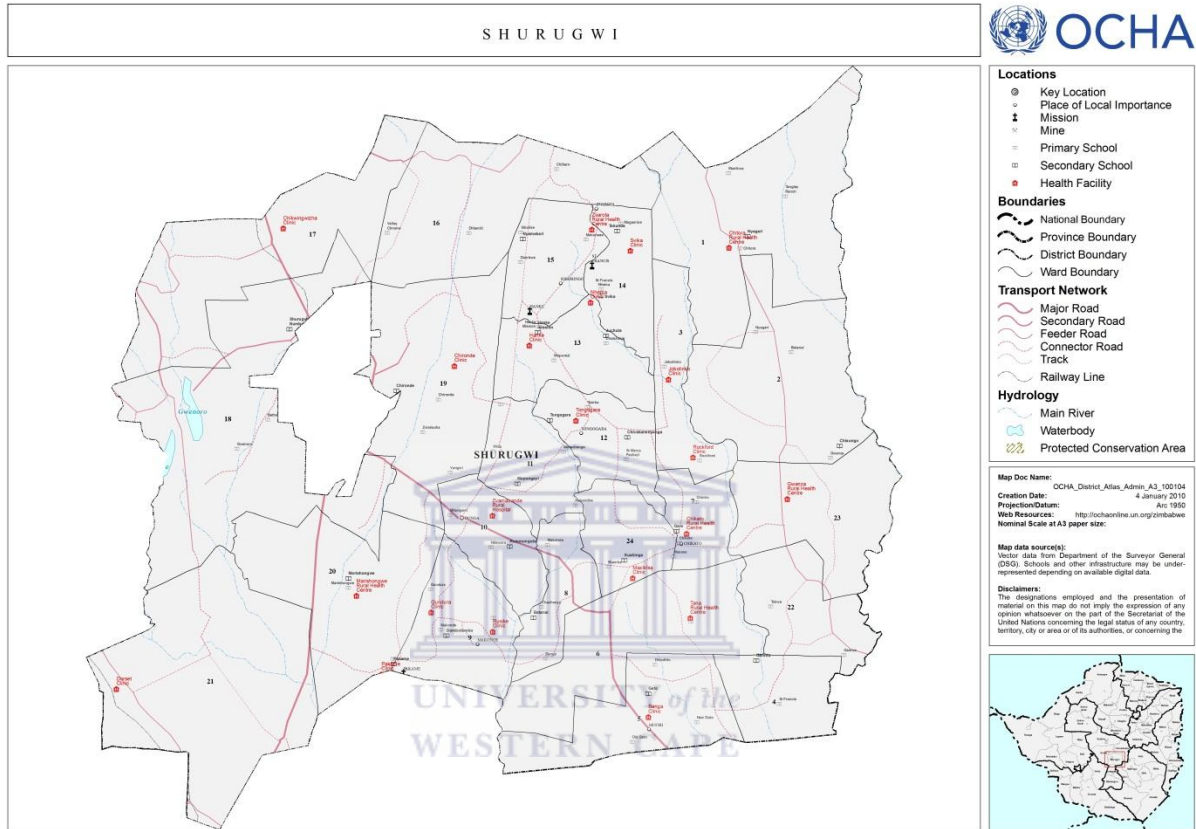


Figure 2 source: <http://ochaonline.un.org/zimbabwe/DistrictMaps.aspx>, Accessed 22 August 2012.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
AU	African Union
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CCR	Centre for Conflict Resolution
CHRA	Combined Harare Residents Association
CIO	Central Intelligence Organisation
COPAC	Constitutional Select Committee of Parliament
CSO	Civil Service Organisation(s)
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
CZC	Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FAWEZI	Forum for African Women Educators Zimbabwe
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GCN	Girl Child Network
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
JOC	Joint Operations Command
JOMIC	Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change

MDC-M	Movement for Democratic Change Mutambara
MDC-N	Movement for Democratic Change Ncube
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change Tsvangirai
MP(s)	Member(s) of Parliament
NAC	National Aids Council
NAC	National Aids Council
NAZ	National Archives of Zimbabwe
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NCC	National Constitutional Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation(s)
NYS	National Youth Service
PISI	Police Internal Security Intelligence
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
PTUZ	Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe
RAU	Research and Advocacy Unit
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
RENAMO	Mozambique National Resistance
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UN	United Nations
WOZA	Women of Zimbabwe Arise
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation

ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZFU	Zimbabwe Farmers' Union
ZHRNGO Forum	Zimbabwe Human Rights Non-Governmental Organisation Forum
ZICOSU	Zimbabwe Congress of Students Unions
ZIFA	Zimbabwe Football Association
ZIMRA	Zimbabwe Revenue Authority
ZINASU	Zimbabwe National Students Union
ZIPA	Zimbabwe People's Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZNA	Zimbabwe National Army
ZPP	Zimbabwe Peace Project
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police
ZTV	Zimbabwe Television
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement
ZZZICOMP	Zimbabwe Peace Project, Zimbabwe Election Support network and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights Independent Constitution Monitoring Project.





## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION: FRAMING THE MILITARISATION OF VIOLENCE.**

In July 2009 President Robert Mugabe, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara, the Principals in the Government of National Unity (GNU), dedicated three days, 24-26 July 2009, as days of national reconciliation and healing<sup>1</sup> following almost ten years of unprecedented politically-related violence. At the same time there were three co-ministers of Reconciliation and Healing in the GNU. This showed the seriousness of the problem of violence in Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2008.

Worldwide too, no subject, arguably, has been more dominant since the turn of the new millennium than violence. It has been expressed frighteningly as terrorism or as War against Terror in the liberal West, and, generally, in the Muslim world. But there are various other genres of violence witnessed since 2000. It has, for example, been manifest in the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Russian-Chechnya war and the Russia-Georgia war. In Africa, this has been exhibited through the seemingly unending Horn of Africa crises, the violent uprisings in the black townships of South Africa in the xenophobic attacks of 2008, and the recurrent service delivery protests. In Zimbabwe what has been called “the crisis”<sup>2</sup> was largely an exhibition of state violence spearheaded by the military and semi-military bodies.

### **WHAT IS VIOLENCE?**

According to the World Health Organisation, violence “is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a

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<sup>1</sup> See *Government Gazette Extraordinary*, 15 July 2009, General Notice 92 of 2009.

<sup>2</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008”, in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, eds, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, Jacana, 2009, p 201, for a nuanced discussion of the crisis.

group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation”.<sup>3</sup> A more gendered definition has been given in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, which says violence is “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”.<sup>4</sup> From the definitions, we can see that violence is caused from the outside, can be verbal or actualised, is injurious either psychologically or physically and it leads to, or is intended to produce, an involuntary action.

Psychological violence as separated from physical violence is not easily deciphered and it includes verbal abuse, maltreatment, personal abuse, detentions, solitary confinements, brainwashing and misuse of education.<sup>5</sup> Besides this, violence, as shall be discussed especially in Chapter One, and in many other sections of this thesis, operates under different discourses, including structural, instrumentalised and emancipatory, among others.

Stange says violence is normally associated with the following words: “abuse, break, cease damage, defeat, desecrate, dishonour, disagree, disobey, embarrass, erupt, excite, fear, force, harm, humiliate, impair, impede, injure, insult, interrupt, kill, maltreat, mar, murder, obstruct, perturb, prevent, punish, resent, spoil, stop, torture, thwart and wound.”<sup>6</sup> These key words imply that violence leads to a violation of basic human rights, such as the right to: life, liberty, security, to be protected from torture, cruel or inhuman or degrading treatment, protection of the law, freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, opinion, and expression.<sup>7</sup> We must be careful, however, not to limit violence to the human rights and legal discourses suggested by the terms above. These terms, however, suggest connotations that are harder to define but which provide

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<sup>3</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/evophp-URL\\_ID=36790&URL](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/evophp-URL_ID=36790&URL)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Johan Dageenaar, “The concept of violence” p 76.

<sup>6</sup> Stange quoted in Johan Dageenaar, “The concept of violence” p 74.

<sup>7</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/evophp-URL\\_ID=36790&URL](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/evophp-URL_ID=36790&URL)



useful insights with regard to my research. They also render the possibility of a more complex analysis of the violence in Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2008, which is why I devote a large section of Chapter One to theorising violence.

## **VIOLENCE, POWER AND STATE FORMATION**

In this section I intend to briefly introduce the discussion on the relationship between violence, political power, change and state formation. This is to situate the problematic of the Zimbabwean political violence in the broader context of worldwide history of nationalism, nation formation, and political change epitomised by the French and American revolutions, colonialism and decolonisation. The overall aim is to show that while violence seems to be in the negative, it nonetheless can, and has played, a significant political role in the history of mankind regarding power and state formation. The thesis of this section is encapsulated by Karl Marx's dictum that violence is "the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one," and violence is the midwife of "all change in history and politics."<sup>8</sup>

Regarding state formation and under the "war makes states" theory, Sparling forcefully posits that "[i]n medieval Europe, the primary cause of state formation was the violent expansion of empires and territories. The threat of wars compelled 'would-be' states to develop strong state apparatus' so as to avoid defeat."<sup>9</sup>

Following from the above, there is little disagreement that the process of European colonialism which resulted in the altering the political-social-economic geography of most of the Third World and the creation of new polities was a violent process. In this regard, the dispossessions, territorial conquests and economic expropriation were

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<sup>8</sup>See Karl Marx, quoted in John L Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, "Law and disorder in the postcolony: an Introduction", in Jean Comaroff and John L Comaroff, eds, *Law and disorder in the postcolony*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2006, p 2.

<sup>9</sup> Laura Sparling, "Death and taxes: The role of violence in the development of European and African state", *Undercurrent*, 2(3), 2005, P 37.

supported by force.<sup>10</sup> In terms of political administration, Mamdani asserts that colonialism was buttressed by the violent bifurcation of people in the colonies. The indigenous people were classified under tribes while the non-indigenous were classified as races.<sup>11</sup> The distinction went further at law where the indigenous groups were governed by customary law as opposed to the races who were governed by civil law, which determined these groups' claims to the state: that is customs and rights, respectively.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, the process of decolonisation that brought independence to the colonies was also underwritten by the force of arms, violent protests and other various forms of coercion against the colonialists including economic embargoes and diplomatic isolation.

In this thesis, I grapple with the significance of violence in the reformulation of the Zimbabwean nation, especially in the new millennium. To what extent was it emancipatory or progressive, and, to what extent was it also a project of the violation of human rights and aimed at the sustenance of ZANU-PF in power? These two questions largely frame the debate on the human rights and redistributive explanations for the violence that are frequently resorted to in explaining the 2000-2008 violence.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMING**

Throughout the large body of this dissertation I deploy the analysis enabled by Michel Foucault's theory of power to try to unravel the mystery around the state-sponsored violence in Zimbabwe. According to Foucault, power, in Nietzsche's hypothesis constructed in the mode of "relation of forces", is a condition of "struggle, conflict and

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<sup>10</sup> I will expand on this point in Chapter One when I discuss "Emancipatory violence". See for now, Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the earth*, Grove Press, New York, 1963.

<sup>11</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, "Political violence and state formation in post-colonial Africa", in [idc.open.ac.uk/files/Resources/20090911\\_031601\\_2992.pdf](http://idc.open.ac.uk/files/Resources/20090911_031601_2992.pdf), Accessed 13 February 2013, p 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, pp 4-8.

war.”<sup>13</sup> In an inversion of Clausewitz’s notion of “war as a continuation of politics by other means”, he says politics can instead be understood as being subservient to war needs and as the continuation of war by other means. In his words, “power is essentially war, a war continued by other means.”<sup>14</sup> In this modality, power reinscribes existing relations in “social institutions, in economic inequalities, in language, in the bodies themselves of each and everyone ...”<sup>15</sup> Thus power sanctions and upholds the disequilibrium played out during war. More importantly for this study, under this genre of power, all political struggles and all conflicts for power, with power and over power as well as peace have to be interpreted in the mode of the continuation of war.<sup>16</sup>

I also seek to connect this understanding of power to the broader analytical lenses of pre-modern spectacles of punishment<sup>17</sup> and “passive revolution”<sup>18</sup> that also inform the larger dissertation. In this regard, and in short, by treating the violence in Zimbabwe in the first decade of the new millennium as rooted in the Foucauldian notion of power relations enhances the understanding of the “spectacles of punishments” used for publicly “disciplining” citizens meted out in order to make them “passive.”

For me, this theory of power is crucial in the face of mounting evidence of ZANU-PF’s deliberate articulation of its politics of legitimacy to rule Zimbabwe in terms of its historic mastery of, control of, and “degrees in violence” mustered from the Second Chimurenga. It is moreover in the face of mounting evidence of the MDCs’ retaliatory and intra-party violence that helped fashion their political engagements. So for this research, the larger question is: to what extent is this understanding of power as a tool of war, and in the violence of war, as advocated in the ZANU-PF’s controversial Third

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<sup>13</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, edited by Colin Gordon, Translated by Colin Gordon, Leo Marshal, John Mepham and Kate Soper, Pantheon Books, New York, 1980, pp 89-90.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p 90.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison*, Translated by Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, New York, 1998, pp 16-34.

<sup>18</sup> See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, International Publishers, New York, 1971, pp 59 & 106-114.

Chimurenga<sup>19</sup> discourse, helpful in the understanding of the Zimbabwean violence in the new millennium?

Broadly, I contend that the militarisation of the state and the construction of farm takeovers as the Third Chimurenga was a deliberate ploy to justify the use of violence for the elimination of critics both within and without ZANU-PF and to settle scores.<sup>20</sup> The brutal tactics adopted were then crucial in the creation of conditions necessary for a Gramscian “passive revolution”. As is now widely known, this process was led by the militant war veterans who forcefully occupied farms and led in the intimidation campaign against all critics both within and outside ZANU-PF. Thus through this terror, fear, subjugation, elimination and submission were achieved. Through these brutal tactics, while the quasi-military institutions committed most of the violations, the military assumed a king-making role over who assumes political office.

Additionally, and as in true war situations, the rule of law was suspended. Regarding this, the cases against the invasions brought up by white farmers could not be upheld because of a combination of an uncooperative police force, an intimidated judiciary, a deliberate disregard of the court rulings, and a changed law on land matters.<sup>21</sup> There was therefore a “total strategy”<sup>22</sup> of sorts against the white farmers. Besides this multifaceted onslaught the violence also allowed, in another dimension, for the primitive accumulation of wealth by the well-connected, starting, firstly, with the land grabs,<sup>23</sup> and the subsequent industrial and firm invasions.<sup>24</sup> Thus through the sanctified

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<sup>19</sup> I say controversial because some would not perceive the violence of the period as such. The human rights discourse, which I articulate in Chapter One, for example speaks to this. As such, while I constantly use the term, I do not do so unproblematically.

<sup>20</sup> See also Lovemore Madhuku, “Law, politics and the land reform process in Zimbabwe”, in M Masiwa, ed, *Post- independence land reform in Zimbabwe*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Harare, 2004, p 137.

<sup>21</sup> See Lovemore Madhuku, *Ibid*, p137. See also, Jocelyn Alexander, “Squatters, veterans and the state”, p 100 & p 104. See also Nelson Marongwe, “Farm occupations and occupiers in the new politics of land in Zimbabwe”, p 156.

<sup>22</sup> I borrow the term, and not the meaning, from the apartheid’s multi-pronged strategy against African nationalists, to denote the coordinated efforts by the state against the farmers (and the opposition).

<sup>23</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008”, p 218, who contends that the best farms expropriated went to top ZANU-PF/government/military elites.

violence of the Third Chimurenga, another facet of passive revolution was achieved, that is, “accumulation from above” by the political elite, senior civil servants, and businesses aligned to ZANU-PF.<sup>25</sup> This is however notwithstanding the “progressive” aspects of the land redistribution that ensued, including correcting the historical colonial racial land imbalances.<sup>26</sup> Correspondingly, this should not undermine the historical struggle for land by communities before and after independence, which had led to farm invasions since independence.<sup>27</sup>

### **BACKGROUND: MILITARISATION OF VIOLENCE IN ZIMBABWE, 2000-2008**

Between 2000 and 2008 Zimbabwe saw an increase in the prominence of the military in the state. Zeff Sithole encapsulates this scenario very well by stating that by 2008 there was an army general running the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA); the head of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) was a former Brigadier; two High Court Judges were former soldiers; one of the ten provincial governors was a former soldier; a Permanent Secretary in the ministry of Transport was a Colonel; military personnel also headed the Grain Marketing Board (GMB); the Prison Service, the National Railways, the Sports and Recreation Commission; plus there were four ex-senior army officers in government as either ministers or deputy ministers. In addition, there were army officers at the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, while other army officers headed civilian operations such as Maguta and Garikai.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, former military chiefs led the

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<sup>24</sup> See Patrick Bond and masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, neoliberalism and the search for social justice*, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, Weaver Press and The Merlin Press, Scottsville, Harare and London, 2003, pp 132& 141.

<sup>25</sup> See Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos, “Zimbabwe’s unfinished business”, p 23.

<sup>26</sup> See Jocelyn Alexander, “Squatters, veterans and the state” for a condensed summary of the history of land grabs and desires in the post-independence era by the landless to acquire land.

<sup>27</sup> See Henry V Moyana, *The political Economy of land in Zimbabwe*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1984. See also Nelson Marongwe, “Farm occupations and occupiers in the new politics of land in Zimbabwe”, in Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen, eds, *Zimbabwe's unfinished business*, pp 156-157, for more on this.

<sup>28</sup> See Zeff Sithole “Is the army taking over?” in [www.afrika.no/Detailed/12358.html](http://www.afrika.no/Detailed/12358.html), Accessed 12 March 2009, for an in-depth discussion of the pervasiveness of the military in the state.

Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), the Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe (MMCZ), and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, there were some senior military officers who teamed up with politicians and ZANU-PF aligned businessmen and engaged in the mining of gold, platinum and diamonds.<sup>30</sup> Related, the commanders, together with senior ZANU-PF leaders, obtained huge tracts of land under the *jambanja* and FTLP.<sup>31</sup> Over and above there was formed the Joint Operations Command (JOC) that is credited with running a “deep state” and fomenting violence against the opposition.<sup>32</sup>

Thus by 2008, Zimbabwe’s political-military alliance had reached praetorianism,<sup>33</sup> and resembled the 1978 to 1980 Rhodesian state with the prominent role of the army and quasi-military organs, such as the Selous Scouts, the District Assistants and the Auxiliaries of Ndabaningi Sithole and Abel Muzorewa.<sup>34</sup> Other parallels include the glorification of the security or “coercive institutions” like the army, police, prison and tax administrators as well as the harnessing of the “ideological institutions” like schools, churches, boy scouts, radio, media and other information agencies,<sup>35</sup> for the benefit of the state. However, the main difference was that in the 1978-80 case the Rhodesian state was at war against the nationalist forces, while between 2000 and 2008 there was no war in Zimbabwe. In this regard, as Sachikonye says, the Rhodesian JOC, formed in 1966, coordinated the efforts of the army, police, intelligence and air force against the guerrillas. In contrast the post-1999 JOC sought to protect ZANU-PF interests that were

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<sup>29</sup> Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, “The military factor in Zimbabwe’s political and electoral affairs” in [http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/The\\_military\\_Factor\\_in\\_zimbabwe.pdf](http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/The_military_Factor_in_zimbabwe.pdf), Accessed 02 July 2011, p 19.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> See Roger Southall, “Too soon to tell?: Land reform in Zimbabwe”, in *Africa Spectrum*, 3, 2011, p 93, in [hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/giga/afsp/article/viewPDFInterstitial/.../487](http://hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/giga/afsp/article/viewPDFInterstitial/.../487), Accessed 18 June 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 47.

<sup>33</sup> See Francois Vrey, “Strategic culture of Southern African Development Community: Militarised pathways to Security” in *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol 9, No1, 2009, p 67, The African Centre for Conflict Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), who says praetorianism is achieved when civilian and military structures collapse into one and the army becomes the “de facto ruler”

<sup>34</sup> See Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans exist*, p 223, for a more elaborate discussion.

<sup>35</sup> Horace Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The exhaustion of the patriarchal model of liberation*, David Philip, Cape Town, 2003, p 18.

entangled with theirs.<sup>36</sup> However, both JOCs were meant to prop up unpopular regimes threatened by an ignominious ending.

In addition to the above, war veterans and National Youth Service Graduates or Green Bombers terrorised the rural areas together with ZANU-PF youths in a highly charged political campaign that was targeted at weeding out MDC supporters and the creation of “patriotic citizens”. This included, firstly, training youths in patriotism in national youth centres commonly referred to as Border Gezi centres<sup>37</sup> and then unleashing them on the population. Related to this, patriotic history had been introduced formally at Teachers and Technical colleges as a compulsory subject.<sup>38</sup> Informally, however, this version of distorted history had been started in the 1980s when ZANU-PF sought to downplay the contributions of ZAPU, Nkomo and more generally Ndebele-speaking people in the liberation of Zimbabwe.<sup>39</sup>

In serious ways patriotic history evoked the Foucauldian “discourses of truth” in the power-knowledge discourse. Here, there are “manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse.”<sup>40</sup> Overall, the truth is produced by power, where “[the powerful] must produce truth as we must produce wealth, indeed we must produce truth in order to produce wealth in the first

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<sup>36</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 48.

<sup>37</sup> Border Gezi is a late minister of Youth who was credited with the re-emergence of National Youth Training Centres in the post 2000 era, and in time both the trainees and the training centres were categorised in the public sphere as Border Gezi youths or centres respectively.

<sup>38</sup> Patriotic history was largely an essentialised and narrowed version of Zimbabwean history that focussed on the teleology of African resistance against colonisation from 1896-7 wars, but especially the Second Chimurenga and the centrality of ZANU-PF in the attainment of independence. See Terence Ranger, “Historiography, patriotic history and the history of the nation: the struggle of the past in Zimbabwe” in <http://cas1.elis.rug.ac>, accessed 12 May 2009.

<sup>39</sup> See James Muzondidya and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Echoing silences: Ethnicity in post-colonial Zimbabwe, 1980-2007”, *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol 7, Number 2, 2007, p 284.

<sup>40</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings: 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon, translated by Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham and Kate Soper, Pantheon Books, New York, 1980, p 93.



place.”<sup>41</sup> In this regard in Zimbabwe, the state pushed for an essentialised and narrowed version of the country’s history centred on ZANU-PF and the Second Chimurenga.<sup>42</sup>

The close alliance between the security forces and the ruling party was unhealthy for Zimbabwe’s democracy and gave ZANU-PF an edge over its opponents, especially the MDC. Basically, as Finer asserts, the army has three distinct advantages over civilians. These are: it has a superior organisational unity; a highly emotional symbolic status; and it has superiority in the means of applying force.<sup>43</sup> All these advantages, which relate to the efficient application of organised violence, were thus turned into ZANU-PF advantages against the opposition parties. One ought to state too that the military are trained in the use of violence to solve problems. Thus their pervasiveness in the state in Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2008 overexposed citizens to this attribute and profoundly altered perceptions. This is so because, as Catherine Lutz says, it leads to the invention of “societal beliefs and values” that legitimate “the use of force, [and] the organization of large standing armies ...,” and the resurgence of militarist nationalism. In addition, it leads “to the less visible deformations of human potentials into the hierarchies of race, class, [and] gender [...], and to the shaping of national histories in ways that glorify and legitimate military action.”<sup>44</sup>

On the whole it epitomised what Franz Fanon described as the “pitfalls of national consciousness,” where

the incoherent mass of the people is seen as a blind force that must be continuously held in check either by mystification or by the fear inspired by the police force. The party acts as a barometer and as an information service. The militant is turned into an informer. He is entrusted with punitive expeditions

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, pp 93-94.

<sup>42</sup> See Terence Ranger, “Patriotic history”.

<sup>43</sup> Finer, cited in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Nationalist-Military alliance and the fate of democracy in Zimbabwe”, p 53.

<sup>44</sup> Catherine Lutz cited in Ismael Lagardien, “The space of militarisation that haunts the US” in <http://www.thoughtleader.co.za>, accessed on 19 April 2009. Regarding Zimbabwe, see Horace Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe*, for an in-depth development of repressive militarism in Zimbabwe.



against the villages. The embryo opposition parties are liquidated by beatings and stonings.<sup>45</sup>

One can add that this resort to using the army for political gains signified the abuse of power by Mugabe as Commander-In-Chief of the defence forces and also the abuse of the military structures for the same ends. It also greatly extends the Foucauldian notion of politics as a continuation of war by other means. In this regard, based on its control of the army, and other state security arms, ZANU-PF, literally, waged a war on the opposition through these arms fomenting violence on its behalf. What is more, this fed into the institutionalisation of the violence where state institutions orchestrated violence in the service of the political agenda of ZANU-PF. As Sachikonye says, these state institutions “conducted acts of commission (harassment and arrests) and omission (refusal to prosecute in cases brought to them by opposition parties).”<sup>46</sup>

What should also not escape mention here is that ZANU-PF and the senior army structures shared a common political-military history rooted in the Second Chimurenga in which the senior military officials were simultaneously high-ranking ZANU officials.<sup>47</sup> This is hardly surprising when one looks at the fact that during the Second Chimurenga ZANU guerrillas acted as both military cadres as well as political commissars of their party, and at times were found in quasi-administration in the rural areas where they abrogated themselves the right to, for example, kill witches and sell-outs.<sup>48</sup> This conflation was carried into the post-independence era with several high-ranking security service chiefs openly declaring their membership of ZANU-PF and also threatening a

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<sup>45</sup> See Franz Fanon, *The wretched of the earth*, p 182.

<sup>46</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 19.

<sup>47</sup> See Knox Chitiyo, “Tracking Zimbabwe’s political history: The Defence force from 1980-2005” in Martin Rupiya (ed), *Evolution and Revolution: A contemporary history of militaries in Southern Africa*, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2005, p 354, who says that besides being war veterans, senior army officials were also members of high ranking ZANU-PF structures like the Politburo and the Central Committee, in blatant violation of the constitution, which states that soldiers may only be ordinary card carrying members without taking any office in political party structures.

<sup>48</sup> See Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Nationalist-military alliance and the fate of democracy in Zimbabwe”, p 55, and Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU guerrilla warfare*, pp 93 & 108, for an in-depth discussion of this. See also Alexander Kanengoni, *Echoing silences*, Heinemann, Sandton, 1997, p 22.

*coup d'état* in the event that ZANU-PF lost power.<sup>49</sup> A recent study on violence by Sachikonye has established that one of the key factors driving violence against the opposition is the presence of a large number of ex-guerrilla cadres in the state security organs of the army, police and CIO who were schooled in intolerance of dissenting voices and are cultured in their reverence for Mugabe.<sup>50</sup>

With this close strategic alliance it was therefore little surprise that the military was used as the primary instrument of policy as opposed to it being the last resort. Also, the army, to some serious degree, began to direct the national and political goals of Zimbabwe. This was amply demonstrated by the “big brother” pronouncements by the senior security officers in 2002 and 2008 on the suitable presidential candidates, and the infamous utterances by Brigadier-Generals in 2011, cited above.

The militarization project drew its authorizing ideology from ZANU-PF's triumphalist and aggressive nationalism that projected its central role in the Second Chimurenga. The ideology, also referred to as *Mugabeism*,<sup>51</sup> essentialised the centrality of the land problem as the *raison d'être* for the Second Chimurenga and African nationalism, that is, as the “first and only issue.”<sup>52</sup> However, nationalism, as Alexander, McGregor and Ranger have argued, in addition to the restoration of land, also embodied other ideals

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<sup>49</sup> See Martin Rupiya, “Contextualising the military in Zimbabwe between 1999 and 2004 and beyond” in Brian Raftopoulos and Tyron Savage (eds), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political reconciliation*, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town, 2004, p 81. See also *The Standard*, 29 May 2011, “Brigadier throws ZANU PF into crisis”, in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/local/29820-brigadier-throws-zanu-pf-into-crisis.html>, Accessed 1 June 2011. See also *The Herald*, 23 June 2011, “Brigadier-General Nyikayaramba responds to Tsvangirai”, in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=13369:generals-respond-to-tsvangirai&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13369:generals-respond-to-tsvangirai&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130), Accessed 23 June 2011. See again *Zimbabwe Independent*, 21 July 2011, “All eyes on the military ahead of Zim elections”, in <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/local/31762-all-eyes-on-military-ahead-of-zim-elections.html>, Accessed 25 July 2011.

<sup>50</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 13.

<sup>51</sup> See Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “The meanings of Mugabeism in the postcolonial African present: Beyond the polemics” Unpublished paper presented at the *Re-Imagining Postcolonial Futures: Knowledge Transactions and Contests of Culture in the African Present Colloquium*, organised by the Centre for Humanities for Research of the Western Cape, and The Ferguson Centre for African and Asian Studies of the Open University, UK, 8-11July 2009, UWC, Cape Town, especially p 14. See also Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans exist*, pp 236-298.

<sup>52</sup> See Ezra Chitando, in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans exist*, p 275.

such as freedom, democracy, and equality.<sup>53</sup> In addition, nationalism, for others, as Kriger and Nhongo-Simbanegavi have amply demonstrated, represented an opportunity to fight battles that were rather personalised. These included class, age and sex differences.<sup>54</sup> Further, others joined because of failed marriages or to escape parental controls.<sup>55</sup>

In the same vein guerrilla violence against the Rhodesian state was valorised as the only strategy to independence.<sup>56</sup> While military confrontation was primary, it nonetheless depended on the active support and sacrifices of the “masses” who not only bore the brunt of Rhodesian state agencies’ excesses, but also helped the guerrillas with provisions and information in a true role as the “water” in the Maoist strategy.<sup>57</sup> Regional and international geo-politics were again paramount in the attainment of independence. To this degree, South Africa’s policy of détente that was actively supported by the United States of America and Zambia, as well as the pressure on the Rhodesia state from Mozambique, Zambia Botswana, and Tanzania, the Organisation of African Unity, Britain and most Scandinavian countries, as well as the church and certain business organisations, coerced in a significant way the belligerents to negotiate for majority-based rule.<sup>58</sup> As Brian Raftopoulos has advanced, this narrowing “entailed the flattening of [other] issues.” And, this narrowing too paved the way for the exclusion, marginalization and deployment of violence against ZANU-PF’s “enemies in the form” of “farm workers, urbanites ‘without totems’, women and members of the opposition” in a bid to reclaim back the lost electorate between 2000 and 2008.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn Mcgregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory*, p 6.

<sup>54</sup> See Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s guerrilla war*, p 177.

<sup>55</sup> See Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better or worse*, p 32.

<sup>56</sup> See Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe’s plunge: Exhausted nationalism, neoliberalism and the search for social justice*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003, p 74. See also Brian Raftopoulos, “The state in crisis: Authoritarian nationalism, selective citizenship and distortions of democracy in Zimbabwe” in Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen, eds, *Zimbabwe’s unfinished business: rethinking land, the state and nation in the context of crisis*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003, p 217.

<sup>57</sup> See Joseph Mtisi, Munyaradzi Nyakudya and Teresa Barnes, “War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980”, p 155.

<sup>58</sup> Luise White, *The assassination of Herbert Chitepo*, p 18.

<sup>59</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, “The state in crisis”, p 217.

Related to this, Bond and Manyanya argue that this resort to essentialism and violence came because by 2000 ZANU-PF was faced with an expired national appeal against the background of increased hardships and an emerging opposition<sup>60</sup>, which led to its defeat in the February 2000 constitutional referendum. Thus, as they say,

in desperation Mugabe resurrected ZANU's most virulent strain of nationalist demagoguery, attempting as time ran out to simultaneously 'solve' the long standing land redistribution problem, terrorise supporters of the opposition and pass the buck for his own failings to the country's small white population, foreign countries, imperialism in general and the IMF in particular.<sup>61</sup>

More than this, the suffusion of the language of war with triumphalism created, in Allen Feldman's argument, spaces in which "claims of power are made and practices of power are inscribed."<sup>62</sup> These practices targeted the passivity of the citizens because of the threats to return to war. For many people the devastating memories of war were still vivid from the Second Chimurenga and, for parts of the Midlands and Matebeleland, from the *gukurahundi*.

*Mugabeism*, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni continues, was a complex formulation. On the one hand, it was formulated as a party and government under siege from foreign imperialism led by Britain and the United States of America. Because of this, it called for "sacrifice, courage, ability to fight, valorisation of war, manifestation of anger, preparedness to shed blood and defiance of the West."<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, it incorporated resonant Pan-Africanist and Third World and internationalist doctrines including Garveyism, Negritude, Marxism, Stalinism, Maoism, Nkrumahism, Nyerereism, Pan-Africanism and African neo-traditionalism.<sup>64</sup> Because it incorporated strong anti-imperialist, and third-world discourses, it had a large appeal generally among those who

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<sup>60</sup> Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's plunge*, p 74.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> See Allen Feldman, *Formations of violence: The narrative of the body and political terror in Northern Ireland*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1991, p 9.

<sup>63</sup> Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans exist*, p 280.

<sup>64</sup> Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "The meaning of Mugabeism in the post-colonial African present: Beyond Polemics", Unpublished paper presented at the *Re-emerging post-colonial futures: knowledge transactions and contests in African present*, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, 9-11 July 2009, p 4.

challenged the increasingly controversial, ambivalent and warlike Anglo-American nexus under Tony Blair and George Bush.<sup>65</sup> The Bush-Blair nexus or “Atlantic emporium”, while presenting its project as the “arbiters of human rights,”<sup>66</sup> was perceived to have had selectively embarked on an ambivalent agenda.

Locally, *Mugabeism* was targeted against the opposition MDC that was characterised as a sell-out party and an extension of Western Imperialism. The MDC’s articulation of the human rights discourse in a language similar to that of NGOs and the West, which in more ways than one, seemed in favour of the propertied whites and against the ZANU-PF mode of violent redistribution, brought this characterisation to bear. It then was linked with the regime change agenda of the Atlantic Emporium. In addition, the NCA, the MDC parent organisation, was funded by the Freidrich Ebert Stiftung,<sup>67</sup> and the MDC was also supported financially by the large-scale white commercial farmers who were opposed to the ZANU-PF-sponsored land reform,<sup>68</sup> as well as by foreign governments and aid agencies.<sup>69</sup>

Together with articulating militarism and restructuring the state into a quasi-military one, *Mugabeism* also incorporated various repressive masculinities. Speaking in 2000, President Robert Mugabe, for example, called for “*amadoda sibili*” in cabinet to fight the Third Chimurenga.<sup>70</sup> Primarily, *amadoda sibili* were characterised as those who were brave, those who were prepared to suffer and sacrifice the ultimate gift of their lives for the sovereignty of Zimbabwe. Horace Campbell states that this was generally part of ZANU-PF’s deformed masculinity, which led it to enter the DRC war, engage in violence in farm takeovers, and initiate virginity tests, among others.<sup>71</sup> Interestingly, the

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, “Sanctions regime strengthens Mugabe’s hand”, in *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 15-22 March 2012, in <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/international/34623-sanctions-regime-strengthens-mugabes-hand.html>, Accessed 20 March 2012.

<sup>67</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe”, p 206.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p 210.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, p 218.

<sup>70</sup> President Robert Mugabe speaking in 2000, see Sabelo Ndlovu- Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans exist*, p 158.

<sup>71</sup> Horace Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The exhaustion of the patriarchal model of liberation struggle*, Africa World Press, Trenton, 2004, p 18.

participation in the DRC war also led to the refashioning of this brand of masculinity. This was by way of adapting the brutal war tactics employed against their opponents in the DRC war in the suppression of dissenting voices in Zimbabwe, where they “brutally” suppressed riots and the opposition and engaged in the “primitive accumulation” of wealth.<sup>72</sup> According to Sachikonye, this occurred because the army began to perceive itself as a “part of the state establishment as well as part of a political hierarchy whose major qualification to rule was participation in the liberation struggle.”<sup>73</sup>

Under these oppressive and repressive masculinities which demanded that the state leaders seek opportunities to demonstrate that they were *amadoda sibili* or “real men”<sup>74</sup>, ZANU-PF embarked on pre- and post-election violence against the MDC structures. These attacks were meant to offer pre-emptive or intimidatory violence and witch-hunting or retributive violence,<sup>75</sup> respectively. On the whole, these attacks were in the form of “land invasions, violence, virginity tests, aggressive homophobia, and denial of citizenship.”<sup>76</sup> As a result, women, students, peasants, farmers, workers and generally opposition supporters were persecuted in an effort to re-establish the power base ZANU-PF had lost. This too speaks to Foucault’s discourse of power as a continuation of war by other means. In this regard, ZANU-PF sought force to reclaim lost ground by employing the military and quasi-military structures from around 2000, to stifle the rise of the MDC. The apogee of this was represented by the security chiefs’ announcement on the suitable presidents and ruling parties in 2002, 2008 and in 2011 in which the army promised force if their preferred choices lost.

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<sup>72</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens: 60 years of institutionalised violence in Zimbabwe*, Jacana, Auckland Park, 2011, pp 22-23.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p 23.

<sup>74</sup> Horace Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe*, p 18.

<sup>75</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 19.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p 23.

## MAPPING THE CRISIS, VIOLENCE AND GENDER

The militarisation of the violence largely emerged out of a crisis that engulfed Zimbabwe following the February constitutional referendum in 2000.<sup>77</sup> The crisis, however, had long term historical, political and structural underpinnings.<sup>78</sup> It was precipitated because the ruling party, Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), in power since independence in 1980, faced a potential demise, prophesied by its loss in the constitutional referendum to a coalition of civic organisations fronted by the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), and the rise of a powerful opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).<sup>79</sup> The impending parliamentary, local government and Presidential elections, all within the next two years, compounded ZANU-PF's precarious existence,<sup>80</sup> threatening an ignominious end for ZANU-PF's hold on the government. Indeed, the MDC won 57 of the 120 parliamentary seats, and made a strong showing in the Presidential election, where Tsvangirai got 40 percent of the vote to Mugabe's 56 percent,<sup>81</sup> and in the Council elections, albeit under adverse conditions. The harmonised elections in March 2008 nearly spelt this inauspicious end for ZANU-PF, which lost the parliamentary majority to the MDC, while its leader, President Mugabe lost the first round of the Presidential ballot. He was only able to reclaim office following the deeply disputed and bloody 27 June 2008 re-run.

These political problems were exacerbated by an economic collapse that was triggered by the failures of the economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) from the mid-1990s.<sup>82</sup> The major side-effect of ESAP was deindustrialisation which led to massive job losses and a decline in living standards.<sup>83</sup> It also led to reduced government-provided

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<sup>77</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "The crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008", p 201.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p 202.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p 203.

<sup>80</sup> See Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's plunge*, p 74.

<sup>81</sup> See <http://www.ascleiden.nl/library/webdossiers/Zimbabwe.aspx>, Accessed 23 May 2012.

<sup>82</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "The crisis in Zimbabwe", p 219.

<sup>83</sup> See David Moore, "Zimbabwe's triple crisis: Primitive accumulation, nation-state formation and democratisation in the age of neo-liberal globalisation", in *African Studies Quarterly*, <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v7/v7i2a2.htm>, Accessed 19 May 2012. See also Brian Raftopoulos, Ibid, p 14. See also Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's plunge*, pp 27.



social services, diminishing student support, collapsing urban infrastructure, reduced wages and standards of living, increased state repression, and corruption.<sup>84</sup> In the rural areas, ESAP also contributed significantly to a collapsing infrastructure, increased demand for land, and other resources by those who had been brought to the rural areas as they lost their urban employment.<sup>85</sup> Politically ESAP contributed to the rise of the MDC. The ZCTU managed to drum up a huge urban and to a small extent rural support base, largely by articulating the widespread grievances caused by the ESAP to mobilise diverse interest groups. These challenges also provided the ZCTU with the opportunity to coordinate workers' strike actions and stayaways, and link students and women's struggles and strikes to ESAP. Importantly, the ZCTU forged a discursive link between these problems and moribund governance. Following this it played a crucial role in the formation of the NCA that campaigned for a new constitution, and more boldly, its leaders spearheaded the formation of the MDC.<sup>86</sup>

The economic gloom was worsened by the awarding of gratuities to war veterans in 1997, totalling about Z\$ 4,5 billion, which triggered a 75 percent depreciation of the local currency on the "Black Friday".<sup>87</sup> In the long term, the loss of value of the local currency aggravated the rising the cost of living.<sup>88</sup> The situation was further compounded by the involvement of Zimbabwe in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) war that bled the country of up to US\$25 million dollars per month.<sup>89</sup> In addition,

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<sup>84</sup> See James Muzondidya, "From buoyancy to crisis, 1980-1997", in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, eds, *Becoming Zimbabwe: A history from the pre-colonial period to 2008*, Weaver Press and Jacana, Harare and Auckland, 2009, p 189 & p 194.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p 189.

<sup>86</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "Current politics in Zimbabwe: Confronting the crisis", in David Harold-Barry, ed, *Zimbabwe: the past is the future*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2004, p 10.

<sup>87</sup> See David Moore, Ibid. See also, Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's plunge: Exhausted nationalism, neoliberalism and the search for social justice*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003, p 38, who put the percentage at 74.

<sup>88</sup> See Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's plunge*, p 38.

<sup>89</sup> See Zachary Tambudzai, "Zimbabwe's military expenditure, 1980-2003: A study from the comparative SADC perspective", in *Africana Bulletin*, No 53, 2005, p 139, in [www.wgsr.uw.edu.pl/pub/uploads/ab05/7Tambudzai.pdf](http://www.wgsr.uw.edu.pl/pub/uploads/ab05/7Tambudzai.pdf), Accessed 20 May 2012.



recurrent droughts of the 1990s compounded the economic collapse, further worsening living standards.<sup>90</sup>

Following the constitutional referendum, which was taken in ZANU-PF as an inauspicious event, a series of events began to unfold. Most of these bordered on the adoption of coercive mobilisation, intimidation, threats, and compulsive reallocation of resources. The first of these was that ZANU-PF blamed the defeat on “imperialist forces”, that is white farmers, the whites, the MDC, and other “enemies” of the state for the defeat.<sup>91</sup> The other response was the ZANU-PF sponsored “spontaneous” farm invasions, generally called *jambanja*, led by war veterans and “land hungry” peasants.<sup>92</sup> These were later formalised under the nonetheless chaotic government sponsored FTLRP.<sup>93</sup> Under the latter model, land acquisition was compulsory, and legislation to control it involved rush amendments to the Land Acquisition Act. Thus there were immediate and rush occupations, an unclear policy of compensation for farm developments, a partisan selection of beneficiaries, and the process was characterised by fever-pitch emotions.<sup>94</sup> At another level, occupiers were at times removed and relocated to pave way for the “chefs” in government, ZANU-PF and the security service.<sup>95</sup> The oxygen and currency of the land reform was violence and threats of violence, which enabled the “invaders” to takeover and sustain themselves on the

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<sup>90</sup> See Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's plunge*, p 27.

<sup>91</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “Current politics in Zimbabwe”, p 13.

<sup>92</sup> While it is still a hotly debated matter over who was actually behind the farm invasions, it is widely accepted that ZANU-PF planned the invasions, but projected the war veterans as leading the process while it provided them strategic and material support at times using state instruments. See interesting discussions in Nelson Marongwe, “Farm occupations and occupiers in the new politics of land in Zimbabwe”. See also Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla veterans in post-war Zimbabwe: Symbolic and violent politics, 1980-1987*, Cambridge, University Press, Cambridge, 2003.

<sup>93</sup> See *Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee on the implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, 2000-2002* (The Utete Report), p 30.

<sup>94</sup> See Mandivamba Rukuni and Stig Jensen, “Land, growth and governance: Tenure reform and visions of progress in Zimbabwe”, In Amanda Hammer, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen, eds, *Zimbabwe's unfinished business: rethinking land, the state and nation in the context of crisis*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003, p246-247 and p 251.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p 247.

farms. Simultaneously, similar violent-based methods were also employed by the farmers and farmworkers to retain and at times to reclaim their farms.<sup>96</sup>

Over the years the coercive-inclined redistributive tactics were extended to non-agricultural spheres, like industries and firms, as well as to urban and rural communities for the political profit of ZANU-PF.<sup>97</sup> This was largely through the use of heavy-handed technology to disrupt workers, students and women activists' demonstrations. Alongside the reorganisation of the judiciary, the period also saw the conversion of the state-controlled media into a hegemonic arm of the ruling party, which was employed to advance the politics of ZANU-PF and caricature the MDC especially its leader. Fear was entrenched into people's hearts to the extent that they began to police themselves through the same media apparatus.<sup>98</sup>

Specifically, these acts of actual and threatened violence were targeted against known or suspected MDC supporters, workers organised under the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), women's organisations, especially WOZA, the student union ZINASU, and NGOs working on human rights issues.<sup>99</sup> These abuses, while continuous, were more concentrated around election times, especially towards the June 2000 parliamentary elections, the February 2002 Presidential, and the 2008 harmonised elections. On the whole, besides the violence, the other facets of the crisis included "[...] steep declines in industrial and agricultural productivity; historic levels of hyperinflation; the informalisation of labour; the dollarization of economic transactions; displacements; and a critical erosion of livelihoods."<sup>100</sup>

However, to treat this violence as a completely discontinuous process would miss its long term influences and complexities. A genealogy of the instrumentalisation of

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<sup>96</sup> See Nelson Marongwe, "Farm occupations and occupiers in the new politics of land in Zimbabwe", in Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen, eds, *Zimbabwe's unfinished business: rethinking land, the state and nation in the context of crisis*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003, p 170.

<sup>97</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "The crisis in Zimbabwe", p 218.

<sup>98</sup> See a similar argument in Mandivamba Rukuni and Stig Jensen, "Land growth and governance", p 245.

<sup>99</sup> See Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, pp 19 and p 23.

<sup>100</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "The state in crisis", p 202. See also, Zachary Tambudzai, "Zimbabwe's military expenditure", p 136.

violence for political ends from pre-colonial to post-colonial Zimbabwe has been established.<sup>101</sup> Revisionist historians have also reimagined the Second Chimurenga violence as not only between the nationalists and the Rhodesian state, but as embracing intra-nationalist violence. To this extent, violence has been viewed as one of the main currencies for nationalist mobilisation between ZANU and ZAPU, to settle jealousies between supporters, to fight opponents within the movements, and generally to repress dissenting voices.<sup>102</sup>

Following in the same trend, politically motivated violence in the service of ZANU-PF to “reclaim lost political ground”,<sup>103</sup> has been extensively used in the post-colonial era. To begin with, it was used in the *gukurahundi*, 1982-1987, to subjugate if not annihilate ZAPU.<sup>104</sup> In the 1990s, it was deployed against other opposition parties including the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) and Forum Party in the 1990s.<sup>105</sup> It was also deployed against workers led by the ZCTU, students and even peasants.<sup>106</sup> Externally, violence was also employed in the Mozambique civil war to safeguard the Beira corridor and simultaneously to prop up ZANU-PF’s ally, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) threatened by South African sponsored RENAMO. The DRC war, 1997 to 2003, was much more complex. As well as being a show case for ZANU-PF-military complex and repressive masculinity, it was used to prop up an ally, Laurent

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<sup>101</sup> See Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist*, manuscript, p 190. See also, Jocelyn Alexander, Joann McGregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One hundred years in the ‘Dark Forests’ of Matebeleland*, James Currey: Oxford, Heinemann: Portsmouth, David Philip: Cape Town, Weaver Press: Harare, 2000, p 1.

<sup>102</sup> See Terence Ranger, ed, “Introduction to volume Two”, *The historical dimensions of democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe: Nationalism, democracy and human rights*, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2001. See also Norma Krieger, *Zimbabwe’s guerilla war: peasant voices*, and Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better or worse*.

<sup>103</sup> Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos, “Zimbabwe’s unfinished business”, p 10.

<sup>104</sup> See Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor, “Democracy, development and political conflict: Rural institutions in Matebeleland North after independence”, in Terence Ranger, ed, *Historical dimensions of human rights, vol 2*, p 122.

<sup>105</sup> See John Makumbe and Daniel Compagnon, *Behind the smokescreen: The politics behind the 1995 General elections*, University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 2000, for a detailed discussions.

<sup>106</sup> See Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros, cited in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans exist?* p 200.

Kabila.<sup>107</sup> The same war was simultaneously a project for the “primitive accumulation” of wealth for the senior military- ZANU-PF cohort.<sup>108</sup>

The purpose of this dissertation, which is centred on an in-depth study of Shurugwi, is to establish the context for, and connections between, the 2000-2008 violence with these other earlier moments of violence. Shurugwi district has suffered its own cycles of violence. As argued in Chapter Three, Shurugwi suffered numerous rounds and continuous threats of Ndebele raids in the pre-colonial era.<sup>109</sup> Shurugwi also suffered the violence of British colonialism that led to land expropriations from the 1890s. Specifically this was from the Orders in Council of 1898 that extended “reserves” across the country.<sup>110</sup> Importantly, the Orders in Council besides creating land shortages for the Africans, engineered structural inequalities and structural violence. This was compounded by the imposition of the policy of “centralisation” that Alvord piloted in the district. This exerted tremendous labour demands as well as a lot of physical land usage and social reordering in its desire to “improve African agriculture” through intensive farming based on crop rotation and the use of agricultural demonstrators.<sup>111</sup>

Centralisation also involved the consolidation of all village crop lands into large arable blocs and the creation of communal village grazing areas. A row of houses separated the

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<sup>107</sup> See Zachary Tambudzai, “Zimbabwe’s military expenditure”, p 142.

<sup>108</sup> See Horace Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The exhaustion of the patriarchal model of liberation struggle*, Africa World Press, Trenton, 2004, p 18. See also Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens: 60 years of institutionalised violence in Zimbabwe*, Jacana, Auckland Park, 2011, pp 22-23.

<sup>109</sup> See JoAnn McGregor, “Woodland resources, ecology, policy and ideology: An historical study of woodland use in Shurugwi communal area, Zimbabwe”, Doctoral thesis, Loughborough University of Technology, September 1991, in <https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/>, Accessed 14 March 2012, p 78. See also, a discussion on Ndebele raids in neighbouring areas such as Chivi, in David N Beach, *Zimbabwe before 1900*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1994, pp 57-58.

<sup>110</sup> See Tapera Knox Chitiyo, “Land, violence and compensation: reconceptualising Zimbabwe’s land and war veterans debate” in *Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR)*, Vol 9, No 1, May 2000, Accessed 1 March 2011.

<sup>111</sup> See National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ), Alvord, E.D, “The gospel of the plough or guided destiny”, Unpublished Autobiography of Emory D Alvord Unpublished 1950, cited in Eira Kremer, “A clash of economies”, p 91. See also Chapter Two of this thesis for an in-depth discussion of this policy and its ramifications for the people of the district of Shurugwi.

grazing lands from crop farms per village.<sup>112</sup> Among the residents of Shurugwi, as in other communal areas where centralisation and its successor the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 were implemented, were perceived as attempts by the state to create “numerous petty rules and associated punishments.”<sup>113</sup> Later, Shurugwi was engrossed in the violence of the anti-colonial struggle during the Second Chimurenga. Besides the Rhodesia state versus nationalist violence, violence also included intra-nationalist conflicts between the two main nationalist movements, ZAPU and ZANU. Lastly, it was afflicted by the post-1999 militarised political violence.

On the whole, however, I attempt a two-tier analysis of the new millennium violence in Shurugwi. First, the thesis analyses the violence as a part of this continuous trajectory with the other earlier moments, particularly the Second Chimurenga. I contend that the Second Chimurenga fertilised and nurtured, among the nationalists, the ideals of the repression of dissenting voices.<sup>114</sup> In addition to the thread of intolerance, in the 2000-2008 period there was also a revival of Second Chimurenga traits in the form of *pungwes*, bases, and a ZANU-PF language that depicted a country at war.<sup>115</sup> In the same vein, the thesis contends that there was a continuous thread in the skewed resource allocation, especially land, that had caused pre- and post-independence land invasions throughout the country which had a strong influence on entrenching structural inequalities and on producing structural violence.

In the second tier, I try to look at the 2000-2008 violence as a discontinuous era distinct from other episodes. This is meant to enable a pithy study that disaggregates history into its specific and peculiar parts, and to contest the trope of the “inevitable-ness” of

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<sup>112</sup> See NAZ, Alvord, E.D, “The gospel of the plough or guided destiny”, Unpublished Autobiography of Emory D Alvord Unpublished 1950, cited in Eira Kremer, “A clash of economies”, p 91.

<sup>113</sup> See Wilson, cited in Michael Drinkwater, “Technical development and peasant impoverishment: Land use policy in Zimbabwe’s Midlands province” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 15, no2, Special issue on the politics of conservation in Southern Africa, p 295, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable2636804>, Accessed 14 February 2011.

<sup>114</sup> See also a similar contention in Terence Ranger, ed, “Introduction to volume Two”, *The historical dimensions of democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe: Nationalism, democracy and human rights*, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2001, p 2.

<sup>115</sup> See chapter by Jocelyn Alexander, “Squatters, veterans and the state”.

the resort to violence by ZANU-PF that the former teleological model proffers for the post-colonial period.

Broadly, the major distinguishing features of the 2000-2008 violence have been intensity and extensiveness. In this regard, up to 1 000 people were murdered, and unlike the other episodes such as the *gukurahundi*, millions more witnessed it, spurred it on, or were victimised across Zimbabwe.<sup>116</sup> In addition to this, as already highlighted, was the prominent role played by the military and semi-military bodies in the planning, fomenting, committing of the violence and in the abrogation of the political king maker's role. This latter feature has led many to regard it as militarised violence. Faced with this evidence, the question that informs the thesis is: what was the impact of the militarisation of the state on the 2000-2008 violence? The contention of this thesis is that the militarisation of the state and government structures had a huge effect because it "normalised" coercion through extending the reach of military-inspired coercive tactics, repressive politics, as well as command-based economic management.

The understanding of this violence has also split academics into two polar, totalising, grand narratives. These are based on the human rights approach and the school of thought that advances the positive attributes of the violence, and articulate it in redistributive and emancipatory terms. Sketchily, the redistributive paradigm argues that the violence was necessary to correct colonial inequalities in land and other forms of resource allocation.<sup>117</sup> On the other hand, the human rights discourse contends that the violence was used in a repressive way that violated human and property rights.<sup>118</sup>

Using empirical research from Shurugwi, the dissertation troubles this binary polarity. In sum, it avers that while both schools are illuminating and have laid important

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<sup>116</sup> See Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 87.

<sup>117</sup> See arguments by: Slavoj Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, Picador, New York, 2008, p 1; and Mahmood Mamdani, "Lessons of Zimbabwe" in *London Review of books*, 04 December 2008.

<sup>118</sup> See for example: Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos, "Zimbabwe's unfinished business: Rethinking land, state and nation", p 1, Amanda Hammar, et al, eds; *Zimbabwe's unfinished business*, Harare, 2003; Brian Raftopoulos, "The crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008", in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, eds, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, 2009, p201; and Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens: 60 years of institutionalised violence in Zimbabwe*, Jacana, Auckland Park, 2011, p xviii.

foundations to imagine the violence and have laid the groundwork for further studies on violence, on their own, they nonetheless are rather simplistic as readings of the violence. Thus, as Hegel would perhaps say, both should be “*respected*” and simultaneously “*despised*.”<sup>119</sup> I hope to *respect* and *despise* them through taking a long term perspective of the violence in Shurugwi. First, I analyse the impact of the collision of the genuine long term structural inequalities that produced structural violence that demanded redistribution. These were largely around skewed land and other resource ownership. In addition, I intend to address the short term political objectives of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, other indigenous modes and the military-style operations that resulted in serious human rights violations in producing the violence. The major focus will be to explain the impact of the collision of the long term and “genuine” with the conjunctural “politically-inclined” programmes from 2000. By doing this, I hope to proffer a more inclusive depiction, a sort of Homi Bhabha “third space”<sup>120</sup> of the violence, that in the language of Woodward, Hayes and Minkley, is one that “... recognise[s] ... complexities and, as it were, other routes beyond binarisms.”<sup>121</sup>

This thesis also tries to historicise the gender dimensions of the violence in Zimbabwe by looking at the debates on pre-colonial forms of African governance and the position of women. Added to this, I also intend to look at the importance of the Second Chimurenga in entrenching the oppression of, and violence against, women. This thread, I contend, continued into the post-independence conflict eras. On the whole, I intend to trouble the universalised and atemporal victimhood of women in Zimbabwe as set out in much of the western feminist discourse. Rather, I argue along the lines of emerging

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<sup>119</sup> See Hegel, cited in Theodor W Adorno, *History and Freedom: Lectures 1964-1965*, edited by Rolf Tiedmann, Trans by Rodney Livingstone, Polity, 2006, p 93.

<sup>120</sup> See Homi Bhabha, cited in Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley, “Introduction”, p xxx.

<sup>121</sup> See Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley, eds, “Introduction”, *Deep HiStories: gender and colonialism in Southern Africa*, Rodopi, Amsterdam and New York, 2002, p xxv.



Africanist feminism and contend for a more temporally and spatially-based gendered femininities and masculinities.<sup>122</sup>

## THE CHOICE OF SHURUGWI

Shurugwi district was selected for this research because, firstly, it was one of the eighty-one constituencies that witnessed immense violence in the period 2000-2008.<sup>123</sup> Secondly, the district provided conditions for a historical analysis of the violence. It has an old communal area that faced a number of problems, including especially acute land problems<sup>124</sup> that existed tendentiously alongside large tracts of land under commercial farms. In addition to this, the district also underwent a lot of violence ascribed to the reordering in terms of land ownership, in the 2000s.

Related to this, political conditions in the district continued to be influenced by the strong emotions emanating from the conflicting legacies of the late heads of the Rhodesia Front government and armed forces, Ian Smith, and the late ZANLA supremo, Josiah Tongogara, who both hailed from the district. Thirdly, I was born, brought up, worked, and still live in the district. It was especially during my teaching days in Shurugwi rural district, between 2000 and 2003, that I witnessed some violence. This added to my interest to try to dig deeper to understand that violence, but from the perspective of women who, as shown in Chapters Three and Four, constituted not only the bulk of the residents, but also the bulk of the victims and perpetrators of, the violence. As such I combine personal interest, lived experience and research curiosity as a basis for my interest into the violence.

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<sup>122</sup> See Oyeronke Oyewumi, "Visualising the body: Western theories and African subjects", in Oyeronke Oyewumi, ed, *African Gender Studies: A reader*, Pelgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, 2005.

<sup>123</sup> See Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *Who will dare begin the process of recovering the truth? Vol 2*, 2010, cited in [http://www.hrforum.com/special\\_hrru/outreach-report-07-10.pdf](http://www.hrforum.com/special_hrru/outreach-report-07-10.pdf), Accessed 19 May 2011, p 13.

<sup>124</sup> See Eira Kramer, "A clash of economies: early centralisation efforts in colonial Zimbabwe, 1929-1935", in *ZAMBEZIA*, XXV, (i).



What also struck me was that despite witnessing so much violence, many human rights reports did not record much from Shurugwi. Instead they focused on Matebeleland and Mashonaland areas. Politically Matebeleland had a special appeal because it had witnessed the murderous *gukurahundi* in the 1980s, while rural Mashonaland's shifting political allegiance from ZANU-PF to the MDC attracted their focus.

As an insider, the above familiarity provided valuable background knowledge about situations, places and people which assisted in avoiding areas of trouble, both political and ethical. It thus helped me to define what Pete Shirlow's calls the "spaces of fear".<sup>125</sup> As Nils Zurawski says, "spaces of fear" are "spaces that hold a threat to life, or simply unsafe to go."<sup>126</sup> It also assisted me in overcoming potential problems related to the feasibility of carrying out the fieldwork, and accessing interviewees for such a sensitive topic. Under the dangerous conditions of incomplete political transition, and in an atmosphere of suspicion in the immediate aftermath of (and recurring violence), I could undertake the research as I "socially" interacted with friends and relatives without arousing unnecessary suspicion. Familiarity was also necessary for an intimate study of the violence that I sought to undertake. I was aware of what was acceptable and taboos in the district, which were very crucial for me as a man trying to research on the experiences of women in, around, the militarized political violence.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF SHURUGWI DISTRICT**

Shurugwi (formerly Selukwe), district is one of the eight districts of the Midlands province. It is an old district that was settled before colonisation of Zimbabwe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although there are controversies about who settled in the district earlier, it is generally accepted in oral accounts that Mabedzenge and his people were the first to

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<sup>125</sup> See Pete Shirlow, cited in Nils Zurawski, "I know where you live'- Aspects of watching, surveillance, and social control in a conflict zone (Northern Ireland)", in *Surveillance and society*, 2 (4), p 502, in <http://www.surveillance-and-society.org>, Accessed 28 May 2012.

<sup>126</sup> Nils Zurawski, *Ibid*, p 502.

settle when they migrated from Chivi in the south in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Mabedzenge later on invited his more powerful uncle, Nhema, to settle in the area and in time (he Nhema) established his supremacy over Mabedzenge.<sup>127</sup> Currently the Mabedzenge house operates as one of the eight headmenships under Chief Nhema.

Administratively, Shurugwi is divided into two: urban and rural. Of the two, the rural part is larger and spatially covers almost 98% of the district and a population of 69 954, with Shurugwi urban area consisting of the small Shurugwi town with a total population of 16 866 people.<sup>128</sup> Shurugwi rural is administered by the Tongogara Rural District Council (TRDC) housed at Tongogara Growth Point. It is a district that is divided into twenty-four wards, with a councillor representing each ward.

Following the 2008 elections, twenty wards were won by ZANU-PF and four by the MDC-T. In terms of gender representation twelve wards have women councillors and another twelve have male councillors. An interesting aspect is that all the twelve female councillors are from ZANU-PF. This in part stems from the ZANU-PF policy of setting aside certain wards for female candidates during its primary elections. Many of these wards were not contested by the MDC in the harmonised elections.<sup>129</sup> However, there are some female candidates who won from non-female wards such as from wards 13, 14, 16 and 19.

The district is represented by two members of parliament who sit in the House of Assembly. These are equitably represented in terms of gender, with Shurugwi South having a female MP, and Shurugwi North a male MP. The Senator for the Upper House of Parliament, the Senate, is however a man. In terms of female representation at the political level, Shurugwi fares way above the other parts of the country. Generally, there

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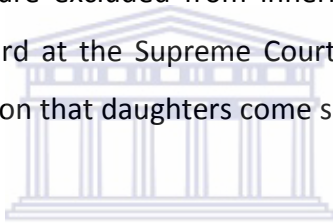
<sup>127</sup> In addition to oral accounts gathered for this thesis, there is also cross-referencing with information from the Colonial records, see for example, NAZ, S2929/7/6, *Delineation Reports General: Selukwe District*. Although not directly related, but more in reference to the controversies around the start of the Nhema chieftaincy, see also Joann Mcgregor, "Woodland resources, ecology, policy and ideology", p 98.

<sup>128</sup> *Gouvernement of Zimbabwe, CSO, 2002 Population Census*.

<sup>129</sup> In some of these wards the MDC-T did not field candidates, either indicating its preoccupation with higher positions of MP and Senator in the district. It might also point to the fear by its supporters to take risks for such lowly positions.

is only an 18 percent female representation at the national level,<sup>130</sup> despite women constituting 52 percent of the total population.

In terms of traditional administration there are three chiefs namely Nhema, Ndanga and Banga. These are supported by twelve headmen namely Mabedzenge, Mupangayi, Mudzengi, Tinhira, Chiworise, Pisira, Nyahwa, Mazivisa, Mapendere, Makonese, Mhangami and Mupanduki. By 2011, there was only one headwoman for the Mudzengi house. The collateral system of assuming these positions is patriarchal and operates against women. In most cases women are excluded by tradition from the right to inheritance let alone the inheritance of leadership. In this extended family succession system the positions are reserved for the “eldest sons” within this larger extended family. The fact that women are excluded from inheritance was underscored at the national level by the case heard at the Supreme Court in the case of Magaya versus Magaya, which upheld the notion that daughters come second in terms of inheriting the family estate.<sup>131</sup>



Chiefs and headmen in Shurugwi, like their counterparts elsewhere in Zimbabwe, have amassed a lot of power and influence since the turn of the twenty-first century. Outside of their traditional roles they have acquired political roles in ZANU-PF, and have also been given the role of distributing relief food and inputs like ploughs, harrows and scotch carts.<sup>132</sup> As already discussed above, women in the district seem to have found compensation in politics. However, this attainment has not emerged organically, as it were, but mainly derives from ZANU-PF party policy directives.

What is striking from the discussion is the ambivalence between the political role of women as MPs and councillors on the one hand and their absence from the revitalised and increasingly powerful traditional authorities. The gender equality found in the

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<sup>130</sup> See COPAC, 29 July 2010, “Women - Raise your voices in the Constitution Outreach!”, in <http://www.copac.org.zw/news/166-women-raise-your-voices-in-the-constitution-outreach.html>, Accessed 26 June 2011.

<sup>131</sup> See *Mail and Guardian*, 10 June 1999.

<sup>132</sup> Based on an interview with a headman.

political arena in Shurugwi is not matched clearly in the chiefly and headmen structures. Another ambiguity lies in the fact that ZANU-PF is a highly patriarchal organisation, but one seen here as seriously promoting gender equality. Its national top brass contains only one female as second vice secretary, and all the other positions of First Secretary, the other Second Secretary and Chairperson, that constitute the Presidium, are occupied by men.<sup>133</sup> The District ZANU-PF hierarchy is also very patriarchal. Patriarchy, as noted by Lisa Gilman,

produces gendering of power structures in which men fill a majority of leadership positions in local and foreign based institutions, relegating most women to subordinate roles. In some, such as political parties, the majority of women play roles of supporting and legitimating, at least symbolically, those in leadership positions.”<sup>134</sup>

## MAIN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

In Shurugwi the mainstay economic is peasant agriculture done in communal areas. More than half of the district's population depends on peasant agriculture. However, the district can also be broadly divided into four zones, that is, communal, resettlement, small scale and large scale farming areas. Wards 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 24 make up the communal areas, while wards 1, 2, 6, 16, 19, 20, 21 and 23 are in resettlements. Small scale farms are found in wards 3, 4 and 22, and large scale farms are in wards 17 and 18. Thus on the whole agriculture, in its various forms, peasant, small scale farms, resettlement and large scale, constitutes the backbone for most livelihoods in Shurugwi.

Recently the rural landscape has undergone serious transformation as witnessed by the establishment of semi-urban activities, especially mining, which has resulted in the

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<sup>133</sup> ZANU-PF uses socialist terminology and secretary is actually the leader of the party, thus Joyce Mujuru is the only lady in the top brass, which includes the First and Second Secretaries, Political Commissar, Secretary for administration and secretary for Legal Affairs. The only other top position for a woman is Secretary for Woman affairs.

<sup>134</sup> Lisa Gilman, *The dance of politics: Gender, performance, and democratisation in Malawi*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 2009, p 16.

district benefitting from two major mining ventures by Unki Platinum and Todal Platinum. Besides altering the settlement patterns through resettling families from these mining sites, these major mining concerns have also transformed the economic worth of the district. Simultaneously, the political value of the district at the national level has also been enhanced because of these high value platinum mines. In fact, one of the big mines, TODAL that is being set up, is alleged to be owned by some top ZANU-PF leaders.

Another economic activity, albeit illegal, which has helped to sustain the district is gold panning. Gold panning gained prominence in the district around the early years of the new millennium as the economic situation of the country worsened. It was largely done around the Boterekwa Mountains and in the nearby Mutevekwi river although other pockets of gold panners could be found scattered across the breadth of the district. In March of 2000, there were reportedly about 15 000 gold panners around the Boterekwa Mountains.<sup>135</sup> Many more thousands were located in other portions of the district. This was however, before the peak of the economic crunch and periods of acute food shortages in 2002-2003 and between 2006 and 2008 that produced more panners in the district as a result of the combination of droughts, economic crisis and political meltdown. There are also a lot of small-scale chrome mines in the district. These small scale miners operate open pit mines in their claim areas and sell the chrome ore to ZIMASCO or to some Chinese merchants who resell it abroad.

### **THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN SHURUGWI**

According to the 2002 population census Shurugwi rural has a population of 71 573 people. Of these 37 146 were females and 34 409 were males. Put differently, women and girls constitute 51.9% of the total population. However, these women are not a homogenous group, rather they are heterogeneous. In fact this diversity can be

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<sup>135</sup> See *The Daily News*, 1 March 2000, which says there were about 15000 gold panners around the Boterekwa escarpments.

explained according to location, occupation, social status, and educational levels, among others. Broadly, however, the majority are poor peasants from the communal areas,<sup>136</sup> who are generally vulnerable due to their low social status that is mediated by their patriarchal culture, which places them under their male spouses.<sup>137</sup> While the women in Shurugwi do not lack political representation at the council level and at the national parliament, this has not yet been fully translated into tangible benefits because they still suffer from a general lack of land ownership rights, education, and are used as voters without many rights.

There are other women found in other sectors, such as in commercial agriculture, where some work as farm workers or happen to be wives of farm workers. In addition, there are professional women especially in government service as teachers, nurses and agricultural extension workers. Of note is that there are fewer professional women than men even when there are more females in the district. This inverse relationship is amply demonstrated in the study by the National AIDS Council (NAC), for example, which reveals that there are 566 female teachers in both primary and secondary schools out of a total of 1137 teachers, and in the health sector, out of a total of 82 workers, only 24 were females.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> See *Government of Zimbabwe, 2002 Population Census Preliminary Results*. That there are eleven wards, nearly half the number of all wards, in the communal areas also testifies to this.

<sup>137</sup> The majority of the inhabitants are Shona of the Karanga dialect, and a minority are Ndebele found around Dlodlo School. Both sets are patriarchal. Robert Mugabe, p 71 best describes “traditional” Shona and Ndebele patriarchy, where men headed families, gave blood to the children and where married women were expected to change their surnames and their husbands’ praise names. See also Mickias Musiyiwa and Memory Chirere, “The nature of fatherhood and manhood in Zimbabwean texts of pre-colonial and colonial settings” in Kizito Muchemwa and Robert Muponde, eds, *Manning the Nation*, p 156, who say that the colonial masters, the British, in addition to the Shona and Ndebele were patriarchal. Also due to marriage, women are expected to move from the public domain into more domesticated spaces of the home. See Patricia Mcfadden “Democratising citizenship” for a more nuanced description of patriarchy and impact of the payment of lobola that sanctions marriage in Zimbabwe. In addition, other practices that negatively impact women are still common in the district for example polygamy, with both old practice of keeping more than one wives in the same homestead and the more modern concept of the small houses, prevalent.

<sup>138</sup> National AIDS Council, Tongogara District AIDS Action Committee, *Second Quarter Report*, April-June 2005.

The disparity in the professional employment should be seen in the unequal educational opportunities between boys and girls. As FAWEZI (Forum for African Women Educators Zimbabwe) reported in March 2000, there was a gender gap in education in Africa with about fifty two million children of school going age in Sub Saharan Africa not in school and out of these seventy percent were girls. The report goes on to say that the majority of women in Africa were illiterate, despite constituting the majority of the populations of their countries.<sup>139</sup> Explaining the imbalances, the former Minister of Education in Zimbabwe, Gabriel Machinga, posited that this was as a result of unfavourable conditions for females at home, in the community and at school.<sup>140</sup>

There are also twelve female councillors in the district, all from ZANU-PF. Eight of these benefitted from ZANU-PF setting aside their wards as female candidates' wards. The other four, in wards 13, 14, 16 and 19, however, won against male opposition at the party primary elections. This equality in gender representation at the council level must not be misconstrued for a greater decision-making power for women. There is fifty percent representation for the women, but most of the duties of councillors have been transferred to the traditional leadership. The transfer of most basic political duties that used to be performed by councillors to the chiefs and headmen has helped to reduce the influence of councillors among the populace. In an interview with a female councillor, she lamented this transfer of duties to chiefs and headmen, which has left councillors as mere figure-heads. In her words,

We councillors do not have much to do. Our work has been taken by chiefs and headmen. Chiefs and headmen have taken over the distribution of agricultural inputs, relief food and they are also better paid than us.<sup>141</sup>

What cannot be denied, however, is that the fifty percent representation that the females have achieved is a very big leap from only three female councillors in the previous twenty- three member council.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> See *The Daily News*, 7 March 2000.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Interview with a female councillor, 23 May 2010.



The female councillors and other women leaders generally face stigmatisation, rejection, resentment and at times open hostility. In interviews with men, many expressed reservations about the councillors and the female MPs. They tended to question their fidelity. Most often they suggested that these women are of questionable morals.<sup>143</sup> If not of loose morals, such females are thought of as “submissive, not very sharp, or otherwise weak”.<sup>144</sup> A female professional based at Tongogara Growth point summarised best the concerns in the district:

Women tend to change behaviour once in power and become freer and loose morally. The more they rise politically the looser they become. Some rise on the back of their association with powerful men. Politics is very close to prostitution. Sometimes politicians are required to attend meetings at night, and naturally husbands do not like it.<sup>145</sup>

In my view this questioning of the morals of women and setting decorum for them in politics at times has more to do with men feeling challenged in “their domain,”<sup>146</sup> and the naturalisation of the patriarchal notion that ascribes political leadership to men and passivity to women. At another level, Zimbabwean politics, dating back to the liberation struggle, has been an arena that has been dominated by men. This is notwithstanding the strenuous attempts by women to use nationalist politics to escape various entrapments linked to “culture” that sought their domestication.<sup>147</sup> Still however, men strive to keep their women domesticated and themselves in the frontline positions, albeit in the face of constitutional amendments that have theoretically sought the amelioration of the position of women in the post-colonial Zimbabwean setup. This

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<sup>142</sup> See National AIDS Council, *Tongogara DAAC, Second Quarter Report*, April- June 2005, p 23.

<sup>143</sup> My findings were that very few of the councillors were married. Some were widows, while others were divorced or single parents. The female MP was also not married, which seemed to affirm the notion that politics is not for married women.

<sup>144</sup> See Gisela Giesler, “troubled sisterhood”, p 571.

<sup>145</sup> Interview at Tongogara Growth Point, 22 April 2010.

<sup>146</sup> See for example, Kwanele Ona Jirira, “Gender, politics and democracy” in Patricia Mcfadden, ed, *Gender, Politics and Democracy, SAFERE*, Volume 1, no2, 1995, p 3, who avers that politics is seen by men as public space and therefore a male space, which seeks to entrench the “dominant male” and “subordinate female”.

<sup>147</sup> See compelling arguments by Norma Krieger, *Zimbabwe’s guerilla war: peasant voices*; and Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better or worse*, for pithy enunciations of this ambivalence, especially during the Second Chimurenga.



perception is akin to the Foucauldian notion of regimes of truth,<sup>148</sup> and sometimes to what Hobsbawm has called “invented traditions”.<sup>149</sup> Regimes of truth are powerful discourses about events or belief systems that are made to function as the basis of relations and which in time become part of the “social truth” that is widely accepted as part of customs and are also taken as primordial. In terms of regimes of truth, I established that in Shurugwi, married women with husbands and “steady” families were not expected to be vying for political leadership positions, and those who were in politics were not positively evaluated by both men and women hence were called different names.

In Shurugwi the fact that there is only one female in the fifteen traditional leadership houses helps to support these “cultural” arguments that women should remain domesticated in the home. As a result few women even participate in leadership roles in the traditional courts of chiefs and headmen set up to adjudicate issues. This represents masculinised traditions that are aimed at keeping women under the control of men. Through politics, albeit aided by male politicians and in lowly councillor roles, women are able to challenge and confront these norms. However, even in the political arena women still suffer prejudices. The words by the late Vice President Dr Joshua Nkomo, best encapsulate these and the general male societal feeling. He said:

What again is the role of women in the party? The role is to fulfil the objectives of the Party through the Women’s League, but the Party would like women to take their role as mothers seriously because mothers have an important responsibility of moulding characters of children from birth [...]. The Party

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<sup>148</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings*, p131, cited in Kwanele Ona Jirira, “Gender, politics and democracy”, p 3, to refer to discourses that are disseminated and made to work as “social truth” especially to serve a particular purpose.

<sup>149</sup> See Eric Hobsbawm, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds, *The invention of tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, p1, who among other things defines inventing traditions as “a set of practices [...] of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.”

therefore expects mothers to inculcate those values which are constructive and will strengthen the nation because children are the leaders of tomorrow.<sup>150</sup>

It would not be very wrong to say therefore that women are supposed to play a subordinate role in politics akin to their “submissive” role in the home.<sup>151</sup> Many were to be restricted to the home while being called upon to legitimise men during election times as voters. What is more is that such pronouncements feed into what Dale Spender terms “man-made language”, which among other things normalises inequalities, domestication, discrimination and abuse of women.<sup>152</sup> The words are also informed by the gendering of spaces in Western societies where politics, a public space phenomenon is constituted as a male sphere, while “domesticity, caring and the body” that make the private arena, are a preserve of females.<sup>153</sup>

The dissertation builds on the impact of the inequalities between the sexes in understanding the impact of the home and social disparities on the political. Broadly, I argue that the inequalities that lead to the domestication of women contributed significantly to the exposure of women to political violence. Because men were free and not tied to the home, they left during times of crucial political and economic crisis, leaving women to fill the political void. In the process of assuming these manly duties, women then began take over roles that would cause them to be victimised or to cause the extension of the process of the victimisation of other women or even men.

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<sup>150</sup> Joshua Nkomo speaking at the ZANU-PF 1994 Women’s League conference cited in Kwanele Ona Jirira, “Gender, politics and democracy”, pp 12-13. Although made at a ZANU-PF women’s congress, these words can be extended to most men in Zimbabwe on their perception of women.

<sup>151</sup> See Gisela Giesler, “Troubled sisterhood: Women and politics in Southern Africa: Case studies from Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, in *African Affairs*, vol 94, No 377, October 1995, p 547.

<sup>152</sup> See Dale Spender, *Man Made Language*, cited in Robert Morell, “Silence, sexuality and HIV in South African Schools”, in *The Australian Educational Researcher*, Vol 30, No1, April 2003, cited in <http://www.aare.edu.au/aer/online/30010e.pdf>, accessed 28 February 2011. See also Nancy Duncan, cited in Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley, “Introduction”, p xxii, who says that this “spatial restructuring practices ... [have been used to] ... construct, control, discipline, confine, exclude and suppress gender and sexual difference” for the purpose of maintaining “traditional patriarchal and heterosexist power structures.”

<sup>153</sup> Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley, “Introduction”, p xxii.

## Methodology

The cornerstone for this research are oral testimonies provided by the rural women of Shurugwi, as well as interviews with politicians from ZANU-PF and the MDC, coupled with some NGO personnel who had worked in the district, that were gathered over a total period of eleven months. These interviews were carried out between December 2009 and July 2010; in December 2011, and during repeat visits from mid-January to mid-February 2012. I sought to prioritize the first-hand accounts by the rural women whose personal experiences and encounters with violence inform the direction of the thesis. By using these oral testimonials, I hoped to disrupt the invisibility of women and a general reticence around the occurrence of violence in Shurugwi. As Alexander, McGregor and Ranger would say, this silence contributes to “a profound sense of exclusion from national memory.”<sup>154</sup> This silence is even worse regarding the rural women therein.

While acknowledging the areas of weaknesses of oral history, such as the dynamism of memory which sometimes results in empirical inaccuracy about specific events in favour of “psychological truth”, the researcher believes this method enables the voice of the women to be heard.<sup>155</sup> Oral accounts have also been successfully used in bringing out state atrocities during the Gukurahundi massacres in Zimbabwe.<sup>156</sup> In adopting oral testimonies, I am also in agreement with what Bukenya (cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni) says,

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<sup>154</sup> Jocelyn Alexander, Joann McGregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory*, p 1.

<sup>155</sup> I hope to use oral traditions positively and in a manner as explained by Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Giving Africa voice within global governance: oral history, human rights and the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council”, Unpublished paper presented at the International Conference on Human Rights and Social Justice: Setting the Agenda for the United Nations Human Rights Council, 23-25 February 2007, University of Winnipeg, Canada, who says by deploying oral traditions in strategic-instrumentalist terms, they can be emancipating for the oppressed by affording them the opportunity to relate their experiences that are usually part of “hidden histories” and are shrouded in “secrecy” (p 12) and also that they provide “one of the few democratic ways” to capture the subaltern voices who do not have an archive (p 15). I also believe oral traditions can be a credible source of history by borrowing from Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A study in Historical methodology*, University of Wisconsin press, Madison, 1965.

<sup>156</sup> See the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the Legal Rights Foundation (LRF), *Breaking the silence, Building true peace: A report on the disturbances in Matebeleland and the Midlands 1980-1988*, CCJP and LRF, Harare, 1995.

that oral histories and traditions when carefully used can help to overcome marginalization and voicelessness.<sup>157</sup>

By using the questioning technique, further probing, repeat visits where possible, and gaining the confidence of the interviewees, the researcher attempted to go beyond the surface of bias, deliberate untruths, and unconscious half-truths. After establishing strong rapport and having gained the confidence of some respondents, I was led to other women victims of the violence. This however did not mean an automatic access to their testimonies. At times some would refuse flatly to share these, while for others, they only told me in bits and pieces as they also gathered confidence in my research. Repeat visits were also made to major centres and many social gatherings and ceremonies, and social sites where it was easy to chat with people without raising too much suspicion.

However, the strategy for me was to engage in many interviews and informal discussions, sixty in all, with women, and twenty others with other actors, that is, with the local political, NGO, and traditional officials to enable a wider set of discourses to emerge, for the purposes of critical analysis. From them, I particularly recorded common names, patterns and structures that were repeated by the respondents in the commission of the violence. This also helped to sift through the testimonies. Commonly repeated stories, names and patterns were taken as more credible, while less common ones were put through thorough scrutiny to check their validity. In addition, I also contested these testimonies against each other and cross-checked them, which enabled me to drop unsupported ones, and to merit others as credible.

However, I also appreciate the controversies around attempts to give a “voice” to women, including the colonial othering and recovery debate, the debate around the gendering of voice and silence as male and female preserves respectively, as well as the

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<sup>157</sup> A. Bukenya, cited in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Giving Africa voice within global governance”.

debate around the superiority of voice over silence.<sup>158</sup> The dissertation took notice of the tensions around whether “subalterns can speak”, as ably discussed by Gayatri Spivak,<sup>159</sup> or whether this would not only result in the “invisible” merely being “much more seen than heard.”<sup>160</sup> On the whole, as Woodward, et al posit, I do not take the categories of silence versus voice or visible against invisible as given, but as fluid, unstable, and needing problematisation.<sup>161</sup> Still, I followed in the mode employed in ways that erudite works such as Terence Ranger’s, *Peasant Consciousness and guerilla warfare*; and Norma Kriger’s *Zimbabwe’s guerilla war: peasant voices* achieved with some success for Makoni and Mutoko districts, respectively, in their “recoveries” of the “hidden histories ‘from below.’”<sup>162</sup>

Heeding the call, so to say, by Scott Straus, for detailed “micro-level, social scientific investigation[s]”<sup>163</sup> and following on Ranger’s and Kriger’s suggestive genealogical framework, I adopted a local area study of violence in Shurugwi district. Through this ethnography, I hoped to get an in-depth understanding of the violence, especially at personal and village levels, as well as how it descended into the ordinary everyday sphere.<sup>164</sup> This augments and at the same time troubles, the human rights reports that, while offering useful insights into human rights abuses on a larger scale, tend to offer generalisations of the violence, and are policy-oriented. As Shari Eppel has pointed out,

[h]uman rights reports are not intended to document history as it unfolds in all its nuanced realities, but to be the sledgehammer that may change world opinion, that may make it easier for refugees abroad to get asylum, that will give a voice to the voiceless and raise funds for medical and legal aid for those at the

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<sup>158</sup> For a summation of these controversies, see Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley, “Introduction”, especially pp xxi-xxv.

<sup>159</sup> Gayatri Spivak, “Can the subaltern speak?” in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds, *Marxism and the interpretation of culture*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1988, pp 271-313, especially p 287.

<sup>160</sup> See Wallace, cited in Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley, “Introduction”, p xxiv

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, p xxxii.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, p xxvi.

<sup>163</sup> Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide. Race, Power and War in Rwanda*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 2006, p 40, in Charles Kabwete Mulinda, “A space for genocide: Local Authorities, local population and local histories in Gishamvu and Kibayi (Rwanda)”, Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of the Western Cape, September 2010, p 13.

<sup>164</sup> I borrow the phrase from Veena daas, *Life and words*.

receiving end of state violence, and that will keep the record that may one day contribute to redress and prosecution or compensation.<sup>165</sup>

I wanted to get the dynamic nuances of the violence as it was extended over time, and played out at the lowest levels. Towards 2008, the violence became rather decentralized, intimate, and involved close relations: the extended family, neighbours, villagers and workmates. I sought to examine these in greater detail, because the *how* with which this violence was played out helped me to explain *why* it happened that way. I also wanted to get the intricacies around the blurring of people's innocence and guilt. This enabled me to understand the complexities of the violence. Some of these complexities I examine include *inter alia*, how political violence affected social violence, (domestic and family violence) and social relations; the role of local economic inequalities; the impact of the local on the national, and vice versa at the local level. As explored in Chapters Three, Four, and Five, while the planning and coordination lay with the centre (in Harare), the execution of the violence was mediated by local conditions and relations, which determined the targets, direction, depth and unevenness of the violence.

By extension, I also wanted to understand the perceptions of justice at these lowest levels, which I suspected differed from the normative of statist Western notion of justice, which is retributive compared to the traditional conceptions of restoration that is central for the communal relations in the district. This led me to explore the possibility of the adoption of a TJ based on the concept of *kuripa ngozi*.

Largely because the nature of the research was rather sensitive, and the politics of fear, intimidation, and suspicion were omnipresent throughout the fieldwork, face-to-face interviews were preferred to alternatives such as questionnaires or telephone-based interviews. The dangerous atmosphere coerced me to do the research surreptitiously, to do a rather random sampling of the informants and most of the time to engage in more informal discussions rather than formal interviews. This was however done with

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<sup>165</sup> Shari Eppel, "A tale of three dinner plates", p 1.

the view to incorporate narratives from across the district especially by women respondents. In some cases, however, I visited already known victims, in their homes or at social gatherings or gathering places. The first move was to gain their trust by engaging them in unrelated conversations, slowly introducing general political issues. When the respondents were led into deeper political issues we would then introduce questions related to the past violence. To avoid raising unnecessary fears and suspicions, research equipment such as tape recorders and notebooks were not used in the direct interviews. Immediately after the discussions I would record the notes of the major issues and key names raised.

Besides oral accounts, written sources were also used intensively and extensively to engage with the controversies around the subject. These sources were crucial in the verification and cross-referencing of statistics, dates and for comparing events in other parts of the country with what obtained in Shurugwi. In addition, they were also important in providing connections between the violence in Shurugwi to the national violence from which the district level violence was derived. They also help in the validation of or comparison with, the oral stories which form the foundation for this work. In addition alternative professional and or independent research opinions were obtained from written sources, which helped to unlock complex sets of events that were encountered.

While the dissertation is informed by the desire to produce a historical account, it is also situated at the intersections with ethnography and anthropology disciplines. As Hamilton suggests, “these disciplines” together with history and linguistics, “provide the essential background against which oral history can be re-evaluated.”<sup>166</sup> And, “in such hands”<sup>167</sup> “oral history certainly can be a means for transforming both the content and purpose of history”.<sup>168</sup>

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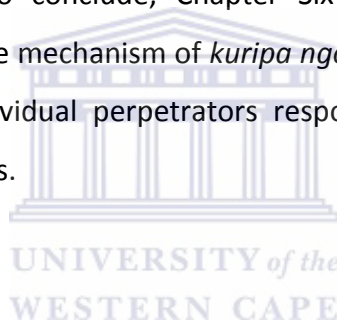
<sup>166</sup> CA Hamilton, “The study of Southern African pre-colonial history: ‘Bantustan propaganda’?”, p 7, in [www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/webpages/DC/remay82.6/remay82.6.pdf](http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/webpages/DC/remay82.6/remay82.6.pdf), Accessed 03 June 2012.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> See P Thompson, in CA Hamilton, Ibid.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

In order to do justice to the complexities of the past ten years, Chapter One focusses on the discussion of the relevance of theories of violence to the Zimbabwean case. Chapter Two looks at the peculiar historical conditions that contributed to violence in Shurugwi district. The Third chapter foregrounds the narratives of the rural women of Shurugwi in the reconstruction of meaning of the 2000-2008 violence. Chapter Four discusses the distribution of political power and how this enabled the agency by the women of Shurugwi. The Fifth chapter addresses the conditions in the “post-violence” era between 2009 and 2011. It broadly argues that whilst the GNU interregnum brought political and economic changes these are not adequate to prevent a recurrence of another bout of violence. To conclude, Chapter Six proposes the adoption of a “traditional” transitional justice mechanism of *kuripa ngozi* to end the cycles of violence and impunity by making individual perpetrators responsible for restitution to their victims for violations and losses.





## CHAPTER ONE: CONCEPTUAL AND HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE 2000-2008 VIOLENCE IN ZIMBABWE.<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins by looking at the theories of violence. It focusses primarily on the two theories moulded first around the abuse of human rights and second on redistribution which have been used in many accounts in the (re)construction of violence in Zimbabwe. More than this, these two paradigms have provided the poles, especially concerning the methodology for the redistribution of land and other resources as well as the timing to implement this, around which the debates on the crisis have coalesced.

The chapter also concerns itself with the debates on the relationship between the victimisation of women and gender. First, this emanates from the assumption that I held at the start of the research that women were the invisible victims of the 2000-2008 violence. There were many human rights reports that portrayed women as such. However, as I will explore more in Chapter Four, their relationship with violence is much more complicated and was much more differentiated. Second, gender and violence discussions are not mutually separable. The conventional Western feminist theory that has historically dominated has universalised femininity with the victimhood of women. There is, however, a new set of African literature that is emerging and is challenging this conventional Western feminist discourse. Instead, this later school emphasises local situations and conditions in its analysis.

Broadly, by looking at the different historical epochs that are profound in fashioning my discussion, the pre-colonial and the Second Chimurenga eras, and the intellectual reformulation from the emergent Africanist feminist theory, I argue that femininity transcended biological sexualities. Importantly, along the formulation of Africanist

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<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to Professor Sabelo J Ndlovu-Gatsheni for his stimulating suggestions and for opening me up to take this as the starting point for my thesis and for availing his manuscript of *Do Zimbabweans exist?*

feminist construction, women's victimisation and victimhood are contextual, temporal and spatial, and cannot be taken as the historical-universal descriptions of Shona-speaking women in Zimbabwe (and Shurugwi).

## **VIOLENCE AS A PRODUCT OF STRUCTURE**

A very common way to look at violence has been to see it as a product of structure. Generally this discourse sees violence as rooted in politico-historical terms of inequalities found in national and international political, social and economic structural relations. One can moreover say that this discourse deploys at its centre the Marxist economic model of power in the maintenance of class distinctions and oppression found in the "forces of production."<sup>2</sup>

Slavoj Zizek, a key theoretician of this discourse, conceptualises violence as taking three basic forms. These are subjective violence and the two forms of objective violence, that is, symbolic and systematic violence.<sup>3</sup> He describes subjective violence as that which is visible, for example crime and terror, while symbolic violence is rooted in language and its forms like racism, hate speech and discrimination. Systematic violence is found in the economic and political systems of the world.<sup>4</sup> Most importantly, he posits that there is a link between subjective and objective violence. To him, what may be perceived as irrational (subjective) violence could be rooted in the objective forms of violence which are not easily decipherable. For him, systematic violence operates like "a notorious 'dark matter' of physics, the counterpart to an all too visible subjective violence."<sup>5</sup> Thus, systematic violence underwrites subjective violence. As such, even when systematic violence cannot be easily deciphered, it should be assumed and taken into account in order for subjective violence to make sense.

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<sup>2</sup> See Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, pp 88-89.

<sup>3</sup> Slavoj Zizek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, Picador, New York, 2008, p 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p 2.

Crucially, Zizek finds a direct correlation between capitalism and objective violence. While capitalism may not have initiated systematic violence, it has worsened it and has given it a new meaning, impetus and direction. Citing Karl Marx, Zizek theorises that capitalism is exploitative and feeds like a “parasite” on humans and the environment, which has overhauled relations between workers and the owners of capital.<sup>6</sup> He continues to say that global capitalism was responsible for the 16<sup>th</sup> century deaths in Mexico, and the 20<sup>th</sup> century massive deaths in the Belgian Congo. For him this was due to “an ‘objective’ process, which nobody planned and executed and for which there was no ‘capitalist manifesto’”<sup>7</sup> In total, Zizek argues that capitalism through worsening the exploitation of workers and other resources, has widened inequalities and injustices. However, “inequalities, exploitation and injustice” of capitalism are “naturalised” and “hidden” as reflective of cultural differences.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, it has given a new and extended meaning to objective violence.

For Zimbabwe, Moyo and Yeros similarly see the 2000 to 2008 violence as having roots in the capitalist structures that were introduced with the colonisation of the country and perpetuated under neo-colonialism that led to racialised class exploitation.<sup>9</sup> This engendered structural violence. To them, this violence cannot end unless neo-colonialism itself is eradicated. Besides the racialised capitalist structure introduced during the colonial period, they likewise perceive the class structure emanating from the former liberation movements of ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU as having contributed to the post-independence violence in the country. For them, the violence in the 1980s *gukurahundi* massacre, for example, was rooted in the “petty-bourgeoisie ethnic divisions in PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF.”<sup>10</sup> They also maintain that the 1990s attacks on the students, workers and the peasants were ZANU-PF bourgeois violence in defence of the

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p 12.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p 14.

<sup>8</sup> See Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans exist?* p 193.

<sup>9</sup> Paris Yeros, “Zimbabwe and the dilemma of the Left”, p 12, argues that in order to rid the violence, it is also necessary to rid the country of the neo-colonial hangover.

<sup>10</sup> Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros, “Intervention: The Zimbabwe question and the two lefts” in *Historical Materialism*, 15, 2007, p 199.

failing Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) were class-based.<sup>11</sup> They also see the post 2003 violence in a similar way, where the bourgeoisie in ZANU-PF began to launch “quick-fix, military-style operations” against both the urban and rural dwellers.<sup>12</sup>

Whilst we may agree with them on the long term structural underpinnings of capitalism on the Zimbabwean violence, they seem to take away the central political agency of ZANU-PF lower level structures in fanning the violence of the beginning of the third millennium. ZANU-PF was on a knife edge, where it was faced with its biggest political threat in the form of the MDC. Because of this, and in order to “reclaim lost political ground”,<sup>13</sup> it “democratised” the technology of violence to ensure its survival. In addition, Moyo and Yeros deliberately omit to discuss the human rights and governance dimensions of the 2000-2008 violence on the society. In fact they are very clear that they do not wish to do so.<sup>14</sup>



## EMANCIPATORY VIOLENCE

Following in the thread of the structural inequalities and attendant injustices introduced by the twin processes of colonialism and capitalism we find an emancipatory discourse that valorises violence as vital in contributing to the freedom of the oppressed classes or races. A deeper analysis of this discourse reveals that violence is perceived in some

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<sup>11</sup> See Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros, cited in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans exist?* p 200.

<sup>12</sup> See Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros, “Zimbabwe ten years on”, and Zeff Sithole, “Is the military taking over?” in [www.afrika.no/Detailed/12358.html](http://www.afrika.no/Detailed/12358.html) for a detailed discussion of the different military style operations between 2003 and 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos, “Zimbabwe’s unfinished business”, p 10.

<sup>14</sup> Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros, “Zimbabwe ten years on”, state that the suspension of the rule of law was a necessary prerequisite to the attainment of fuller democracy in the country. They say that “The issue of democracy is intrinsic to both the agrarian and national questions; one issue can only be enhanced by the other’s advance. Let us recall that in Zimbabwe democracy itself was an historical conquest against settler colonialism. But this democracy fell far short of attending to the historical demands of social justice; instead, the newly independent state began to defend privilege in the name of rights and to criminalise demands for justice through the rule of law. Thus when the deep antagonisms of this society escalated, civic organisations and ordinary citizens were faced with a confounding dilemma; either to tolerate the suspension of the rule of law and go for a historic breakthrough; or defend the rule of law and defend perpetual inequalities and backwardness.”

sense as necessary and unavoidable to the process of change. This borrows and strengthens the Marxian contention on the integral part that violence plays in any transformation. As Marx puts it violence is “the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one,” and violence is the midwife of “all change in history and politics.”<sup>15</sup>

Franz Fanon, who may be regarded as the prophet of revolutionary African nationalist violence from the 1960s against European imperialism, together with Jean-Paul Sartre, in *The Wretched of the earth*, glorifies the necessity and emancipatory power of violence.<sup>16</sup> Their starting point is that colonialism and its antithesis, decolonisation, were violent processes. The process of colonisation depended on violence. In the same way violence was required in the decolonisation process. As such, as Sartre says,

No gentleness can efface the marks of violence; only violence itself can destroy them. The native cures himself of colonial neurosis by thrusting out the settler through force of arms. When his rage boils over, he rediscovers his lost innocence and he comes to know himself in that he creates his self. Far removed from his war, we consider it as a triumph of barbarism; but of its volition it achieves, slowly but surely, the emancipation of the rebel for bit by bit it destroys in him and around him the colonial gloom.<sup>17</sup>

What is crucial is that the violence by the natives achieves independence for them as well as a reassertion of their humanly status. As Fanon puts it, “the ‘thing’ which had been colonised becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself”<sup>18</sup>, a violent process described by Sartre as killing two birds with one stone, that leaves a dead European and a free man.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, as Fanon says, by decolonisation the biblical adage of “the last shall be first, and the first last”,<sup>20</sup> will be achieved.

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<sup>15</sup>See Karl Marx, quoted in John L Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, “Law and disorder in the postcolony: an Introduction”, in Jean Comaroff and John L Comaroff, eds, *Law and disorder in the postcolony*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2006, p 2.

<sup>16</sup> See Franz Fanon, *The wretched of the earth*, Grove Press, New York, 1963, and Jean-Paul Sartre “Preface” to the same book.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p 21.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p 37.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

In his further valorisation of violence, Fanon argues for the unifying role of violence for the oppressed. In his words “violence is in action all inclusive and national. It follows that it is closely involved in the liquidation of regionalism and of tribalism [...] *Caid*s and the customary chiefs”<sup>21</sup>, which are impediments towards the unity of the locals. The unity achieved will bring together especially the peasants, who constitute the “revolutionary class”, and the lumpenproletariat, who will provide the “urban spearhead” or leadership of the violence.<sup>22</sup> In a nutshell, he avers that through engaging in this violence people lose their individuality for a group and national cause and begin to form parts of a greater chain. As a result it is “in and through violence” that the colonised and oppressed will find their freedom.<sup>23</sup>

Related in some sense to this, Dipesh Chakrabarty, an Indian post-colonial scholar says that violence provided “the undemocratic foundations of ‘democracy’” in the modern world.<sup>24</sup> He gives the example of the developments in the medical field in India that relied on physical force where research was done on prisoners. He also cites the forced immunisations in the 1970s to eradicate smallpox in rural India.<sup>25</sup> For him the successes of the campaigns in acquiring new drugs through the forced tests on the prisoners and the eradication of smallpox in the rural areas means that violence was a blessing in disguise.

Zizek too discusses the necessity for revolutionary violence, which he terms divine violence. Divine violence deals with independence, where the killing is beyond personal hatred, crime, and religion.<sup>26</sup> From the above, divine violence, besides being emancipatory, is also necessary, legitimate and morally justified. To him, the 1792-94 Jacobin Revolutionary terror in France and the 1990s Rio de Janeiro mobs from the

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p 94.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p 129.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p 57.

<sup>24</sup> See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference*, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2000, p 44.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p 198.

*favelas* who stormed the supermarkets in the rich sections of the city, exemplify divine violence.

The notion that violence has a liberating role cannot be underestimated in Zimbabwe. This is the discourse around which ZANU-PF has constructed its metanarrative. As already mentioned, the farm takeovers were construed as part of the Third Chimurenga. Drawing on its role in the Second Chimurenga, it construed itself as a vanguard against Western imperialism led by Britain and the United States of America, and their “local face”, the MDC in redistributing land and other resources to the blacks. In line with this, its history has been construed as representing the history of struggle against these forces. Tying its participation in the Second Chimurenga to the biography of the independence struggle, it has privileged its role in the Second Chimurenga from which it also claims its legacy to continue to rule.

The official history of the country is likewise written in masculine terms of the continuum of struggles, set in a teleology from the First Chimurenga, through the Second Chimurenga to the Third Chimurenga.<sup>27</sup> Ngwabi Bhebe sums up this view succinctly. Linking the Second Chimurenga to the first, he wrote that it was “the culmination of a long process dating as far back as 1893 and which over the years had developed through various distinct stages.”<sup>28</sup> Crucially, ZANU-PF is portrayed as heir to this tradition, and hence as eternal heir to the throne. In a similar notion that Gerald Mazarire has soundly challenged, the history of pre-colonial Zimbabwe has been imagined in the masculinity of war as the sequence of the rise and fall of empires; running from the Great Zimbabwe, to the Mutapa, to the Rozvi and finally the Ndebele. According to Mazarire, this was a part of an Africa-wide construction of history to serve African nationalism. The tendency was to appropriate a version of history to link and

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<sup>27</sup> See Terence Ranger, “Historiography, patriotic history and the history of the nation: the struggle of the past in Zimbabwe” in <http://cas1.elis.rug.ac>, accessed 12 May 2009, on the impact of patriotic history, and how he tries to separate it from Nationalist historiography, which also valorised violent African resistance to European settler colonialism in Zimbabwe.

<sup>28</sup> See Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU AND ZANU guerrilla warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1999, p 10.

enhance the position of nationalists as heirs of the great traditions.<sup>29</sup> He also argues that ZANU-PF's resort to "assertions of sovereignty, reclamation, restitution, the return to tradition, and even anti-imperialism" in the post-1999 era was part of the general essentialisation of the pre-colonial past.<sup>30</sup> It is widely accepted in this regard that Terence Ranger's *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia* marked the start of such a genealogy in Zimbabwe's African nationalism.<sup>31</sup>

In this discourse of the rise and fall of states there is an unambiguous central role of war and the heroism of the different pre-colonial avatars from which ZANU-PF draws a legacy. A connection was also made between ZANU-PF and the three *zvimurenga*, that is the First, Second and Third. This was illustrated in songs and speeches that were broadcast on state media: the Zimbabwe Television (ZTV), and four state radio stations, and was correspondingly printed as advertisements in newspapers. Some of these portrayals depicted how ZANU-PF had acquired "degrees" in the field of violence<sup>32</sup> and how the violence was necessary to deliver economic independence under the Third Chimurenga. Through these advertisements and jingles ZANU-PF's "heroic" deeds and graphic war illustrations from the Second Chimurenga were literally forced on the population at regular intervals. In a way, this provided an important means of disseminating a hegemonic ZANU-PF discourse, in the Gramscian sense,<sup>33</sup> on the population, many of whom did not have an alternative media to the state media, especially in the rural areas and amongst the majority in the townships.

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<sup>29</sup> See Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, "Reflections on pre-colonial Zimbabwe, c.850-1880s", in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, eds, *Becoming Zimbabwe: A history from the pre-colonial period to 2008*, Weaver and Jacana, Harare and Auckland Park, 2009, p 1.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> See the emergency and development of this genealogy in Brian Raftopoulos, "Problematising nationalism in Zimbabwe: A historical review", *Zambezia*, Vol 26, No 2, 1999, pp 115-134.

<sup>32</sup> The decade from 2000 witnessed a fierce campaign by ZANU-PF in the media portraying itself as not only the sole agency that brought about the liberation of the country, but also that it had mastered the art of violence. The jingles by musicians like Tambaoga and Cde Chinx need no reminder. ZANU-PF spokesman Nathan Shamuyarira once remarked that his party had "many degrees in violence" cited in Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's plunge: exhausted nationalism, neoliberalism and the search for social justice*, University of Natal Press, Weaver Press, and The Merlin Press, Scottsville, Harare and London, 2003, p xiv.

<sup>33</sup> See Antonio Gramsci's discussion of hegemony in *Selections from the prison notebooks*, edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, Orient Longman, 1998.



One can furthermore draw parallels with Foucault's theory of power as a continuation of war.<sup>34</sup> The labelling of the process of farm takeovers (and other indigenisation modes) as the Third Chimurenga, was not only an emotive evocation, but was meant to situate the process in a sequence with, and in the same category of importance as, the earlier *zvimurenga*. The First Chimurenga of the 1890s was fought against white settlement, while the Second Chimurenga culminated in independence in 1980. The Third Chimurenga was supposed to be "the final phase of the nationalist, anti-colonial revolution,"<sup>35</sup> "revolutionary and righteous violence meant to end all forms of colonial violence."<sup>36</sup> In this trope, "nationalism", in Ignatieff's argumentation, is constructed as "an ethic of heroic sacrifice" hence "justifying the use of violence in the defence of one's nation against enemies, internal or external."<sup>37</sup> Portraying it this way thus provided some justification for the use of the technology of violence against the white farm owners and the MDC supporters in general.

Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros argue along these Fanonian lines regarding the violence in Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2008. For them, the state-led violence between 2000 and 2003 was necessary because it was "in defence of the landless and against the forces allied to the white agrarian monopoly and Western interests." In addition, from 2003, although largely used "in defence of narrow class interests" the violence was still used "against the forces allied to the West."<sup>38</sup> On the whole, they justify the violence of the new millennium Zimbabwe as a necessary part of the redistributive project to complete the independence of the country through the transference of economic resources to the black majority.

A similar contention is shared by Mahmood Mamdani. For him, the violence of between 2000 and 2003 marked the final death of colonialism in Zimbabwe, surpassing the

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<sup>34</sup> See General introduction for a pithy discussion of this theory.

<sup>35</sup> Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos, "Zimbabwe's unfinished business", p 11.

<sup>36</sup> Sabelo Gatsheni Ndlovu, *Do Zimbabweans exist?* p 214.

<sup>37</sup> See Ignatieff, cited in Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos, "Zimbabwe's unfinished business", p 26.

<sup>38</sup> Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros, "Zimbabwe Ten Years On: Results and Prospects" *Pambazuka News*, 419, 2009.

formal handover of independence in 1980, which he characterises as “qualified majority rule” that served to perpetuate the privileges of the whites.<sup>39</sup> He further argues that the new millennium violence was revolutionary because it resulted in “the greatest transfer of property in Southern Africa since colonisation” over a relatively short period of time, leading for example to the addition of more than one hundred and twenty thousand (120 000) new small-scale farmers in Zimbabwe.<sup>40</sup> In addition, he says there was little violence to the whole process, which he attributes to the role of traditional leadership, war veterans, security officials, ZANU-PF officials and local government officials.<sup>41</sup> Sadomba argues similarly and attributes the “low levels” of violence to the rules that were laid down for the war veterans and other farm occupiers.<sup>42</sup> He blames the apparent breakdown of the rule of law on the farms to unruly and criminal elements that took advantage of, or hijacked, the movement. However, research by Nelson Marongwe contests this. While there were set rules, these were in most cases broken, or local socio-political dynamics took precedence over rules, leading to extensive violence on these farms.<sup>43</sup>

Justifying the ZANU-PF state-sponsored violence in this way recalls Levinas’s conceptualisation of the connections between violence, the state and justice. To him, violence is embedded in the state, and, crucially, that “violence can involve justice”,<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See Mahmood Mamdani, “Lessons of Zimbabwe” in *London Review of books*, 04 December 2008, he contends that the independence obtained in 1980 did not alter the structure of the Zimbabwean society. He cites the willing buyer-willing seller land clause and the racial constitution that reserved for the 5% whites a 20% seats in parliament in the Lancaster House Constitution as major drawbacks to unqualified independence.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> See Wilbert Z Sadomba, “War veterans in Zimbabwe’s land occupations: complexities of a liberation movement in an African post-colonial settler society”, Unpublished Doctoral thesis, Waganigen University, 2008, pp 16-17. See also Wilbert Z Sadomba, “Challenging the limits of the state’s market-based land resettlement programme in Zimbabwe: War veterans as the catalyst of the land movement”, Unpublished paper presented at the Market-oriented changes in land policies in developing and transition countries: Understanding the varied views and reactions “from below”, International Conference on Land, poverty, social justice and development, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 9-14 January 2006. pp 16-17.

<sup>43</sup> See Nelson Marongwe, “Farm occupations and occupiers”, p 170. See also Mandivamba Rukuni and Stig Jensen, “Land, growth and governance”, p 252.

<sup>44</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre Nous: Thinking of the other*, Translated by Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshaw, Columbia University Press, New York, 1998, p 106.

and “there is a measure of violence necessary in terms of justice.”<sup>45</sup> In this way the state embodies this violence in the name of justice. Levinas goes further to argue that the question of justice emerges when there is “a third”. “If there were two of us in the world, there would be no problem.” However, the presence of the third creates a complex world of reciprocal citizens. It creates the need for justice, since we are all responsible for one another.<sup>46</sup> A certain amount of violence is, therefore, necessary for justice (although a merciful attitude towards the neighbour who perpetrates crime or injustice is preferred). The state is the third-party arbiter who dispenses justice.

In this role, the violence of the state that leads to the killing of its own people is often justified as an act of justice. The state is morally bound to protect its people, to aid their development. All threats to the security of the state are a threat to its people, to justice. In this moral economy of justice, the state can kill, injure, maim, all those that it identifies as enemies or threats: internal enemies and external enemies, those who oppose development, those “citizens” who side with the external enemy (the MDC, in the case of Zimbabwe) those who are terrorists, who are secessionists, and more broadly “enemies of the nation”.

Of interest in the analyses by Moyo, Yeros, and Mamdani is the casting of the violence in the form of a “foundational” mode.<sup>47</sup> By placing the emphasis that violence was greatest between 2000 and 2003, they not only sanctify the violence, because this violence is necessary in inaugurating and establishing authority,<sup>48</sup> but they also ignore the “reiterative” or the repetitive dimension of the violence.<sup>49</sup> In this regard, they pay scant attention to the violence that continued to plague the nation up to 2008, and even beyond. Of significance in the formulation by Mamdani and Sadomba is the apparent

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p 105.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p 106.

<sup>47</sup> See Jacques Derrida, “Force of law: The ‘Mystical Foundation of Authority’”, in Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfield and David Gray Carlson, eds, *Deconstruction and the possibility of justice*, Routledge, New York and London, 1992, p 13.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> See Jacques Derrida, cited in Uppendra Baxi, “Preliminary notes on transformative constitutionalism”, *BISA Conference: Courting Justice 11*, Delhi, April 27-29, 2008, p 9.

downplaying of the magnitude and extent of the violence that is the central theme of the critique by the human rights paradigm. Mamdani, for instance, underrepresents important issues such as the collapse of the rule of law and agricultural production, the miserable plight of farm workers, the urban poor, women and children to mere casualties of the violence. Other issues of cronyism have too been deliberately silenced in the discussions by these leftist scholars.<sup>50</sup> On the collapse of agricultural production, Mamdani, for example blames it more on the West's targeted sanctions. Other scholars, however, point to the unholy alliance of the war veterans, traditional leaders, ZANU-PF officials and the Youth militias, in fomenting, steering and fanning the widespread violence that precipitated the collapse of agricultural production.<sup>51</sup>

Broadly, however, questions have been asked whether the violence that rocked Zimbabwe was purely emancipatory. There is no denying to the hitherto historical and structural difference in terms of land ownership and control of other resources way into 2000.<sup>52</sup> This provided an imperative demand for an accelerated programme of reform to transfigure land and other resources allocation and ownership patterns in Zimbabwe. Thus, to this extent there is little contestation about the progressive nature of the outcome of the *jambanja* especially if one considers the thousands of peasants who accessed land as a result.

While this was largely not in dispute, academics and political players, however, questioned the simultaneous strategic deployment of a violent project targeting the opposition alongside *jambanja* giving credence to its instrumentalisation. This led Michael Neocosmos, for example, to argue instead that what happened should be categorised as a form of state nationalism, advanced by the state to articulate problems

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<sup>50</sup> Issues of cronyism in land allocation have been an important factor in the land redistribution process in Zimbabwe, and they call for more space than hitherto given in the Leftist scholarship. Moyo and Yeros, "Zimbabwe ten years on" refer to it but do not pursue it to any length.

<sup>51</sup> See Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla veterans in post-war Zimbabwe: Symbolic and violent politics, 1980-1987*, Cambridge, University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p 196.

<sup>52</sup> See compelling researches by Robin R Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Zimbabwe*, Heinemann, London, 1977, and also by Henry V Moyana, *The Political economy of land in Zimbabwe*, for further insights.

in order to get short-term electoral support.<sup>53</sup> Brian Raftopoulos additionally sees the paradoxical twin deployment of a liberatory propaganda and violence against the opposition as a disorientation. To Raftopoulos, this was

... an 'anti-imperialism' built on widespread coercion and diminishing electoral support [...] Therefore the 'sobering fact' that has to be kept in mind ... is not just the massive changes on the land, but the widespread state attack on the citizenry of the country that has been the modality of the politics of land.<sup>54</sup>

In the end the main victims of the violence turned out to be mainly the peasants, rural civil servants and women, who should have benefitted from the land reform, the harbinger of the violence. To this extent therefore, while admitting to the transformation in land ownership patterns, violence seems to have been deployed more to bully the electorate and maintain ZANU-PF hegemony.<sup>55</sup> More than this, the violence enabled a localised "primitive accumulation" or what Sachikonye refers to as naked expropriation or coercive accumulation.<sup>56</sup> Besides accessing some of the best farms, appropriating farm produce or farm equipment, and privileged access to urban houses, the looting by the 'chefs' extended to the mining sector, especially in diamond mining.<sup>57</sup> However, officially, this was represented as a part of the indigenisation process.

This violence that was deployed alongside the land acquisition feeds into Foucault's notion of power as a relation to war in the sense that the violence was heavily militarised. The army, police, secret agents, as well as the quasi-military organ, the war veterans, who had been made into a reserve army, actively led the invasions and or

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<sup>53</sup> See Michael Neocosmos, "Reflections on Human rights Discourse and Emancipation in the Twenty-First Century", in <http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/909/the-global-political-agreement-as-a-passive-revolution/>, Accessed 02 June 2011.

<sup>54</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "Response to the Mamdani debate" in *Concerned Africa scholars*, Bulletin No 82, Summer 2009, p 58.

<sup>55</sup> See Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens: 60 years of institutionalised violence in Zimbabwe*, Jacana, 2011, Auckland Park, p 33.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, pp 37-40.

<sup>57</sup> See a condensed discussion in Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, "The military factor in Zimbabwe's political and electoral affairs", p 19.

protected the occupiers.<sup>58</sup> In addition, as we have already mentioned, serving and ex-serving military personnel headed key government departments and parastatals.<sup>59</sup> In true fashion as the leader of the Third Chimurenga and as Commander-In-Chief of the army, President Mugabe led the ideological battle, constantly encouraging these invasions in statements made in the press at rallies or in *Inside the Third Chimurenga*.<sup>60</sup> Symbolically, President “Mugabe donned combat fatigues and spoke of enemies of war, veterans occupied farms and held *pungwes*” and “white farmers reverted to their agricultural security systems and were killed ...”<sup>61</sup>

At another level, ZANU-PF began to churn out jingles that portrayed a nation at war. Regarding this, such jingles as “*Chave Chimurenga*” or “It’s now a war”, began to be played on both radio and TV.<sup>62</sup> In this modality, there was created a “hierarchy of citizenship and security that elevate[d] those directing the forces of brutality to the highest status beyond the reaches of the law, and those conducting acts of violence to the status of ‘war heroes.’”<sup>63</sup> Crucially therefore, those at the top echelons set the tone of the ensuing “revolution”, either through essentialising the history of the country that enabled them to carve their place in that trajectory or through the repressive, coercive, violent or deformed masculinity that was cascaded to the lower echelons of society to intimidate opponents.

In Shurugwi, this was the dominant discourse, and mode of operation, mainly because of the joint work of war veterans, ZANU-PF youths, Green Bombers, and state media. The hegemonic role of the state media cannot be overemphasised because it was the dominant media source for the majority of the people in the district who had limited

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<sup>58</sup> See Nelson Marongwe, “Farm occupations and farm occupiers”, especially pp179-182. See also, Brian Raftopoulos, “The state in crisis”. See also Jocelyn Alexander, “Squatters, veterans and the state”, p 101.

<sup>59</sup> See Martin Rupiya, “Evaluating the security sector as the Repressive Instrument for the state in Zimbabwe”, Paper prepared for the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town, 2006, cited in Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe” p 215.

<sup>60</sup> See Robert Gabriel Mugabe, *Inside the Third Chimurenga*, Department of Information and Publicity, Harare, 2001.

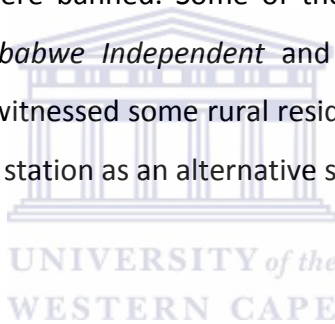
<sup>61</sup> See Jocelyn Alexander, “Squatters, veterans and the state”, p 99.

<sup>62</sup> See Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos, “Zimbabwe’s unfinished business”, p 27.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p 28.

access to alternative media sources. This contrasted with Shurugwi town, for example, where many residents had alternative media sources. I observed during the fieldwork that most households in urban Shurugwi had satellite dishes that beamed news items especially from Botswana and South African channels, as well as the more international channels like CNN and BBC, among others. Furthermore, many had access to the internet, which added to the variety of access to information compared to the rural inhabitants of Shurugwi.

In contrast, I established that there were fewer, I would say, less than ten percent of all households in rural Shurugwi which had satellite decoders installed.<sup>64</sup> In other informal interviews, I was informed that certain newspapers that were perceived to propagate “anti-ZANU-PF” news items were banned. Some of these newspapers were the now defunct *Daily News*, the *Zimbabwe Independent* and the *Financial Gazette*. I was, however, made aware of and witnessed some rural residents who secretly relied on the banned Voice of America radio station as an alternative source of news.



### **VIOLENCE AS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION**

Another way that the violence has been perceived is through the human rights analysis. This looks at the violence in Zimbabwe as having been aimed at intimidating the electorate to vote for ZANU-PF and the elimination of a strong opposition to ZANU-PF and to President Mugabe. The construction of the effects of the violence in this way was rooted in the liberal conception of the relation between the individual with rights and the state. On the whole the relation is constructed in terms of domination and repression, and power is perceived as “a mechanism of repression” and not so much a relation of war.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> See also a similar estimate by *The Sunday Mail*, 04-10 March 2012, “SABC blackout coming soon” that says about ten percent of Zimbabwe’s rural households owned free-to-air decoders that broadcast foreign channels.

<sup>65</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p 90.



In Zimbabwe, this is the discourse that is proffered differentially by NGOs, the MDC and the Western liberals opposed to the violence of the state. In sum, this school of thought has categorised the violence that plagued the country as a constitutive component of the Zimbabwean “crisis”.<sup>66</sup> In the “crisis” period violence was used broadly as an “instrument of dehumanisation,”<sup>67</sup> as well as “a method of political competition, and for seeking and maintaining power ...”,<sup>68</sup> with the overall goal being to gain political “dividends.”<sup>69</sup> For Kriger, the violence of between 2000 and 2001, which can be extended to 2008, was formulated by ZANU-PF as a “systematic campaign of intimidation aimed at crushing support for opposition parties ...”<sup>70</sup> In another dimension, the state-sponsored land invasions are perceived by the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) as an attempt by the state to “forestall major constitutional reforms that [would] offer greater scope for democracy and political reform.”<sup>71</sup>

At another level, the paradigm argues that targeted sanctions imposed by the USA, the European Union, Australia, and Canada were “invited” by the human rights violations by the ZANU-PF government and the state.<sup>72</sup> Based on these targeted measures, there was a freezing of aid, not only for balance of payments, but crucially for the support of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme (LRRP).<sup>73</sup> On the whole, violence is

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<sup>66</sup> See Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos, “Zimbabwe’s unfinished business: Rethinking land, state and nation”, Amanda Hammar, et al, eds; *Zimbabwe’s unfinished business*, p 1. See also Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008”, in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, eds, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, 2009, p 201, for a detailed discussion of this phenomenon as well as a list of writings that argue along these lines.

<sup>67</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p xviii.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p 1.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, p 2.

<sup>70</sup> Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla veterans in post war Zimbabwe: symbolic and violent politics, 1980-1987*, Cambridge university Press, Cambridge, 2003, p 196.

<sup>71</sup> See Mandivamba Rukuni and Stig Jensen, “Land, growth and governance: Tenure reform and visions of progress in Zimbabwe”, in Amanda Hammer, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen, eds, *Zimbabwe’s unfinished business*, p 246.

<sup>72</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe”, p 218.

<sup>73</sup> See Mandivamba Rukuni and Stig Jensen, “Land, growth and governance”, p 246.



perceived to have “been institutionalised to build an authoritarian state that [was] contemptuous of citizen rights.”<sup>74</sup>

Brian Raftopoulos, a key authority in this discourse argues that the crisis period, from 1998 to 2008, that was underlain by both political and economic collapse, “exploded” at the time of the entrance of the MDC that seriously threatened the fortunes of ZANU-PF.<sup>75</sup> As he continues, the crisis was exhibited in multivalent ways, including:

confrontations over land and property rights; contestations over history and meanings of nationalism and citizenship; the emergence of critical civic society organisations campaigning around trade union, human rights and constitutional questions; the restructuring of the state in more authoritarian forms; the broader pan-African and anti-imperialist struggles in Zimbabwe; the cultural representations of the crisis in Zimbabwean literature; and the central role of Robert Mugabe.<sup>76</sup>

According to Raftopoulos, by the late 1990s the state was confronted by an economic collapse that was triggered by the failure of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), corruption, the gratuities to war veterans and the cost of the involvement in the DRC war.<sup>77</sup> This increased the “imbalance between growth and equity, domestic growth and export promotion, and the declining possibility of developing a social contract between the state, capital and labour” which led to an “impasse over future development strategy.”<sup>78</sup> Because of this, the ZANU-PF government “retreated into repression, isolation and a strategy aimed at the support of an economic elite close to the ruling party, using the state to eliminate barriers to its expansion.”<sup>79</sup> The process of repression and the elimination of barriers was initiated from 1998 against the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU)-led food riots, strikes, collective action, and stayaways through security agents and through harsh

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<sup>74</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens: 60 years of institutionalised violence in Zimbabwe*, Jacana, Auckland Park, 2011, p xviii.

<sup>75</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe”, pp 201-202.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p 202. See also Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos, “Zimbabwe’s unfinished business”, p 3.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p 219.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p 203.

<sup>79</sup> Suzanne Dansereau, “Between a rock and a hard place: Zimbabwe’s development impasse”, cited in Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe”, p 203.

legislation such as the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Labour Regulations of 1998.<sup>80</sup>

However, other scholars, while agreeing with Raftopoulos on the repressive effects of the ZANU-PF state from the 1990s trace this thread of the history of state repression in post-colonial Zimbabwe to the *gukurahundi* era in the Matebeleland provinces and parts of the Midlands.<sup>81</sup> To them, the “government intervention took the form of a campaign of grotesque repression in which violence was used indiscriminately against civilians and more selectively against party activists.”<sup>82</sup> And, these “excesses of the state” had “devastating effects.”<sup>83</sup> For Sachikonye, the repression even affected the children of the victims’ access to citizenship.<sup>84</sup> Werbner cited in Sachikonye, points to property (cattle) violations by the army, in the violence that eclipsed that imposed by the Rhodesian forces.<sup>85</sup> Others perceive the abuses of the state during army integration as having contributed to the *gukurahundi*.<sup>86</sup> In total, the *gukurahundi* violence is represented as being state-led repression that as much targeted ZAPU as it aimed at ethnic (Ndebele) cleansing that was framed in a language along the lines of “wipe out the people in the area” or “kill anything that was human.”<sup>87</sup>

Following the rejection of the draft National Constitutional Commission (NCC) constitution in February 2000, violence and repression were spread to the rural areas beginning on the farms that were invaded as punishment against white commercial farmers who were opposed to the government land reform as enunciated in the draft

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<sup>80</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, *Ibid*, pp 204-206.

<sup>81</sup> See Jocelyn Alexander and Joanne McGregor and Terence Ranger *Violence and Memory: One hundred years in the dark forests of Matebeleland*, James Currey and Baobab Books, Oxford and Harare respectively, 2000.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, p 15, see also chapter 9 of their book for a pithy description of this.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, p 8.

<sup>84</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 17.

<sup>85</sup> Richard Werbner, cited in Lloyd Sachikonye, *Ibid*, p 16.

<sup>86</sup> See Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Nationalist-Military Alliance”, p 64, see also Horace Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe*, p 51, and Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla veterans*, pp 68-71.

<sup>87</sup> See Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor, “Democracy, development and political conflict: Rural institutions in Matebeleland North after independence”, in Terence Ranger, ed, *Historical dimensions of human rights*, vol 2, p 122.

constitution. The white farmers were also accused of mobilising their workers against the draft constitution, and for providing financial and material support for the emerging opposition party, the MDC.<sup>88</sup> Of significance is the fact that the constitutional referendum loss had a larger significance in that it marked a “first major political defeat” for ZANU-PF<sup>89</sup>. As well, it served as an inauspicious event, heralding, so to say, a warning to ZANU-PF that the defeat could be replicated in the forthcoming June 2000 and March 2002 parliamentary and presidential elections, respectively.<sup>90</sup> To Bond and Manyanya, the defeat was symptomatic of expired national appeal against an emerging coalition opposition from labour, church, the bourgeoisie and students.<sup>91</sup> Faced with the possibility of such an apocalypse, President Mugabe aligned himself with the militant war veterans to violently expropriate farms, a process called the *jambanja* and later formalised as the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP).<sup>92</sup>

While the war veterans played a significant lead in the farm invasions, and there were significant continuities with previous invasions, the post-2000 invasions differed significantly from the earlier ones. First of all, many of those who participated were ZANU-PF youths who were forced to join because of “grassroots initiatives and centralised coercion and violence.”<sup>93</sup> Secondly, the central ethos was “the need to contain, coerce and demobilise the structures and support of the opposition.”<sup>94</sup> Thirdly, as Alexander suggests, the land reform started in 2000 was based on the populist mode of the Second Chimurenga nationalist mobilisation rather than the technical or scientific

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<sup>88</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe”, p 210.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p 211.

<sup>91</sup> Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe’s plunge*, p 74.

<sup>92</sup> Lovemore madhuku, “Law, politics and the land reform process in Zimbabwe”, in M Masiwa, ed, *Post-independence land reform in Zimbabwe*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Harare, 2004, p137. See also Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos, “Zimbabwe’s unfinished business”, p 11. On the whole *Jambanja* is represented as an unprecedented, violent and radical land redistribution process which was doubly aimed at taking white farms and intimidating Mugabe’s opponents inside and outside ZANU-PF

<sup>93</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe”, p 212.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, p 212.

models of the first two decades of independence derived from the models the colonial governments had used in communal areas.<sup>95</sup>

The other major differences, as noted by Nelson Marongwe, included the massive intensity and scale of the 2000 onwards invasions.<sup>96</sup> An aspect that Marongwe also refers to, and one that feeds into the “passive revolution” the land grabs instituted, was the central role the war veterans played in leading the processes of identifying farms, occupying them, strategizing how to occupy them, in terms of protecting the occupiers and in terms of assuming leadership positions for the resettled communities.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, the structure of leadership established at the occupied farms as well reflected similarities “with the military and party command structures of the national liberation struggle.”<sup>98</sup> Because these structures were formulated at a juncture of “war”, exigencies meant that they did not allow for much criticism.<sup>99</sup>

At another level, the state was reorganised in more authoritarian and racial ways. In terms of ZANU-PF ideology, the problems of the state, some of which were markedly due to its failings, were explained in a discourse that blamed the MDC, whites, and more generally Western imperialism.<sup>100</sup> Regarding this, there was created a clear distinction between those who belonged and those who did not that is, citizens and non-citizens. In this way, the MDC, urbanites and civic societies and whites, were cast as “enemies of the nation”, “outsiders” and “Western surrogates”,<sup>101</sup> or as totemless people.<sup>102</sup> Because they were cast in the language of war, as “enemies”, they were to be crushed.

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<sup>95</sup> See Jocelyn Alexander, “Squatters, veterans and the state”, pp 84-114.

<sup>96</sup> See Nelson Marongwe, “Farm occupations and occupiers in the new politics of land in Zimbabwe”, p 157.

<sup>97</sup> Nelson Marongwe, *Ibid*, pp 157-158 & 178.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, p 179.

<sup>99</sup> See Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor, “Democracy, development and political conflict: rural institutions in Matebeleland North after independence”, p 113.

<sup>100</sup> See Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe’s plunge*, p 74.

<sup>101</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe”, p 213.

<sup>102</sup> See J Mujere, “‘Tsunami!’, Coping with the impact of Operation Murambatsvina in Harare: The case of elderly vendors and tuckshop owners in Mbare and Highfield suburbs”, Paper presented at the conference on *Ageing in African Cities: revisiting the issues, responses and outcomes*, Nordic Africa Institute, Zomba, Malawi, 29 November-1 December 2007, p 13.

Thus, they suffered forced dismissals from work (especially rural civil servants and local government officials), disenfranchisement, threats, exclusion, physical assaults, displacement, and property destruction, among others. The above, as Masipula Sithole would possibly say, was a carryover from the Second Chimurenga's "warlike" "commandist nature of mobilisation" where opponents were viewed "as enemies, and therefore illegitimate."<sup>103</sup>

Other developments included the violent reorganisation of the judiciary to ensure that it became pro-ZANU-PF arm, the enactment of repressive legislation namely POSA and AIPPA that proscribed the operations of the opposition parties, the militarisation of the state, and the increased deployment of violence against the opposition at election times.<sup>104</sup> In urban areas, the state increasingly violated the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15) to not only violate the rights of the urbanites, but to try to wrestle control of urban councils from the MDC that had consistently won the right to control them.<sup>105</sup> In addition, the state also stifled the democratic space for urban-based groups such as the Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA), women, pressure groups to demonstrate against the state excesses by violently suppressing any attempts to show discontent through for example strike actions, demonstrations or even prayer sessions for good governance.<sup>106</sup>

The construction of Zimbabwean politics around insiders-outsiders recalls Carl Schmitt's link between the "political" and violence in his work *The concept of the political*. In the treatise, he posits that violence is embedded in the political,<sup>107</sup> which is hinged on the enemy-friend binary.<sup>108</sup> For Schmitt, the state, and hence the political are inherent in

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<sup>103</sup> See Masipula Sithole, cited in James Muzondidya, "From buoyancy to crisis, 1980-1997", in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, eds, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p 176.

<sup>104</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "The crisis in Zimbabwe", pp 213-215.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, p 225.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, pp 226-7.

<sup>107</sup> The "political", according to Carl Schmitt is different from politics. The political defines the state in terms of friend/enemy, which help to define its internal security as well as external threats. It is thus the source of politics, but not the equivalent of it. See Carl Schmitt and G. Schwab, *The concept of the political*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2007, p 19.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, p 19.

nature (this view of sovereignty is directly opposed to the Hobbesian sovereignty where states are formed for protection). Because they are inherent in nature, and are undergirded by the friend-enemy binary, the politics that emerge from them are also fraught with these tensions. When further extended this friend-enemy binary leads to further binaries, that is, good or bad; which ultimately become life or death, because it is through this binary that “societies are formed, maintained, progressed and destroyed.”<sup>109</sup>

That the “political” is constructed in terms of violence needs not be emphasised in Zimbabwe. The discourse of ZANU-PF has always been one rooted in what Ranger terms a “doctrine of ‘permanent revolution’ leaping from Chimurenga to Chimurenga,”<sup>110</sup> which is a “doctrine of violence because it sees itself as a doctrine of revolution.”<sup>111</sup> It is also from this discourse of participation in violent revolutions that ZANU-PF claims its legitimacy to continue to rule in the face of diminished support at the ballot.<sup>112</sup> A closer scrutiny of what has become patriotic history or Mugabeism<sup>113</sup> further underscores Schmitt’s binary found at the root of the “political”. In it the friend-enemy binary in ZANU-PF is constructed in patriot-sell-out terminology.

The increasing resort by the government to military-style operations to redress problems of the state has again been constructed in this repression-domination in the human rights framework. In this regard, operations such as *Murambatsina*, *Maguta*, *Garikai* and *Chikorokoza chapera*, have been understood as a part of the larger project aimed not only at retaining ZANU-PF in power, but additionally to browbeat the opposition support base. More broadly, they have been taken as punishment for those constituencies that had voted for the MDC in a retributive fashion of violence. Regarding

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<sup>109</sup> Michael O’Meara, “Carl Schmitt’s The concept of the political” in <http://www.togonline.com/blog/carl-schmitts-concept-of-the-political/>, Accessed 06 June 2011.

<sup>110</sup> See Terence Ranger, “The Uses and Abuses of History in Zimbabwe”, Paper presented at the *Skinning the skunk-Zimbabwe Futures*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala 2005, cited in *kms1.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/...ef7a.../30+-+3+chapters.pdf*, Accessed 07 June 2011, p 8.

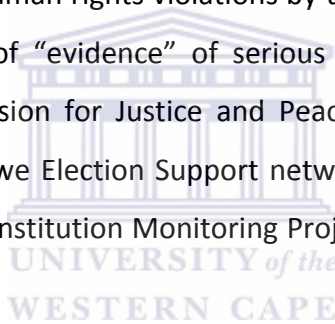
<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “The Global political Agreement as passive revolution.”

<sup>113</sup> See Sabelo Gatsheni Ndlovu, *Do Zimbabweans exist*, chapter six. See also Terence Ranger, “The uses and limits of history in Zimbabwe”, p 7.

Operation *Murambatsvina* that visibilised a country-wide government terror, Anna Tibaijuka,<sup>114</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye,<sup>115</sup> Solidarity Peace Trust,<sup>116</sup> among others, have cast it as representing the cruelty of the ZANU-PF regime against an urban constituency that had persistently voted for the MDC. Its impact, that of displacing about 700 000 urbanites, and indirectly affecting over two million people, is portrayed in monumental terms akin to those of a tsunami.<sup>117</sup> This was to describe terms of its seismic negative effects on the people's livelihoods, access to jobs and basic rights as citizens. This, however, contrasted the official discourse that claimed the operation was meant to restore order to urban areas.<sup>118</sup>

Alongside these scholars were numerous human rights NGO reports that provided detailed accounts of alleged human rights violations by the ZANU-PF led state. Amongst those that provided reports of "evidence" of serious abuses were: Solidarity Peace Trust;<sup>119</sup> the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP),<sup>120</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum;<sup>121</sup> Zimbabwe Election Support network and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights Independent Constitution Monitoring Project ZZZICOMP;<sup>122</sup> Research and



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<sup>114</sup> Anna Tibaijuka, *Report on the Fact Finding mission to Zimbabwe to assess the scope and impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlement Issue in Zimbabwe*, United Nations, New York, 2005.

<sup>115</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, pp 25-27.

<sup>116</sup> Solidarity Peace Trust, *"Discarding the filth": Operation Murambatsvina. Interim report on the Zimbabwean government's "urban cleansing" and forced eviction campaign, May/June 2005*, 27 June 2005.

<sup>117</sup> See Joost Fontein, "Anticipating a tsunami: Rumours, planning and the arbitrary state in Zimbabwe," in *Africa: The journal of the International Africa Institute*, Vol 79, Number 3, 2009, pp 369-398, in <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/afr/summary/v079/79.3.fontein.html>, Accessed 21 May 2012.

<sup>118</sup> See Government of Zimbabwe, *Response to the UN special envoy's report on Operation Murambatsvina*, 2005, Harare.

<sup>119</sup> See for example, Solidarity Peace Trust, *Desperately seeking sanity: what prospects for a new beginning in Zimbabwe?*, Durban, 2008.

<sup>120</sup> See CCJP, *Graveyard governance*, Harare, 2009.

<sup>121</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *Only bruises on the soles of their feet: torture and falanga in Zimbabwe*, Harare, 2009.

<sup>122</sup> ZZZICOMP, *Weekly Report Shadowing the Outreach process, 19-25 July*, in <http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/WeeklyReport19-25July2010.pdf>, Accessed 12 May 2011.



Advocacy Unit;<sup>123</sup> Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network; and the Zimbabwe Peace Project.<sup>124</sup>

### **PROBLEMATISING THE HUMAN RIGHTS NARRATIVE: TOWARDS A “THIRD SPACE”**

Having analysed the redistributive paradigm and having spelled out the human rights discourse on the violence between 2000 and 2008, I now turn to address the critique of the human rights narrative. My aim is to conceive ways to imagine it alongside, and not averse to, the historical structural inequalities that have been evoked by ZANU-PF at a time of loss of support. As Raftopoulos says, we should not dismiss too quickly the redistribution agenda simply because of its closeness with the diatribe of the besieged ZANU-PF,<sup>125</sup> and neither should we be quick to dismiss the human rights claims because of their apparent closeness to the “regime change” agenda.<sup>126</sup> In doing so, I seek to project an instance of Homi Bhabha’s “Third space.”<sup>127</sup> A third space, as Woodward et al, suggest, is one that recognises the currency in polar views with a view to finding “other routes beyond binarisms.”<sup>128</sup> This might generate “a new idea”<sup>129</sup> in which to imagine the problematic of the new millennium displacements, farm and firm takeovers, emotional and physical torture, and the stifling of the democratic space in Zimbabwe.

The central theme of the critique of the human rights project is neatly captured in the words of Shivji, who stated that:

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<sup>123</sup> Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU), *“When the going gets tough the man gets going”: Zimbabwean women’s perceptions on politics, governance, political violence and transitional justice*, Harare, November 2010.

<sup>124</sup> Zimbabwe Peace Project, *ZPP Monthly Monitor(s)*, for example in [www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/ZPP300312.pdf](http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/ZPP300312.pdf) – Zimbabwe, Accessed 21 July 2012.

<sup>125</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “Current politics in Zimbabwe: Confronting the crisis”, in David Harold-Barry, ed, *Zimbabwe: The past is the future*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2004, p 1.

<sup>126</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, *Newsday*, 22 December 2011, “Guest column: Zim politics in a spell of indecision”.

<sup>127</sup> See Homi Bhabha, cited in Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley, “Introduction”, p xxx.

<sup>128</sup> See Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley, “Introduction”, *Deep HiStories: gender and colonialism in Southern Africa*, Rodopi, Amsterdam and New York, 2002, p xxv.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*, p xxx.



Human rights discourse has succeeded in marginalising concrete analysis of society. Human rights ideology is the ideology of status quo, not change. Documentation of the human rights abuses, although important, in its own right, by itself does not help us to understand the social and political relations in our society. It is not surprising that given the absence of political economy context and theoretical framework, much of our writings on human rights, rule of law, constitution, etc, uncritically reiterate or assume neo-liberal precepts. Human rights is not a theoretical tool of understanding social and political relations. At best it can only be a means of exposing a form of oppression and, therefore, perhaps, an ideology of resistance.<sup>130</sup>

Wendy Brown concurs with Shivji and posits that the discourse of human rights is situated in a complex paradox of emancipation and domination, and protection and regulation.<sup>131</sup> In her words:

Historically, rights emerged in modernity both as a vehicle of emancipation from political disenfranchisement or institutionalised servitude and as a means of privileging an emerging bourgeois class within a discourse of formal egalitarianism and universal citizenship. Thus, they emerge both as a mode of protecting against arbitrary use and abuse by sovereign and social power and as mode of securing and naturalising dominant social power- class, gender, and so forth. Not only did bourgeois rights discourse mask, by depoliticising, the social power of institutions such as private property or the family, they also organised mass population for exploitation and regulation, thus functioning as a mode of what Foucault termed 'biopower.'<sup>132</sup>

The key in these arguments is that the human rights discourse might not capture the full scale situation of inequalities in societies and may serve to entrench the oppression of the weak classes.

With reference to the land issue in Zimbabwe, the language of human rights seems to be wanting in addressing the impact of the colonial heritage in promoting racialised land and other resource inequalities, hence it is not sensitive enough to appreciate the impact of structural violence that also engendered social and economic inequalities. To this extent numerous accounts have been produced regarding skewed land distribution

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<sup>130</sup> I Shivji, "The life and times of Babu" in *Review of African Political Economy*, 99, 2003, p 115.

<sup>131</sup> Wendy Brown, "Rights, identity in late modernity: Revisiting the Jewish question", in Austin Sarat and Thomas R Keams, eds, *Identities, Politics and Rights*, University of Michigan Press, 1995, p 89.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

patterns in Zimbabwe since colonisation in 1890.<sup>133</sup> These historic imbalances have constantly [re]produced tensions, and intermittent land invasions, in both the colonial and post-colonial state.<sup>134</sup> Some of the highly recognised tensions include the Tangwena people's struggles to remain on the Kaerezi ranch, the Ndau claims over Chirinda forests, as well as the Chief Manhenga's claims over the Gambuli farm.<sup>135</sup> It is also beyond debate that land imbalances were a key grievance of the liberation struggle and it was also a deal breaker that stalled the negotiations at Lancaster in 1979.<sup>136</sup> The Lancaster logjam was only unlocked with the financial aid promises for equitable land redistribution from the USA, British and other European countries.<sup>137</sup> Elsewhere, the government had to use force to evict land occupying communities on government or private farms in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>138</sup>

Shurugwi district shares in some of these struggles over access to land by the local communities. These include the 1920s disputed relocation from the Tokwe ranch by people under Chief Banga.<sup>139</sup> To show land shortages in the reserve they were driven into, and their desire to remain in the Tokwe ranch, some went back to Tokwe ranch as rent-paying settlers, while others slipped in as "invaders."<sup>140</sup> The land shortages in the district are summed up in the words of the Native Commissioner for Selukwe (Shurugwi) who wrote that: "from the figures relating to the population and stock on the reserve at any disposal it was apparent to me that under the system in vogue the reserve was overcrowded- in fact I marvelled that so large a number of people were able under the conditions to be self-supporting."<sup>141</sup> In fact, based on some calculations, Shurugwi fared worse than most reserves because she had a higher population density. On average a

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<sup>133</sup> See Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial domination* and Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and guerrilla warfare*.

<sup>134</sup> See Nelson Marongwe, "Farm occupations and occupiers", p 157.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, pp 172 and 186.

<sup>136</sup> See Henry V Moyana, *The political economy of land*, pp 22-23.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> See James Muzondidya, "From buoyancy to crisis, 1980-1997", pp 182 & 190.

<sup>139</sup> See NAZ, S235/505-508, *Report of the NC, Selukwe, for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 1928*.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> See NAZ, S235/505-508, *Report of the NC, Selukwe, for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 1929*.

person, for example in 1934 had access to only 9 acres of land,<sup>142</sup> compared to the national average of 30,49.<sup>143</sup> It was because of the acute land shortages in Shurugwi reserve that the district was selected to pilot the “centralisation” programme, a technical-scientific method meant to maximise production from the land and simultaneously conserve it.<sup>144</sup>

The land shortages in Shurugwi and other communal areas continued largely unresolved right up to the start of the *jambanja* in 2000. However, this was due to a concoction of the government receiving marginal farms for resettlement, the corrupt allocation of acquired farms to “chefs”, shortages of finances and capacity for the land reform, a rise in population, the impact of ESAP, donor fatigue, and, the government’s involvement in other programmes.<sup>145</sup> Because the land problem remained unresolved, it remained an emotive political issue. It was certainly on the basis of this that ZANU-PF rode on this emotion to instigate the *jambanja*, and later the FTLRP.

From the foregoing discussion, it follows therefore that the human rights paradigm, while important, nonetheless has to factor in politico-historical inequalities that were ushered in by the moment of colonisation and the embedded structural violence rooted in the racially skewed legislation and policies. This makes it imperative to tie the understanding of human rights for any particular group to the understanding, and even the redressing, of historical wrongs. As Gayatri Spivak says, “the groups that are dispensers of human rights must realise that the natural Rights of Man were contingent upon the historical French Revolution, the Universal Declaration upon the historical events of the Second World War.”<sup>146</sup> In Zimbabwe, the starting point should be

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<sup>142</sup> Based on population and size of the reserve calculations. See also NAZ, S235/505-508, *Reports of Native Commissioner, (NC), Selukwe, 1934.*

<sup>143</sup> See Henry V Moyana, *The political economy of land in Zimbabwe*, p 47.

<sup>144</sup> See Chapter Two of this thesis, for an in-depth discussion of the policy of centralisation, that is, reasons for its adoption in Shurugwi, its memorialisation and its impact in the district and for other “reserves”.

<sup>145</sup> See Mandivamba Rukuni and Stig Jensen, “Land, growth and governance”, pp 249-253.

<sup>146</sup> Gayatri Charkravorty Spivak, “Righting wrongs”, p 530. See also “Statement on Human Rights” Submitted to the Commission on Human Rights, United Nations, by The Executive Board, American Anthropological Association, in *American Anthropologist*, Vol 49, No 4, Part 1, Oct-Dec 1947, cited in <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002->

colonisation and the attendant project of land alienation, and other policies of racial discrimination in the economic and political spheres that reverberated across to other facets of people's lives which also introduced and sustained inequalities between races. Shari Eppel and Brian Raftopoulos have also alluded to such a need, which projects the structural inequalities running back to colonialism for such human rights projects not to be seen as merely Western liberal extensions.<sup>147</sup>

It is also pertinent to think through Karl Marx's critique of the human rights discourse and liberalism in general to understand the limits of this paradigm. In *On the Jewish Question*, he warns that this discourse has the potential of obscuring the emancipation of the real human by instead liberating the abstract substitute, which he says leads to the return to the "old society."<sup>148</sup> To him therefore, rights in this situation remained at the transcendental level that has to be reached via a medium, and they mostly remain inaccessible. This was largely rooted in the nature of the hierarchical relationship between man and human rights, which always required an intercessor as in the religious sphere. The analogous relationship he made with Christianity brings out this clearly. He writes:

[R]eligion is simply the recognition man in a roundabout fashion; that is, through an intermediary. The state is the intermediary between man and human liberty. Just as Christ is the intermediary to whom man attributes all his own divinity and all his religious bonds, so the state is the intermediary to which man confides all his non-divinity and all his human freedom.<sup>149</sup>

On the whole the need to attain the abstract, transcendental state, where individual human rights are respected and observed by all has the potential to obscure inequalities

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[7294%28194710%2F12%292%3A49%3A4%3C539%3ASOHR%3E2%3E2.0.CO%3B2-0](https://www.oxfordjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1093/ajph/101.12.2192), Accessed 21 January 2011, p 542, which says further that there was a selective deployment of the human rights language to exclude non-whites in both the Americana and French declarations. To this end, the authors of the American Declaration were slave owners, while in the French case, the country had colonies, and its citizens in these colonies owned slaves who were not accorded similar human rights.

<sup>147</sup> Shari Eppel and Brian Raftopoulos, "Political crisis, mediation", pp 5-6.

<sup>148</sup> Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question", p 32. In the Hegelian school, for which Marx was a disciple and critic, the real refers to people in the Civil Society that was characterised by individualism and egoisms; and the abstract was found in the political state where people lived in the transcendental guided by reason, a condition which was never easy to achieve.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

and inhibit the emancipation of the lower classes. This therefore means that human rights are not always found in the practical sense, but in the Hegelian “political state”, abstracted from reality. As such inequalities remain because many citizens do not have a direct access to them.

In the Zimbabwean case, and in relation to our discussion, among others, is the issue of farms as private property that has been violated. The flip side is that offered in ZANU-PF discourse, which argues that the majority of the citizens of Zimbabwe needed to also access to the land. As such this brings to issue two important views on rights that are difficult to balance. These are contestations ultimately on what constitutes emancipation. Is it the protection of the “negative rights” or redistributive rights? In other words, is freedom for the majority to be found in the land redistribution, indigenisation and other affirmative actions, for which the violence is explained in ZANU-PF discourse or in the protection of rights in the liberal sense? This is a complex question, which begs for a more nuanced analysis. However, the short of it might be that both discourses have relevance and truths which cannot be ignored and which have to be put together to formulate a more meaningful and inclusive discourse for Zimbabwe. Unfortunately, however, they have been strategically deployed to solicit certain emotive and political reactions, and not impartially used and understood.

The discussion around human rights is a crucial one for Zimbabwe. At play one sees a clear bifurcation of views on the subject by the two groups in the equation of power. Broadly, ZANU-PF stresses “positive” notion of rights while the MDC, the NGOs and the West in general emphasise the upholding of the “negative” notion of freedom.<sup>150</sup> Under “negative” freedom individual liberties, such as property rights, freedoms of; movement, religion, speech, and association among others, should be jealously guarded

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<sup>150</sup> These two views of freedom were popularised by Isiah Berlin, in his essay “Two concepts of Freedom”, 1958. In it he says negative freedom centred around individual-liberal view of human rights against intrusion by other individuals and by the state. On the other hand he says positive human rights were based on rationale and they looked for what was right especially for the group and not the individual, although the individual’s desire for self-growth were incidentally catered for.

from interference by the state.<sup>151</sup> These are the first generation rights on the civil and political claims that guarantee individual liberty. On the other hand “positive” freedom, that is freedom to, is mainly concerned with the group interests that are supposed to dominate and individual rights are supposed to play second fiddle to these group rights that are to lead to higher attainments for the society/group, that is, self-mastery, self-determination and self-mastery.<sup>152</sup> These are rooted in the second generation rights that stress equality of treatment and equality of conditions leading to economic freedom of groups.

ZANU-PF’s emphasis on redistribution, indigenisation and national sovereignty points to “positive” freedom where it claims that the farm invasions under the fast track land reform programme were aimed at completing the independence of Zimbabwe by ensuring that the majority blacks also participate in the economy of the country.<sup>153</sup> As Isaiah Berlin has said, the danger in the “positive” version of freedom is its compatibility with authority, where the wonderful ideals of taking control, self-mastery, self-determination and self-realisation may end up being adulterated to promote the goals of the leaders while oppressing the desires, aspirations and individual liberties of the ruled.<sup>154</sup> At play at some serious level is the question of which rights to articulate first, the individual or the group? ZANU-PF seems to be following the Kwame Nkrumah adage that says: “seek ye the political kingdom and all things shall be added unto you”,<sup>155</sup> by its articulation of the language of sovereignty and indigenisation. There is also a clear tension over which rights to follow first between the civil or political on the one hand and the cultural, economic, or social rights.

As The Scrutator in the *Zimbabwe Mirror* newspaper also stated, by emphasising human rights and democracy issues, the MDC was doing little justice to the “National

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> See ZANU-PF election manifestos between 2000 and 2008.

<sup>154</sup> Isaiah Berlin, “Two concepts of liberty”.

<sup>155</sup> See Ali Mazrui, “Seek ye first the political kingdom” in Ali Mazrui and C. Wondji, eds, *General History of Africa: Africa since 1935*, UNESCO, Paris, 1993, p 105.

Question”.<sup>156</sup> As such on its own the human rights language might prove inadequate to articulate a solid discourse. In the Zimbabwean situation, therefore the human rights discourse has to take into account the peculiarity of the land issue and colonialism and not to discuss it in the universal version of the discourse, which tends to idealise issues.

Notwithstanding the value of the arguments against the human rights paradigm in the Zimbabwean crisis, it should be stated that such issues should not also be relegated to a secondary role. The need for the observance of political and civil rights was certainly not at the bottom of the issues that coalesced into the nationalism that challenged and dethroned the settler regime by 1980.<sup>157</sup> On the whole, however, one finds that ZANU-PF has portrayed itself largely as a victim of Western conspiracy, as a revolutionary opposition party to Britain and America, and also as a party that has failed to transform itself from a liberation movement into a governing party by continuously articulating the notion of liberation against the former coloniser, Britain.

The project of critiquing the human rights discourse is not again to demean their essence and importance in shaping Zimbabwe history. As Michael Neocosmos, cited in Raftopoulos says, “such interventions are meant to contextualise the current import of the human rights debate, and to take note of its limitations and disabling elements in the interpellation of people as juridical rather than more broadly political subjects, and as part of the language of the new form of imperialism.”<sup>158</sup> Also, notwithstanding the arguments against the human rights discourse, we need to state that in the current era

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<sup>156</sup> The Scutator in the *Zimbabwe Mirror*, cited in Brian Raftopoulos, “Zimbabwe crisis and the challenges for the left”, *Journal of African Studies*, vol 32, No2, June 2006, p 6. But, the unresolved question is what is the national question? Is it land in Mugabe and ZANU-PF terminology? And, who also defines that?

<sup>157</sup> In this regard, human rights organisations such as the CCJP fought tooth and nail to highlight and publish human rights abuses by the colonial state in the 1970s. See also Terence Ranger, ed, *The historical dimensions of democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe*, vol 2, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2003, p 9.

<sup>158</sup> See Michael Neocosmos, cited in Brian Raftopoulos, “The Global Political Agreement as a ‘Passive Revolution’: Notes on the contemporary politics in Zimbabwe”, in *The Round Table*, in <http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/909/the-global-political-agreement-as-a-passive-revolution/>, accessed 02 July 2011.



of the domination of Western liberal thought, the idea of a citizen is constructed by access to basic rights, both first and second generation.

## **HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE MILITARISATION OF VIOLENCE AND RURAL WOMEN IN ZIMBABWE**

There is no consensus on the origins of the militarisation of violence and its negative impact on women in rural areas of Zimbabwe. Some scholars like Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni argue that violence has been endemic in Zimbabwe running in a continuum under different names from the pre-colonial, through the colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe. Others, like Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi and Norma Kriger, locate it in the Second Chimurenga. On the whole, they posit that nationalist movements of the Second Chimurenga were patriarchal and generally intolerant and oppressive to the cause of not only women, but other interest groups like workers and students, for example, in the name of the common good of the African struggle against colonialism.

Yet on the other end of the scale Ngwabi Bhebe, Joyce Kazembe, and Terence Ranger, under nationalist historiography, have described the Second Chimurenga, in rather celebratory terms, as being a moment that liberated Zimbabweans in many spheres, including women who confronted and escaped the entrapments of gender and colonial oppression. In this regard they posit that women acquired new roles, and became more liberated from “traditional” male-based oppression and control.

From the above, one can say that the rise and development of African nationalism in Zimbabwe offered an ambiguous terrain where both gains and losses were decipherable, proving a paradox in terms of the advancement and the emancipation of women. This section tries to [re]present these different views on the origins and impact of the nationalist-based violence on rural women, with a view to also position the militarisation of violence in Shurugwi district in some perspective of the broader nationalist-based violence. By pitting the nationalist perspective against the revisionist



one on the impact of the Second Chimurenga on the emancipation of women, I seek to push for, and portray an ambivalent reading of the liberation war. Through this I intend to locate the entrenchment of gendered inequalities against the backdrop of the liberation movements' claims of strong inroads towards gender parity. The thesis of this section is that while there could be other points of origin for the violence between 2000 and 2008, the evolution of African nationalism from the 1940s, and especially its crystallisation into the Second *Chimurenga* in the 1960s and 1970s, fertilised and intensified the process of gender oppression.

This genealogy is important because ZANU-PF is a party rooted in African nationalism of the Second *Chimurenga* that officially acknowledged, but practically suppressed, sectarian interests, including those of women, under the notion of the “common good” of nationalism. It still had (by 2008) the same leadership nucleus, from its days as a guerrilla nationalist movement, which was still averse to diversity and that still harboured intolerance to the opposition. Furthermore, during 2000 to 2008 it was increasingly resorting to Second Chimurenga coercive mobilisation methodologies. Chief of which were the resuscitation of the *pungwes*, militarist nationalism, the wearing of military fatigues by President Mugabe during campaign rallies and the re-emergence of bases.<sup>159</sup>

I intend to sketch these debates, not to so much to affirm or deny any, but in order to provide a background for the understanding of the 2000-2008 violence in Shurugwi. I also seek to contend that the Second Chimurenga was the moment that nurtured the ideals of “passive revolutions” led by the party leadership. These would be through the identification of “common good” notions during the war, and in the post-millennium dispensation, the land invasions of the Third Chimurenga, the harbinger of the 2000-2008 violence.

But the contention remains: Can we solely locate the origins of politically inspired and gendered violence in Zimbabwe in the Second Chimurenga? In what other episodes of

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<sup>159</sup> See chapter by Jocelyn Alexander, “Squatters, veterans and the state”, pp 99.

the country's history can we also locate the strengthening of gender oppression? Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni provides an interesting view of the history of violence in Zimbabwe. He perceives violence as being a lingering feature in the course of Zimbabwe's history. To him violence has characterised relations firstly between those groups later identified as Shona-speaking and between the Shona groups and the Ndebele-speaking group before colonisation; between the whites and Blacks during the colonial period; between blacks during the first decade of independence; and the controversial violence in the first decade of the new millennium. In his words:

One of the common problems running through the continuum of Zimbabwean history across the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial epochs is that of violence, its memory and impunity. This violence has been given names and justified through various euphemisms that cast it as a positive attribute of human progress... Forms of violence that have afflicted... [Zimbabwe]...have ranged widely from raiding and conquest in the pre-colonial period; civilising mission/whiteman's burden/conquest/pacification of barbarous tribes under imperialism and colonialism; African resistance/First Chimurenga/Second Chimurenga/Liberation war under African nationalism; various military style operations such as *Gukurahundi*, *Chinyavada*, *Murambatsvina*, *Mavhoterapapi* and *Chimumumu* under the post-colonial state.<sup>160</sup>

Thus, violence in the above regard was used in a rather instrumentalised way at various intervals. In this manner, strong tribal chiefs, colonialists, and the post-colonial government all used violence to nullify opposition and also to intimidate people to submit to their administrations. There is little denying that Ndlovu's argument opens us to the institutionalised notions of violence, which had a bearing on the new millennium violence. As Sachikonye says, ZANU-PF has transformed state institutions into partisan institutions. Because of this, state institutions like the police, the army, intelligence, local state administration structures, judiciary, war veterans and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, became actively involved in acts that spurred the violence against the

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<sup>160</sup> Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist*, forthcoming, p 190.

opposition.<sup>161</sup> Ndlovu-Gatsheni further widens our scope on the effects of impunity and the instrumentalisation on the recurrence of violence.

However, it would seem he wants to naturalise violence and portray a sense of its inevitability in seeking power. This presupposition needs to be put to some contest. This approach takes away the need to closely examine the different contexts, the nature and the extent of these violent episodes especially that which ZANU-PF has used in the post-colonial period, and more importantly in the period 2000 to 2008. In addition, it does not illuminate sex-based violence. This leads us to engage with the pre-colonial and Second Chimurenga debates on the oppression and or liberation of women.

## PRE-COLONIAL ZIMBABWEAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND GENDER

There has been a tendency to project features of pre-colonial African political systems as negative. Thus it is not uncommon to read of them as anachronistic, unrepresentative, autocratic and patriarchal. This was based, partly, on early colonialist prejudices and deliberate exaggerations to justify the European colonisation of Africa by denigrating the African past. These were generally captured under the “whiteman’s burden” or *mission civilizatrice*,<sup>162</sup> because they were static, barbaric and therefore in need of salvation. In addition, pre-colonial chiefs were said to have wielded all governmental duties, that is legislative, executive and judiciary.<sup>163</sup> Thus there was no separation of powers. What made it worse was the fact that most of the governing codes were oral and not codified. Outside these Eurocentric perceptions are some

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<sup>161</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens: 60 years of institutionalised violence in Zimbabwe*, Jacana, 2011, Auckland Park, pp 30, 34, 40. See a similar perception in Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU), “*When the going gets tough the man gets going*”: *Zimbabwean women’s perceptions on politics, governance, political violence and transitional justice*, Harare, November 2010.

<sup>162</sup> <http://www.codesria.org/links/conferences/generalassembly11/papers/tangie.pdf>, Accessed 12 November 2009, also Immanuel Kant, *Physische geographie*, (Vol II), Konigsburg, 1802, p 15, who posited that Africans (Negroes) together with the Red Indians were lower than the Whites, and GWF Hegel, *Lectures on the philosophy of history*, Translated by J Sibree), Bell and Daldy, London, 1872, pp 95-103, who wrote to say that Africa did not have a history but darkness only.

<sup>163</sup> See T W Bennett, “Human rights and the African cultural tradition”, in *Transformation*, Vol 22, 1993, p 32.

Africans who are also guilty of misrepresenting the past. Most notable of these was Mathieu Kereku, the former President of Benin, who tried to justify his long hold to power by evoking the notion that traditionally African leaders did not retire. In his own words “have you ever heard or seen a retired King in Africa?”<sup>164</sup> In Zimbabwe, there were allegations that Ndebele state rulers “ruled by the spear”,<sup>165</sup> basically implying that they ruled based on coercion and little consent and cooperation.

By 2009 Africa was also beset with numerous cases of long term serving Presidents and heads of government. These included, among others, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Muamar Gaddafi of Libya, Theodore Nguema of Equatorial Guinea and Eduardo dos Santos of Angola. The above are clear exaggerations of following in the warped appropriation of traditional African governance. Without exaggerating and exalting the pre-colonial African systems that exhibited autocratic and patriarchal tendencies, they nonetheless were also largely stable, viable, and they also incorporated some democratic principles, where chiefs ruled in consultation with advisory councils and in accordance with religious checks of their areas. At another level, there were rules and legal systems, albeit, not codified that governed conduct, both for the rulers and the ruled. They also had kinship-based ways that helped to prevent the abuse of women.

Studies across Africa, by Mamdani in his survey of Africa,<sup>166</sup> White for the Zulu state,<sup>167</sup> Hammond-Tooke, in the Transkei,<sup>168</sup> the Khoisan,<sup>169</sup> and Aletum in Cameroon,<sup>170</sup> have revealed that by and large pre-colonial African chiefs were not absolute dictatorships. True, some wielded enormous political and economic power on the surface, but on the

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<sup>164</sup> Mathieu Kereku, quoted in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Who ruled by the spear?: Rethinking governance in the Ndebele state” in *African Studies Quarterly*, vol 10, nos 2 & 3, 2008, p 87.

<sup>165</sup> See Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Who ruled by the spear?”

<sup>166</sup> See Mahmood Mamdani’s survey of the pre-colonial African governance in *Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1996.

<sup>167</sup> See J.D White cited in <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/people/bios/zulu-shaka.htm>.

<sup>168</sup> WD Hammond-Tooke, “Chieftainship in Transkei political development”, in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol 2, 1964.

<sup>169</sup> See <http://exploringAfrica.matrix.msu.edu/students/curriculum/m10/activity2.php>.

<sup>170</sup> M.T Aletum, cited in <http://africanhistory.about.com/od/kingdoms/Precolonial-Africa.htm>, and M.T Aletum, *Political Sociology*, Yaoundé, Pator Publishers, 2001.

whole some subjects were allowed to participate in the power, especially the elders, queen mothers, lesser chiefs, and different councils.<sup>171</sup> At worst there were reciprocal obligations that rulers shared with their subjects. Thus, elements of participatory politics are decipherable, although they may not have been fully developed. However, as Mudenge established for the Mutapas the advisors and advisory councils were more often hand-picked by the rulers to assist them and served at the mercy of their appointers.<sup>172</sup> Of significance from these studies is the possibility of upward mobility allowed of women and the senior positions they ended up occupying in society.

Regarding women, the major debate has been on the impact of the patriarchal practices in engendering the abuse of women. This position is aptly presented by Bennett who says that they were not allowed to sue for divorce, did not have the right to the child custody or guardianship, were not entitled to hold or dispose property, and did not participate in governance.<sup>173</sup> In addition, women suffered the added weight of polygamy.<sup>174</sup> For those in monogamous marriages the weight of *lobola* still demanded their subordination to their husbands.<sup>175</sup>

This argument, no doubt, is undergirded by the Western feminist discourse that has rigidified gender relations in terms of the binary male-female sexuality. In it, femininity is ascribed to women while masculinity to men.<sup>176</sup> As a consequence, the “universal social and cultural inferiority of women was a foregone conclusion.”<sup>177</sup> However, the

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<sup>171</sup> See a detailed discussion of the various court officials in the Mutapa state by Stanslaus IG Mudenge, *A political history of Munhumutapa*, pp 84-110.

<sup>172</sup> Stanslaus IG Mudenge, *A political history of Munhumutapa*, p 85.

<sup>173</sup> TW Bennett, “Human rights and the African cultural tradition”, p 32.

<sup>174</sup> Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, “The politics of the womb”: Women, politics and the environment in pre-colonial Chivi, Southern Zimbabwe, c1840-1900”, in *ZAMBEZIA*, XXX,(I), 2003, pp 42-43.

<sup>175</sup> See Monica Matavire, “Interrogating Zimbabwean traditional jurisprudence and the position of women in conflict resolution, A case for Shona tribes in Muzarabani district”, in *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, February 2012, p 220.

<sup>176</sup> See Jeanne Boydston, “Gender as a question of historical analysis”, in Alexandra Shepard and Garthine, eds, *Gender and History*, Vol 20, Issue 3, November 2008, p 559.

<sup>177</sup> See Ifi Amadiume, cited in Jeanne Boydston, “Gender as a question of historical analysis”, p 565.

conditions in the rather decentralised Shona<sup>178</sup> states, the position women occupied and power they exercised requires a troubled re-reading of this phenomenon. And, like Ifi Amadiume suggests, while female and male existed as distinct categories, femininity and masculinity fractured these. This ensured that some women enjoyed raised statuses.<sup>179</sup>

Among the pre-colonial Mutapa and Rozvi Karanga groups, research by Beach and later by Schmidt discount the pervasiveness of polygamy.<sup>180</sup> To Beach, the Shona were by and large monogamous because of the near equality in the sex ratio which necessitated the demand for the payment of bride price. He suggests that the bride price that was wanted, while in simple payments such as in hoes, iron products, cloth beads and cattle, was considerable and could only be afforded by the wealthy members.<sup>181</sup>

An important view of pre-colonial African state system, however, is that they were largely kinship-based. Because of their lack in the creation of centralised state systems, most depended primarily on relations of a different nature that were rooted in the family.<sup>182</sup> For those who would from the 19<sup>th</sup> century be known as the Shona, these were based on dynasties.<sup>183</sup> As such communities became larger extended families of sorts, and these relationships, and inter-relationships, as Bennett posits, “provided for all the individual’s material, social and emotional needs.”<sup>184</sup> In addition, the governing code was the common good of the communities, which put the need for one’s duty to society above their individual rights.<sup>185</sup> This code also instructed chiefs and other

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<sup>178</sup> There is still huge debate on the validity of using the term Shona to refer to pre-19<sup>th</sup> century Zimbabwe states. See arguments around this in Stanslaus I.G Mudenge, *A political History of Munhumutapa c 1400-1902*, James Currey, Zimbabwe Publishing House and Heinemann Educational Books, London, Harare and New Jersey, 1988, pp 33-34.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> David Norman Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe, 900-1850*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1980, pp 89-90. See also Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders and wives*, p 5.

<sup>181</sup> David Norman Beach, *Ibid*, pp 89-90.

<sup>182</sup> TW Bennett, “Human rights and the African cultural tradition”, p 32.

<sup>183</sup> See David Norman Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, p 93. See also Gerald Chikozho Mazarire’s interesting study of pre-colonial Chivi dynasties, in “The politics of the womb”.

<sup>184</sup> TW Bennett, “Human rights and the African cultural tradition”, p32.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

leaders, who could face censure, be removed from power or even killed if they deviated from the goal of common good.<sup>186</sup> In other instances subjects could switch allegiance from unpopular rulers.<sup>187</sup> Among the pre-colonial Shona, in addition to the above, dissatisfied subjects could emigrate, and there were “elections” of sorts for village heads and sub-chiefs who were intermediaries between common people and chiefs.<sup>188</sup> Another check on the abuse of power of rulers among the Karanga was the *mhondoros* or spirit mediums,<sup>189</sup> who also played a key role at succession.<sup>190</sup>

The above gives credence to the notion that kings ruled through the grace of their subjects, for a King was not a king without subjects.<sup>191</sup> Among the Shona of Zimbabwe, the above was captured by the idiom, *ishe vanhu*. The essence of this was that the king was supposed to be a servant of his subjects. This necessitated that leaders had councils that helped them to govern, adjudicate and ensure that the community goals were adhered to. Common people, especially adult males, participated at the community assembly meetings.<sup>192</sup> It was again on the basis of these strong kinship bonds that vulnerable groups, including women and children, had community-based protection. Particularly referring to women, Bennett has suggested that, while they were in effect treated like minors, without property rights, without legal rights to sue or to seek divorce, and did not have child guardianship rights, they had protection from the extended family.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> See Edward Kofi Quashigah, “Legitimate governance: The pre-colonial African perspective” in EK Quashigah and C Okafor, eds, *Legitimate governance in Africa: International and domestic legal perspective*, Kluwer, The Hague, London, Boston, 1999, p 43.

<sup>188</sup> See David Norman Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, p 94.

<sup>189</sup> See Stanslaus IG Mudenge, *A political history of Munhumutapa*, p 65.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, p 81.

<sup>191</sup> See Edward Kofi Quashigah, “Legitimate governance”, p 44.

<sup>192</sup> See FT Abioye, “Indigenous African institutions”, in [upetd.up.ac.za/thesis/available/etd-1005201.../02chapter2.pdf](http://upetd.up.ac.za/thesis/available/etd-1005201.../02chapter2.pdf), Accessed 04 June 2012.

<sup>193</sup> TW Bennett, p 32.



Regarding the Shona, it has been found that kinship relations in communities offered safety nets for women.<sup>194</sup> Specifically on divorce, Beach and Schmidt suggest that while there were set grounds for divorcing women, such as infertility and infidelity, most relatives worked towards the preservation of the marriages especially in view of the need to reconstitute the *lobola* paid.<sup>195</sup> The fact that divorces also impacted on the larger kin relations meant that relatives of feuding spouses worked to preserve the troubled marriages.<sup>196</sup> On married women, those with sons were in positions of influence in their families because they controlled the extension of the patrilineages.<sup>197</sup> Older women were also greatly respected.<sup>198</sup> More than anything, this argument resonates with the rising body of Africanist feminist literature that troubles the Western feminist theory that pushes for atemporal and universalised subordination and powerlessness of women, simply because they were women.<sup>199</sup> Rather, gendered differences are more “cultural and historical.”<sup>200</sup> In this regard, “the body is not always enlisted as the basis for social classification.”<sup>201</sup> Among the pre-colonial Shona groups procreation and seniority were important in raising the women’s worthiness.<sup>202</sup> Over and above these, women who were possessed by spirits acquired more authority in these Shona societies.<sup>203</sup>

To further illustrate the importance of extended family relations among the Shona in the traditional Zimbabwean societies, their welfare was largely the responsibility of the lineage elders even when they had husbands. Stoneman and Cliffe, for example, found

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<sup>194</sup> David Norman Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, p 93. See also Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders, and wives*, p 21.

<sup>195</sup> David Norman Beach, *Ibid*, p 90.

<sup>196</sup> Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders, and wives*, p 22.

<sup>197</sup> David Norman Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, p 90.

<sup>198</sup> Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders, and wives*, p 15.

<sup>199</sup> See Oyeronke Oyewumi, “Visualising the body: Western theories and African subjects” in Oyeronke Oyewumi, ed, *African Gender Studies: A reader*, Pelgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, 2005, p 11.

<sup>200</sup> See Jeanne Boydston, “Gender as a question”, p 564.

<sup>201</sup> See Oyeronke Oyewumi, “Visualising the body”, p 13.

<sup>202</sup> Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders, and wives*, pp 22-23.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid*, p 25.



that marriage transactions were controlled by these elders.<sup>204</sup> As a result of this, women, although they were married to a husband, they also belonged to, and were protected by, the larger society. The elders controlled the cattle used in marriage deals, negotiated the exchanges and in turn regulated the new wife in terms of her labour and her children, and offered her protection against abusive husbands who were too violent, demanded too much work from her, made her pregnant too often or initiated divorce without good cause.<sup>205</sup>

Women themselves had rather informal ways, both public and private, to confront abusive husbands, mother-in-laws, co-wives, and leaders. To this extent, they could secretly engage their husbands behind closed doors. Alternatively, they could use child or dog-naming to register complaints. Or, they could use songs at social ceremonies, near the men-meeting point (*dare*), again to publicise their abuses or areas of concern.<sup>206</sup> In more extreme and audacious cases, some women would physically fight their husbands or would escape back to their parents' homes.<sup>207</sup> More often than not, these led to change or for action from village elders to rectify the problem.

With regards to pre-colonial Zimbabwe, studies on the Shona and Ndebele pre-colonial systems have also shown that some serious signs of common people's participation and flexibility existed with women found in higher positions too. Among the Shona, as the Native Affairs Department established, chieftaincy was not necessarily permanent or till death, nor was it lineal. Instead it was adelphic collateral and passed from one house to the next or from one brother to the next as opposed to the primogeniture of father to son.<sup>208</sup> A system of checks and balances was also operational to avoid permanency and

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<sup>204</sup> Colin Stoneman and Lionel Cliffe, *Zimbabwe: Politics, Economics and Society*, Pinter Publishers, London and New York, 1989, p 72.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid*, this is true, notwithstanding the fact that women were still regarded largely as minors, with limited property rights and rights over children.

<sup>206</sup> See Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders, and wives*, pp 20-21, for a nuanced discussion of these techniques.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid*, p 21.

<sup>208</sup> *Appointment of successor to late chiefs letters: Chief Native Commissioner's Office: 1915-1917*, Government of Rhodesia Printers, Salisbury, 1917. See also stanslaus IG Mudenge, *A political history of Munhumutapa*, pp 62, who established the same for the historic Mutapa state that existed between

abuse of office. To this end it was not uncommon for abusive and autocratic chiefs to be quietly killed or to be asked to drink a poison called *muteyo* to avoid bringing shame to the chieftaincy.<sup>209</sup> However, the replacement chief came from within the ruling houses and was not popularly elected.

Still among the Shona groups, a certain amount of free speech was also guaranteed, which kept abuses by chiefs at a relative minimum. This freedom of speech was especially done by family friends called *madzisahwira*, who could mock abusive chiefs, say almost anything with impunity, and they could also sing in public against abuse of power or authority by the chiefs.<sup>210</sup> While oral testimonies referring to this may not be conclusive evidence given the political context they were given, they open the possibilities of further research in that direction.

As an affirmation to the respect that women were accorded in the pre-colonial Mutapa and Rozvi states, women were found in high-ranking positions in their states. In this regard, wives of chiefs were found to wield enormous amounts of power.<sup>211</sup> Some women even had authority to govern parts of states, there was Nehanda who ruled a province in the Munhumutapa state in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>212</sup> The same state also had a regiment entirely composed of female cadres.<sup>213</sup> Still in the Mutapa state, other chiefs' wives administered "their own houses, lands, and vassals", while others in the Manyika and Mashonaland controlled vast territories.<sup>214</sup> Also among the Shona, as in other

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about 1450 to 1902. On p 81, Mudenge defines adelphic collateral as "brother succeeding brother until one whole generation of brothers had succeeded and then it reverts to the first son of the first brother in the previous generation. From there it goes to the first son of the next brother and so forth.

<sup>209</sup> Interview with Chief Nhema of Shurugwi, Shurugwi, 25 August 2007, interview was done for a MA thesis on Chiefs in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe. See also Godfrey Tangwa, "Democracy and development in Africa: Putting the horse before the cart" in *Road companion to democracy and meritocracy*, Kola Tree Press, Bellington, 1988, p 2, also says the system of administering poison on abusive chiefs was practised in many communities of West Africa. See also Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, "The politics of the womb", p 43.

<sup>210</sup> Interview with Headman Mabedzenge of Shurugwi, Shurugwi, on 29 August 2007.

<sup>211</sup> See David Norman Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1980, p 96.

<sup>212</sup> See Stanslaus. I.G Mudenge, *A political history of Munhumutapa*, p 41.

<sup>213</sup> See Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerilla war: Peasant voices*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p 192.

<sup>214</sup> See Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders and wives*, p 29.

African states, Queen mothers played a key role in administration, for example, they could nominate or impeach chiefs.<sup>215</sup> In other areas, women relatives were also responsible for choosing and installing new rulers.<sup>216</sup> Continuing on the thread of the revisionist feminist discourse, one can then argue that the fact that their physicality as women did not inhibit the women from assuming higher social positions. Thus as Oyewumi would probably have said, the “social order requires a different kind of map, not a gender map that assumes biology as the foundation for the social.”<sup>217</sup>

During my field research, between December 2009 and July 2010, I also established that chiefs and headmen in Shurugwi depended on advisory councils, composed of *makurukota*, who advise them and help them in the adjudicating over disputes. Besides the advisory role, they also acted as the eyes and ears of kings, as well as conveyors of the ordinary people’s concerns to the leaders. This concept is a carryover from the pre-colonial past. A sizeable number of the *makurukota* are females. Moreover, women were also found as moral leaders of their states as well as to advise kings. As such, senior women were and are still tasked with the upholding of societal morals by encouraging virtues which were aimed at ensuring chastity, celibacy and, in the new millennium to check the spread of HIV and AIDS.

It has, however, to be pointed out that the occupation of these high positions in Shona societies, as in many others on the continent, was frowned upon by some. Furthermore, one has to be careful not to take these few politically recognised women for the generality of women’s empowerment. To begin with, and in contest to the findings of Beach, above, Mudenge<sup>218</sup> and Mazarire have posited an interesting argument that seeks to show that power was not equally shared by the wives of chiefs. To Mazarire, there were “class differences” between the wives. The first wife (*Vahosi*) had more

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<sup>215</sup> <http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-5440-201-1-DO-Topic.html>, Accessed 16 June 2012.

<sup>216</sup> See Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders and wives*, p 29.

<sup>217</sup> See Oyeronke Oyewumi, “Visualising the body”, p 13.

<sup>218</sup> Stanslaus Mudenge, *A political history of Munhumutapa*, p 104.

power followed by other married wives (*varongo/vakaranga*) and at bottom were the adopted wives (*vakadzi venhaka*).<sup>219</sup>

Linked to the above, the age of a woman significantly determined her social status in many of the pre-colonial Shona states. Age was associated with wisdom, closeness with ancestral spirits and symbolised the woman's productive and reproductive contributions to her married family.<sup>220</sup> In this regard aged women with many children and grandchildren were better respected than young ones or those without children. Female fecundity in this respect was also associated with their contribution to the family's production. Crucially, aging was associated with "drying out."<sup>221</sup> To this end,

[a]t birth, children are considered to be wet. Soft and bloody, they are thoroughly human and lack all authority. Elderly people, who are virtually ancestors themselves, are hard, dry, and bony. In human life they hold the utmost authority. The ancestors, dry, brittle, and bloodless, are wiser and more powerful than people. They can cure illness, provide rain, and are omniscient concerning past and future events. Like infants and small children, young women, during menstruation and child birth, are also considered to be wet. Thus, it is only when they are post-menopausal, brittle, and dry that they possess a degree of authority. In other words, women acquire power when they are least women and most like men and the ancestors.<sup>222</sup>

The Ndebele state has been previously described as an epitome of autocracy, with a rigid caste system, as warlike, and as a society that depended largely on raiding.<sup>223</sup> However, revisionist studies on the Ndebele have found that the state was not too centralised. Rather, the Kings ensured an equitable distribution of wealth among their Ndebele subjects. Political power was also decentralised and shared between the king and the *izindunas* (lesser chiefs) who controlled the districts. Importantly, the Ndebele kings also relied on advisors. The key having been the *indunankulu yesizwe*, who was the effective head of the government, as well as two councils: the *umphakathi* and

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<sup>219</sup> See Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, "The politics of the womb", p47.

<sup>220</sup> See Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders, and wives*, pp 22-23.

<sup>221</sup> See David Lan, cited in Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders, and wives*, p 23.

<sup>222</sup> See Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders, and wives*, p 23.

<sup>223</sup> Sabelo J Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Who ruled by the spear?"

*izikhulu*.<sup>224</sup> However, the two, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni laments, were made up of the wealthy members of the state.<sup>225</sup> Additionally, the established hierarchy ensured effective communication between higher and lower echelons of power in the state.<sup>226</sup>

In Zimbabwe, as in most other African countries, most societal systems were altered to suit the new demands of the colonialists. It was also found that the status of women suffered too under colonialism. This was because of the elevation of community elders and local chiefs to new status against other locals including women.<sup>227</sup> Also, due to colonialism the migrant labour system was introduced which meant that lobola began to be paid in cash thus eliminating the elders from the marriage equation, and there was also a shortage of land which necessitated the young to move away in search of new areas.<sup>228</sup> The above opened the women to more labour demands on the farms and generally to abusive husbands who were now liberated from traditional checks. Also because most sectors of the new economy favoured “single man” or “bachelors” over women, financial inequalities grew between men and women. Men got cash payments while females remained as unpaid labourers in the reserves.<sup>229</sup>

Besides exerting increased labour demands on the women, colonialism was responsible for adding new forms of patriarchal controls. As Schmidt argues, in the end the “indigenous and European structures of patriarchal control reinforced and transformed one another, evolving into new structures and forms of domination.”<sup>230</sup> Additionally, in agriculture, it introduced “male-dominated farming” through by encouraging ploughs, oxen, and new agricultural techniques, as well as cash crop production.<sup>231</sup> At another

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid, pp 76-77.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid, p 77.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid, p 76. See also the diagram showing the distribution of power in the Ndebele state that he gives on the same page.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid. See also Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and subject*, whose analysis, notwithstanding its generalisations is insightful on the ills of colonialism on African political and social systems, for example, the institution of chieftaincy in Zimbabwe and the continent.

<sup>228</sup> Colin Stoneman and Lionel Cliffe, *Zimbabwe*, p 72.

<sup>229</sup> See Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders, and wives: Shona women in the history of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939*, Heinemann, Baobab, James Currey, Portsmouth, Harare and London, 1992, p 5.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid, pp 1-2 & 4.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid, p 5.

level, the Christian missionaries preached the gospel about patrilineal households in which women were subordinated to men.<sup>232</sup> Moreover, customary law was created which gave undue powers of control to men, as did selective employment of women even in domestic service.<sup>233</sup>

The above colonial labour demands contrasted with the labour requirements for women in 16-17<sup>th</sup> century Shona states. To this end, while the division of labour portrayed that women did most of the labour-intensive work like agriculture, mining, and weaving, some men also did these.<sup>234</sup> In addition, the major pre-occupation of men was to protect their herds and to seek other avenues to mitigate the effects of famine (*shangwa*), through hunting and trading.<sup>235</sup>

The above is important in illustrating that the suppression of women, which falls generally under repressive masculinities, has ambivalent roots in the pre-colonial past. While at times the women were commodified especially in marriage transactions and in war situations,<sup>236</sup> treated as minors with limited property rights and at times subjected to forms of submission in marriage, they still had community-based protection against violations. These patriarchal tendencies that led to the suppression and domination of women were, however, worsened by new ones introduced by colonialism. As the discussion below attempts, the impact of the rise of African nationalism from the early 1960s further worsened the situation of women.

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid, p 7.

<sup>234</sup> David Norman Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, pp 91-92.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, pp 91-92.

<sup>236</sup> See Stanslaus IG Mudenge, *A political history of Munhumutapa*, pp 41-42. See also Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, "The politics of the womb", p 37.

## THE SECOND CHIMURENGA AND THE ENTRENCHMENT OF POLITICAL INTOLERANCE AND GENDER INEQUALITIES

It cannot be contested that most rural areas of Zimbabwe were militarized during the 1970s. This was because most communal areas were used by the guerilla African nationalist movements in their Marxist-Leninist and Maoist strategies against the Rhodesia Front government forces,<sup>237</sup> resulting in the deployment of Rhodesian troops in these rural areas. Brickhill advances a similar notion and says that by 1978 “guerilla war had reached most rural areas and had encircled the economic heartland of the country”.<sup>238</sup> The same effect had been achieved in the large-scale farming sector. To this extent, nationalist guerrillas, as Bhebe says, were “harassing the enemy by attacking the farmers in their isolated homesteads, laying landmines on routes used by enemy troops, assaulting centres of colonial power such as district and police stations, blowing up railway lines and bridges and ambushing enemy convoys.”<sup>239</sup> As a consequence, rural people were sandwiched between the two belligerent forces.

Because of this, a number of negative effects befell the rural dwellers. Between 750 000 and one million were put in keeps or protected villages and some were internally displaced to cities. Put together, these, according to Moyana, constituted a third of the total African population in the reserves.<sup>240</sup> Others suffered beatings, arrests, torture, while others had their homes burned down.<sup>241</sup> Yet others suffered from the effects of the Rhodesian chemical warfare that was aimed at poisoning guerrilla food, water and clothes, as well as from the effects of anthrax poisoning of cattle.<sup>242</sup> Consequently, rural

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<sup>237</sup> Colin Stoneman and Lionel Cliffe, *Zimbabwe: politics, economics and society*, Pinter Publishers, London and New York, 1989, p 25.

<sup>238</sup> See Jeremy Brickhill, “Daring to storm the heavens: the military strategy of ZAPU 1976-1979” in Ngwabi Bhebe and Terrence Ranger, eds, *Soldiers in Zimbabwe’s liberation war*, University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 1995, p 53.

<sup>239</sup> See Ngwabi Bhebe, cited in Joseph Mtisi, Munyaradzi Nyakudya and Teresa Barnes, “War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980”, in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, eds, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p 149.

<sup>240</sup> See Henry V Moyana, *The political economy of land in Zimbabwe*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1984, p 18. See also, David Lan, *Guns and rain: Guerrillas and spirit mediums in Zimbabwe*, James Currey, London, 1985, p 133.

<sup>241</sup> Joseph Mtisi, Munyaradzi Nyakudya and Teresa Barnes, “War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980”, p 150.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, p 150.



dwellers were in the literal dilemma, between a rock and a hard place, so to say, regarding which of the two to follow. Either they had to support the liberation movements and risk the wrath of the Rhodesian forces, or vice versa.

The effect of this contestation for and confrontation in the rural areas and on rural women is, however, still hotly disputed. What can, however, be little contested is the fact that rural areas were turned into theatres of both the political or ideological and military warfare, which meant that peasants were affected by the violence of the war in one way or the other.<sup>243</sup> One dimension that is increasingly gaining currency is on the double use of violence by nationalist movements. Concurrently, they directed their violence against the Rhodesian state, and against the other nationalist groups, as well as, the peasants, women, and students.<sup>244</sup>

In the nationalist historiography, the Second Chimurenga has however been generally explained as emancipatory to women. On the whole if women were not per se liberated, they were at least afforded the space for new opportunities divorced from their traditional gendered roles.<sup>245</sup> Ranger, for instance, basing his argument on the Makoni district, says

men in their fifties,...who were used to controlling a flock of dependent women.....now found that the initiative had passed to young men with guns. The young men called upon the unmarried women of Makoni to act as their cooks, informants and messengers and in these later two roles, teenage girls were able to exercise a good deal of power, for the first time in Makoni.<sup>246</sup>

David Lan similarly contends that during the Second Chimurenga guerillas tried to “institute full scale democracy that would include women and unmarried men,” and also that female cadres “acquired practical experience of living alongside men as their moral

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<sup>243</sup> See Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU AND ZANU guerrilla warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1999, pp 73-117.

<sup>244</sup> Joshua Nkomo, *The story of my life*, p 101, who gives an account of the use of petrol bombs by either ZANU or ZAPU on the other. See also Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 43.

<sup>245</sup> Terence Ranger, *Peasant consciousness*, p 206-7.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid*, p 9.



and intellectual equal”<sup>247</sup>. This view is correspondingly shared by Joyce Kazembe who maintains that women were liberated by fighting alongside men in the Second Chimurenga.<sup>248</sup> On their part, Collin Stoneman and Lionel Cliffe say that since the bulk of peasants were women, the guerillas had to rely more on women for war duties such as reconnaissance, in addition to domestic roles.<sup>249</sup>

Attempts have too been made to portray the central leadership role women played in the independence struggle. Ngwabi Bhebe, cited in Tanya Lyons, glorifies the contribution of the 1961 protests against the racial-based constitution. To Bhebe, since the National Democratic Party was banned on 8 December 1961 immediately following the women’s protests, the actions of women catalyzed the transformation of the struggle towards militancy.<sup>250</sup> While this may be acceptable, one may draw a counter from Nhongo-Simbanegavi’s argument that at times women’s activism was promoted by men because women received less harsh treatment from the Rhodesia security forces, and also men working in towns feared losing their jobs.<sup>251</sup>

Both to illustrate the key role of women, and how unifying and liberating the Second Chimurenga was, nationalists drew on the mythical role the female spirit of Mbuya Nehanda played. The spirit was taken to express the equality of sexes and further to show the important role women played in rallying people to fight white oppression.<sup>252</sup> During the Second Chimurenga the medium of Nehanda was also taken to Mozambique for safety from the Rhodesians.<sup>253</sup> The same reverence for the spirit of Nehanda is maintained for the First Chimurenga 1896.<sup>254</sup> As David Beach however contends, the

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<sup>247</sup> David Lan, *Guns and girls*, pp 12-13.

<sup>248</sup> See Joyce Kazembe, “The women issue”, in Ibbo Mandaza (ed) *Zimbabwe: The political economy of transition 1980-1986*, CODESRIA Book Series, London, 1987.

<sup>249</sup> Colin Stoneman and Lionel Cliffe, *Zimbabwe : Politics and Society*, Pinter Publishers, London and New York, 1989, p71.

<sup>250</sup> Ngwabi Bhebe, cited in Tanya Lyons, *Guns and rain*, p 98.

<sup>251</sup> Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better or worse*, p 15.

<sup>252</sup> Tanya Lyon, *Guns and girls*, p 81.

<sup>253</sup> Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better or worse*, p 15.

<sup>254</sup> See Terence Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia: 1896-7, A Study in African Resistance*, North Western University Press, 1969, for a comprehensive role the spirit mediums played in the First Chimurenga

role of religion, spirit mediums and more specifically that of Nehanda in the First Chimurenga have been exaggerated and should be revised.<sup>255</sup>

Nationalist historians have in addition argued for the existence of a common nationalistic agenda against colonialism and that this thread bound the different sections together. These nationalist grievances were around the need to remove the repressive and oppressive Rhodesia state and correct the racial-based skewed land distribution.<sup>256</sup> Other issues were on human rights and dignity for all in the state.<sup>257</sup> At another level, it is assumed that the various forms of state repression conscientised peasants which meant that by the time the guerillas mobilised them, they were ready to support them.<sup>258</sup>

Revisionist scholarship on the African nationalism has deconstructed this as an oversimplification and narrowing of African grievances and African nationalism. Norma Kriger for instance says that peasant participation in the Second *Chimurenga* was as much based on the desire to unsettle the Rhodesia state as it was meant to address peasant-on-peasant and class differences in the rural areas.<sup>259</sup> As she says, there were struggles within the peasantry, for example, between the youths and the elders, the poor and more affluent peasants, and also between the common peasants and the traditional leadership.<sup>260</sup> To this, Nhongo-Simbanegavi adds that peasants also did not have a choice in the face of guerilla force, which led to fear of ZANU, for example, before and after independence.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> See David Norman Beach, "An innocent woman unjustly accused? Charwe, medium of the Nehanda Mhondoro spirit, and the 1896-7 Central Shona rising in Zimbabwe" in *History of Africa*, Vol 25, 1998, pp 27-54, he says that Charwe refused to admit influencing the Shona to rise against the British in 1896, and that she was killed simply because the British wanted a scapegoat and to set a public example.

<sup>256</sup> See David Lan, *Guns and rain* pp148-9 and Terence Ranger, *Peasant consciousness*, pp 185-6.

<sup>257</sup> See Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence Ranger, *The historical dimensions of human rights*, for a detailed look at the African grievances during the Second Chimurenga.

<sup>258</sup> Julie Frederikse. *Non but ourselves*, p 90. See also Terence Ranger, *Peasant consciousness*.

<sup>259</sup> Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's guerrilla war*, p 177.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid, see also Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better or worse*, p 14-15.

Kruger also says the emancipation of women did not last long because of men and traditional leaders' opposition to the open beating of men who abused their wives which was taken as interference in domestic affairs.<sup>262</sup> For her again, the mere adoption of new roles by the women did not equate to their emancipation because after some time the women returned to being "controlled subjects"<sup>263</sup>. Mies, cited in Cawthorne, argues likewise and says wars by nature are "exceptional" situations that call for some changes in how things are done. As a result, women could be found in "unusual" roles. What is more, once the war ends, women revert to their "normal" duties.<sup>264</sup> Similarly, Tanya Lyons contends that with the intensification of the war, the gendered roles of men and women were naturally "blurred" because there was "seldom time for gendered distinctions".<sup>265</sup> Importantly, following the end of the Second Chimurenga the female guerrillas were expected by the larger society to revert back to their submissive role and shade off their "independent" status of the war period.<sup>266</sup> At another level, their demobilization went hand in glove with their depoliticisation.<sup>267</sup>

In addition to the above, there is an increase in research "evidence" that associates the sexual abuse of women, to the rise of African nationalism and to the struggle for independence. Raftopoulos, for example, traces the genealogy of gendered violence to the formative years of nationalism in the 1950s. Citing the raping of women in the Carter Ladies Hostel in Mbare during 1956 Bus Boycott, he asserts that from its formative stages, African nationalism was beset by gender insensitivities and to some extent coercion to mobilize women's support.<sup>268</sup> Following in this trajectory, other

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<sup>262</sup> Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's guerrilla war*, p 192.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid*, p 193.

<sup>264</sup> See Maria Mies, cited in Maya Cawthorne, "The Third Chimurenga", in Patricia Macfadden, (ed), *Reflections on gender issues in Africa*, SAPES, Harare, 1999, p 62.

<sup>265</sup> Tanya Lyons, *Guns and rain*, p 93.

<sup>266</sup> See Gisela Giesler, "Troubled sisterhood: Women and politics in Southern Africa: Case studies from Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, in *African Affairs*, vol 94, No 377, October 1995, p 552.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid*, p 553.

<sup>268</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "Gender, Nationalist politics and the fight for the city: Harare 1940-1950s", in Patricia Macfadden, ed, *Southern African Feminist Review (SAFERE)*, Vol 1, No2, 1995, pp 41-42.

researchers argue strongly that there were extensive cases of the abuse of women both in the camps outside Zimbabwe and in operational zones inside Zimbabwe.<sup>269</sup>

Again, Ruth Weiss, while acknowledging some semblance of advancement during the Second Chimurenga, highlights that women were sexually exploited by senior ZANU and ZANLA leaders.<sup>270</sup> At another level, Luise White says that the issue of the turning guerrilla women, into “housemaids and concubines”, was at the heart of the causes of the Nhari rebellion.<sup>271</sup> What was worse was that some female guerillas were forced to abort to save the image of the some high commanders.<sup>272</sup> This is supported by Fay Chung, in Mtisi et al, who suggests that these sexual abuses by the military commanders drove many women cadres to join the Nhari rebellion.<sup>273</sup>

There is also some perception that nationalist-based sexual violations were extended into the post-independence era *gukurahundi* crisis. However, the aim and scale differed significantly from the Second Chimurenga era ones. As Muzondidya argues, the *gukurahundi* sexual liaisons between state security officials and local women were a part of the battery of strategies in the fight against a complex opponent, who in time ceased to be merely the dissidents, but also ZAPU supporters and more generally Ndebele speakers.<sup>274</sup> However, the turning of women into “bed fodder” was not limited to the nationalist movements as Rhodesia security forces also abused women especially in protected villages. Due to shortages of provisions, the camp guards used food rations as bait while at times the women offered themselves for better care.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> See Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better or worse*, pp21-33, for a dense discussion of the sexual abuses. See also, Jocelyn Alexander, et al, cited in Joseph Mtisi, Munyaradzi Nyakudya and Teresa Barnes, “War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980”, p 161.

<sup>270</sup> See Ruth Weiss, *The women of Zimbabwe*, Kesho Publications, London, 1986, p 95 for the full interview. Also the film *Flame* vividly brought the gender violations to the fore, as does the novel *Harvest of Thorns* by Shimmer Chinodya.

<sup>271</sup> See Luise White, *The assassination of Herbert Chitepo: Texts and politics in Zimbabwe*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2003, p 20.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid*, p 24.

<sup>273</sup> Fay Chung cited in Mtisi, et al, *Ibid*, p 160. See also Luise White, *Ibid*, p 25.

<sup>274</sup> See James Muzondidya, “From Bouyancy to crisis, 1980-1997”, p 179.

<sup>275</sup> Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better or worse*, p 8.

Patriarchy and associated tendencies that stifled women's development, liberation and advancement have also been ascribed to the liberation movements. Nhongo-Simbanegavi describes it as a "legend"<sup>276</sup> that the cause of women was advanced because ZANU failed to remove patriarchal practices such as lobola and polygamy in camps in Mozambique during the Second Chimurenga.<sup>277</sup> This contrasted sharply with the official ZANU-PF policy espoused by the top party leadership, for example by Teurai Ropa at a women's conference in Albania in 1978, and by Robert Mugabe at the ZANU congress at Xai Xai, Mozambique in 1978. Both illustrated the official position and highlighted significant steps towards the upliftment of women within the party. The same position was also repeated in ZANU's newspaper, the *Zimbabwe People's Voice*, which among others wrote that "the emancipation of women is a must and not an act of charity [...] their struggle is part of society's struggle for progress. Women should enjoy equal rights with their menfolk. No progress can be reached without the effective participation of women."<sup>278</sup> On the whole there was a dichotomy between official ZANU and ZANLA rhetoric on the one hand, and sad reality on the other, on how women were supposedly advanced in ZANU.

Also as a result of gender inequalities, there were many trained women guerillas who were, however, not deployed on the battlefield, but were more often relegated to the provision of support services, such as, nursing, teaching, child minding; they were deployed in liberated or semi-liberated zones.<sup>279</sup> This reduced their chances of advancement. It was thus little surprise that despite constituting more than a third of ZANLA guerillas there was only one female, Sheba Tavarwisa, in the ZANLA High Command out of twenty eight members, and in the Central Committee there were only two females, Sheba Tavarwisa and Teurai Ropa Nhongo (Joyce Mujuru).<sup>280</sup> Kriger weighs in and she also says that "only 5% of cadres sent for special courses by ZANU abroad

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<sup>276</sup> Ibid, p xix.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid, p 142.

<sup>278</sup> See *Zimbabwe People's Voice*, cited in Joseph Mtisi, Munyaradzi Nyakudya, and Teresa Barnes, "War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980", p 159.

<sup>279</sup> Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better or Worse*, p xxi.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

were women, all ZANU representatives abroad were men; leadership selection was biased in favour of men.”<sup>281</sup> Because most trained female cadres had not been deployed at the battlefield inside Rhodesia, they were moreover brought back as refugees and were thus not gathered at Assembly Points with other male guerillas.<sup>282</sup> As a result many lost out on the benefits that accrued to their male counterparts, such as demobilization packages, or integration into the security or government sectors. The above notwithstanding, it would, however, be fair to highlight that in ZANLA there were up to 2000 “trained and fighting” women cadres, while there was also a brigade composed entirely of women in ZIPRA.<sup>283</sup>

Nhongo-Simbanegavi has further established discrimination against women in ZANU, especially those who were pregnant or those who were menstruating.<sup>284</sup> In most cases these women were sidelined from mainstream activities. What was worse was that in the camps in Mozambique, pregnant women were relegated to the infamous birth camps, such as Osibisa, where they were cut off from the rest of the guerillas, including from the men who would have made them pregnant.<sup>285</sup>

However, one cannot underestimate the value of tradition in the slow pace of the promotions and abuse. In discussions with elders from Shurugwi, for example, I established that women could be excluded from some “traditional” rituals if they were either pregnant or having menstrual periods. To this degree, menstruating women or suckling mothers could be excluded from brewing beer for some ceremonies because they were considered wet and the milk and blood were thought to affect spirits because they competed with the productive and reproductive powers of the spirits.<sup>286</sup> In the nationalist movements, it could have caused women to be viewed, and to view

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<sup>281</sup> Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla war*, p 193.

<sup>282</sup> See Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better or Worse*, pp 129-130.

<sup>283</sup> See Joseph Mtisi, Munyaradzi Nyakudya, and Teresa Barnes, “War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980”, p 159.

<sup>284</sup> Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better or worse*, p 8 .

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid*, p 8. A female former ZANLA guerilla, Freedom T.V Nyamubaya, has produced a poem titled “Osibisa” in *On the road again*, ZPH, Harare, 1986 to highlight the plight of pregnant women in camps in Mozambique during the liberation struggle.

<sup>286</sup> See also Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders, and wives*, pp 24-26, for a pithy articulation of a similar point.

themselves, as, inferior. The generally inferior education women guerillas had in comparison with male cadres too worked against their elevation to senior posts. In the traditional set-ups also women are supposed to be subservient to their men or husbands. Outside the traditional explanation, one however sees this lack of advancement for women stemming from their assigning to non-military duties in the movements, which determined promotions in the liberation movements. There were some efforts made in ZANU-PF towards the betterment of women through the creation of the department for women, in 1977. However, this Department for Women's Affairs in ZANU was staffed by nationalist leaders' wives.<sup>287</sup>

The discussion on the abuses and inequalities that women suffered as a result of the rise and spread of African nationalism needs to be considered together with the brand of nationalism that emerged. Although targeting liberation, it was, inter alia, unitary, intolerant, despotic, and coercive. As Terence Ranger says, "by the late 1950's with the emergence of mass nationalism it had come to be accepted that the nationalist movement must dominate all these other spheres" like religion, domesticity, education, gender, sport and work.<sup>288</sup> This was akin to what Nkrumah stated, that "seek ye first the political kingdom and all shall be given unto thee".<sup>289</sup> However, the question remains why it had to be this way. Terence Ranger attempts the answer and says:

But perhaps there was something inherent in nationalism itself [...] which gave rise to authoritarianism. Maybe nationalism's emphasis on unity at all costs [...] its subordination of trade unions and churches and all other African organizations to its imperatives- gave rise to an intolerance of pluralism. Maybe

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<sup>287</sup> Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better or worse*, pp 50-55. She says that this department was staffed by people like Teurai Ropa, Sally Mugabe, and Julia Zvobgo, all wives of senior ZANU leaders.

<sup>288</sup> Terence Ranger, cited in Brian Raftopoulos, "The State, NGO's and Democratisation", in Sam Moyo, John Makumbe and Brian Raftopoulos, eds, *NGO's, the state and politics in Zimbabwe*, SAPES Books, Harare, 2000, p 25. See also Terence Ranger, "Introduction to Volume Two", p 5, who quotes Stanlake Samkange who stated that nationalist leaders sought to be "acknowledged by all as the leader and spokesman of Africans ..."

<sup>289</sup> Kwameh Nkrumah cited in Michael Neocosmos, "Analysing political subjectivities: naming the post-developmental state in Africa today", Unpublished paper presented at *The Social Theory Colloquium* at The Centre for Humanities Research, University of the Western Cape, 20-21 August 2009.



nationalism's glorification of the leader gave rise to a post-colonial cult of personality.<sup>290</sup>

Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni weighs in and teases out the ambivalences. To him, the African nationalism was on the surface populist to win support across the spectrum, yet at the core it was largely “hegemonic and intolerant of diversity, internal criticism, and dissent. As a movement, it was basically sweeping in what it claimed and annihilatory in what it rejected.”<sup>291</sup> Following in such a framework by Ranger and Ndlovu-Gatsheni helps to understand why even “progressive” formulations such as the March 11 Movement in ZAPU, the Zimbabwe People’s Army (ZIPA), Nhari revolt, and *Vashandi* were violently suppressed<sup>292</sup> under what David Moore calls “authoritarian militarism”.<sup>293</sup> In the Nhari revolt, up to 155 persons were executed for “zig zagging” and for being “stumbling blocks” to ZANU.<sup>294</sup>

Force was also deployed against those who “zig zagged” amongst civilians. Those suspected, as Norma Kriger, Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, Terence Ranger, and Horace Campbell, among others, say, suffered severe violence.<sup>295</sup> While peasants suffered the largest of the wrath of the guerrillas in search of food, clothes, money,<sup>296</sup> labour, witches, rival nationalist supporters, and for forced attendance of *pungwes*, chiefs, headmen, teachers, church pastors, agricultural demonstrators, as well as families of Rhodesian police and military officers in the rural areas were targeted too. Furthermore, Africans who belonged to rival nationalist movements, successful peasant farmers, white farmers and their workers were targeted.<sup>297</sup> Additionally as already said,

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<sup>290</sup> Terence Ranger, “Introduction to Volume Two”, p 2.

<sup>291</sup> See Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Putting people first: from regime security to human security: A quest for Social Peace in Zimbabwe, 1980-2002” in <http://ecalib.uneca.org/ipac20/ipac.jsp>, Accessed 07 July 2009.

<sup>292</sup> See Joseph Mtisi, Munyaradzi Nyakudya, and Teresa Barnes, “War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980”, p 152.

<sup>293</sup> David Moore, cited in Brian Raftopoulos, “The Zimbabwean crisis and the challenges for the left” in *Journal of African Studies*, vol32, no2, June 2006, p 3.

<sup>294</sup> Luise White, *The assassination of Herbert Chitepo*, pp 28 & 40.

<sup>295</sup> See Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's guerrilla war*; Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better for worse*; Terence Ranger, “Introduction to volume two”; pp 5-6; Horace Cambell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe*, this violence involved the need for food, clothes, money, labour and forced attendance of all night rallies from peasants by the guerrillas’ as well as the desire for what Ranger, p 5, describes as “monolithic unity”.

<sup>296</sup> See Henry V Moyana, *The political economy of land in Zimbabwe*, p 19.

<sup>297</sup> See Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's guerrilla war*, pp 102 & 104.



women and students were not spared by this violence. What was worse was that in the Second *Chimurenga*, there was a sharp binary drawn between supporters and enemies. Those who did not share similar views or did not openly identify with the movements were openly castigated, physically assaulted or even killed. The essence of this is encapsulated in the words of Dumiso Dabengwa in the 1960s that: “[a]ny African who remains independent and does not take part in the common cause is as bad as a sell-out as the so called moderates [...] Those who are not with us are against us.”<sup>298</sup>

As Bhebe says, this may have been due to the failure of these movements to gain unquestioned popular appeal and to eradicate setbacks that could expose them to the settler forces.<sup>299</sup> One may add that the overall goal that was sought by these nationalists was power. As such the elimination of barriers was a crucial stage towards the attainment of power. However, it is necessary to take into account research that has established that some of the violence ascribed to nationalists was perpetrated by unruly *mujibhas* and youth collaborators<sup>300</sup>, and by *mhondoro* agents on people who worked on rest days or *chisi*.<sup>301</sup> What, nonetheless, comes out from both the nationalist and revisionist discourses, is that nationalist politics involved an element of coercion.

Further regarding intolerance, as has been widely documented, there was also a general antagonism between the two main liberation movements of ZANU and ZAPU. Name calling, jealousy, street skirmishes, open competition for supporters and financiers, mistrust and lack of cooperation characterized the operations of these movements. In this instance, following the split of ZANU from ZAPU in 1963, under rather acrimonious and sometimes ethnic terms, there were open clashes by the rank and file of these parties.<sup>302</sup> Added to these there was open sloganeering against the other party. For

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<sup>298</sup> Dumiso Dabengwa, the Chairman of the Bulawayo City League in 1961. He later became Intelligence Chief in ZIPRA and cabinet minister after the 1988 Unity Accord, quoted in *The Bantu Mirror*, cited in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Putting people first”, p 7.

<sup>299</sup> See Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU guerrilla warfare*, p 212.

<sup>300</sup> See Terence Ranger, *Peasant consciousness*, p 292.

<sup>301</sup> David Lan, *Guns and rain*, p 166.

<sup>302</sup> Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU guerrilla warfare*, p 12; See also, Terence Ranger, “Introduction to volume two”, p 6.

example, it was not uncommon to hear of slogans like “down with Nkomo”,<sup>303</sup> or conversely down with Sithole and later Mugabe, when the two groups were supposed to be fighting for the same cause.

Again, notwithstanding the occasional unity between ZIPRA and ZANLA, the two liberation armies often openly clashed. This was, for example at Mboroma in Zambia when ZAPU, ZANU and FROLIZI cadres fought each other,<sup>304</sup> and also in Tanzania in the 1970s, which was repeated in the assembly points inside Zimbabwe at the time of demobilization.<sup>305</sup> According to Ranger, there seemed not enough room for plural nationalist political parties to co-exist. In his words: “under early colonialism there was room for only one church at a time, during the nationalist period there was room for only one political party at a time”, which accounted for violence and counter-violence between ZAPU and ZANU “that sought to establish “one-party regions.”<sup>306</sup> The rupture of this intolerance was however to be in the *gukurahundi* in the early years of independence. In this conflict up to 20 000 people were killed.<sup>307</sup>

While there are numerous discourses on the causes of *gukurahundi*, one dimension that has strong currency is that of perceiving the *gukurahundi* violence as a part of ZANU-PF’s broader scheme to establish a one party system of some kind, “either a one party rule, or a single party constitution.”<sup>308</sup> This resonated with the desire by African

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<sup>303</sup> See Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s guerrilla war*, p 101.

<sup>304</sup> See Joseph Mtisi, Munyaradzi Nyakudya, and Teresa Barnes, “War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980”, p 152.

<sup>305</sup> See *Breaking the silence*, p 45.

<sup>306</sup> See Terence Ranger, “Introduction to volume two”, p 7.

<sup>307</sup> There is no generally accepted figure of the casualties, but these range between 6000 and 20 000. See among others *estimates Breaking the silence: A report on the disturbances in Matebeleland and the Midlands*, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and the Legal Resources Foundation, p xix, puts the figure at 30 000, while others give different estimates, for example, Terence Ranger, *Voices from the rocks: Nature, culture and history in the Matopos hills of Zimbabwe*, Baobab, Harare, 1999, Norma Kriger, *Guerilla veterans in post-war Zimbabwe: Symbolic and violent politics, 1980-1987*, and Richard Werbner, *Tears of the dead: A social biography of an African family*, Edinburgh University Press, London, 1991.

<sup>308</sup> Colin Stoneman and Lionel Cliffe, *Zimbabwe: politics*, p 86.

liberation movements to want to be the “sole” and “authentic” representatives of the people.<sup>309</sup>

The deployment of violence between ZANU and ZAPU in the 1970s and 1980s, again speaks to the Foucauldian notion of power as a relation of war in the sense that while there could have been an ethnic factor underwriting the split and the clashes, the violence was essentially meant to strategically advance the power goals and attain domination. Suffice it to say that both ZANU and ZAPU had in their rank and file members from the other ethnic groupings usually associated with the other.<sup>310</sup> In this regard, for example, ZAPU although aligned with the Ndebele ethnic group contained some Shona, notably James Chikerema, George Nyandoro, and Joseph Musika, in key national positions. Conversely, there were also some Ndebele in influential positions in ZANU, such as Enos Nkala.

Thus, the violence was meant as an instrument to drive up the support base. Initially, for ZANU it was meant to gain a foothold into the ZAPU strongholds, and for ZAPU, to retain its constituencies. Later, this inter-party nationalist violence was used for coercive recruitment of support, that is, to grow and better the one vis-à-vis the other that was crucial for future access to power. These were akin to “political struggles, the conflicts waged over power, with power, for power ...” that Foucault outlines fought in “episodes, factions and displacements in the same war.”<sup>311</sup> For the nationalist leaders, this was meant to “reinscribe through a form of unspoken warfare”<sup>312</sup> the old relations of control by violent means.

It is imperative to note, the “war” against opposition political parties, which started with the clashes between ZANU and ZAPU in the 1960s, whose legacy, as already discussed, was the deployment of violence on opposition party structures was reinvented against

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<sup>309</sup> Ibbo Mandaza, “The one party state and democracy in Southern Africa: towards a conceptual framework”, in Ibbo Mandaza and Lloyd Sachikonye, eds, *The one party state and democracy: The Zimbabwe debate*, SAPES Books, Harare, 1991, p 27.

<sup>310</sup> See Luise White, *The assassination of Chitepo*, p 16.

<sup>311</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/knowledge*, p 91.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

the opposition MDC in the post-1999 era.<sup>313</sup> This was a way of fighting a larger and long running imperial battle, as already mentioned in ZANU-PF discourse, in which the MDC fronted a larger imperial force led by Britain, which ZANU-PF had defeated in 1980. A report of May 2010, by the IDASA, International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) and the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU), also established that intolerant politics were considered by ordinary women to be at the core of the violence in Zimbabwe.<sup>314</sup>

At a crucial level, this hegemonic discourse legitimized ZANU-PF's continued reign against a reduced support at the ballot based on its historic and heroic participation in the Second Chimurenga. This articulation sought, so says Foucault, to reify a "definite relation of forces that is established at a determinate, historically specifiable moment, in war and by war."<sup>315</sup> This sense of right to rule, so to speak, drawn from participating in the liberation war led the state security chiefs to abrogate themselves, as shown by their pronouncements on "suitable" presidential candidates in 2002 and 2008, the role of the arbiters of power in Zimbabwe.

Another attribute of the nationalism that arose out of the 1960s and 1970s was the glorification of the leadership. Personalities like Nkomo and Mugabe became venerated and were addressed in highly celebratory names. In this regard, for example, Joshua Nkomo, was called *Chibwechitedza* (slippery stone) or *Umdala wethu*, "our leader and Father Zimbabwe).<sup>316</sup> This hegemonic practice was also established in ZANU in which party slogans began to be closely linked with the personality of Mugabe.<sup>317</sup> To this extent, all party slogans started with the declaration: Forward with comrade President Robert Mugabe, followed by Forward with ZANU.<sup>318</sup> This was symbolic of the order of

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<sup>313</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 62.

<sup>314</sup> See IDASA, ICTJ and RAU, *Women, politics and the Zimbabwe crisis*, May 2010, p 10.

<sup>315</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p 90.

<sup>316</sup> Following his death in 1999, the national broadcaster, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Television (ZTV) churned out a lot of praiseworthy information about Joshua Nkomo even when he had been hunted down by ZANU-PF during the early years of independence. See Joshua Nkomo, *The story of my life*, for more on attempts at his life during the first decade of independence for being in the opposition.

<sup>317</sup> Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans exist?* p 255.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*

importance, first the leader, and the party second, which overall put the contribution of Mugabe at unparalleled levels in the liberation struggle.<sup>319</sup> The tradition was carried into the post-independence era. While the order of sloganeering continued, Mugabe was elevated to the earthly sovereign “supreme leader”<sup>320</sup> status in ZANU-PF songs and slogans. As an example, the Christian song “I will never cry if Jesus is there” was adulterated to “I will never cry if Mr Mugabe is there.”<sup>321</sup> Further, the adaptation of religious songs as nationalist songs dates back also to the Second Chimurenga.<sup>322</sup> It is necessary, however, to point out that the veneration of nationalist leaders was not limited to Zimbabwe, as it was the trend in many countries, including Nyerere, Kaunda, Kamuzu Banda, and Kwame Nkrumah who were constructed as divine kings of sorts.

Despite the fact that African nationalism had many ills, we must, however, acknowledge that they incorporated emancipatory politics, which were crucial in the dismantling of settler colonialism in Zimbabwe. As Michael Neocosmos states, these emancipatory politics were centered on the universal notions of freedom, justice and equality, which were derived from pan-Africanism.<sup>323</sup> Due to this universal appeal nationalist parties were then able to attract support that cut across the spectrum of gender, age, class, region, tribe and even race. Hence they became rallying points for an oppressed people. This is notwithstanding threats of violence or actual violence to force people to join.<sup>324</sup> The testimonies about how people were threatened into joining rallies and were sometimes forced to leave Sunday worship to attend nationalist meetings is evidence of this coercion.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> See Ezra Chitando, in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans exist*, p 275.

<sup>320</sup> See Kwanele Ona Jirira refers to this in “Gender, Politics and Democracy”, p 20.

<sup>321</sup> See Ezra Chitando, in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans exist*, p 275.

<sup>322</sup> See Maxwell, cited in Joseph Mtisi, Munyaradzi Nyakudya, and Teresa Barnes, “War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980”, p 158.

<sup>323</sup> See Michael Neocosmos, “Analysing political subjectivities: naming the post-developmental state in Africa today”, p 6, for a more detailed explanation of this.

<sup>324</sup> Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, eds, “Introduction”, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p 11.

<sup>325</sup> See Shimmer Chinodya, *Harvest of Thorns*, Heinemann, Oxford, 1989, pp75-76. Although his work is in a literary format, it provides a useful insight into the intolerance to competing though sometimes complementary institutions by the nationalist movements.

Broadly, by looking at the possible sources of the violence directed against women, I sought to emphasise the fact that the origins of the ill-treatment or violence against women in Zimbabwe cannot be located in one epoch. Neither can it be universalized or atemporalised. Rather it is situated in local and temporal conditions.

## CONCLUSION

The chapter has tried to sketch out the debates on the currency of the redistributive and the human rights violations discourses respectively concerning the militarized violence in new millennium Zimbabwe. Basically, I posited that overemphasising one over the other presents a narrowed, inadequate, and to some extent a misleading oversimplification of the violence. By problematizing the two, I not only aimed to demonstrate their conceptual limitations, but I also wished to invoke a “third space” on the violence that is couched in more inclusive terms. In this regard, besides problematizing the two discourses, I integrated Foucault’s theory of power to further understand the militarised violence in Zimbabwe. Treating the contest for power in the first decade of the Third Millennium as the “continuation of war by other means” enabled the connections between the Second Chimurenga iniquities with the Third Chimurenga violence as it particularly affected women. This illuminated the construction of the MDC, workers, students and activist women as enemies of the nation who had to be eviscerated along war lines. This also shed more light on how ZANU-PF reverted to liberation war era coercive mobilisation tactics, such as the *pungwes*, bases, deployment of war veterans to spearhead election campaigns through farm and firm invasions, and also in the construction of the MDC and their supporters as a part of the larger imperial forces bent on the recolonisation of the country.

Simultaneously, the violence of both the militarisation of the state and the land redistribution were constructed in ZANU-PF as part of the Third Chimurenga, hence were articulated as liberatory and emancipatory. In this register, the Third Chimurenga

representing the transfer of economic wealth and ownership of the means of production to the indigenous groups, marked the final stage in the liberation of the country following in the teleology of the earlier *zvimurenga*. It was thus supposed to deliver “mass justice”, in Mamdani terminology.<sup>326</sup>



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<sup>326</sup> See Mahmood Mamdani, “Lessons of Zimbabwe.”

## CHAPTER TWO: SHURUGWI AS A SITE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE.

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter tries to understand why Shurugwi witnessed so much political violence between 2000 and 2008, after it had managed to escape similar horrors that affected the other parts of the Midlands province in the earlier post-independence period.<sup>1</sup> Between 2000 and 2008, however, Shurugwi became one of the 83 constituencies that were engulfed in serious violence.<sup>2</sup> The questions for me here include, firstly, why was Shurugwi a theatre of political violence when it had generally escaped these other episodes of post-colonial violence? Where did the violence take place? Sites of political violence included, but were not limited to, reinvented political bases, farms, gold panning sites, homes, bodies of women, and such public places as shopping centres, schools, police-camps, and village heads homesteads. Some of these sites are normally sacrosanct, but were turned into torture stations.

Long term and short-term reasons coincided to produce the necessary conditions for this violence to happen in Shurugwi. The long-term reasons centre on the long-nurtured grievances over land shortages in the district, and these came to a boil when they were superimposed with the political opportunism of the fast track land reform programme (FTLRP). The FTLRP, I would like to argue, was a rather fortuitous and expedient political tool that led to much of the violence that was witnessed in the district. As will be

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<sup>1</sup> Other parts of the Midlands, notably Gokwe, Silobela, Zhombe and Lower Gwelo, together with large parts of the two Matebeleland provinces, witnessed the murderous *gukurahundi* episode between 1982 and 1987. For details see Tapera Knox Chitiyo, "Tracking Zimbabwe's political history: The Zimbabwe defence Force from 1980-2005", in [http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Books/Evol\\_RevolOct05/Chapter13.pdf](http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Books/Evol_RevolOct05/Chapter13.pdf), Accessed 23 March 2011, especially p358, see also The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and The Legal Resources Foundation, *Breaking the Silence, Building Peace: A Report on the disturbances in Matebeleland and the Midlands 1980-1988*, CCJP/LRF 1999.

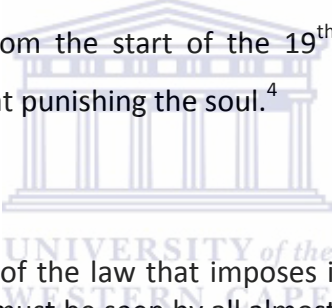
<sup>2</sup> See Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *Who will dare begin the process of recovering the truth?* Vol 2, 2010, cited in [http://www.hrforum.com/special\\_hrru/outreach-report-07-10.pdf](http://www.hrforum.com/special_hrru/outreach-report-07-10.pdf), Accessed 19 May 2011, p 119.



evinced it differed significantly from the other national moments of land invasions, not only in scale and intensity, but also in terms of the politics behind it.

In addition to trying to understand why Shurugwi became a site for political violence in the post millennium period, this chapter also attempts to analyse the importance of pre-modern spectacles of public punishments, in the Foucauldian sense, in the violence. By “pre-modern” I wish to denote forms of punishment that were used in previous centuries, as outlined by Foucault. These were torturing methods that focussed on the public display of corporeal punishment, such as chopping off hands, cutting out tongues or piercing them, breaking criminals alive and leaving them to die on the wheel, strangling, burning alive, having four horses pulling them in different directions, decapitation, floggings and branding.<sup>3</sup> These differ from the more reticent and hidden forms that were developed from the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which, while causing bodily pain, were more aimed at punishing the soul.<sup>4</sup>

As Foucault posits,



from the point of view of the law that imposes it, public torture and execution must be spectacular, it must be seen by all almost as its triumph. The very excess of the violence employed is one of the elements of its glory: the fact that the guilty man should moan and cry out under the blows is not a shameful side-effect, it is the very ceremonial of justice being expressed in all its force. Hence no doubt those tortures that take place even after death: corpses burnt, ashes thrown to the winds, bodies dragged on hurdles and exhibited at the roadside. Justice pursues the body beyond all possible pain.<sup>5</sup>

This public spectacle was necessary to dissuade the rest of the population from committing similar crimes in the future, because “men will remember [the] public exhibition, the pillory, [the] torture and pain duly observed.”<sup>6</sup> In the violence that beset Zimbabwe, some of the “torture as techniques of pain”<sup>7</sup> was employed, for almost the

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<sup>3</sup> See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison*, Translated by Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, New York, 1998, p 32.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p 16.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p 34.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p 34,

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

same reasons. For Shurugwi it was to dissuade people from identifying with and from supporting the MDC. By the public “display of violence or threat of violence” ZANU-PF sought to create “visible deterrence”, and to make the supporting of the MDC a part of the “spaces of fear”, in the sense argued by Pete Shirlow.<sup>8</sup> Spaces of fear are defined as “spaces that hold a threat to life, or are simply unsafe to go.”<sup>9</sup> Taken forward, the spaces of fear impact on everyday interactions and may lead to self-policing, and communal surveillance.<sup>10</sup>

### THE LAND ISSUE IN PERSPECTIVE<sup>11</sup>

Land problems have undergirded the district since the colonisation of the country, and land remained a “lingering issue”, in Charles Kabwete Mulinda’s terminology.<sup>12</sup> More



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<sup>8</sup> See Pete Shirlow, cited in Nils Zurawski, “‘I know where you live’ - Aspects of watching, surveillance, and social control in a conflict zone (Northern Ireland)”, in *Surveillance and society*, 2 (4), p 502, in <http://www.surveillance-and-society.org>, Accessed 28 May 2012.

<sup>9</sup> See Nils Zurawski, *Ibid*, p 502.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*. Communal surveillance involves members of the community watching out for those that do not belong, that is, outsiders.

<sup>11</sup> Literature abounds on the issue of the historic inequalities in terms of land appropriations and inequalities of ownership between races for Zimbabwe. Key of these include: Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Zimbabwe*, Heinemann, London, 1977. Despite this I wish to also draw on this to establish how Shurugwi district was affected. This is aimed at providing a useful background to the ecological factors that predisposed Shurugwi district to the post 2000 violence by looking at the connections between long term land problems and the post millennium violence. I also seek to transcend the binary discourses on land that have emerged, which have polarised, not only Zimbabwe’s politics, but also Zimbabwe’s academic circles. Broadly, these have been the school that is pro-redistribution and secondly, the school that tries to put individual rights violations at the centre. For Shurugwi, the violence between 2000 and 2008 was largely around land and fought also on a large scale on the farms where thousands sought to acquire a piece of resettlement land. Whilst the district might have escaped other post-independence era violence, like the farm invasions of the 1990s, for example, the Svosve case, it still shared in their problem of inadequate land. The key to this presentation is that the land problems faced in the district were not unique, but there were moments in them that made Shurugwi “special”. The most notable of this was the adoption of the policy of centralisation in the district from 1929. Noteworthy also is the fact that it was on the basis of land shortage and demands that the violence of the post 2000 was largely fought in Shurugwi district.

<sup>12</sup> See Charles Kabwete Mulinda, “A space for genocide: Local Authorities, local population and local histories in Gishamvu and Kibayi (Rwanda), Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of the Western Cape, September 2010.

importantly, land shortages fed into the structural violence against the locals.<sup>13</sup> The racially-based, skewed land distribution patterns created structural inequalities and hence structural violence that demanded recourse in an equitable redistribution of that important resource. Building on the meaning of structural violence discussed in Chapter One, Assefa, cited in Nelson Marongwe, sums up the impact of this violence as leading to the generation of “repression, abject poverty, malnutrition and starvation for some members of society while others enjoy opulence and unbridled power.”<sup>14</sup> Erin Mccandless also argues similarly and says:

[t]he land tenure context upon which the land occupations [2000s] were predicated was one of extreme structural violence. In the absence of serious movement on land redistribution through willing-seller, willing-buyer approaches and numerous efforts to negotiate a way forward with both national actors and the donor community, it was only a matter of time before the situation would erupt into crisis.<sup>15</sup>

As a result of this, time and again nationalist mobilisation has been around land shortages in the district, as in other many other rural districts of Zimbabwe. In this regard, nationalists consistently, and rightly so, hammered on the negative impact of white settler land expropriations most notably the creation of reserves, which have been described as having been unfit for human settlement.<sup>16</sup> Besides their smallness, poor soils and low rainfall, the reserves were also set far away from railways and markets, with the result that they became factories for the rural poverty and the

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<sup>13</sup> For a pithy discussion of structural violence, see Slavoj Zizek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, Picador, New York, 2008, pp 1-2, who says structural violence as violence rooted in economic, political and social systems of selective inclusion and exclusion.

<sup>14</sup> Assefa, in Nelson Marongwe, “Farm occupations and occupiers in the new politics of land in Zimbabwe”, p 160.

<sup>15</sup> See Erin MacCandless, “Transforming and preventing polarisation by embracing strategy dilemmas: An outsider’s view on lessons from Zimbabwe”, in <http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/1042/transforming-and-preventing-polarization/>, Accessed 02 June 2011. See also Nelson Marongwe, “Farm occupations and occupiers in the new politics of land in Zimbabwe”, p 157, for a similar argument.

<sup>16</sup> See Henry V Moyana, *The political economy of land in Zimbabwe*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1984, p 14.

proletarianisation of Africans.<sup>17</sup> They also formed the earliest pillars for the economic and social differentiation in colonial Zimbabwe.<sup>18</sup>

As shall be discussed below, the explosive issue of land in Shurugwi was epitomised by the selection of the district to pilot the centralisation scheme. This policy was extended to the rest of the reserves as the Native Land Husbandry Act in 1951. Basing on the annual Native Commissioners' reports on Shurugwi in the late 1920s,<sup>19</sup> it can be reasonably argued that the acute land problems led to the policy of centralisation. In turn, the introduction of centralisation provides an important genealogy for subsequent land-related problems for Shurugwi.

The settler policy of creating "reserves" (hereinafter without quotation marks) dating back to the Gwaai and Shangani reserves following the defeat of the Ndebele in the Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893, engineered land problems for Shurugwi. This policy was extended to the whole of the country after the 1896-7 risings. For Shurugwi, it can be traced to the 1898 Orders in Council, which stated that "the Council shall assign to the natives land sufficient for their occupation, whether as tribes or portions of tribes, and suitable for agriculture and pastoral requirements."<sup>20</sup> As Chitiyo rightly points out, this was a euphemism for resettling Africans in reserves.<sup>21</sup> These reserves, as Moyana advances, were mainly intended to absorb the excess African population that could not be accommodated in the European sectors.<sup>22</sup> And, true to this, 60 reserves including Shurugwi were created by 1905,<sup>23</sup> with their persistent land shortages.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, pp 16, 39, & 40-41.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p 51.

<sup>19</sup> See NAZ, S235/505-508, *Reports of Native Commissioner, (NC), Selukwe*, 1926, 1928, and 1929.

<sup>20</sup> See Tapera Knox Chitiyo, "Land, violence and compensation: reconceptualising Zimbabwe's land and war veterans debate" in *Centre for Conflict Resolution*, Vol 9, No 1, May 2000, in [www.ccr.uct.ac.za/archive/two/9\\_1/zimbabwe.html](http://www.ccr.uct.ac.za/archive/two/9_1/zimbabwe.html), Accessed 1 March 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Tapera Knox Chitiyo, Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Henry V Moyana, *The political economy of land*, p 41.

<sup>23</sup> See Tapera Knox Chitiyo, "Land, violence and compensation".

Because Shurugwi district faced acute shortages of land it was thus no coincidence that it was chosen to pilot the centralisation scheme in 1929.<sup>24</sup> This followed the period between 1923 and 1928 which saw a dramatic rise in the population in the reserve of Shurugwi. In fact the African population more than doubled in these five years from 5 400 to 11 400.<sup>25</sup> By 1934, the population in the reserve had further increased by a further 32,5 percent to 16 889.<sup>26</sup> This rapid growth of population followed the streaming of people into the reserve following the introduction of a land tax for Africans staying on European land from 1907,<sup>27</sup> and the recommendations of the 1914-1915 Native Lands Commission/Reserves Commission that actually reduced the size of African reserves dramatically.

This move has to be seen in the wider context of the failure by the British South Africa Company (BSAC) to find the second rand-belt. It was also a part of the settler policy of coercive expropriation of the means of production. As part of the attraction to join the invasion group organised by the BSAC, the “Pioneer Column”, the settlers had been promised both free land and mining rights. With regards to land, they were promised 3 175 acres of free land, and because of the failure to find the “Second Rand” many began to settle the land.<sup>28</sup> As a result of this, some 4 737 white farmers had settled the land nationally by 1914<sup>29</sup>, which necessitated the setting up of the 1914 Native Reserves Commission which recommended an ordinance to push Africans out of the European-designated areas. From 1912 the BSAC also began to encourage white farmers to occupy their farms, and began to seriously enforce the one pound per year fee introduced in

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<sup>24</sup> See Eira Kramer, “A clash of economies: Early centralisation efforts in colonial Zimbabwe, 1929-1935”, in *ZAMBEZIA*, XXV (i), 1998, p 83, cited in msu.archive.ac.zw, accessed 11 February 2011.

<sup>25</sup> See JoAnn McGregor, “Woodland resources, ecology, policy and ideology: An historical study of woodland use in Shurugwi communal area, Zimbabwe”, Doctoral thesis, Loughborough University of Technology, September 1991, in <https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/>, Accessed 14 March 2012, p 83, where she cites the annual reports of the Native Commissioners; see Annual figures from Native Commissioner Selukwe, Annual Reports 1923 to 1928, ZNA, S235/500.

<sup>26</sup> See NAZ, S235/513, *Report of the NC, Selukwe, 1934*.

<sup>27</sup> See Eira Kramer, “Early years: Extension Services in peasant agriculture in colonial Zimbabwe”, *ZAMBEZIA*, XXIV, (ii), p162, cited in msu.archive.ac.zw, accessed 15 February 2011.

<sup>28</sup> See Henry V Moyana, *The political economy of land in Zimbabwe*, p 43.

<sup>29</sup> See Robin. Palmer, “Aspects of Rhodesia land Policy 1890-1936” in Central African Historical Association Pamphlet, Local Series, no22, p 7, for a nuanced discussion.

1907 on Africans who sought to remain on European land.<sup>30</sup> The post-World War One depression also encouraged Africans settled on “unalienated” land to also move to the reserves because it was increasingly becoming uneconomic to continue paying the land tax against the backdrop of reducing maize prices.<sup>31</sup>

For Shurugwi, this was the period when Chief Banga, who had been forced to abandon the Mashava area, that is the area that eventually became the Tokwe Ranch with his two headmen, Mhangami and Pisirayi, and about 2000 of his subjects, settled in the south-west part of Selukwe district, around 1924.<sup>32</sup> Overall, this led to increased pressure on the reserve of Selukwe. In addition to this, fifty-four (54) small scale farms were also established for the successful Africans to the East and South-East of the district, in the Jobolinko-Rockford area and in the Gamwa area, respectively, following the Land Apportionment Act<sup>33</sup> adding to the already worse population situation. I was also informed that due to the establishment of the Jobolinko small scale farms, chief Nhema’s subjects under headmen Mudzengi and Tinhira were relocated in the early 1930s into areas formerly reserved for grazing, further congesting these areas.

Centralisation, which was piloted in Selukwe reserve, was defined by Alvord, its chief architect and ideologue, as a system that consolidated and demarcated grazing areas from arable lands in the rural areas. These (grazing and arable lands) were to be separated by a line of homesteads.<sup>34</sup> Under centralisation, “...people under headmen [had] to centralise their scattered crop lands together into large arable blocs and to set aside large stretches of other land to be used as communal grazing lands where cattle can graze freely during the growing season. Then, after the crops are harvested the cattle could graze freely in the arable areas to clean up crop residue for a month or two

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<sup>30</sup> See Eira Kramer, “Early Extension services”, p 162.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p 162.

<sup>32</sup> See NAZ, S2929/7/6, *Delineation Reports General: Selukwe District*, and also Macgregor, Ibid, p83.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Alvord’s official designation was Agriculturalist for the instruction of the Natives from 1926 to the mid-1950s.

while the grazing land had a rest.”<sup>35</sup> The basic stated and official aim of centralisation was to improve agricultural production, both cattle production and crop production. The African agricultural methods which at times were based on shifting cultivation, scattered fields, scattered grazing lands and dispersed settlement pattern were perceived as outdated, wasteful, and harmful to the environment.

On the whole, centralisation ushered in wholesale and arbitrary alterations. First, it did away with dispersed settlement pattern with their emphasis on grazing and crop cultivation in close proximity. In its place fields and grazing were consolidated, while homesteads were put in single lines ending dispersed settlement. In addition, the emphasis on manuring and intensive crop rotation exerted tremendous labour requirements from the residents. In sum, its forced introduction ushered in radical social reorganisation of human labour and settlement patterns, as well as the reordering of access to land and land usage.

However, the hidden aim was to “... avoid, as far as possible, the necessity for acquisition of more land for native occupation.”<sup>36</sup> This was to be through promoting intensive crop cultivation, which entailed the use of agricultural demonstrators<sup>37</sup>, manure, and four-course crop rotation based on the Norfolk traditions; the adoption and extensive use of the plough; as well as allocating adequate pastures for the cattle. And, it was to be on this basis that “the foundation of permanent agriculture for the African [was to be] based”, that is, on cattle production and crop cultivation.<sup>38</sup> Suffice to also say, at this point, that this policy of centralisation first tested in Shurugwi together

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<sup>35</sup> E.D Alvord, “The gospel of the plough or guided destiny”, Unpublished Autobiography of Emory D Alvord Unpublished 1950, cited in Eira Kremer, “A clash of economies”, p 91.

<sup>36</sup> CNC, Annual Report for 1932, cited in Michael Drinkwater, “Technical development and peasant impoverishment: Land use policy in Zimbabwe’s Midlands province” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 15, no2, Special issue on the politics of conservation in Southern Africa, p 293, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable2636804>, Accessed 14 February 2011.

<sup>37</sup> Demonstrators referred to African extension workers whose primary role involved imparting practical agricultural methods and skills. They had specific terms of reference, see NAZ, S138/72 “Appointment, duties and instructions in connection with Native farming demonstrators”, for more details.

<sup>38</sup> See NAZ, S2386, E.D Alvord, “Agricultural Position in Reserves, Selukwe Reserve-Report of the Agriculturalist for Natives”, 1943.



with its central, rational and rather impractical, ethos of improving techniques of farming by the Africans, instead of availing more land; was extended, modified and adapted to other districts under the Land Husbandry Act codified in 1951. It was also to be the central nervous system of all “Native” agricultural planning for the entire duration of the colonial governmentality, and arguably into the first two decades of post-independence.<sup>39</sup>

Hence, like other settler policies, centralisation remained in its rational mode, especially as the African population in the reserve continued to grow, through natural increase and through inflows of those Africans ejected from European areas. Annual reports by the NCs illuminate the predicament. For example in 1926 an NC wrote: “[i]n this district the only reserve is, even today, very thickly populated and the present occupants complain of having insufficient ground for cultivation and grazing.”<sup>40</sup> The same was repeated in 1929 when the NC stated again that “from the figures relating to the population and stock on the reserve at any disposal it was apparent to me that under the system in vogue the reserve was overcrowded- in fact I marvelled that so large a number of people were able under the conditions to be self-supporting.”<sup>41</sup> It should also be said that it was on this basis that the NC also vociferously called for agricultural demonstrators to try to contain degradation in the face of overflowing population.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See Nelson Marongwe, “Farm occupations and occupiers in the new politics of land in Zimbabwe”, p 156. See also, Michael Drinkwater, “Technical Development and Peasant Impoverishment”, pp 289 and 295, for a pithy discussion on the continuities between the colonial agricultural policies and those adopted in the post-independence period, especially during the “First Five Year Development Plan” from 1986 to 1990. His discussion enables us to go beyond understanding “colonial law” simply as based on coercion and discrimination, but to also understand it also as functioning to represent the “transformation which occurred in the nature, role and power of the state.” He goes on to say “It left the state at independence as the dominant source of power in the country and its generally centralised institutions in the habit of exercising this power through purposive-rational action. Those who work for the state institutions are trained and socialised into the language of goals, policies, programmes and plans, and hence accept as normal that bureaucracies should function according to a purposive rationality.” (p 289). John L Comaraff, “Colonialism, culture and the law: A foreword”, in *Law and Spring Inquiry*, American Bar Foundation, 2001, p 4, weighs in and says colonial legal tools were also “...languages of practice; symbolic and ritual systems; abstract principles for the production of social order, citizenship, and subjugation; and immanent material realities. And a lot more.”

<sup>40</sup> NAZ, S235/504, *Report of Native Commissioner, (NC), Selukwe, 1926.*

<sup>41</sup> See NAZ, S235/505-508, *Report of NC, Selukwe, 1929.*

<sup>42</sup> NAZ, S235/504, *Report of NC, Selukwe, 1926.*



Alvord also alluded to this fact when he wrote in 1928 that: "Selukwe Reserve at present is an old worn out Native lands, heavily populated and greatly overstocked with cattle".<sup>43</sup>

This situation was made worse by the consummation of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, which resulted in the second major streaming of Africans into the reserves. The Native Commissioner for Selukwe wrote: "Considerable number of natives reside on the alienated farms and crown lands in this district specified in schedule 5 of the act for whom provision will have to be made when the allotted time arrives for their removal from these areas."<sup>44</sup> This repeated an earlier similar observation by the Native Commissioner for Selukwe in 1921, who wrote that "a considerable amount of crown land has recently been taken over by European farmers and it is estimated that about 50% of the Natives residing thereon moved to the reserves, the balance remaining on the farms."<sup>45</sup> This is the balance that continued to trek especially to the reserve and at times back to the European farms for either work or to seek settlement.

On balance, Shurugwi reserve fared much worse compared to other reserves. The size of the reserve stood at 76 000 morgen,<sup>46</sup> which translates to 152 000 acres. This was to be shared by about 19 889 people by 1934.<sup>47</sup> This translated to about 9 acres per person. The above shows the seriousness of the land problem in the district when compared to the national average of 30,49 acres per person in the reserves.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> See NAZ, SRGI/INT4, *Annual Report of Agriculturalist*, 1928.

<sup>44</sup> NAZ, S235/508, *Report of NC, Selukwe*, 1929.

<sup>45</sup> NAZ, N/1/24, *Report of NC, Selukwe*, 1921.

<sup>46</sup> See NAZ, S235/505-508, *Reports of Native Commissioner, (NC), Selukwe*, 1929.

<sup>47</sup> See NAZ, S235/505-508, *Reports of Native Commissioner, (NC), Selukwe*, 1934.

<sup>48</sup> See Henry V Moyana, *The political economy of land in Zimbabwe*, p 47.

To make matters worse, the reserve of Shurugwi was endowed with poor sandy soils, which derive from the parent granite rock.<sup>49</sup> The Native Commissioner reiterated this when he wrote to the Superintendent of Natives in 1931:

[t]he Selukwe Reserve, pure sandveld throughout, is far too small for the Natives settled therein, and this position is accentuated by the wasteful methods of Native agriculture. There being no more land available, we are obliged to meet the constant applications of these natives to settle elsewhere by endeavouring to cut down the wastage to an absolute minimum, and utilise every available yard of the reserve by an undertaking which to my mind is rendered possible by this scheme alone.<sup>50</sup>

In this report, the Native Commissioner highlights two important and related issues. These are, firstly, the poor soils in the reserve, and secondly, overcrowding. It is also crucial to point out that while the centralisation programme had a measure of temporary success in the district in terms of mitigating against land shortages, which it was supposed to solve permanently, it was nonetheless inadequate as a long term strategy. As Kremer plausibly argues, once the Land Apportionment Act was effected the ethos of centralisation, that of reducing land shortages, was defeated because “the carrying capacity of the reserves needed to be increased to accommodate all those entering them”<sup>51</sup>. Related also is the fact that as the population increased in the reserve the balance was lost because of the further subdivisions of the plots among the male children.<sup>52</sup> Still Alvord remained completely fixed in his rational ideas that improving native agriculture would solve the attendant problems of overcrowding, land degradation and land shortage. As he would say in 1948 “[...] to give Natives now on

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<sup>49</sup> See Victor Madebwe and Crescentia Madebwe, “An exploratory analysis of social, economic and environmental impacts on wetlands: the case of Shurugwi district, Midlands province, Zimbabwe” in *Journal of Applied Sciences research*, 1 (2), 2005, p 229.

<sup>50</sup> NAZ, S1007/7, *Miscellaneous, Selukwe Reserve, NC, Selukwe to Superintendent of Natives, Bulawayo, 3/2/31.*

<sup>51</sup> Eira Kramer, “A clash of economies”, p 86. See also Eira Kramer, “Early extension services”, citing E. Tawse-Jollie, “Native land tenure in Africa”, *American Geographical Society, Pioneer Settlement Cooperative Studies*, 14, 1932, in “Early extension services”, p 163, points to the population pressure impact of the Land apportionment Act, that of squeezing a massive 300 000 Africans into the reserves after the act abolished rent and labour agreements between white farmers and African peasants in European land areas, which triggered a second massive exodus from the areas demarcated for white agriculture into the reserve.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, pp 93-95.

Reserves more land at present would be most unwise. They would only ruin it and destroy its fertility in the same manner as they have already done on the land they already have. For them the solution is not to be heard in more land but in better farming the existing land.”<sup>53</sup>

One could argue then that the actual basis for the implementation of centralisation and its subsequent rolling out in other districts of the country shepherded by Alvord during the years of the infamous Separate Development and Partnership/Cooperation of Prime Minister Godfrey Huggins,<sup>54</sup> with their pillars the Land Apportionment Act, 1930, the 1951 Land Husbandry Act, and the 1969 Land Tenure Act, was to deny Africans in the reserves more land based on an argument for unachievable scientific-technical standards of mixed farming. This comes out clearly in the words of the Prime Minister Coughlan who posited that “this [Rhodesia] is essentially a country where the white man has come and desires to stay, and he can only be certain of doing so if he has certain portions of the country made his exclusively.”<sup>55</sup> Alvord also stated clearly that

on the reserves we are trying to induce the people to centralise their arable lands and set aside permanent grazing lands for their cattle. It is not our intention to necessarily encourage greater production, but rather reduce the area under cultivation and to encourage better methods on smaller lands in order that people may grow sufficient for their needs and more land maybe available for grazing purposes.<sup>56</sup>

It was on the basis of such fallacious thoughts therefore that the settler government at times turned to force and coercion to make Africans comply with the strict land use and conservation demands. This contrasted significantly with the policy regarding white farmers, who besides being allocated huge tracts of land, had the benefits of “experimental stations, free expert advice, credit facilities, provision of fertilisers, seeds

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<sup>53</sup> E.D Alvord, “The Progress of Native agriculture in Southern Rhodesia”, in *The New Rhodesia*, 15, 1948, pp 18-19.

<sup>54</sup> Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU guerrilla war*, pp 89-90.

<sup>55</sup> Prime Minister Coughlan’s contribution to the House of Assembly debates in 1927, cited in Victor EM Machingaidze, “Agrarian Change from above: The southern Rhodesia Native Land Husbandry Act and African Response” in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol24, No3, 1991, cited in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/219092>, accessed 14 February 2011, pp 558-559.

<sup>56</sup> NAZ, *Report of Agriculturalist for the instruction of Natives to Chief Agriculturalist*, 1/4/30.

and stock at subsidised cost, irrigation works” and better roads.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, the white farmers benefitted from better prices at the market.<sup>58</sup>

In interviews, the elderly people have vivid memories of the *nhamo yemakandiwa* (enforced contour ridge regime) as a result of the 1951 Land Husbandry Act.<sup>59</sup> One interviewee stands out on this issue when he told me that agricultural demonstrators asked the late interviewee’s father to lie across the contour ridge as a way to denote the width that was required of the contour ridge.<sup>60</sup> Although he was possibly exaggerating, what I managed to figure out from this and other interviews is that the contour ridges had to be wide and meticulously maintained all the time, which exerted a great demand for manual labour from the Africans. McGregor has too established that one colonial Land Development Officer for Selukwe, Mr Fisher, required that the width of these contour ridges be wide enough for him to drive his land rover.<sup>61</sup>

Crucially, the issue raised above feeds into a trans-Africa colonial land conservation regime that was based on skewed perceptions to arrest land wasting in African areas.<sup>62</sup> It also speaks to the humiliations that Africans suffered under some colonial authorities. These contour ridges and the deep ridging plough, which for Shurugwi were colonial “inventions”, represent at another level the deeper penetration of the environment which symbolised the deeper penetration of colonialism. This also showed the excesses of the exercise of state power.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> See Giovanni Arrighi, cited in Terence Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1930*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1970, p 112.

<sup>58</sup> Terence Ranger, *Ibid*, p 112.

<sup>59</sup> *Nhamo yemakandiwa* is the common term used to describe the excruciating labour demands that people went through in the digging and preservation of contour ridges. One of Zimbabwe’s Chimurenga and anti-oppressionist singer Thomas Mapfumo has sung a song about “*nhamo yemakandiwa*”.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Mr Shumba, 28 May 2010.

<sup>61</sup> See Joann Macgregor, “Woodland resources: Ecology, policy and ideology”, p 114.

<sup>62</sup> See Grace Carswell, “Continuities in environmental narratives: the case of Kabale, Uganda, 1930-2000”, in *Environment and History*, No 1, February 2003, in <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/3143>. Accessed 15 June 2012, for a discussion on Uganda.

<sup>63</sup> See Joann Macgregor, “Woodland resources: Ecology, policy and ideology”, p 114.

Besides altering the land tenure, the centralisation project also had far-reaching implications for the general culture of the people of Shurugwi. In this way, the need to survive on smaller, intensively worked areas demanded more labour per unit of production, manuring and crop rotation. Indeed, centralisation and other technical-scientific policies like the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 reinforced wholesale transformations of the villagers' lives. They reconfigured the physical landscapes through the strict observance of mixed farming, as well as introducing new relations in Shurugwi that entailed the ending of communal land ownership, the introduction of small individualised landholding,<sup>64</sup> and compulsory destocking.<sup>65</sup> The policy measures were also indirectly aimed at extracting African labour for the settler capital economic sectors, notably industry, mining, agriculture; as well as domestic labour needs.<sup>66</sup>

By depriving Africans of adequate land, centralisation, in its various faces, transformed the relationship that African males had with land. All men were "traditionally" supposed to acquire their own piece of land upon marriage, and under conditions of limited access due to overpopulation, the young were "cut off from the possibility of ever owning land."<sup>67</sup> And, due to this fear of being cut off from the land that drove many to come back from towns into the already heavily populated areas or to engage in nationalist politics to confront the Rhodesian state.<sup>68</sup>

Because of land problems, that is, shortage, degradation and poor quality, it was thus not surprising that the rallying point of African nationalism in Shurugwi, and the rest of the rural areas in colonial Zimbabwe, was the Land Husbandry Act of 1951. In Shurugwi, the basis of this was the resistance to centralisation by Chiefs Nhema and Banga.<sup>69</sup> There were also reports of "freedom ploughing" where residents went against the law

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<sup>64</sup> For a detailed discussion of this see also Willam Wolmer and Ian Scoones, "Agriculture: The mixed farming discourse in Zimbabwe", *African Affairs*, (2000), 99, cited in <http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/content/99/397/575.full.pdf>, accessed 12 February 2011.

<sup>65</sup> See Paresh Pandya, Mao Tse-Tung and Chimurenga, p 35.

<sup>66</sup> See Robin.R Palmer, *Land and racial discrimination in Rhodesia*, Heinemann, London, 1977, for a pithy discussion of this.

<sup>67</sup> See Victor EM Machingaidze, "Agrarian change from above", p 571.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p 571.

<sup>69</sup> See JoAnn Mcgregor, "Woodland resources, ecology, policy and ideology", p 87.

to allocate themselves plots even in unsuitable or in crown areas.<sup>70</sup> However, these chiefs were later “won over” to accepting it.<sup>71</sup> Africans grew to realise that efforts at centralisation and the well-packaged project of the Land Husbandry Act were rooted in discrimination and coercion by the colonial state.<sup>72</sup> This was so because whilst the colonial government provided monetary and other incentives to the white farmers to help improve their agriculture, black farmers met with various forms of coercion and punishments to solve the problems that emerged from their agricultural activities.<sup>73</sup>

Coercion, which was meant to ensure compliance, was carried out by the various government officials including the demonstrators, chiefs, African police and messengers.<sup>74</sup> In other words they (Africans) were supposed to miraculously make the concept of modernisation work in the absence of adequate land. The land size allocated to blacks as a variable remained unchanged, or was reduced due to natural increase in population, as the other variable, in the form of population growth, increased considerably. On land deprivations, Yudelman quoted in Machingaidze posited, for example, that about 70 percent of the 32 900 square miles in Rhodesia that comprised the area suitable for intensive production had been set aside for European agriculture.<sup>75</sup>

This overall made the target of modernising African agriculture untenable, political and to some extent populist-rational talk. What instead happened was that the land in Shurugwi became so overworked and overextended that agricultural production became difficult. The settler government was aware of these problems, and was also particularly aware of the value Africans attached to their land. Another sign of the

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<sup>70</sup> See S235/505-508, *Report of NC, Selukwe, 1927*.

<sup>71</sup> JoAnn McGregor, “Woodland resources, ecology, policy and ideology”, p 97.

<sup>72</sup> See Joann McGregor, “Conservation, control and ecological change: The Politics and ecology of Colonial conservation in Shurugwi”, in *Environment and History*, vol1, no3, October 1995, pp 257-279.

<sup>73</sup> Joann McGregor, *Ibid*, pp 257-279. See also Tapera Knox Chitiyo, “Land, violence and compensation” says coercion also included the forced construction of pasture furrows’ road contour drains, gully control measures, tree planting and fencing of area deemed critical.

<sup>74</sup> See Terence O Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and guerrilla war in Zimbabwe: A comparative study*, James Currey, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985, p 30 See also comments of Alvord cited in Victor EM Machingaidze, “Agrarian change from above”, p 560 that called for the use of force to make African farmers fully comply with the tenets of the act.

<sup>75</sup> See Yudelman cited in Victor EM Machingaidze, “Agrarian change from above”, p 559, for more details.

attachment the people of Shurugwi reserve had with the land came from the fact that some chose to seek employment only in the agricultural off season.<sup>76</sup> This was mainly to raise the cash for the taxes. Alvord, ironically, was acutely aware of this and he wrote: "These people are essentially agriculturalists. They are of the earth, earthly. Agriculture to the Native is not an occupation or a trade- it is more of life."<sup>77</sup> Yet he still proceeded with the theme of agricultural modernisation as opposed to a programme that simultaneously also availed more land in the reserves. Thus while there was a basis for technical-scientific methods of farming, there was clearly a need for an increase in the size of land in the district.

In interviews and discussions with residents of rural Shurugwi, I was made aware of land conflicts over both grazing areas and arable lands between villages and also between people from the same villages.<sup>78</sup> For example, I heard of feuds between Mvura villagers and those from Mapfumo; Chivi village and those from Muguzumbi; as well as those from Gambe village fighting constantly those from Manungo village over grazing and arable lands. Of note is the fact that where a village's arable land stopped, the neighbouring villages' arable or grazing land started.<sup>79</sup> Without properly fixed boundaries in the form of fences, but only physical landmarks, such demarcations became difficult to maintain.<sup>80</sup>

There were also constant problems between villagers and white farmers whose farms were on village edges. In this regard, for example, some peasants lost cattle that strayed into neighbouring farms. People from Marira village told how they lost cattle and or

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<sup>76</sup> NAZ, S235/505-508, *Report of the NC, Selukwe, 1928.*

<sup>77</sup> See E.D Alvord, "Agricultural demonstration on Native Reserves", Department of Native Development, Southern Rhodesia, occasional paper no3, 1931, p 5.

<sup>78</sup> Information obtained from interviews. This also accords with Tapera Knox Chitiyo, "Land, violence and compensation" established that "there were also serious boundary disputes between villages. The period 1961-1968 saw an upsurge in land disputes brought before chiefs for mediation, as well as an increase in fights between individuals and families over land."

<sup>79</sup> Based on personal interviews and discussions I held in the district between December 2009 and July 2010.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with a Councillor. These also came up in several other discussions and interviews I had with elderly residents of Shurugwi.



goats that strayed into Muponda farm. If they did not lose their cattle or goats they would be thoroughly beaten by the farmer himself or his workers. At other times they said were made to pay hefty fines by Muponda. Eventually the villagers nicknamed the farmer Muponda, meaning murderer, because of the harsh way he related with the neighbouring villagers.

As intimated above, the Land Husbandry Act had the unintended effect (on the government's part) of stirring African nationalism in the early 1950s. The leading figure was Benjamin Burombo. Based in Bulawayo, Burombo was one of the founding fathers of Zimbabwean nationalism through the British African Voice Association (BAVA), which tried to combine rural and urban grievances.<sup>81</sup> After the BAVA, the other urban-based movements also connected urban with rural grievances. These were the (United) African National Congress (ANC), and later the National Democratic Party (NDP), the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). In this regard African nationalists like George Nyandoro, James Chikerema, Edison Sithole, Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, among others, articulated combined urban and rural African grievances into the emerging African nationalism against minority rule in the then Southern Rhodesia.<sup>82</sup>

Sarcastically summing the "positive" impact the Land Husbandry Act had on African nationalism, George Nyandoro said it had been "the best recruiter Congress (ANC) ever had."<sup>83</sup> The early successes of these movements against the Land Husbandry Act were seen in their banning as movements or their proscription from rural areas where they were accused by the colonial Native officials of undermining governance. To this end due to the conscientisation activities of these early movements rural people began to undertake various forms of passive resistance against government officers. In this

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<sup>81</sup> Ngwabi Bhebe, *Benjamin Burombo: African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1947-58*, College Press, Harare, 1989, p 100; see also Taper Knox Chitiyo, "Land, violence and compensation: Reconceptualising Zimbabwe's land and war veterans debate", in *CCR*, Vol 9, No 1, May 2000, accessed 1 March 2011.

<sup>82</sup> See Ngwabi Bhebe, *The Zapu and Zanu Guerrilla Warfare*, pp 10-11, and also Victor EM Machingaidze, "Agrarian change from above", p 580.

<sup>83</sup> George Nyandoro quoted in Victor EM Machingaidze, "Agrarian change from above", p 582.



regard it was reported that people would disrupt government officials meetings in rural areas, ridicule agricultural advisors, demonstrators and chiefs; engage in civil disobedience against government instructions; burn dip tanks and engage in “freedom ploughing”, which entailed cultivation in unauthorised places.<sup>84</sup>

Whilst these early nationalist movements of the early 1950s tried to link urban grievances with rural land grievances their impact in Shurugwi is not well documented. While there is this paucity in written accounts especially linking land problems in the district to the rise of African nationalism, it would be plausible to estimate that the district, one of the worst affected by land shortages going by the adoption of centralisation and reports of colonial officials, could not have escaped the connections. The “brutalising”<sup>85</sup> effects of centralisation which were worsened by the Land Apportionment Act and its sequel the Land Husbandry Act should surely have conspired to generate some link. In fact the resistance by the chiefs Nhema and Banga to centralisation, that we discussed earlier, also strengthens such an assumption.

It would appear, however, that there were other various forms of uncoordinated individualised resistance in the district, which nonetheless were centred on confronting land shortages. There was no widespread peasant consciousness in Shurugwi in the mode as explained by Terence Ranger.<sup>86</sup> Instead, the locals confronted the colonial power through tax evasions, avoidance of labour,<sup>87</sup> freedom ploughing which entailed “injudicious settlement and cultivation of lands”,<sup>88</sup> and voluntary emigration to the less

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<sup>84</sup> See NAZ, S235/505-508, *Report of NC, Selukwe, 1927*. See also, Victor EM Machingaidze, “Agrarian change from above”, p581-583. Tapera Knox Chitiyo, “Land, violence and compensation”, also describes this phenomena at great length in this article.

<sup>85</sup> Henry V Moyana, uses the term widely in *The political economy of land in Zimbabwe*.

<sup>86</sup> See Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe, A Comparative Study*, London, James Currey, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1985, p177, who posits for a generalised peasant awareness and response to white settler colonial activities. Thus, while Shurugwi peasants were aware of their predicament, they nonetheless responded differently and there is no evidence of uniform forms of resistances.

<sup>87</sup> See Joann Mcgregor, “Woodland resources, ecology, policy and ideology”, p 83.

<sup>88</sup> See NAZ, S235/505-508, *Report of NC, Selukwe, 1927*.

populated areas such as Gokwe, Silobela and Nembudziya.<sup>89</sup> In yet other cases they loaned out their cattle under the system of *kuronzera* to avoid compulsory destocking that also accompanied the Land Husbandry Act.<sup>90</sup> This is akin to what Gramsci has described as “negative rather than positive class position.”<sup>91</sup>

Of note is that the Land Husbandry Act became the watershed of the centralisation policy, whence from it was universalised to all the other rural areas of the country. We ought also to recall that the Land Husbandry Act was invoked against the background of intensive post World War Two white settlement in the country which put further pressure on the land, and on the reserves. The policy of attracting European settlement, regarded as marking a “second colonisation” of Rhodesia, resulted in new annual settler figures of about 14 000 per year towards the end of the 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>92</sup> As a consequence the white population rose dramatically, almost tripling, from 80 500 in 1945 to 219 000 in 1960.<sup>93</sup> Of more significance is that the population of white farmers in Zimbabwe nearly doubled in this period from 4673 to 8632.<sup>94</sup> This resulted in about 85 000 black families being pushed out of European areas, between 1945 and 1955, which put enormous strain on the reserves.<sup>95</sup> This worsened the plight of the reserves and furthered the nationalist mobilisation.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> In interviews I gathered that there were individuals that relocated on their own accord to the less densely populated but inhospitable areas of Gokwe, Nembudziya and Silobela, for example. In an interview with Headman Mabedzenge, he told me that he moved to Gokwe in the late 1960s due to land shortage and also that the land he had inherited from his late father had become overworked. He only returned to Shurugwi in 1996 when he was allocated an A1 self-contained 56 hectare plot in the Mavhumasha area. I have also come to be aware that there are areas in Gokwe, Nembudziya and Silobela that contain significant emigrants from Shurugwi, and are generally known as *MaSelukwe*, to denote that they originated from Selukwe/ Shurugwi.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Mr Ncube of Dlodlo kraal, 23 May 2010. This was also repeated in many other interviews.

<sup>91</sup> See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, International Publishers, New York, 1971, pp 272-273.

<sup>92</sup> Victor EM Machingaidze, “Agrarian change from above”, p 574.

<sup>93</sup> See *Utete Commission Report*, p 11.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, p 11.

<sup>95</sup> See Victor EM Machingaidze, “Agrarian Change from above”, p 561. The Utete Commission report, p 11 put the figure of those displaced nationally at 100 000 Africans.

<sup>96</sup> See William Wolmer and Ian Scoones, “Agriculture: The mixed Farming Discourse in Zimbabwe”.

Regarding Shurugwi, the Native Commissioner for the district wrote to the Provincial Native Commissioner (Gwelo) that he had 289 African “persons” displaced from the European section of the district that he needed to settle but could not do so because there was no space in the reserve.<sup>97</sup> Pendered and von Memerty sum up the situation best by stating that:

...since 1902 the African population has increased fourfold and the cattle population has increased 35 times. These factors working together have destroyed the system of shifting farming, and have increased the pressure upon the soil to such an extent as to endanger the natural resources and have, resulted in many areas, in the fragmentation of arable land down to uneconomic bits and pieces.”<sup>98</sup>

They also noted that half of all the reserves were overpopulated.<sup>99</sup> While the Land Husbandry Act was dissolved in the mid-1960s and replaced by the Land Tenure Act, its ethos was not abandoned and it was continued right up to independence where the concept of demonstrators continued to be used in African rural areas where people continued to eke out a living on the ever-shrinking arable lands. The opening up of demonstrator colleges like Makoholi and Henderson kept that spirit alive.<sup>100</sup>

Centralisation was not the only radical intervention that had a profound impact in worsening land problems in Shurugwi. The plough which was introduced in the district between 1910 and 1930 became widely used in the reserve,<sup>101</sup> with serious effects. Because it enabled people to cultivate large plots, it brought an agricultural mini-revolution to the district, as in other districts. Many in Shurugwi many began to cultivate large fields. In Shurugwi, by 1927 there was a widespread adoption of ploughs. As the NC, 1927, said, “following on the good results obtained at the demonstration plots the natives have acquired numerous implements. A fair estimate of which would be twenty

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<sup>97</sup> See *Letter from Native Commissioner (Selukwe) to the Provincial Native Commissioner (Gwelo)*, 20/2/46, cited in Victor EM Machingaidze, “Agrarian change from above”, p 562.

<sup>98</sup> A Pendered and W. von Memerty, “The Native Land Husbandry Act of Southern Rhodesia”, in *Journal of African administration*, Vol 7, No3, London, 1955, p 99.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, p 101, see also R Pamer, *Land and racial discrimination*, who says that 55% of all reserves were overpopulated by 1955.

<sup>100</sup> See William Wolmer and Ian Scoones, “Agriculture”, p 584.

<sup>101</sup> See JoAnn Mcgregor, “Woodland resources, ecology, policy and ideology”, p 78.

cultivators, fifteen planters, five harrows and four scotch carts for carting kraal manure.”<sup>102</sup> No doubt, the figures rose dramatically with the implementation of the policy of centralisation from 1929. Whilst there are no direct accounts with figures on acreage in Shurugwi, Mcgregor says peasants elsewhere began to cultivate fields that ran into hundreds of acres.<sup>103</sup> By extension therefore it can be possible that some peasants in Shurugwi began to also want larger pieces of land. However, in Shurugwi because of the acute land shortages discussed already and introduction of centralisation, it is plausible to argue that they would not have been able to satisfy this demand for larger pieces of land.

Secondly the plough demanded that peasants abandon the cultivation of wetlands for the drier top lands.<sup>104</sup> The wetlands had been more suitable for the simple hand held hoes, and also were more secure from the Ndebele raids of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>105</sup> More importantly, the introduction and widespread use of the plough introduced shifting cultivation in the district<sup>106</sup> (before centralisation), a method that requires a lot of land per person. The method was favoured by the locals for its higher returns on labour, that is, it demanded less labour; enabled the people to get fresh fertile soils; and it was also a way of evading the marauding *striga asiatica* or witchweed, a weed which could only be effectively controlled by constant field changes.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> See NAZ, S235/505-508, *Report of the Native Commissioner, (NC), 1927.*

<sup>103</sup> Mcgregor, *Ibid*, p 78.

<sup>104</sup> Joann Mcgregor, *Ibid*, p 78. The importance of the wetlands in Shurugwi pre-plough cannot be overemphasised as Chief Nhema is said to have taken over from the Boroma chieftaincy precisely to take over the wetlands. See Mcgregor, p 73.

<sup>105</sup> Joann Mcgregor, *Ibid*, p 78.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, p 79. Mcgregor avers that shifting cultivation was not “traditional” to the district of Shurugwi, but was a method that was adopted by the peasants with the coming of the plough as from 1910 to 1930. As such the method has a short genealogy and was never a long term one. This contrasted the European administrators who regarded it as a long term method. In my fieldwork, my informants also told me the same. They said that the only form of migration involved the movement of the locals into the mountains together with their cattle and grain in cases of Ndebele raids. In an interview with Mr Mazivisa, 28 January 2010, for example that his grandparents had continuously used the Shamba Mountains to avoid Ndebele raids.

<sup>107</sup> Joann Mcgregor, *Ibid*, pp 78-79.

As Chitiyo also says, the introduction of the deep ridging plough had a disastrous effect on land degradation as compared to earlier more traditional hoe, which only loosened largely the top soil hence causing minimum damage to the soil.<sup>108</sup> Deep ploughing, it also has to be added, encourages leaching of nutrients, which made the soil less fertile, and less productive and consequently more expensive to work. As such this desire for shifting cultivation, which required more land, and which was economic in many ways to the peasants, put them in direct conflict with the state authorities who sought to limit African access to land as seen by the creation of reserves following the end of the First Chimurenga, the adoption of the policy of centralisation in 1929, and the passing of such legislation as the Land Apportionment Act, the Land Husbandry Act and the Land Tenure Act. It ought also to be noted that it was on the basis of shifting cultivation, among others, that the colonial authorities hinged their policy of centralisation, the harbinger of more discriminatory and coercive agricultural legislation and policies, discussed earlier. On the whole the adoption of the plough in the district came with it increased demand for land by the Shurugwi rural residents.

The introduction of the plough too introduced techniques of “male-dominated farming” that were centred on the use of ox-drawn ploughs, oxen and cash crop production.<sup>109</sup> The overall social impact was to worsen the domestic plight of women from whom increased labour demands were exerted.<sup>110</sup> Women also suffered increased patriarchal exploitation as men began to migrate in search of larger plots, as well as paid labour to pay taxes,<sup>111</sup> which freed them from kins-based regulatory controls regarding their [ill-]treatment of women.

Land degradation due to poor conservation worsened the land shortage problems. Primarily, land degradation was a function of both residents of Shurugwi and colonial

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<sup>108</sup> See Tapera Knox Chitiyo, “Land, violence and compensation”, for an in-depth discussion of the negative impact of the plough.

<sup>109</sup> See Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders, and wives: Shona women in the history of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939*, Heinemann, Baobab, James Currey, Portsmouth, Harare and London, 1992, p 5.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Colin Stoneman and Lionel Cliffe, *Zimbabwe*, p 72.

capitalist ventures, especially mining. For the locals the practice that contributed most to land wastage was vleis cultivation or wet land cultivation. Vleis were largely utilised for the growing of rice, where seasonally wet and permanently wet lands were utilised.<sup>112</sup> The mining concerns that operated in the district in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also significantly led to environmental degradation through the chopping of trees for the mines. This was the era before the use of coal and other forms of power for the mines. In Shurugwi these mines were mostly chrome and gold mining concerns.

### POST-INDEPENDENCE RESETTLEMENT

At independence the situation of inadequate land among African farmers had not improved much qualitatively. Despite the fact that the Land Tenure Act had led to the division of the country into two equal halves of 44.9 million acres, there still was overcrowding in the rural communities.<sup>113</sup> This meant that there were 6 000 whites owning 15, 5 million acres of the best land, 8 500 small-scale black farmers on 1 400 000 acres,<sup>114</sup> and 700 000 communal farmers' families on 16, 4 million acres in marginal areas.<sup>115</sup> While the allocation was inadequate in 1969, it got worse as the African

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<sup>112</sup> See Joann McGregor, "Woodland resources, ecology, policy and ideology, pp 71-72, and Tapera Knox Chitiyo, "Land, violence and compensation". This method of agriculture still continues and people still use these wetlands for the growing of traditional brown rice. Wetlands are also still made use of for the early crops and the late maize crop, that which matures in late April and May. This method is common in places that do not have irrigation. I have seen it being done in both the old communal areas (previously reserves) and in newly resettled areas like Mavhumashava. At times wetlands are used for horticultural gardens. On a nationwide scale, vleis cultivation is still a problem that confronts the country, and to this end the Minister of Environment Francis Nhema sent out a passionate appeal for the conservation of wetlands in early 2011. See "Nhema calls on nation to preserve wetlands", in [www.theherald.co.zw](http://www.theherald.co.zw), accessed 12 April 2011.

<sup>113</sup> *Utete Commission Report*, p 12.

<sup>114</sup> *Utete Commission Report*, p 14.

<sup>115</sup> See Roger Southall, "Too soon to tell?: Land reform in Zimbabwe", in *Africa Spectrum*, 3, 2011, p 84, in [hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/giga/afsp/article/viewPDFInterstitial/.../487](http://hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/giga/afsp/article/viewPDFInterstitial/.../487), Accessed 18 June 2012.

population in the reserves continued to grow exponentially to 3,9 million by 1982, and 5,1 million in 1987.<sup>116</sup>

In post-independent Zimbabwe, the theme of emphasising “technical development” or scientific development together with its nerve system of maximising productivity in fact remained part of the selection criteria for resettlement even during the most populist nationalist-liberation rhetorical phase that espoused unmitigated transfer of land to all the landless blacks.<sup>117</sup> The state also continued the policy of re-organising communal areas in terms of land use.<sup>118</sup> As Alexander says, this was in line with the imperatives of the “modernising state” that was embarked upon, which was however, “top-down” in its approach.<sup>119</sup> It is also imperative to point out the fact that due to cash shortages, inadequate technical expertise, and other social programmes that absorbed it, the government could not adequately assist the resettled farmers. Neither did it meet the targets of “modernising” the agricultural sector.

The Riddell Commission of 1981 pointed to the acute land shortages in the country. It reported that: “[t]he greatest problem facing the peasantry is land. In practically every peasant area which the Commissioners visited, the first issue raised by the people was land shortage”, which was causing “a very pronounced degree of discontentment, frustration and often anger.”<sup>120</sup> Reporting in a similar fashion was the Chavhunduka Commission of 1982, which, while pointing to land shortages, also pointed at the need for better land husbandry techniques.<sup>121</sup> Despite the findings by these two successive post-independence Commissions, the resettlement programme remained lower than

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<sup>116</sup> See Tapera Knox Chitiyo, “Land, violence and compensation”. See also Paresh Pandya, *Mao Tse-Tung and Chimurenga*, p 34, who says that the total population in 1979 was 7,1 million blacks and 200 000 whites.

<sup>117</sup> See Jocelyn Alexander, “Squatters, veterans and the state in Zimbabwe”, in Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen, eds, *Zimbabwe’s unfinished business: Rethinking land, the state and nation in the context of crisis*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003, pp 84-5.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, p 89.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, p 85.

<sup>120</sup> See *Report of the commission of Inquiry into Incomes, Prices and Conditions of Service (Riddell Commission)*, Harare, 1981, p 34.

<sup>121</sup> See *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Agricultural Industry (Chavunduka Commission)*, Harare, 1982, cited in Michael Drinkwater, “Technical Development and Peasant Impoverishment”, p 290.



the demand. As an example, the Riddell Commission reported that in 1981 a total of 219 000 families required resettlement but the government only targeted to resettle only 162 000 by 1984.<sup>122</sup>

The situation remained the same up to 1990 as the government had managed to only resettle 52 000 families on 3,5 million hectares as opposed to the target of settling 162 000 families on 9 million hectares.<sup>123</sup> The key factors for this slow pace of resettlement was the emphasis for technical-scientific based resettlement model, especially between 1980 and 1986,<sup>124</sup> the constraints imposed by the Lancaster House Constitution, shortages of capital as well as the government's adoption of the policy of resettlement centred on growth with equity or internal reorganisation,<sup>125</sup> the poor quality land that was availed by the willing sellers,<sup>126</sup> and the drought of 1982 to 1984.

There was not much resettlement between 1990 and 1997 the resettlement programme stalled considerably despite the passing of the Land Acquisition Act in 1993. Outside the problems highlighted above which still affected the programme, the introduction of the ESAP in 1990 brought with it a shift in government focus "from a primary emphasis on addressing landlessness" to the identification of "capable" small farmers and supporting large scale indigenous farmers.<sup>127</sup> As a result of the slowdown, there was a general rise in "spontaneous" farm occupations across the country by the peasants up to 1999.<sup>128</sup> However, the government did no support these and it forcibly evicted the invaders.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> *Riddell Commission*, Ibid .

<sup>123</sup> See James Muzondidya, "From buoyancy to crisis, 1980-1997", in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p 172.

<sup>124</sup> See Mandivamba Rukuni and Stig Jensen, "Land, growth and governance: Tenure reform and visions of progress in Zimbabwe", in Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen, eds, *Zimbabwe's Unfinished business*, pp 249-251.

<sup>125</sup> See R.M Mupawose and E.T Chengu, "Development of land policy: Determination of land policy in Zimbabwe", in <http://unu.edu/unupress/unubooks/80604e/80604E06.htm>, Accessed 5 March 2011, and Michael Drinkwater, "Technical Development".

<sup>126</sup> See James Muzondidya, "From buoyancy to crisis, 1980-1997", p 172.

<sup>127</sup> See Mandivamba Rukuni and Stig Jensen, "Land, growth and governance", p 250.

<sup>128</sup> See Nelson Marongwe, "Farm occupations and occupiers", pp 163-165. Outside the Svosve case, these were also experienced in Mashonaland Central, Matebeleland(s), Masvingo, and Mashonaland East.

<sup>129</sup> See Mandivamba Rukuni and Stig Jensen, "Land, growth and governance", p 250.



## **JAMBANJA, THE FAST TRACK LAND REFORM PROGRAMME (FTLRP) AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE**

The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) which started with “spontaneous” land grabs by war veterans and “land hungry peasants” in March following the February 2000 constitutional referendum<sup>130</sup>, but officially launched on 15 July 2000, witnessed the start of sustained orgy of violence on many commercial farms in Shurugwi district as in other districts of the country.

The scale of the transformation of land ownership under the FTLRP was ominous,<sup>131</sup> and because it was not properly coordinated and politicised to retain ZANU-PF in power it produced a lot of violence. As Rukuni and Jensen say, the FTLRP was “characterised by limited planning, compulsory acquisition, partisan selection, immediate occupation, and uncertain compensation.”<sup>132</sup> The tables below comparing the land ownership patterns in Zimbabwe just before and just after the FTLRP show tremendous alterations to land ownership that largely brought about the violence. It can be seen from the two tables below that by 2000, not much change had occurred to decongest the rural areas of the country. However, the landscape was radically altered under the FTLRP and its fore-runner, the *jambanja*.

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<sup>130</sup> Whilst there is so much contestation over the spontaneity and the role that war veterans, see Tapera Knox Chitiyo, “Land, violence and violence” describes some of the war veterans were too young to be born after 1980) peasants played in setting in motion the land invasions commonly referred to as *jambanja*. There is, however, general agreement that these farm invasions started following the No vote in the Referendum of February 2000. See Nelson Marongwe, “Farm occupations and occupiers”, p 175.

<sup>131</sup> See Mahmood Mamdani, “Lessons of Zimbabwe: Mugabe in Context”, *Concerned Africa Scholars*, Bulletin No 82, Summer 2009, for an in-depth, though controversial discussion of the scale of the land transfers due to the FTLRP.

<sup>132</sup> See Mandivamba Rukuni and Stig Jensen, “Land, growth and governance: Tenure reform and visions of progress in Zimbabwe”, in Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen, eds, *Zimbabwe’s Unfinished business*, p 251.

Table showing land ownership patterns in Zimbabwe as at 30 June 2000.

Category	Area (million hectares) As at June 30 2000	% of total land area
Large Scale Commercial	11.8	30
Small Scale Commercial	1.4	4
Communal Areas	16.4	41
Resettlement Area	3.7	9
National Parks and Urban	6.0	15
State land	0,3	1
Grand Total	39,6	100

**Source:** Adapted from Utete Committee Report, September 2003, p25.

Table showing land ownership patterns after the FTLRP

Category	Area (million hectares) As at July 30 2003	% of total land area
A1	4,2	11
A2	2,2	6
Old Resettlement	3,7	9
Communal	16,4	41
Large Scale Commercial	2,6	6
Small Scale Commercial	1,4	4
National Parks and Urban	6,0	15
State Land	0,3	1
Other	2,8	7
Total Land Area	39,6	100

**Source:** Utete Committee Report, September 2003, p 26.

The figures for the number of farms that were occupied between 2000 and end July 2003 in the Midlands Province contained in the Utete report show that there were a

total of 1347 farms of which 791 were gazetted for resettlement under the FTLRP.<sup>133</sup> Shurugwi district itself saw a lot reordering in terms of land ownership in this period. It was one of the districts that had a well-defined skewed landownership in the country. In this regard 80 percent of the district belonged to large scale commercial and small scale commercial agriculture sectors by 2000.<sup>134</sup> This therefore left a paltry 20 percent of the district for close to 70 000 people.<sup>135</sup> As already discussed this 20 percent was made up of poor soils. Contrasted to the communal areas which were congested, the large scale farms averaged 3 175 acres.<sup>136</sup>

A cursory survey of the district revealed that the areas in Shurugwi district that fell under the categories of crown and European lands were massive and broadly covered the whole region between the Shurugwi- Zvishavane highway and the Gweru-Bulawayo highway, also from the Mvuma road to De Beers ranch, and other areas outside this general demarcation by 2000. Early resettlements had been done in the Chitora and Gwanza in the East, and Dorset and Zhaugwe in the West under the villagisation model. These were primarily under the villagisation model. In the latter half of the 1990s had been established self-contained resettlement scheme in the Mavhumashava area to the south-west of the district.

According to the Utete Commission, Shurugwi had a total of 151 farms by the start of the *jambanja*.<sup>137</sup> Out of these 151 farms, 127 were originally gazetted for compulsory acquisition for resettlement, however, 9 were delisted.<sup>138</sup> In total therefore 118 farms were eventually gazetted by the end of July 2003. In addition to these 118 farms, 5 more farms were “illegally” occupied in the district.<sup>139</sup> In the Midlands province Shurugwi

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<sup>133</sup> *Utete Committee Report*, pp 24 and 69.

<sup>134</sup> See [http://www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/shurugwi Rural Areas](http://www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/shurugwi_Rural_Areas), Accessed 18 February 2011.

<sup>135</sup> Zimbabwe Population Census Results, 2002.

<sup>136</sup> Robin. R Palmer, “Aspects of Rhodesia land policy”, p 7.

<sup>137</sup> *Utete Committee Report*, p 69.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, p 69.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, p 70. This represented people who continued to occupy farms that were not supposed to be occupied such as those on headwaters of major dams, dairy farms or conservancies. This also represented farms which were parcelled out by the war veterans, councillors and government officials outside the government regulations.

together with Gweru and Mvuma were the three districts with such “illegal” occupants.<sup>140</sup> Of importance is the fact that Shurugwi ranked second after Gweru which had 438 farms, in the number of farms that were gazetted for the FTLRP.<sup>141</sup> Further to this, Shurugwi with five illegal farm occupations also ranked second after Mberengwa with seven on the scale of the highest “illegally” occupied farms.<sup>142</sup>

The number of farms gazetted for resettlement in the early years of the 2000s also represented sites where violence was witnessed, as more often than not the process was fraught with violence, firstly to remove the white farmers and to sustain the settlers. This was despite the provision of legal protection for the new settlers under the Rural Land Occupiers (Protection) Act.<sup>143</sup> We should also consider the two background factors to the launch of the FTLRP, which were the harbingers of the violence. These are the disorderly land invasions led by the war veterans before the official launch of the FTLRP, and the defeat of ZANU-PF in the 2000 constitutional referendum which pushed it to deploy *jambanja*.

Thus by the time of the official launch of the programme violence was already central to occupations and land transfers and it also defined who would and who would not have access to land.<sup>144</sup> This violence was used as a ZANU-PF mobilising tool, as a displacement tool against the white farmers and their workers, as well as a means by the white farmers to hold on to their farms.<sup>145</sup> The other important point to note is that the farm

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid, p 70.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, p 70.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, p 70.

<sup>143</sup> See the Utete Commission, p19. See also *Constitution of Zimbabwe Constitutional Amendment No 16 of 2000*.

<sup>144</sup> See the conflicting statements on the farm invasions by senior ZANU-PF officials in early 2000. Dumiso Dabengwa and Edison Zvogbo, for example wanted them removed, see *The Daily News*, 3 March 2000, and 24 March 2000. This contrasted with the views of President Mugabe, *The Daily News* 29 March 2000, who wanted them to remain on the farms. Thus the programme was chaotic, experimental and left to the war veterans to decide the course of action on the ground, on the farms, which left it open to abuse, especially with no code of ethics/conduct for the invaders. See also *Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum*, “Human rights and Zimbabwe’s June 2000 Election”, January 2001, p 18, which posits that violence started even before the 12-13 February Constitutional referendum.

<sup>145</sup> See Blair Rutherford, “Belonging to the farm(er)” and Nelson Marongwe, “Farm occupations and occupiers”, for more discussions on the deployment of violence on the farms.

invasions were led by the war veterans with a known history of violent demonstrations,<sup>146</sup> including “besieging” President Mugabe on several occasions.<sup>147</sup> Another important point to make is that the FTLRP was an integral part of the Third Chimurenga in ZANU-PF discourse. Under the Third Chimurenga, the state through the war veterans and landless peasants began to sponsor farm/land invasions as part of a package of responses following the defeat in the Constitutional referendum and the impending June 2000 general elections.<sup>148</sup>

Although somewhat exaggerated, Chitiyo’s analysis that the Third Chimurenga “was essentially ZANU-PF’s version of the ‘Total Strategy’ which the South African apartheid state had used as a socio-political grand strategy” in the face of a “total onslaught” from both internal and external opponents who threatened the “sovereignty” of the country,<sup>149</sup> deserves some merit. Following a similar trend as in apartheid South Africa, the forward looking military strategy was chosen to lead and coordinate all the other responses by ZANU-PF against its political opponents in Zimbabwe. This was organised under *Operation Tsuro* that was launched from March 2000.<sup>150</sup> Over the decade of political turmoil, this version of Zimbabwe’s total strategy was epitomised by the pre-emptive violence on the opposition especially before elections to intimidate them and

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<sup>146</sup> Besides having violently demonstrated against Robert Mugabe at the National Heroes Acre in Harare, the war veterans were also feared for their intimidatory tactics. AS an example, they threatened to go to war if ZANU-PF lost the 2000 elections, see the *Daily News* 16 March 2000, “Ex-combattants threaten war if ZANU-PF loses (June 2000 elections)”, see also John Makumbe “Mugabe’s desperate acts against his own people”, in *The Daily News*, 24 June 2000, in which he outlines that the war veterans were paid a handsome fee of twenty million Zimbabwe dollars (Z\$20 million) to campaign for ZANU-PF. It also has to be recalled that it was as a result of violent demonstrations that the war veterans were awarded the Z\$ 50 000-00 gratuities and monthly payments of Z\$ 5000-00. See also David Moore, “Zimbabwe’s triple crisis: Primitive accumulation, nation-state formation and democratisation in the age of neo-liberal globalisation”, in *African Studies Quarterly*, <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v7/v7i2a2.htm>, Accessed 19 May 2012.

<sup>147</sup> James Muzondidya, “From buoyancy to crisis, 1980-1997”, p 198.

<sup>148</sup> See Taper Knox Chitiyo, “tracking Zimbabwe’s political history”, p359. See also, Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe”, p 212. See also Jocelyn Alexander, “Squatters, veterans and the state”, pp 84-114. See also Nelson Marongwe, “Farm occupations and occupiers in the new politics of land in Zimbabwe”, p 157.

<sup>149</sup> Taper Knox Chitiyo, “Tracking Zimbabwe’s political history”, p 359, who says the basket of responses included legal, political, cultural, economic and military ways.

<sup>150</sup> Taper Knox Chitiyo, “Tracking Zimbabwe’s political History”, p 359.

also to clear the ground for ZANU-PF “victory” at the ballot that it needed for legitimacy purposes. Among other things, under *Operation Tsuru*, war veterans and landless peasants were encouraged to occupy white owned-farms, and to vigorously campaign for ZANU-PF.<sup>151</sup> Importantly, too is the fact that victims had little recourse through the police who refused to prosecute the perpetrators. At another level, supporting legislation, as already discussed, was passed to legalise the process, depicting a multi-pronged scheme.

In other words, the preceding process to the FTLRP was not peaceful and was organised along military lines under *Operation Tsuru*. Going forward the official launch of the FTLRP did not bring an end to the violence on the farms. In fact it continued to utilise violence. Words of senior government and ZANU-PF officials gave impetus to this violence. President Mugabe, for instance, on one occasion said “Strike fear into the heart of the whiteman, our real enemy.”<sup>152</sup> Although fear was targeted at the “heart of the whiteman” it was also meant for the other “white race”, in the Foucauldian formulation, that is, generally MDC supporters.<sup>153</sup> In this Foucauldian formulation, race transcends biological groups that ordinarily make races. It rather is a social construct that denotes groups of people that belong and those that do not belong. It is basically

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<sup>151</sup> Tapera Knox Chitiyo, “Tracking Zimbabwe’s political History”, p 360. On the whole *Operation Tsuru* was organised around three facets: It aimed firstly to coordinate the Third Chimurenga under the JOC, which comprised the Ministry of Defence, the Police (ZRP), CIO, and the war veterans. Secondly, it established “operations zones”, from which “loyal” and “opposition” communities and individuals were established, for rewards or punishment respectively. As Chitiyo says, Mashonaland and Manicaland provinces were to be made “no-go” areas for the opposition. The third task was, as seen already, to push landless communities and war veterans to occupy white farms. See also, Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 36.

<sup>152</sup> President Robert Mugabe speaking at the official opening of the ZANU-PF Congress on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2000. This was at the height of the land invasions, and in the build-up to the 2002 Presidential elections, quoted in CNN.Com.world cited in <http://archives.cnn.com/2000/WORLD/africa/12/14/mugabe.zimbabwe/>, Accessed 20 February 2011, see also Independent.ie cited in <http://www.independent.ie/world-news/mugabe-bids-to-strike-fear-into-the-heart-of-the-whiteman>, Accessed 20 February 2011.

<sup>153</sup> In the Foucauldian formulation race is more than a biological distinction, but it is a more used to distinguish those people who have to live and those who must die in a population. See Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the College de France 1975-6*, edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, translated by David Macey, Picador, New York, 1997, p 254, for a nuanced discussion of this race.

used to separate those have to live from those that have to die. In addition to this, President Mugabe is quoted as saying on Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) that: “We were told to arrest them (war veterans) and remove them from farms. We refused because the occupiers are justified. We said there would be no policemen who will go there. If the British want police to evict the war veterans they must send their police.”<sup>154</sup>

The government-sponsored Utete Committee also alluded to problem of violence and chaos. To the Utete Committee:

[t]he launching of the Fast Track Programme in July 2000, in rapid order in the same year, the voters’ rejection of the draft new constitution; Parliament’s amendment of the Lancaster House Constitution in respect of the land issue in April; the general elections in June; the appointment of a new government in June/July and the mounting widespread land demonstrations by veterans of the liberation struggle and other land hungry communities throughout this period, *gave hardly much of an opportunity to the authorities to plan in the necessary detail the requisite strategic perspective on Programme Implementation*<sup>155</sup> [my emphasis].

As a result structures to control the process of redistributing land were set up retrospectively, in most cases in an expedient manner that reacted rather than led the process in an administrative fire brigade fashion. Again, the Utete report is valuable here when it stated that “new institutions at central Government, provincial and district levels .... were hurriedly set up to spearhead implementation of the programme in collaboration with relevant ministries...”<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> See President Mugabe quoted on ZTV 8 April 2000, cited in Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *Who was responsible? Alleged perpetrators and their crimes during the 2000 Parliamentary Election Period*, July 2001, in <http://www.dogstoc.com/docs/17003921/Harare>, Accessed 8 March 2011. In addition to such speeches that encouraged impunity, there were other actions that were done to entrench this impunity. Most notable of these were: ZANU-PF’s ignoring several court rulings in favour of white farmers, police refusal to act farm occupiers, the involvement of security personnel in farm occupations and general violence, as well as the 8 October 2000 Presidential amnesty for all crimes around the June 2000 elections. See the Human Rights Watch, *Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe*, 8 March 2002, in <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3c8c82df4.html>, Accessed & March 2011, for more details. As for Shurugwi, it cites a former District Administrator who said that he had seen “a lot of violence in Shurugwi where farmers have been beaten. Dockets have not been opened. The law enforcement agencies have been helpless. You get cases where they loot the homestead dry.”

<sup>155</sup> *Utete Committee Report*, p 30.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, pp 30-31.



The resettlement of about 136 548<sup>157</sup> in the Midlands province was a massive undertaking, which no doubt produced a lot of emotions between the invading farmers and the farmers and/ or their workers. It also resulted in a lot of forced movements on to and off the farms, which all added to the possible increase in incidences of clashes. While I could not obtain statistics for Shurugwi, based on violence from other districts,<sup>158</sup> it can be plausibly inferred that it could not have escaped the entrapments of the failings of the national structures. Allegations of evictions of some settlers (invaders), occupation of farm close to harvest times, and reports of clashes in the media (see following section below), all seem to confirm a chaotic and to some extent bloody process.

To further underscore the absence of proper planning, the Zimbabwe Farmers Union pointed out that there were no structures to support the newly resettled farmers.<sup>159</sup> Another illustration of this inadequate planning is highlighted by the fact that no prior survey of the farms had been done, which resulted in people moving onto unfertile farms. This caused them to move to other farms, which not only created further confusion but caused more violence especially on unoccupied farms where they met resistance by the commercial farmers. Where there were other farmers already settled questions began to be asked about one's political affiliation, which more often than not resulted in the beating and expulsion of those that could not prove their membership of ZANU-PF beyond doubt. This also resulted in multiple farm/plot holders, which heightened competition for land amongst the villagers from Shurugwi.

Of note here again is that in most cases the occupations occurred in secluded positions, which meant that violence went on unrecognised and unrecorded. This then contests the assertion by the Utete Report which described the FTLRP in the Midlands as

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid, p 24.

<sup>158</sup> See Blair Rutherford, "Belonging to the farm(er)". See also, Nelson Marongwe, "Farm occupations and occupiers".

<sup>159</sup> See IRIN Africa, "Zimbabwe resettled farmers returning to communal areas" in <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=45936>, Accessed 19 February 2011, for more details on this leading to some of the beneficiaries returning to their communal areas.



peaceful, as it was allegedly carried out with the consultation with previous owners.<sup>160</sup> Of significance, however, is that the Utete report goes on to describe situations of unprocedural allocations of farms by war veterans in Shurugwi, Gweru and Mvuma.<sup>161</sup> In addition to the lack of planning alluded earlier, there were also some fortuitous occupations of some farms in Shurugwi where some were reportedly occupied very close to the time of harvest, which made struggles between the invaders and the farmers inevitable.<sup>162</sup> The occupation of Edwards farm in 2000 by Gunpowder in Shurugwi is a classic example. Informants told me that the farm was “invaded” by the team under Gunpowder at the beginning of March 2002. This was at a time when the maize crop was nearing full maturity. As such Gunpowder stood to gain from having to simply harvest and sell a maize crop, which partly explains the numerous run-ins between the team of Gunpowder and the farm owner and his farm workers.<sup>163</sup>

Again it may be pointed out that while the FTLRP might not have produced much violence after its adoption in July 2000, the process before it that of “spontaneous” farm invasions was characterised by violence.<sup>164</sup> People in Shurugwi talk about teams that were put together and led by war veterans which carried knives, axes and hunting rifles for “protection” against the farmers. Further to this, Gunpowder, who was notorious for violence, was a leading figure in the District Land Distribution Committee (DLC) in Shurugwi.<sup>165</sup> Alongside him were other war veterans of different capacities. It is important, however, to note that some of the war veterans in the District Land Committee were successive District Administrators: Mutikizizi and Mazai, who were successive Chairpersons of the DLC; as well as Assistant District Administrator, Rwafa.

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<sup>160</sup> *Utete Committee Report*, p 70.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, p 70.

<sup>162</sup> Based on interviews and discussions with resettled farmers.

<sup>163</sup> Besides the interviews, see also *The Daily News*, 1 April 2002.

<sup>164</sup> See the NGO Human Rights Forum, “Human Rights and Zimbabwe’s June 2000 election”, January 2001, which highlights that violence of farm invasions started just after the February 2000 referendum, and which also describes how the road to the 2000 violence was one of the bloodiest. See also Nelson Marongwe, “Farm occupations and occupiers”, p 170.

<sup>165</sup> See *The Daily News*, 16 June “Farmers in trouble with Gunpowder” in <http://www.dailynews.co.zw/daily/2000/June/June16/1177.html>, cited 20 March 2011, for more details.

That the District Land Committee was headed by war veterans led to its adoption of methods along military lines.

Other human rights reports state that Gunpowder operated alongside another war veteran, “General Nduku”, in terrorising the commercial farming community of the district.<sup>166</sup> It is also reported that the white farmers in Shurugwi suffered various forms of violence at the hands of ZANU-PF supporters led by Gunpowder.<sup>167</sup> In addition to the white farmers, farm workers also bore the brunt of the violence. The *Daily News* reported for example that thirty-three land occupiers led by Gunpowder had appeared before the Magistrates Court in Gweru on charges of assaulting farmworkers at the Edwards farm close to Boterekwa in Shurugwi, destroying property worth Zimbabwe \$274 000,00 in the process.<sup>168</sup>

Nationally, there were also serious allegations of violence on the farms. The Human Rights Watch cited in the UNHCR report for March 2002, for example stated that several cases of intimidation, assault, and murder on farms had been recorded nationwide. Citing the National Employment Council for the agricultural industry, it reported that some 3000 farm workers had been displaced, some twenty-six killed, 1600 assaulted, and eleven raped, by March 2002.<sup>169</sup> The same report also stated that farms were also turned into bases for launching attacks on MDC supporters in the communal areas and adjacent farms. Teams that went into occupy the farms were also organised along “military structures”, with war veterans situated as base commanders, and their home

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<sup>166</sup> See *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum*, “Who was responsible? Alleged perpetrators and their crimes during the 2000 Parliamentary Election Period”, July 2001, in <http://www.dogstoc.com/docs/17003921/Harare>, Accessed 8 March 2011. My own fieldwork has revealed, however, that there were other war veterans, other than these two who were also key in perpetrating violence on the farms. See also the Human Rights Watch, *Fast Track land Reform in Zimbabwe*, 8 March 2002, in <http://.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3c8c82df4.html>, Accessed 7 March 2011.

<sup>167</sup> *The Daily News*, 16 June 2000, alleges, among other things, that farmers were ordered to use their tractors and cars to ferry ZANU-PF supporters to rallies and were ordered to repair and provide fuel for Gunpowder’s car.

<sup>168</sup> See *The Daily News*, 1 April 2002.

<sup>169</sup> See The Human Rights Watch, *Fast Track land Reform in Zimbabwe*, for more details.

on the farms referred to as “command bases”. Besides, the commonest method to take farms was around “tactics of terror, force and intimidation.”<sup>170</sup>

President Mugabe himself the chief ideologue and guarantor of the FTLRP noted the seriousness of inadequate planning and other problems that bedevilled the programme. Speaking at the annual ZANU-PF conference in Gwanda in 2005, he said:

We still have people in need of land yet at places land has not been taken up. We still have people whose resettlement is disputed for various reasons. Such people remain deeply anxious and unsettled. Then there are boundary problems arising from newly resettled. We have problems of inputs and extension support. We have problems of water and irrigation support, some of it vandalised. ....We have to revamp rural councils so that they are able to service our farmers on the land. The road network into farms is deteriorating ....We have to improve security on the farms and the arms of security will have to attend to that challenge.<sup>171</sup>

Violence also occurred on these resettled farms as local Shurugwi residents fought people from other districts. They regarded these people as “foreigners”, because they originated from outside the district. Mostly these people came from Zvishavane, a district which did not have many farms to begin with, but one that also had a congested population. In addition Zvishavane is a neighbouring district to Shurugwi, and some parts of it are indeed very close to some of the farms that were occupied.<sup>172</sup>

As a result of the violence that accompanied the farm takeovers, there were few females that accessed farms. This was because those that were allocated farms in most cases had taken part in the invasion of those farms. This process favoured mostly males, who could withstand the oft-violent confrontations with the farm owners and their workers. However, this has to be taken together with the patriarchal tendencies common in the patterns of ownership of land in the district, where the land belongs to

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Part of President Robert Mugabe’s speech from Gwanda, in December 2005, cited in Peter Philip Mondhlani, “Zimbabwe’s agricultural policies fail to ensure food security” in *Dateline: Southern Africa*, Journalists Report a People’s perspective of poverty, in <http://www.panos.org.zm/sites/www.panos.org.zm/files/PovertyReport.pdf>, Accessed 1 March 2011.

<sup>172</sup> Based on field interviews.

the men: present, working in towns or deceased. In this case women simply work the land for the good of the family headed by the males, who (males) also own the land by customary rights.

The Utete Report summarises these statistics on land allocation by gender after the FTLRP well. Although the Report does not represent the statistics for Shurugwi district per se, those for the Midlands province and national level show that only 18 percent of the beneficiaries were women under the A1 model.<sup>173</sup> Regarding the A2 scheme, a paltry 05 percent of the beneficiaries were women.<sup>174</sup> Going by these national and provincial figures, it is reasonable to estimate that the statistics for Shurugwi could not have been much different.

### **OPERATION MAGUTA AND VIOLENCE**

The government-sponsored *Operation Maguta/Operation Sisuthi/Operation Eat Well*, officially launched in November 2005 by Vice President Joyce Mujuru to boost agricultural production (maize/grain) and to complement the FTLRP, led to the sustenance of the orgy of violence in Shurugwi district, as in other districts of the country. Under this operation the government targeted putting 1 500 000 hectares under maize production and to produce 2 250 000 tonnes of maize; 90 000 tonnes of tobacco; 49 500 tonnes of maize seed; 210 000 tonnes of cotton; and 750 000 tonnes of horticultural crops, for example in the 2005/6 agricultural season.<sup>175</sup> It was a programme spearheaded by the army who were tasked, among other things, to repair irrigation equipment and to bring to productive use of all ARDA (Agricultural Rural Development Authority) farms. The government's role was to supply inputs to the farmers, provide extension services and monitor the scheme.

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<sup>173</sup> *Utete Committee Report*, p 25.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> See Solidarity Peace Trust, *Operation Taguta/Sisuthi: Command Agriculture in Zimbabwe- Its impact on rural communities*, April 2006.

However, in many districts soldiers were accused of a heavy-handed approach and were said, inter alia, to have destroyed market gardens in Matebeleland in order to force people to grow maize, the major crop targeted under the operation.<sup>176</sup> In addition, farmers who resisted were beaten by the soldiers to ensure compliance.<sup>177</sup> Weintraub also claims that some women and daughters were raped.<sup>178</sup> At times the army also seized maize crops from farmers and sold it to the GMB with no guarantees of payment from the persistently cash-strapped parastatal; as well as seizing irrigation equipment from places such as Masvingo, Chiredzi and Mwenezi.<sup>179</sup> The *Solidarity Peace Trust* goes on to say that the army also imposed fines on those that did not comply, and that the presence of the army had a general effect of closing the democratic sphere because of their close alliance with ZANU-PF, which meant that the opposition found it difficult to access the rural areas.<sup>180</sup>

This has to be taken together with the fact that the structures of *Operation Maguta* clearly resembled ZANU-PF structures, and structures that have been blamed for the violence on the opposition. The operation which was the brainchild of the JOC was launched by Vice-President Joyce Mujuru, who remained its figure head, but whose day-to-day management was left in the hands of two ministers: Joseph Made (Agriculture), and Sydney Sekeramayi (Defence), and was to be implemented by the army personnel of various ranks together with personnel from the Agricultural Research and Extension Services (AREX).<sup>181</sup> At the rural levels, the operation was supervised by village heads,

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<sup>176</sup> See *Zimbabwe Standard* 7 May 2006, for more details. See also Jeff Weintraub, "Zimbabwe, the land of dying children" in <http://jeffweintraub.blogspot.com/2007/01/zimbabwe-land-of-dying-children-rw.html>, Accessed 2 March 2011. See also "Zimbabwe: An opposition Strategy", in *Africa Report* No 117, 24 August 2006, in

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/media/Files/africa/southern africa/zimbabwe/ZimbabweAnOppositionStrategy.ashx>, Accessed 1 March 2011, for more details.

<sup>177</sup> See also Jeff Weintraub, "Zimbabwe, the land of dying children" in <http://jeffweintraub.blogspot.com/2007/01/zimbabwe-land-of-dying-children-rw.html>, Accessed 2 March 2011.

<sup>178</sup> Jeff Weintraub, *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> See Solidarity Peace Trust, *Operation Taguta/Sisuthi*, pp 7 & 9.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p 6.

<sup>181</sup> *Solidarity Peace Trust*, "Operation Taguta", p 8.

councillors and traditional chiefs, who selected beneficiaries whose names they forwarded to army officers.<sup>182</sup> In addition the structures of the operation were conflated with and or confused with those of another scheme, the GMB input scheme, which was also controlled by army structures.<sup>183</sup>

Under the operation farmers were supposed to receive subsidised agricultural inputs, viz, seeds, fertilisers and herbicides. The table below shows the differences in the prices of inputs under the operation and those that were obtaining in the open market.

Table showing subsidised and unsubsidised agricultural inputs prices during Operation *Maguta*.

ITEM	QUANTITY	SUBSIDISED PRICE Z\$	PRICE ON THE OPEN MARKET Z\$
Top dressing fertiliser	50 kgs	750 000	6 000 000
Paraquat herbicide	10 litres	870 000	10 000 000
Petrol/Diesel	200 litres	90 000	10 000 000

**Source:** AREX, HARARE, Cited in Mudzonga and Chigwada, p 6.

When compared to prices on the open market, the subsidised prices were a small fraction, at least a tenth, of the street cost. While the rationale was to help peasant and resettled farmers access cheaper inputs, which more often were in short supply, the programme ended up appropriated for political reasons. From interviews I carried out it became apparent that those in the opposition were not considered. In addition to entrenching the politics of discrimination against opposition supporters the operation

<sup>182</sup> See Evangelista Mudzonga and Tendai Chigwada, "Agriculture: Scenarios for Southern Africa: A case study of Zimbabwe's Food Security", in *International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)*, Winnipeg, Canada, 2009, in [http://www.iisd.org/tnk/pdf/ag\\_scenarios\\_south\\_africa\\_zimbabwe.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/tnk/pdf/ag_scenarios_south_africa_zimbabwe.pdf), Accessed 2 March 2011.

<sup>183</sup> See Evangelista Mudzonga and Tendai Chigwada, "Agriculture: Scenarios", p6, see also *Solidarity Peace Trust*, "Operation Taguta", p 15, for more details.

brought, the profound disparities in the sponsored prices of inputs opened the scheme to abuse by the beneficiaries, who in most cases stood to reap huge profits by selling these inputs on the black market than to use them to grow crops which they would reap at the end of the year without guarantees of payment from the GMB.

In this regard in Shurugwi people set up fuel stations along the Beit Bridge road, which they euphemistically called NOCZIM,<sup>184</sup> the acronym for the National Oil Company of Zimbabwe that had the sole mandate of securing fuel before the liberalisation of the sector under the GNU, but one that was failing to supply fuel to the country. Incidences where people also sold some of the 25 kilograms of maize seed, 300 kilograms of compound D fertiliser and 200 kilograms of ammonium nitrate abound from the informants from Shurugwi.<sup>185</sup> Perhaps what explains this banalisation of corrupt practices by the beneficiaries besides the good black market prices was also the general economy of shortage of foodstuffs. In this regard the beneficiaries sold what they received as inputs to buy food that was immediately needed to survive.

The operation also was set against the backdrop of shortages of key inputs, which made it susceptible to corrupt tendencies and political abuse. Reports of shortages of seeds, fertilisers and inadequate and/ or vandalised irrigation equipment abound.<sup>186</sup> Shortages of seed resulted in people using retained seed and pure grain, which led to low germination rates. In 2008, for example, it was reported that only “7% of the targeted 600 000 tonnes of basal fertiliser and 10% of the required 400 000 tonnes of top

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<sup>184</sup> This came up in most interviews, and people in the district were aware of these “NOCZIM” stations especially the two very close to Chachacha, close to the Chuni River to the west, and another between Mukandapi Shopping Centre and Chachacha to the south. These were paradoxically very close to the police post there. See also *The Standard*, 12 February 2006, “Top chefs exposed: 66 000 litres of diesel for former CIO Boss”, Gideon Gono, the Reserve Bank Governor of Zimbabwe, is also quoted admitting to this abuse of inputs, see *Solidarity Peace Trust*, “Operation Taguta”, p 11.

<sup>185</sup> For the quantities allocated to the communal and A1 farmers, see Evangelista Mudzonga and Tendai Chigwada, “Agriculture: Scenarios”, p 6.

<sup>186</sup> See excerpt of President Robert Mugabe’s speech in Gwanda in Peter Philip Mondhlani, “Zimbabwe’s agricultural policies fail to ensure food security” in Dateline: Southern Africa, Journalists Report a People’s perspective of poverty, in <http://www.panos.org.zm/sites/www.panos.org.zm/files/PovertyReport.pdf>, Accessed 1 March 2011, see also <http://www.pecad.fas.usda.gov/highlights/2009/06/zimbabwe/documents/2ndCropandLivestockAssessmntRevised24April2008Final.pdf>, Accessed 1 March 2011.



dressing fertiliser have been supplied” for the 2007-2008 agricultural season.<sup>187</sup> The same report also highlighted other challenges and shortages that rocked the operation. Among others, these were fuel shortages, which made it difficult to use mechanised equipment, and poor agricultural financing.<sup>188</sup> With the shortages also came another form of violence. The type of violence that informants described for me in Shurugwi was not so much of the physical type. Most of it related to the discrimination against perceived or real MDC supporters, who in most cases were named and shamed at the various meetings over these inputs especially at the village level.

### **OF THE KITCHEN, THE HOME, “CULTURE” AND VIOLENCE**

In the literary work, *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga, Jeremiah, Tambu’s father, asks his daughter Tambu: “Can you cook books and feed them to your husband? Stay at home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables.”<sup>189</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed by Supreme Court Judge Wilson Mucshete who, in a Supreme Court of Zimbabwe judgement in the Magaya versus Magaya case, posited that

women’s status is [...] basically the same as that of a junior male in the family[...] It must be recognised that customary law has long directed the way African people conducted their lives and the majority of Africans in Zimbabwe still live in rural areas and still conduct their lives in terms of customary law.<sup>190</sup>

In the classic work, Dangarembga brings to the fore certain Zimbabwean peasant family expectations of the girl child. More than this Dangarembga also conveys the tribulations that women are confronted with under the yoke of patriarchy in a Shona societal setup.

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<sup>187</sup> See

<http://www.pecad.fas.usda.gov/highlights/2009/06/zimbabwe/documents/2ndCropandLivestockAssessmentRevised24April2008Final.pdf>, Accessed 1 March 2011.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> See Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous conditions*, 1989, p 15.

<sup>190</sup> This is the verdict read by Justice Wilson Mucshete in explaining why Vennia Magaya could not be appointed heir to the family estate in the controversial unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of Zimbabwe in 1999, in *Mail and Guardian* 10 June 1999.



To Tambu's father the ultimate good a girl/woman could do was to impress her husband by being a wife who could cook, clean, take care of the home and do gardening well. Women, to this extent, therefore lived to satisfy their men. Their worth is also determined by men. The hallmark of a woman in the traditional Shona social setting is a woman who is obedient and faithful to her husband, does her household duties and is a good mother of her children.<sup>191</sup> In the modern era, from *Nervous Conditions*, education and the pursuit of other ulterior goals unrelated to the family and the home that is in the public sphere, are regarded as secondary, unimportant, and as a preserve of men.

During the course of my field work I noted the differences in how girls and boys are initiated and socialised into the society. I found that girls are still socialised to be good mothers from a very early age by being made to play with dolls, which they are supposed to treat as their own children. Boys, on the other hand, are "masculinised" by being given guns, toy weapons and toy cars as they are "initiated" into the world. Teen girls are expected to help their mothers in the home, fetching water, cooking and cleaning. This extracts a lot of labour and time demands from the girls, who in most cases have to work in the kitchens till very late. Usually after supper, girls are supposed to clean the dishes and sweep the kitchen huts before they can focus on their school work. Usually by this time the girls will be too tired to concentrate. What is worse is that they are also expected to rise up earlier than the boys, to set up fires, cook and sweep the yards before they head for school.

Against this, teen boys herd cattle and are generally freer to play, study, and explore the world around them as the girls become more tied to the household chores. As a result of such socialisation and the initiation of the girls into the domestic sphere and the boys into the public sphere we may discern the disadvantaged start to life for the girls. More generally this is explained in terms of "culture", where the education and general

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<sup>191</sup> For an even detailed discussion of the societal expectations of virtuous women in Zimbabwe see the literary work by Rudo Gaidzanwa, *Images of women in Zimbabwean literature*, College Press, Harare, 1985, pp 29-31.

advancement is not prioritised because the girl is expected to be married and such investment would not benefit her family of birth but where she will be married. Girls and women are supposed to play second fiddle and be subordinated to their male counterparts.

That women and girls have to play second fiddle in Shurugwi recalls the reading of the judgement in the Magaya vs Magaya case highlighted above. Besides affirming the tradition of patriarchy in Zimbabwe, the judgement also seriously negated the gains that women had accrued since the golden decade of the attainment of independence.<sup>192</sup>

The above has to be taken together with the late Joshua Nkomo, the Vice President of Zimbabwe and former Second Secretary of ZANU-PF,<sup>193</sup> and Vice President Joyce Mujuru<sup>194</sup> (also a Second Secretary) of ZANU-PF's pronouncements on the need for women to be "responsible" mothers of future generations and good wives of leaders. In these prominent politicians' view there was not much space in politics and the public sphere in general for women, but in the home. The two speeches were influenced by the masculine traditions of ZANU-PF. From the discussion in Chapter One, this could be traced back to the moment of the evolution of African nationalism, for example, the raping of the ladies at the Carter hostel. This repressive masculinity was extended to the camps and "operation zones" where women besides being converted to bed fodder, were expected to provide other domestic duties to male combatants. In some sense, it is possible to suggest that Mujuru herself had imbibed this tradition to the extent that she felt "masculinised" and did not consider herself on a par with the other ordinary women.

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<sup>192</sup> For a quick run through of some of the successes that women gained post-independence, see Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For better or worse? Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2000, p 145 and Horace Cambell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The end of the patriarchal model of liberation*, Africa World Press, Trenton, 2003, p 284.

<sup>193</sup> See Ona Kwanele Jirira, "Gender, Politics and Democracy", pp 12-13.

<sup>194</sup> Lene Bull, "Mai Mujuru: Father of the Nation", p 88.

On the whole one finds that women face ominous challenges in their endeavours and in their daily lives to survive and upgrade their status in Zimbabwe. These challenges from the two cases above that cut across the so-called “cultural” trope in Dangarembga’s novel and in the political view in ZANU-PF, carried in the two high ranking officials’ (succeeding Vice Presidents) speeches from both sexes, illuminate the hurdles that confront women. Indeed as Dangarembga’s Mai Tambu says to her daughter Tambu, women’s problems are multifaceted:

[t]he business of womanhood is a heavy burden....How could it not be? Aren’t we the ones who bear children? When it is like that you can’t just decide today I want to do this, tomorrow I want to do that, the next day I want to be educated. When there are sacrifices to be made, you are the one who has to make them...You have to start learning them early. The earlier the better so that it is easy later on.<sup>195</sup>

It however, has to be remembered that there seems to be an ambiguity between the general condition of women in Shurugwi district and political representation. As established in the Introduction, there were twelve female councillors in the twenty-four member Tongogara Rural District Council. Again at a higher level of parliamentary representation, there is one female representative out of three. This gives a false sense of the upliftment of women in the district. However, the situation with regards traditional power hierarchies brings the correct situation to the fore. None of the three chiefs was female, while there was only one out of the twelve headmen.

The “traditional” practice of paying lobola that has often been blamed for the oppression of women was also the norm in Shurugwi, with men expected to pay lobola for the women they married. It has to be stated that the payment of lobola greatly circumscribes the freedom of women. As in the pre-colonial Zimbabwe lobola “reduce[s] them (women) to legal minors throughout their lives: they ha[ve] little control over the wealth they produce[...] or over the children they bore. It [is] only through side earnings,

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<sup>195</sup> Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*, p 16.

such as income from property or work as midwives, or offspring from the gift of a cow by a son-in-law [...] that women could acquire property.”<sup>196</sup>

That the issue of lobola payment has been contentious for some time in Zimbabwe comes from it being on the agenda of the first ZANU-PF conference at Xai-Xai, where the delegates resolved to do away with dowry payment.<sup>197</sup> However, the dowry was only suspended for those in camps in Mozambique and only for the duration of the war of liberation. Even today the family, as a result of the dowry, remains the most unequal institution not only in Shurugwi, but in Zimbabwe as a whole, making family in Ona Kwanele Jirira’s terminology the “most undemocratic” institution in Zimbabwe.<sup>198</sup> Marriage has thus remained a patriarchal institution of social control, oppression and for the transference of the females [re]productive capacities.

Explaining this, Gwaunza argues that marriage is a union of unequals because women usually marry older men, who in most cases are better educated, better paid and of higher social standing than themselves; and who above all would have paid lobola.<sup>199</sup> The inequalities could even be reified if the system of marriage was forced on the woman, for example after pledging (*kuzvarira*) or arranged marriages during crises in return for grain and also in situations of *kuripa ngozi* (appeasing avenging spirits), which overall symbolise the power of men over women. The reason for the oppression of women is due to their exclusion from direct control of the family’s means of production after bride wealth payment (compensation to her family) which, for all intents and practical purposes, transfers her labour from her family of birth to that of her

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<sup>196</sup> A.K.H Weinrich, “Changes in the Political and Economic Roles of Women in Zimbabwe since Independence, in *Cultural Dialogue between the Peoples of the World*, vol 8, No 4, 1982, p 44.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, p 54.

<sup>198</sup> Ona Kwanele Jirira, “Gender, Politics and Democracy”, p 11.

<sup>199</sup> Elizabeth C Gwaunza “Social Attitudes-A hindrance to Women’s Advancement”, *Southern African Political and Educational Magazine (SAPEM)*, August 1990, p 16.

husband.<sup>200</sup> The overall impact of the lobola and marriage, as President Mugabe argues, is:

[a]ll is not well in our world, there is still the issue of dowry, a man pays cattle and money in order to get a wife, if he does not do so, he does not get the wife so really, when he does pay the dowry he expects that the woman will obey him, that he is the head of the family and that all children belong to him, those things have not changed and I doubt they will change because the men will say: What do we pay the dowry for? So there are certain customs that tend to make the woman inferior.<sup>201</sup>

However, it has to be said that under the Customary Marriages Act as amended in 1996, the payment of lobola is not compulsory but may be expected.<sup>202</sup> This means that one may choose not to pay the lobola. From my personal experience of living in Shurugwi and in doing this research, lobola is demanded before marriage. Paying lobola is the standard norm, and a community expectation of a man who marries a woman.<sup>203</sup> Marriage arrangements before the payment of lobola are regarded merely as cohabitation, and the Shona term that is used for such unions, *kuchaya mapoto*, is even derogatory. It denotes illegality, immoral if not an adulterous relationship or one which is rooted in fornication. This is despite the fact that it is a union of consenting adults. It becomes a serious issue when the wife dies and no lobola had been paid, which often results in conflicts at burials.<sup>204</sup>

Notwithstanding the above, we should, however, also note that bride wealth payment has other values in Zimbabwe. As Nicola Ansell suggests, lobola serves other roles like:

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<sup>200</sup> See for example an argument by Angela P Cheater, "The role and position of women in Colonial and Pre-colonial Zimbabwe" in *ZAMBEZIA*, Vol 13, No 11, 1986, p66, for more insight.

<sup>201</sup> See *Newsday*, 25 May 2012, "President bemoans the suppression of women", in <http://newsday.co.zw/article/2012-05-25-president-bemoans-suppression-of-women>, Accessed 26 May 2012.

<sup>202</sup> See *The Constitution of Zimbabwe: Customary Marriages Act* (Revised Edition), Harare, Government Printer, 1996.

<sup>203</sup> Nowadays lobola is demanded in the form of a combination of cash, cattle, goats, kitchen utensils and clothes for the bride's parents.

<sup>204</sup> Non-payment of lobola is viewed as one sure way of inviting *ngozi*/avenging spirits into the home. See Augustine Tirivangani, "Towards a theory of Africa centred metaphysics: A critical exploration of the *Ngozi* theme in selected Zimbabwe fiction", PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, cited in *The Standard* 23 May 2010, Accessed 01 July 2011. See also Chapter Six.

the redistribution of material wealth, the establishment of relationships within and between lineages, as well as the construction of social identity.<sup>205</sup> As such it should not be viewed negatively throughout. It is also true that there are a number of pieces of legislation since independence that have been enacted to help uplift the status of women. These include: the Legal Age of Majority Act of 1982, the Maintenance Act of 1984, the Matrimonial Causes Act (1985), the Labour Relations Act (1985), the Taxation Act (1992) and the Inheritance Act (1993).<sup>206</sup> As such the cause of women should not necessarily be viewed as all doom and gloom. On the whole however, lobola is widely used by men to circumscribe women.

The relevant question to be answered is: could these cultural and political practices that contribute to the domestication of women and the general closing of opportunities for women have predisposed Shurugwi women to the high levels of violence? The answer is not at all simple. It is rather ambiguous. I would like, however, to suggest that it might have some salience to imagine these cultural and political practices as having contributed to the violations the women suffered. Women in Shurugwi district do not have equal opportunities with their male counterparts in terms of specialist jobs. This comes out clearly from the study done by the National AIDS Council (NAC) referred to in the General Introduction, which shows an inverse relationship between the total population figures and representation by gender in professional occupations. Whereas there are 37 164 females and 34 409 males in the district, there are 566 female teachers in both primary and secondary schools out of a total of 1137 teachers. A similar trend is found in the health sector, where out of a total of 82 workers, only 24 were females.<sup>207</sup> A lack of adequate education compared to the boys, for many reasons centred on the tradition of not favouring to send girls to school in favour of boys, may account for the low proportions of women in the NAC categories of professional employment cited

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<sup>205</sup> See Nicola Ansell, "'Because it's our culture!' (Re) negotiating the meaning of lobola in Southern African Secondary Schools" in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 27, 4, December 2001, p 698.

<sup>206</sup> See Kwanele Ona Jirira, "Gender, Politics and Democracy: Kuvaka Patsva [Reconstructing]- The Discourse" in Patricia Macfadden, editor, *SAFERE*, Vol 1, No2, 1985, pp 10-11.

<sup>207</sup> See National AIDS Council, *Tongogara District AIDS Action Committee, Second Quarter Report*, April-June 2005.

above. My conclusion from the field research is that in some cases the sending of girls to school is still not favoured as it is perceived that girls will one day get married and so it is a disinvestment to send them to school because they will eventually transfer their economic, productive and reproductive rights to their husbands' families.

Again due to inferior education and consequent economic/social/political disadvantages the women were at the mercy of politicians in the period of severe economic meltdown between 2000 and 2008. In their study in Norton, Jocelyn Alexander and Kudakwashe Chitofiri, for example, found that poverty begot desperation. As a result of the mainly economic (and also political) problems people were vulnerable and found advantages in belonging to- and identifying with- the MDC and ZANU-PF. This was for the material gifts like food hampers, health care, solidarity and protection from violence.<sup>208</sup>

At times both political movements, however unequally, used these material and social goods to create patronage systems. As agriculture failed, due to a combination of natural and man-made policy disasters, poverty set in deeply in Shurugwi district which made these women vulnerable and susceptible to the whims of the political schemes of politicians. A succession of droughts and floods rocked Shurugwi between 2000 and 2008 which conspired with the negative effects of a violent and poorly conceived and chaotic land redistribution to create food shortages and generated high poverty levels. In this atmosphere people could only buy the staple maize from the GMB. The passport to buying the precious commodity (grain) was by being a ZANU-PF supporter. What made this particularly worse was that people could not approach the GMB at Tongogara as individuals; rather they were supposed to pool their cash together and send their village heads/headmen to go and buy or worker representatives, in the case of civil servants.<sup>209</sup> In the period under discussion the village heads and headmen had to be of

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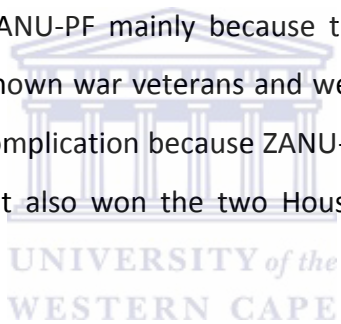
<sup>208</sup> Jocelyn Alexander and Kudakwashe Chitofiri, "The consequences of violent politics in Norton, Zimbabwe", p 5.

<sup>209</sup> This came out in the many interviews conducted. See Chapter Four, for a pithy discussion of this economy of patronage in Shurugwi between 2000 and 2008.



unquestioned loyalty to ZANU-PF. This meant that in order to be on the list to buy from the GMB one had to be an active and card carrying ZANU-PF member. Thus shortage of food was turned into a carrot to entice support for ZANU-PF. This was an effective method used alongside the coercive technology of violence and intimidation in mobilising support in the district.

I also established that for its part the MDC created a counter-patronage system by giving its supporters who had been victimised medical, financial and a general support regime. At times the MDC patronage system got entangled with that of the relief NGOs that operated in Shurugwi. A trend was that the NGOs operated in the classical communal areas and shunned resettlement areas. Of significance is that resettlement areas were associated with ZANU-PF mainly because those that got the farms were aligned to ZANU-PF or were known war veterans and well-known ZANU-PF supporters. However, this needs further complication because ZANU-PF won in other wards outside the resettlement zones, and it also won the two House of Assembly and Senatorial seats.



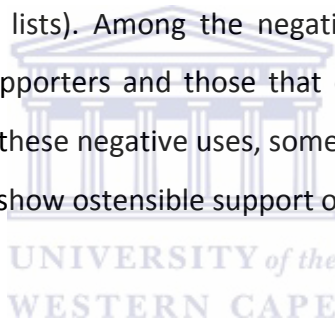
On the whole, however, belonging to either political party, as individual women or as part of a family, or as part of a group, enabled the women in Shurugwi to access the limited essential resources in the highly polarised political economy.<sup>210</sup> This participation, however, also opened up these women to abuse and violence. The women were expected to attend the respective parties' rallies and to vote for these parties. The MDC supporters had to also attend ZANU-PF rallies as well. Due also to the high poverty levels many women victims could not escape hence they were trapped inside the district.

The participation of women in the patronage economy opened them to their continuous participation in, and their victimisation in the violence. To continue to receive the

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<sup>210</sup> See Chapter Four, for more insights.

benefits the women had to continue in a role, singing and showing ostensible support that acted as fuel to the violence. It might be helpful here to refer to Reeler's articulation of participation through compulsion. She describes compulsion in two ways: firstly, by creating conditions or even forcing someone to participate in violence and patronage system which forces them to commit to the political movement. Related to this, forcing someone to commit a violation will most likely force them to repeat thus ensuring their recruitment.<sup>211</sup> Secondly, witnessing the torture of others triggers "a strong self-protection motive, identification with the aggressor, and at least compliance with the aggressor."<sup>212</sup> We should also be able to also mention the possible impact of the pressure the community had on the women.<sup>213</sup> In this regard the existence and impact of "lists"<sup>214</sup> needs to be emphasised. (See Chapter Four, where I discuss the positive and negative uses of lists). Among the negative uses was their use for the identification of opposition supporters and those that did not participate in ZANU-PF activities. Probably because of these negative uses, some women committed violence so as to be seen to belong and to show ostensible support of the violence.



## **GOLD PANNING SITES AND VIOLENCE**

Gold panning sites also became spaces of political and other forms of violence. To begin with, Shurugwi district is blessed with the Great Dyke, which is endowed with a lot of mineral riches. Stretching from the South West, around the Mberengwa regions, the Great Dyke extends all the way to the North East of the country into regions of Mashonaland Central. In Shurugwi, the Great Dyke range literally bisects the district through the middle. It is on the Great Dyke that Shurugwi Town was established in

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<sup>211</sup> See A.P Reeler, "The role of militia groups in maintaining ZANU-PF political power", March 2003, p 18.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> See also AP Reeler, Ibid, p 18.

<sup>214</sup> See Chapter Four of this thesis, for a nuanced discussion. In that chapter, we discussed the positive and negative uses of lists. Among the negative uses were their deployment for the identification of opposition supporters and those that did not participate in ZANU-PF activities.

1899,<sup>215</sup> after the discovery of chrome and gold. Recently, large reserves of platinum have been discovered in Shurugwi along this belt leading to huge mining investments by Unki and Todal corporations.

With the abundance of mineral resources along Shurugwi's Great Dyke section, it was therefore not surprising that when the economic meltdown worsened, residents of Shurugwi, and from elsewhere in Zimbabwe, and even from across the borders of the country,<sup>216</sup> converged on the Boterekwa escarpment turning it into a notorious gold panning site, a politically contested space, and a den of social vices, especially between 1999 and 2007. As early as 2000, there were about 15 000 gold panners around the Boterekwa escarpment.<sup>217</sup> This figure grew as the economic meltdown in the country worsened. After 2007, however, the Boterekwa gold panning site had lost its lustre because of the exhaustion of the gold, and more importantly because of the discovery of the lucrative Chiadzwa diamond fields in Manicaland province where most of the panners flocked with mixed fortunes.

In interviews, I gathered that there were two major divisions around Boterekwa between those that sought alluvial gold, and those that sought to establish some form of shaft mining away from the rivers. Those that were into alluvial gold panning were especially found along the Mutevekwu river. There were many other alluvial panners located along the Runde river, which was some distance from Boterekwa. The other group engaged in shaft mining were found closer to the Boterekwa escarpment, commonly referred to as *kuNumber One*,<sup>218</sup> and also in Mangwende farm. It is difficult,

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<sup>215</sup> See Mark Matsa and Kudakwashe Muringaniza, "Rate of land-use/land cover changes in Shurugwi District, Zimbabwe: Drivers for change", in *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Vol 12, No 3, 2010, p 110.

<sup>216</sup> See Painos Moyo, "Operation chikorokoza chapera bears fruit in Shurugwi", in <http://www.msu.ac.zw/cm/joomla/index2.php?option=com>, who says some of the panners came from Beit Bridge, Gokwe, Lupani, Gwanda, Mberengwa, Chivi and Bindura. In interviews I was told that there were some panners and buyers from Mozambique. Some of those from Mozambique were foreigners from West Africa who were residing in Mozambique.

<sup>217</sup> See the *Daily News*, 13 January 2000, for more details.

<sup>218</sup> *kuNumber One* refers to the area close to the Boterekwa pass, where heavy trucks have to engage the first gear/heavy gears when ascending or descending the steep slope.

however, to say unambiguously if this division between these groups of panners was a permanent one or contingent and whether panners moved from one to the other constantly. What cannot be denied is that working on alluvial gold along the Mutevekwi and Runde rivers was much lighter work, less technical and less expensive compared to shaft mining done at Mangwende farm. As a result, the newly arrived would establish base first at Boterekwa, and those who had made financial gains or those that sought better fortunes moved to engage in shaft mining. The panning activities were so pervasive that the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on mines, energy, environment and tourism, sounded alarmed its negative impact on the environment around Boterekwa.<sup>219</sup>

The site also saw a lot of militarised violence in 2006 under *Operation Chikorokoza Chapera/Isitsheketsha Sesiphelile*/Gold panning is over. The operation was carried out in a rather heavy-handed way in Shurugwi. Panners accused the police of shooting at them and setting the dogs on them. There were also allegations that the police used live ammunition against the panners. Indeed the minister of Home Affairs, Kembo Mohadi, admitted as much saying: “[w]e regret that during this operation there were incidents that should not have occurred, such as the shooting incident in Shurugwi and the destruction of huts in Chikuti.”<sup>220</sup>

The interview with John below shows the horrors of the operation on the panners.

It was one early morning, at about 8 or 9, in December 2006, that we saw a low flying helicopter above us. The police officer in it told us to go to the road and surrender ourselves to the officers who had a lorry. Naturally we did not want to surrender ourselves for arrest. Unbeknown to us was that there were other police officers with dogs, guns and rubber sticks very close to us. We tried to escape by running towards Chironde. The police officers on the ground let their dogs on us. We could not run far away because there were so many pits and shafts that were uncovered, and by running too fast we risked falling into these

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<sup>219</sup> See “Report of the Portfolio Committee on mines, energy, environment and tourism on the developments in Gonarezhou Transfrontier Park”, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2006, in Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debates: The Senate, Vol 15, No 23, cited in [http://www.parlzim.gov.zw/cms/Hansards/Archives/Senate/15\\_2005-2006/8June2006\\_15-23pdf](http://www.parlzim.gov.zw/cms/Hansards/Archives/Senate/15_2005-2006/8June2006_15-23pdf), Accessed 10 February 2011.

<sup>220</sup> See Kembo Mohadi, Home Affairs minister quoted in *The Standard* newspaper, 21 January 2007.

pits, which would have meant that we would have run ourselves into graves. In no time the police dogs caught up with us, some of these dogs were really vicious, for example, the one that came to me and two others mauled us severely before the police officers arrived. However, they started to assault us with the rubber sticks as punishment for having attempted to escape. We were taken to Shurugwi Central police station where we were made to pay Z\$300 000 per person. All those that were found with gold and lots of money were further fined and in most cases they lost these to the state or to corrupt police officers.

What might not be clear from the interview above are the underlying political currents to the gold mining in Shurugwi. The mining of gold in Shurugwi was run and controlled by a well-connected mafia-like group which had political connections. In interviews with some of the ex-panners names of rival senior politicians were mentioned. Some of the allegations made were that one such leading politician controlled panners not only in Shurugwi, but those that also operated in Kwekwe and Mvuma. There were other groups of panners who were allied to different other senior politicians. Due to this, rival groups of panners often clashed over control of mining sites. In the comprehensive raid referred to above, there are claims that it was ordered by one of the political factions that wanted to wrestle control of illegal gold mining. The above makes sense if one looks at the general informal and illegal economy characterised by, among others, underworld cartels, unemployment, shortages and illegal foreign currency transactions.<sup>221</sup> It also makes sense if one brings in the general atmosphere of the “primitive accumulation” of wealth, in the Marxian sense,<sup>222</sup> by the top ZANU-PF brass.

The raid was not only limited to the Boterekwa gold panning area. Simultaneous raids were also done at the Mangwende, Runde, Gweno and other smaller sites in Shurugwi

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<sup>221</sup> In informal discussions with illegal foreign currency changers in Gweru and Shurugwi I was made aware that at times the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and some of the major industrial concerns in both Gweru and Shurugwi sent their own people to buy forex on the black market. This goes to show how bad the illegal economy was in the decade under discussion.

<sup>222</sup> Karl Marx cited in Adam David Morton, *Unravelling Gramsci: Hegemony and Passive Revolution in the Global Political Economy*, Pluto Press, London, 2007, p 44, defines primitive accumulation as “the transformation of the individualised and scattered means of production into socially concentrated ones, of the pigmy property of the many into the huge property of the few, the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence, and from the means of labour, this fearful and painful expropriation of the mass of the people forms the prelude to the history of capital.”

along the Runde river using the same combination of low-flying helicopters and ground police officers. At all these sites temporary huts were torched, which resulted in the panners losing most of their personal belongings. These personal belongings included, inter alia, clothes, blankets, gold, televisions, cooking utensils, and huge sums of cash. All those who were arrested were made to pay fines, with those that could not raise the admission of guilt fines spending varying periods in custody.

What is important is that these attacks on panners followed along similar lines to *Operation Murambatsvina* that was mainly set in urban areas. It was also in the background of grinding poverty and astronomical unemployment levels. *Operation Murambatsvina*, resulted, among others, in large-scale urban to rural migration of most of the 700 000 urbanites displaced nationally,<sup>223</sup> and also contributed to the high unemployment as backyard industries and market stalls were criminalised and made illegal. However, these had become one of the largest sectors employing an ever-rising number of people.<sup>224</sup>

In a way, *Operation Chikorokoza chapera* was a follow up operation to finish off the former urbanites who had migrated to the rural areas and were engaged in panning for gold for survival. These were regarded as the timeless enemies by ZANU-PF for having contributed to the thrashing of ZANU-PF in urban constituencies. As such the operation was meant in a way to further disperse and browbeat them. This also has to be seen in the light of increasing hardships even in the rural areas leading to increasing discontent with the government. Under such circumstances, the ZANU-PF government flexed its muscle and pre-empted intimidatory tactics to induce fear, as much as however stamping out the illegal panning activities.

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<sup>223</sup> See Joost Fontein, "Anticipating a tsunami: Rumours, planning and the arbitrary state in Zimbabwe," in *Africa: The journal of the International Africa Institute*, Vol 79, Number 3, 2009, pp 369-398, in <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/afr/summary/v079/79.3.fontein.html>, Accessed 21 May 2012.

<sup>224</sup> See Anna Kajamulo Tibaijuka, "Report of the fact-finding mission to Zimbabwe to assess the scope and impact of Operation *Murambatsvina* by the United Nations special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe", cited in <http://ww2.unhabitat.org/documents/ZimbabweReport.pdf>, Accessed 2 May 2011, for more details.

The operation should also be seen as a part of the larger military-style quick fix head-in-the-sand solutions to the ailing economy. To this degree, the state may have been trying desperately to capture the gold from panners to prop up the fiscus whose sources of income were drying by the day and were becoming almost non-existent. To give credence to the above argument, we can look at another seemingly desperate move by the state via the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) which embarked on a stop, search and confiscate operation targeting cross-border traders who might not have declared their goods at the border or who could have lost their declaration forms on the way from the border.

Gold panning also increased conflict and violence between newly resettled farmers and gold panners in Shurugwi. The panners at times dug through the plots of land opened up by the new farmers for crop production and for grazing livestock.<sup>225</sup> According to the Utete report this was at Shangrilla farm and Mangwende.<sup>226</sup> As a result of this, the farmers reported loss of cattle that had fallen into the open pits dug by the panners. In other instances the livestock died after drinking water contaminated by cyanide used by the panners to purify their gold, and farmers also faced water problems due to cyanide use.<sup>227</sup> Confrontations also resulted from the silting-up of rivers especially Mutevekwi, which meant that water for irrigation, for domestic animals and for domestic use, became a problem.<sup>228</sup>

In my own interviews I established that there was a paradoxical relationship between the panners and the newly resettled farmers. On the one hand were the farmers who accused the panners of crime, including theft. Some told me that the panners stole their livestock, especially chickens, and goats; as well as grain both in the field and stored grain.<sup>229</sup> At another level, panners were also accused of spreading social immorality by

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<sup>225</sup> See the *Utete Committee Report*, p 72.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> Based on personal interviews, with the new farmers.



taking the resettled farmers' wives and daughters because of their financial power.<sup>230</sup> The panners, while refusing theft allegations, did not refute those around immoral vices. Instead they counter-claimed that most of the new farmers hated them for making money, when most of them had been struggling off the land as farmers.<sup>231</sup> Also as a result of having had the money, they were in "demand" from the farmers' wives and girls. On the other hand the farmers did brisk business from selling different things to the panners.<sup>232</sup>

What is striking to note is also the turning of the conflict between panners and newly resettled farmers into a political one. The panners were said to be MDC or anti-ZANU-PF because their activities destroyed agricultural potential. A closer scrutiny, however, reveals that politics made an easy escape for people to fight their personal battles, and it also resulted in the quick "resolution" of disputes. This also points to the fusion of petty jealousies into mainstream politics with disastrous consequences for those that were labelled anti-ZANU-PF. Of note again is the fact that some of the prominent panners were key ZANU-PF figures, for example Marvellous, who we shall discuss in greater detail in Chapter Three.

A trip to Mangwende farm, a major gold panning site between 2000 and 2008, during the 2010 field research revealed that the farm had suffered serious degradation with several uncovered holes symbolising the gold panning scars. These holes and open pits dug will require a serious programme to rehabilitate the land for future agricultural use. Another interesting feature from Mangwende farm was that there was a crossover between farmers and gold panners. This crossover also came out in other discussions and interviews elsewhere in the district where, for example, men went to Mutevekwi or Boterekwa escarpment to pan for gold while the women and children remained home

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<sup>230</sup> This came up in most interviews.

<sup>231</sup> Interviews with gold panners.

<sup>232</sup> Some of the common goods that farmers sold to the panners were agricultural products such as green maize cobs, dried maize, mealie meal, sugar salt, bread, clothes, blankets and chickens. Panners described stalls and market centres that developed among the panning sites, which drew not only the newly resettled farmers but also traders from as far as Gweru who brought different wares that originated both within Zimbabwe and across the borders, especially electronics and clothing items.

and continued to farm using inputs from the gold mining activities. More often, I was told, newly resettled farmers also turned to gold panning for its immediate and higher returns. The above therefore makes the attempt to separate farmers from gold panners rather tenuous.

## **NATIONAL POLITICS AND VIOLENCE**

Shurugwi district has also been an active district politically. In this sense it has produced several key politicians. Among these was Ian Douglas Smith, the leader of the rightist Rhodesia Front and Prime Minister of Rhodesia from 1965 to 1980. Up to the time of his death in 2007, he still maintained his farm in the district and he also remained a critic of ZANU-PF.<sup>233</sup> Josiah Magama Tongogara, the former ZANLA Commander and a senior member of ZANU's central Committee, also hailed from this district. There are other important politicians from this district across time, including Francis Nhema who at one time was minister of Environment and Tourism, now minister of the Environment; while former ZAPU senior members Matibenga and Clement Muchachi were also from the district. Thus the district has experienced a lot of political contestation since the struggle for independence, especially with two of the most senior commanders of opposing armies, the Rhodesian army and ZANLA, hailing from the same district. As such the district has a symbolic significance for ZANU-PF, especially due to its associations with the late ZANLA General Josiah Tongogara. In addition, having won against Ian Smith's Rhodesia Front in 1980, it would also be indigestible for ZANU-PF to lose the district to the opposition in the post-colonial dispensation.

Shurugwi, like most parts of the Midlands province has always been a contested area for ZANU-PF, which has not always had a clean hold of the district. Its struggle with ZAPU over the district was never completely won up to the time of independence.<sup>234</sup> In the

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<sup>233</sup> See his autobiography, Ian Smith, *Bitter harvest: The great betrayal*, Blake, London, 1997.

<sup>234</sup> As an example, Clement Muchachi, from Shurugwi was in the first GNU in 1980 represented ZAPU. See Pathisa Nyathi, "Zimbabwe: Msika- anationalist par excellence", in *The Herald*, cited in

post-2000 period, this contest was against the MDC. Lucia Matibenga, for example, the first MDC Member of Parliament candidate for Shurugwi in 2000 is the wife of the late ZIPRA cadre Matibenga. She also challenged the results of the parliamentary election against Francis Nhema of ZANU-PF, citing violence and intimidation, despite eventually losing her appeal.<sup>235</sup> The MDC continued to make inroads into the district, and this has been a major source of political violence post 2000-period. The Tongogara family, for example, was at one time reported as abandoning ZANU-PF, the party of the late ZANLA Commander. As an example, Joshua Tongogara, Josiah Tongogara's brother, was reportedly forced to withdraw his MDC candidature in the 2002 local council elections, together with other two candidates: Hlomayi Makotore of ward 8 and Irene Mafukidze of ward 11, because Tongogara's MDC candidature humiliated ZANU-PF.<sup>236</sup>

Election results since 2000 also consistently point to a strong MDC showing in Shurugwi. This despite the strong alliance ZANU-PF has always claimed with the rural areas. In Shurugwi, this is despite the emotional attachment ZANU-PF has with the district where its late military commander Tongogara comes from. In this regard, the MDC has had between 2000 and 2008 a third of the cast votes notwithstanding the high levels of violence, threats, and intimidation on its supporters. Campaigning has been next to very difficult. In addition its supporters have been systematically targeted. The following set of election results show a close contestation between ZANU-PF and the MDC. These are as follows: ZANU-PF to MDC 14 891 to 6 524 in 2000;<sup>237</sup> 16 212 to 5113 in 2005;<sup>238</sup> and

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<http://allafrica.com/stories/2009081001.html>?, accessed 5 March 2011. Added to this Shurugwi like the rest of the Midlands has never really "belonged" to ZANU-PF from the struggle for independence and into the post-independence period. In 1980, as an example, ZANU-PF only managed to win eight out of twelve seats in the Midlands province (although it won the Shurugwi seat), unlike in other predominantly Shona speaking provinces like Masvingo, Manicaland and Mashonaland Central where it won all the seats. See [http://en.wikimedia.org/wiki/SouthernRhodesia\\_general\\_elec\\_1980](http://en.wikimedia.org/wiki/SouthernRhodesia_general_elec_1980), for more details.

<sup>235</sup> See "Playing with fire: Personal accounts of human rights abuses experienced by 50 opposition Members of Parliament in Zimbabwe, and 28 election candidates", by the *Zimbabwe Institute*, Johannesburg, March 2004, in <http://www.swradioafrica.com/pages/fire.htm>, Accessed 20 August 2011.

<sup>236</sup> See *The Daily News*, 12 September 2002, "Tongogara's brother held hostage in Shurugwi", cited in <http://allafrica.com/stories/200209120516.html>, Accessed 16 February 2011

<sup>237</sup> See <http://zimbabwesituation.com/results.html>, Accessed 15 December 2009.

<sup>238</sup> See <http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/ASR/14No2/Trends.pdf>, Accessed 20 February 2011.

in 2008: Shurugwi North 6 452 to MDC-M 1 006 and MDC-T 2 112; and in Shurugwi South: 5 068 to MDC-M 754 and MDC-T 1 977.<sup>239</sup>

## **BASES AND OTHER SITES OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE**

The concept of bases,<sup>240</sup> which is in many ways a reincarnation of the Second Chimurenga secret guerrilla and civilian meeting points, was [re]introduced in 2000 at the national level, although it was in 2008 that it was adopted on a large scale in Shurugwi, especially in the lead-up to the Presidential election runoff between April and 27 June 2008. They became the main sites for the violations against women and generally suspected MDC supporters. In Shurugwi there were bases created at every kraal head level called a village base and above these were ward bases.<sup>241</sup> Depending on the conditions in the village, bases could be open spaces under trees at whatever part of the village, but they were mostly located at the village head's homestead or at borehole sites, which are usually centrally located. Village bases were manned by village heads who kept a register or a roll call of attendance. Village heads were ably supported by the "green bombers" and ZANU-PF youths. It was from these village bases that victims were identified and forwarded to the ward bases for punishment.

The most notorious ward base in Shurugwi was the one established at the former farmstead turned into Boterekwa School, which was superintended by the widely-known war veteran, Gunpowder. At both the village and ward bases meetings called *pungwes*<sup>242</sup> were conducted, where all villagers were to compulsorily attend and receive political orientation in ZANU-PF propaganda and indoctrination. From interviews, much of the discourse at these *pungwes* held at the bases focussed on the role of ZANU-PF in the

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<sup>239</sup> See <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/electoral20317984.html>, Accessed 19 February 2011.

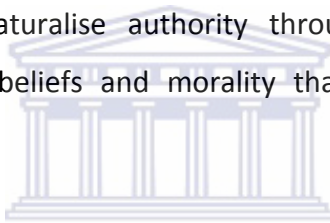
<sup>240</sup> See Tapera Knox Chitiyo, "Land, violence and compensation", for *pungwes* at bases during the Second Chimurenga.

<sup>241</sup> Based on an interview with a former ZANU-PF Youth League member, he was himself later on victimised after being suspected of "selling out", at Tongogara Growth point, 21 April 2010.

<sup>242</sup> See Tapera Knox Chitiyo, "Tracking Zimbabwe's political history", p 360.

Second Chimurenga and in the Third Chimurenga, which qualified it to continue to rule the country. People were also told repeatedly how the country was under the threat of re-colonisation, and the dangers the MDC posed in this regard.

Such reinforcing of the central role that ZANU-PF played in liberating the country fits into the discourse of “coercive nationalism”,<sup>243</sup> and also the discourse of hegemony espoused by Antonio Gramsci.<sup>244</sup> Gramsci articulates hegemony as a strategy of power that operates alongside, and complements, direct domination. For him, domination occurs through what he terms the political society or state made up of the government and the “juridical”. On the other hand hegemony operates through the civil society or non-coercive structures (churches, schools, political parties, the family, trade unions and social clubs) functions to naturalise authority through non-coercive means that established values, systems, beliefs and morality that support the existing power relations.<sup>245</sup>



For Shurugwi, and more generally Zimbabwe, the hegemony contained under patriotic history or Mugabeism provided justification for the violations that the MDC supporters suffered by categorising them as sell-outs. This was in line with Foucauldian racialization that we discussed earlier in this chapter. This also recalls the practice of ZANU-PF politics obtaining from the Schmittian “political”, that was violent and rooted in the dangerous binary of friend and enemy,<sup>246</sup> which like in the Foucauldian “race” discourse determined who was to live or die. As such, by classifying the MDC supporters as the other “race” or as the enemy, it justified beating, rape or other forms of violence.

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<sup>243</sup> See Tapera Knox Chitiyo, “Tracking Zimbabwe’s political history”, p 360.

<sup>244</sup> See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, Orient Longman, Chennai, 1998, pp 12-13

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> See Carl Schmitt and G. Schwab, *The Concept of the political*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2007, p 19.

## WOMEN'S BODIES AS TEMPLATES OF THE VIOLENCE

Alongside hegemony, there has been a strategy of using pre-modern torture-based forms of punishment. These were aimed at disciplining the body of the “criminal” by inflicting severe pain, glorifying the punishment and simultaneously discouraging the spectators from performing similar “crimes”.<sup>247</sup> Here bodies of women were appropriated as a site for the violence. Many of my informants recall the violence that was inscribed on the bodies of women, as well as other non-ZANU-PF supporters. The commonest example from this battery of physical violence mentioned by these informants was beating, that was instituted to the same degree as suggested by Foucault’s *supplice*.<sup>248</sup>

As will be highlighted in Chapter Three, these beatings were meted out on those that were described as MDC supporters, or those whose husbands or sons who were known to be MDC supporters had escaped. In this way the women were beaten and exposed to other forms of torture to reveal the whereabouts of their husbands or sons or to entice the husbands and or sons to come out of hiding. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, such attacks were done as part of *Operation Tsuru negwenzi*,<sup>249</sup> where those that were sought were attacked with those that were supposedly hiding them. In the cases where the husbands or sons had escaped, women were beaten to reveal their whereabouts. In most cases it was thought that by beating the women the “real” targets would emerge from their hiding. The impact of targeting one’s family has been known to not only lead to the intended victims coming out of hiding, but it also weakens their resolve. This is so because “an activist may be willing to sacrifice his own life and limbs, but is he prepared to risk those of his entire family and his property? It is possible for one person to live on

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<sup>247</sup> See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp 6-34.

<sup>248</sup> Supplice, as defined by Jaucourt, cited in Foucault, *Ibid*, is “corporal punishment painful to a more or less horrible degree.”

<sup>249</sup> For more on Operation Tsuru negwenzi, see Solidarity Peace Trust, *Desperately seeking sanity: What prospects for a new Zimbabwe?*, Durban 29 July 2008, p 29.

the run, but much more complicated to displace an entire family, with school-going children or infants.”<sup>250</sup>

What I gathered from the informants is that whilst some beatings were done at the village bases, these were few and less severe compared to the beatings done at ward bases. Instead names of those that would be targeted were sent to ward bases, usually manned by “war veterans” and youth militias. A possible explanation could be that the village bases were usually made up of family members and neighbours, which made it difficult to directly inflict beatings. What instead happened was that from these village bases, as already pointed out, names were forwarded to the ward bases where people were less connected by the various communal relations. What is also interesting is that the ward bases were larger in terms of hierarchy, not least because they were manned by “war veterans”, but also because they were also better attended. The scale of attendance thus provided the right platform to execute public floggings. As Foucault says, in the case of the public disciplining of Damians, for example, a large crowd was necessary to create a spectacle.<sup>251</sup> This was more to send a message to the larger audience that witnessed as it was also aimed at disciplining the one undergoing the punishment.

In some instances, however, the beatings were not done in public. Others were done outside the public eye, and usually these were more severe. Informants told me of how they were abducted in unmarked CAM pickup trucks, especially in 2008, and severely assaulted and abandoned by the roadside. Yet others reported their husbands and sons were abducted and kept at the different base camp sites. In part the severity of the beatings, which for some translated to *falanga*, might have been due to the long period of time the victims were kept in captivity, which exposed them to continuous beatings. The unmarked vehicles referred to point to the possible involvement of state operatives

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<sup>250</sup> *Solidarity Peace Trust*, “Desperately seeking sanity: What prospects for Zimbabwe?”, in <http://www.zwnews.com/SPTdesperatelyseekingsanity.pdf>, Accessed 29 May 2011.

<sup>251</sup> See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp 3-6 & 34



ranging from those from the Central Intelligence Organisation, (CIO), Police Internal Security Intelligence (PISI) or even army officers who were not in uniform. As such, such beatings done by professionals were rather severe. The bodies of the women and other victims were used both figuratively and literally as sites of violence.<sup>252</sup> As Michel Foucault has noted, a person's body is a contested terrain for many things, including power. As he says: "The body is directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, train, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies and to emit signs".<sup>253</sup> Indeed the bodies were turned into sites where the scars of the violence were inscribed, both physically and emotionally.<sup>254</sup>

The violence on the rural women of Shurugwi also recalls the literary writing of Yvonne Vera in *Stone Virgins* where she describes the essence of Sibaso's violence against the weak woman he abused. She writes: "He (Sibaso) turns steadily, with the movements of a hunter who kills not because he is hungry but because his stomach is full, therefore he can hunt with grace."<sup>255</sup> For Shurugwi, one could say that ZANU-PF engaged in violating opposition supporters, especially women, to also show that they could do it with impunity, besides sending a powerful message that sought to cow MDC supporters who were supposed to vote for it out of fear.

Findings from elsewhere in Zimbabwe also confirm the use of women's bodies as an integral site of violence. Jane. L. Parpart puts it well and says:

... the ruling party's struggle to retain power has often been played out on women's bodies. Indeed, policing the bodies of women who do not ascribe to male authority has become one of the prime goals of the Green bombers...These youth have become a symbol of the ruling party's dominance, its warrior masculinity and its clear message that women who 'belong' and submit will be

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<sup>252</sup> See Charlotte Bunch and Niamh Reilly, *Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Rights*, UNIFEM, New York, 1994, p 38, for a nuanced expose of these terms.

<sup>253</sup> Michel Foucault, cited in Kizito Muchemwa and Robert Muponde, eds, "Introduction: Manning the Nation", p xvii.

<sup>254</sup> See Chapter Three of this thesis for an in-depth discussion of the types of violence perpetrated on the bodies and minds of women, and generally MDC supporters in Shurugwi in the period 2000-2008.

<sup>255</sup> Yvonne Vera, *Stone Virgins*, p 71.

protected- those who do not may suffer the humiliation of rape and even death.<sup>256</sup>

Outside the public media gaze, women's bodies in rural Shurugwi became the template on which the physical manifestation of violence was performed during rallies and in secret locations of homes, in the darkness provided by nights or during the day at rallies.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter tried to give the background factors that helped to make Shurugwi such an important theatre of the post-2000 violence. It has drawn attention to the land issue, not least because it was used in ZANU-PF discourse to explain the necessity of that violence, but also to establish the unfortunate conflation of this genuine problem with the rather fortuitous demands of the Third Chimurenga, in which ZANU-PF was faced with the necessity to survive. The chapter also tried to explain the impact that political violence had on localised politics, and on other forms of violence, including the culturally inclined abuses in the family and in the home, and vice-versa. I also tried to extend the same analysis to other activities that have transformed the socio-political landscape of Shurugwi, most notably gold panning. Overall, I wished to argue that there was nothing particularly unique in the factor(s) that predisposed Shurugwi to the 2000-2008 violence except the transformation of the issue of land into a ZANU-PF political agenda to stamp out opposition in this rural district. However, there were moments like the adoption of centralisation and the strong polar influences of the Tongogara and Smith legacies that made Shurugwi "special" and prone to political struggles.

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<sup>256</sup> Jane. L. Parpart, "Masculinities, race and violence in the making of Zimbabwe", in Kizito Muchemwa and Robert Muponde, eds, *Manning the Nation*, p 103. Kizito Muchemwa and Robert Muponde, eds, "Introduction: Manning the Nation", p xvii, have also established that women's bodies throughout the world have been more often than not been appropriated as sites for political battles and have been mutilated, raped and killed.

## CHAPTER THREE: VIOLENCE AND MEMORY: INTERPRETING WOMEN'S VOICES

### INTRODUCTION

While acknowledging that it would be overly simplistic to portray women as pure victims of the violence without any agency, this chapter dwells on the experiences of women as victims of the militarised violence. Another chapter (Four) has been set aside to explore the levels of relative agency of the women of Shurugwi. The multi-layeredness of woman-ness in Shurugwi, based on geographic location, political affiliation, and economic and social status, meant that they suffered differential violations. To this extent some suffered the violence of not belonging, that is, as outsiders who were also cast as sell-outs; others suffered retaliatory attacks; and some were affected by dispossession or acquisition.

Among other issues, this chapter grapples with the meanings of the women's narratives; the context, the nature and extent of the violence in the district; the organisation and patterns of the violence in order to address the question in its complexities. In addition, the chapter grapples with the "silences" encountered during the field research. Key questions to be addressed include how do the women interpret the events of their victimisation? What factors predisposed Shurugwi to the violence?

Based on the narrative accounts of the women, I argue that the violence in the district occurred in the context of the transformation of politics into a war<sup>1</sup> of survival by ZANU-PF, under the controversial Third Chimurenga. This occurred, as explained in the General Introduction, under conditions of the militarisation of both the state and violence. Broadly, because there was a conflation of strategic interests between the army and ZANU-PF, the era was distinguishable. The conflation of interests also demanded a unitary strategy. In the end, an unholy alliance emerged between the security forces'

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to continue on the thread that I started with in Chapter One based on the Foucault's analysis of power as war by other means.

top hierarchy, the war veterans and ZANU-PF. This culminated in a project of coercive mobilisation, armed electioneering, intimidation and aggressive masculinities aimed at retaining of ZANU-PF in power amid reduced electoral support.

As such, violence had become the standard mode of political mobilisation and survival. The narrative accounts that the women gave also showed the link between their victimisation and their suspected or actual links with the MDC. Moreover, I would like to suggest that ZANU-PF had the capacity and means to stop the violence. It was the only party in government, and it certainly wanted it, abetted it and benefitted from it. Hence it had no desire to abate it. It is also crucial to add that the opposition MDC also engaged in acts of retaliatory violence. Because of its trivialisation as well as its use as political strategy of eliciting support, it became easy for more localised and informal politics to adopt, and be subsumed, in the narratives of the political violence. These vendettas, conflicts and jealousies became significant in shaping the direction and in the “democratisation” of the violence at the village and extended family levels.

### **CONTEXT OF THE VIOLENCE**

The attacks on political opponents that rocked Shurugwi district between 2000 and 2008 should not be looked at in isolation. They were a part of a countrywide campaign for political survival by ZANU-PF in the face of a strong opposition.<sup>2</sup> In essence, it was a part of a brutal mobilisation to rescue ZANU-PF from the political doldrums to which it was banished from the beginning of the new millennium. Following the February 2000 Constitutional Referendum loss that wounded its pride, the political fortunes of ZANU-PF were threatened. As highlighted in the General Introduction, there were reasons to believe that this loss would be replicated in the subsequent June 2000 parliamentary and 2002 presidential elections.

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<sup>2</sup> See a similar compelling argument by Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, pp 17-20.

To pre-empt the prognosis ZANU-PF then turned to coercive methodology of retaining lost ground and instilling fear in the citizenry, co-ordinated as the Third Chimurenga. Under the Third Chimurenga, it first reverted to a language of coercive mobilisation that simultaneously revoked the policy of reconciliation<sup>3</sup> and sought to legitimise its continued hold on power based on its role in the Second Chimurenga and the resonant anti-imperialist argument.<sup>4</sup> This authorising narrative at the same time blamed white farmers and the British for contributing to the NO vote and the strengthening of the MDC because they were allegedly against land redistribution and behind attempts to recolonize the country.<sup>5</sup> Second, ZANU-PF fomented violent farm invasions (*jambanja*) led by war veterans and land hungry communities to forcibly take over farms from whites.<sup>6</sup> Concurrently, it initiated a violent programme of repression aimed at those constituencies considered pro-MDC.

The state was also reorganised resulting in the clear militarisation of its structures.<sup>7</sup>

The militarisation was marked by the central and dominant role played by the security arms and semi-military bodies (the war veterans and the National Youth Service graduates) in ZANU-PF and in the state. Officially, the perverse presence of security services' was explained as an attempt to preserve national sovereignty in the face of revived Western imperialism. Outside the usurpation of civilian duties in the state, the various military and quasi-military structures also engaged in a coercive political mobilisation for ZANU-PF. Primarily, these groups were used as shock troops for ZANU-PF. This in turn led to the militarisation of violence as these structures helped foment

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<sup>3</sup> See President Robert Mugabe's speech at the ZANU-PF Headquarters on 25 October 2000 cited in Sabelo. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist*, p 207. In this speech he posited that: "the national reconciliation policy we adopted in 1980 is threatened, gravely threatened, by the acts of the whites in this country and we shall revoke that national reconciliation, we shall revoke it".

<sup>4</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "Current politics in Zimbabwe: Confronting the crisis" in David Harold-Barry, ed, *Zimbabwe: The past is the future*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2004, p 13.

<sup>5</sup> See the many speeches by President Mugabe in *Inside the Third Chimurenga* for further elaboration.

<sup>6</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "Current politics in Zimbabwe", p 13.

<sup>7</sup> See the General Introduction for a detailed discussion of this phenomenon.

and sustain violence throughout the country. At another level, the state increasingly resorted to military-style operations in its civilian administration.

As also discussed in the Introduction, the effects of the militarisation on the pogrom were first presented in the farm takeovers. Over the years, however, this was extended to the invasion of public sector institutions, the intimidation of disgruntled civil servants who suffered unwarranted dismissals, humiliations, beatings and torture. In addition, the actions were extended to industrial and firm invasions, the signing of the anti-sanctions petition, and the indigenisation of other sectors like mining, industries and banks.

In the end intimidation, threats, force and browbeating of opposition structures became the core mobilising strategy for ZANU-PF seeking renewal in the presence of diminished electoral promises amid a worsening crisis.<sup>8</sup> Thus, once ZANU-PF felt its grip on power loosen it turned to the technology of violence to cow the population and more generally to retain its hold on the state. As Hannah Arendt explains:

[...] every decrease in power is an open invitation to violence - if only because those who hold power and feel it slipping from their hands, be they the government or be they the governed, have always found it difficult to resist the temptation to substitute violence for it.<sup>9</sup>

However, it is also prudent to acknowledge that ZANU-PF played to its strengths to gain some votes and retain political power besides using violence. These included its powerful articulation of its inalienable role in the liberation struggle and its portrayal of the “role” of the British in attempts to recolonise the country especially to the people who bore the brunt of the liberation war in the not so distant 1970s, and the ingenious, though narrowed, articulation of the land question at a moment of increasing overcrowding in communal areas that was marked by spontaneous farm invasions.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008”.

<sup>9</sup> See Hannah Arendt, *On violence*, Harcourt, Brace and World Inc, New York, 1970, p 87.

<sup>10</sup> See Robert Mugabe, *Inside the Third Chimurenga*.

ZANU-PF also cleverly spread out the various forms of indigenisation and redistribution of wealth, carefully articulating them to sweeten its election campaign at strategic moments. It also enabled it to gloss over its shortcomings, and promote elements of primitive accumulation of a select few under conditions of unclear indigenisation policy and human rights violations. This staggering, while preventing the total collapse of the economy, enabled ZANU-PF to sustain for a long time a resonant campaign platform. Beyond this, however, it also meant that the threats to deploy force against the MDC and those refusing to “share” remained alive. In this way mining concerns, large foreign-owned companies and banks that showed signs of resistance to the indigenisation strategy were labelled as agents of imperialism. They were also threatened with the withdrawal of their operating licences or with closure.<sup>11</sup>

This violence also speaks to the instrumentalisation of power by the state. In a version of the Maoist doctrine, that has strong influences on ZANU-PF, “power grows out of the barrel of the gun.”<sup>12</sup> Violence as the pillar of political power in this Maoist modality became an even more attractive option for ZANU-PF at a time when its political fortunes were at the lowest ebb. In this regard, it reinvented its status as a “revolutionary party” and it converted the national army into a “revolutionary army” that deploys violence in a “revolutionary struggle” to attain political objectives.<sup>13</sup> What is crucial in this

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<sup>11</sup> See for example, Roman Baudzus, “Zimplats fighting Zimbabwe’s indigenisation policies” in <http://www.resourceinvestor.com/2012/03/05/zimplats-fighting-zimbabwes-indigenization-policie>, Accessed 14 July 2012. See also Office of the Prime Minister, “Zimbabwe: statement on the indigenisation of banks and private educational institutions”, in <http://allafrica.com/stories/201207040159.html>, Accessed 14 July 2012. see also *Newsday* 13 July 2012, “Bank takeover scares away investors”, in <http://newsday.co.zw/article/2012-07-13-bank-takeover-scares-away-capital>, Accessed 15 July 2012.

<sup>12</sup> See Hannah Arendt, “Reflections on violence” in *New York Review of Books*, 27 February 1969, cited in [http://www.cooperativeindividualism.org/arendt-hannah\\_reflectionsw-on-violence.html](http://www.cooperativeindividualism.org/arendt-hannah_reflectionsw-on-violence.html). The linking of votes to the role that ZANU-PF played in the Second Chimurenga supports this link in Zimbabwe. ZANU-PF cadres were also trained in China during the liberation struggle and were well schooled in the Maoist literature. Also the discourse of ZANU-PF’s military prowess and accomplishments in the liberation struggle is emphasised in the academia and in the media. See for example Terence Ranger, “Historiography, patriotic history and the history of the nation: the struggle of the past in Zimbabwe” in <http://cas1.elis.rug.ac> accessed 12 May 2009.

<sup>13</sup> See Paresh Pandya, *Mao Tse-Tung and Chimurenga*, p 8.



“revolutionary” construction is that military and political objectives are conflated.<sup>14</sup> In the process bodies of individual people were apportioned as spaces for violence to obtain the political objectives. This is, however, not to say that Maoism officially condones such acts of abuse of the population. Rather, it implores its cadres not to “hit or swear at people”; or to “take liberty with men or women,” among other things.<sup>15</sup> In fact during the Second Chimurenga, this code of conduct for guerrillas was even composed into a ZANU nationalist song, *The soldier’s code of conduct*.<sup>16</sup>

However, this inclination towards Maoist discourse should not be very surprising because ZANU-PF had strong historical attachments to Maoism going back to the days of the liberation struggle. Most of the senior military officers underwent military and political orientation in China. This relationship was cemented at the time of the creation of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces from the three main protagonist armies involved in the Second Chimurenga. As Kriger ably demonstrates, the army integration process promoted more ex-ZANLA cadres compared to the ex-ZIPRA.<sup>17</sup> The “Look East” policy launched by the Zimbabwe government from the early 2000s, in the face of hostilities with the West, led to strengthening of economic and political ties between ZANU-PF and China. In terms of the economic cooperation, trade grew significantly between the two.<sup>18</sup> Again, there were significant Chinese investments in the country. China also advanced lines of credit to the troubled Zimbabwe government. Politically, China, together with Russia and South Africa vetoed the imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe

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<sup>14</sup> See Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU guerrilla warfare*, p 94.

<sup>15</sup> See an adaptation of Mao’s Red Book, in Paresch Pandya, *Mao Tse Tung and Chimurenga*, p 110.

<sup>16</sup> See Paresch Pandya, *Mao Tse Tung and Chimurenga*, pp 250-251.

<sup>17</sup> The three armies that were merged to form the ZDF were ZIPRA, ZANLA and the Rhodesian Forces. Many analysts feel that in the course of the integration BMATT (British Military Advisory and Training Team) tended to favour ZANLA cadres, which has helped to create an army that is sympathetic to ZANU-PF. For a detailed account, see Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla veterans in Post war Zimbabwe: Symbolic and violent politics, 1980-1987*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p 103, who says that at the end of the integration process ZANLA consisted 60 percent, ZIPRA 35 percent and Rhodesia forces 5 percent of the ZDF. In time the percentage surely improved in favour of ZANU-PF, especially with the mass desertions by ex-ZIPRA during the dissident era and also in the creation of the Fifth Brigade.

<sup>18</sup> See *The Zimbabwean*, 08 May 2012, “China and Zimbabwe trade doubled”, in <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/zimbabwe/58106/china-and-zimbabwe-trade-doubled.html>, Accessed 13 July 2012.

by the United Nations.<sup>19</sup> Importantly, the Look-East policy helped significantly to invent a repressive brand of Maoism which enabled ZANU-PF to trample on people's liberties.

An important aspect of the Third Chimurenga was that it was fought on a clear terrain of insiders and outsiders.<sup>20</sup> In this trope whites, together with Black supporters of the MDC, were labelled alien. To this extent, some urbanites were castigated as totemless,<sup>21</sup> while farm workers, many of who originated from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique, were labelled foreigners.<sup>22</sup> More than this, however, the basis for this labelling was their association with the MDC. They were too accused of siding with their employers, the white farmers, in the 2000 constitutional NO vote.<sup>23</sup> This overall meant appropriating another layer of foreign-ness on them. The urbanites had consistently voted for the MDC.

Regarding the whites, who had campaigned strongly for, and partly sponsored, the NO vote in the February 2000 Constitutional Referendum, and who also partly financed the MDC,<sup>24</sup> President Mugabe once said, "they think because they are white they have a divine right to our resources. Not here. The white man is not indigenous to Africa. Africa is for Africans. Zimbabwe is for Zimbabweans."<sup>25</sup> In the process, many urbanites, farm workers and white farmers were subjected to alienation, property expropriation and destruction, displacement, and intimidation.

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<sup>19</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, "The Global Political Agreement as a Passive Revolution."

<sup>20</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "The state in crisis", p 213.

<sup>21</sup> See J Mujere, "'Tsunami!'", Coping with the impact of Operation Murambatsvina in Harare: The case of elderly vendors and tuckshop owners in Mbare and Highfield suburbs", Paper presented at the conference on *Ageing in African Cities: revisiting the issues, responses and outcomes*, Nordic Africa Institute, Zomba, Malawi, 29 November-1 December 2007, p 13. See also Deputy Minister Phineas chihota's description of some Harare victims of Operation Murambatsvina as non-indigenous in See *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 1 July 2005, for a complete statement.

<sup>22</sup> See Blair Rutherford, "Belonging to the farm(er): Farm workers, farmers, and the shifting politics of citizenship", pp 191-213.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "The crisis in Zimbabwe", p 210.

<sup>25</sup> See "Mugabe's Zimbabwe", in <http://www.mugabeandthewhiteafrican.com/mugabe-zimbabwe/>, Accessed 12 February 2010.

To further underscore the foregoing discussion it might be useful to think through Mamdani's discourse of the shifts and inventions of nativity in his analysis of the Rwanda genocide.<sup>26</sup> In this work, Mamdani brought to the fore the dangers of essentialising nativity. As he says, this led to a murderous campaign in which up to 800 000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were exterminated. It also mirrors the various forms of non-biological racisms referred to by Foucault, which determine "what must live and what must die".<sup>27</sup> As Foucault posits, racism results in the ranking of races as either superior or inferior. These distinctions then form the grounds for exclusion and elimination of the alleged inferiors ostensibly to protect the interests of the superior race.<sup>28</sup> As in Rwanda the politicisation of, and "ownership" of, nativity in Zimbabwe met with catastrophic consequences. Many hundreds of people were killed, thousands tortured and millions more intimidated.

In a significant way also, the articulation of the native-alien discourse in Zimbabwe represented the transformation of liberatory nationalism into racialised nationalism or reverse racism<sup>29</sup> that sought to exclude all those that opposed it. To this extent, ZANU-PF portrayed the whites in and outside Zimbabwe as the root of Zimbabwe's problems. As already stated, this stemmed from the role the white farmers played in the NO vote in the Constitutional referendum of 2000 and their political mobilisation and economic support for the MDC. The net effect was a sometimes racialised nationalist mobilisation. This step assigned collective guilt on to the whites and ascribed collective historical victimhood on the blacks. On the whole, by using the racial card therefore ZANU-PF evoked violence because "racism .... is fraught with violence by definition because it

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<sup>26</sup> See Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims become killers*, for a more detailed discussion.

<sup>27</sup> Michel Foucault, "Society Must be Defended", p 254, cited in Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg, "Michel Foucault: Crises and Problematisations", *The Review of politics*, vol 67, no2, Spring 2005, Cambridge University Press, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable25046414>, accessed 28 October 2010, p 341. He says there are various racisms which are not necessarily based on skin colour. He posits that ethnic differences, religious differences, criminality, physical and mental differences constitute other racisms.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp 157-159. He sees nationalism in Africa metamorphosing, under the pitfalls of nationalism, from liberatory nationalism, to ultra-nationalism, to chauvism, and finally racism.

objects to natural organic facts- a white or black skin- which no persuasion of power could change; all one can do, when the chips are down, is to exterminate their bearers.”<sup>30</sup>

Further, by playing victim of Western imperialist forces masked as the MDC provided some justification for resorting to violence. As Mamdani argues, “by portraying opponents as potential perpetrators and ourselves as potential victims, war tends to demonise opponents and sanctify aggression as protective and defensive.”<sup>31</sup> In ZANU-PF vocabulary, the pogrom was necessary to protect national sovereignty and the gains made from the Second Chimurenga. It was also defensive against Western aggression masked as the MDC. ZANU-PF was thus mirrored as fighting an invasion by an imperialist enemy and not a local opposition political party.<sup>32</sup>

This portrayal of victimhood by ZANU-PF also recalls a reading of Franz Fanon that native violence is not aggressive but is a derivative of colonialist violence and was retaliatory and emancipatory.<sup>33</sup> Above all, it touched on the notion that the only appropriate language the settler colonialist understood was violence.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, in this “cult of victimisation”,<sup>35</sup> to borrow Mbembe’s terminology, ZANU-PF felt justified to use violence in defence of national sovereignty. The evocation of war (Third Chimurenga) therefore proffered justification to the use of the security forces on the opposition. As a result the MDC was vilified and violently treated.

The genealogy of violence on the opposition can, however, be traced back to intolerant nationalist politics dating back to the struggle for independence in the 1960s and 1970s. Nationalism was viewed as a unitary movement, with little room for dissent or even

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<sup>30</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On violence*, bid, p 76.

<sup>31</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims become killers*, p 217.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Mugabe, *Inside the Third Chimurenga*, p 88.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter One section on “Liberatory violence.”

<sup>34</sup> Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p 78.

<sup>35</sup> Achille Mbembe, “African Modes of Self Writing” in *Public Culture*, 14, 1, 2002.

constructive criticism within or outside the movement. As such trade unions, women and students who sought to challenge colonialism from outside the nationalist politics of ZANU and ZAPU, were often subjected to various forms of intimidation, actualised and threatened.<sup>36</sup> The contestations and bitter rivalry between ZANU and ZAPU, the major liberation movements, during the 1960s and 1970s, that we discussed in Chapter One, for majority status, donor funding and recognition, should be perceived in this light. For this reason the liberation movements sought to be the “sole” representatives of the people’s grievances against colonialism.<sup>37</sup>

The genesis of this authoritarianism can also be traced to the time of the liberation struggle when ZANU and ZAPU set up camps, both military and civilian, outside the country. These camps in a way became laboratories for the development of the post-independence governance structures and the genesis of authoritarianism in Zimbabwe.<sup>38</sup> We ought to note that it was in the camps outside Rhodesia at Chimoio, Tembwe, Osibisa, Nyadzonia and Mboroma, among others, that the current leadership of ZANU-PF first tasted leadership and it was there that the current leadership hierarchy was also developed. This hierarchy of power was then brought to govern the nation 1980. This leadership that developed during the struggle for independence was largely maintained with few cosmetic changes. Mugabe and his core group still maintained power in ZANU-PF and in government, and had added a few former ZAPU, and younger leaders to their ranks.

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<sup>36</sup> For a more nuanced explanation refer to Timothy Scarnecchia, *The roots of urban and political violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfields, 1940-1964*, p 2.

<sup>37</sup> See Chapter 1 for more details.

<sup>38</sup> See Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare life*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1998, for a detailed discussion on the importance of the camps in the nurturing of authoritarian leadership. His articulation of the relationship between the “sovereign” and the “bare life” of camp occupants remains seminal.

In the post-colonial set up ZANU-PF, and in keeping with ZANU-PF's long cherished dream of imposing a one party state in post-independent Zimbabwe,<sup>39</sup> the thread of intolerance continued. Intolerant nationalism had however metamorphosed into authoritarian nationalism. Ideally, ZANU-PF preferred a façade of plural politics characterised by weak opposition parties. These opposition parties were useful only to legitimate the notion of plural politics to the outside world. Once an opposition outgrew this use it had to be "silenced once and for all".<sup>40</sup> To this degree, strong political contenders were brutally dealt with. At one level they were criminalised, at another they were infiltrated and forced to crumble, at yet another level their leaders and supporters were arrested, tortured, publicly humiliated and physically abused.

To exemplify, in the 1980s ZAPU which was a formidable opposition was dragooned to merge with ZANU-PF following the murderous *gukurahundi* military campaign between 1982 and 1987.<sup>41</sup> In the 1990s the emergence of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement, led by Edgar Tekere, a former ZANU-PF stalwart, was also met with a lot of violence from the ZANU-PF government.<sup>42</sup> Again in the 1990s in 1995, the Forum Party was branded a European settlers' party, the United Parties as a sell-out party due to its involvement in the 1978 Internal Settlement, and ZANU-Ndonga was called a tribal movement.<sup>43</sup> Through various aggressive methods, these parties were bullied into insignificance or into dissipation.

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<sup>39</sup> Jonathan Moyo, *Voting for Democracy: Electoral Politics in Zimbabwe*, University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 1992, p 22, acutely gives a detailed analysis of this attempt by ZANU-PF to establish the one party system.

<sup>40</sup> John Makumbe and Daniel Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen: The politics behind the 1995 General elections*, University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 2000, p 303.

<sup>41</sup> While accepting that there are varied explanations to the dissident problem and the Gukurahundi response to it in Matebeleland in the 1980s, the indiscriminate targeting of ZAPU supporters and generally Ndebele speakers point to some kind of goal to exterminate ZAPU. There were also quite deliberate attempts at the life of Joshua Nkomo the leader of ZAPU. See for example, Joshua Nkomo, *The Story of My Life*, Norma Kriger, *Guerilla Veterans*, for the various analyses of the *Gukurahundi*.

<sup>42</sup> See Sabelo. J Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist*, pp 180-198.

<sup>43</sup> See *ZANU-PF Election Manifesto*, 1995, pp 4-5, for details.

The scale of attacks and intolerance worsened dramatically at the turn of the century with the creation of an even bigger threat, the MDC, which actually threatened the core of ZANU-PF's traditional support base in the rural areas,<sup>44</sup> including Shurugwi. In all the seven elections that were held between 2000 and 2008 the MDC made strong showings culminating in the two MDC formations controlling the lower house of parliament and the MDC-T winning the first round of the Presidential ballot in 2008. Correspondingly, most of these elections witnessed numerous cases of violence.<sup>45</sup> Cases cited from the interviews from Shurugwi serve to buttress the correlation between elections and the upsurge in violence.<sup>46</sup> Besides the numerous cases of beatings and public humiliations, there were temporary forced displacements which caused the disenfranchisement in Shurugwi. Other MDC supporters were simply too terrified to go to the polling stations on voting days. Alongside this strategy was the deliberate caricaturing of the MDC as a sell-out party, a puppet and front for Western imperial forces.

Mbembe also makes sense of similar violence on the African continent. To him, this was part of the historical trajectory which had become an integral part of the continent's politics. He posits that:

[t]he course of African history is said to be determined by combined action of a diabolic couple formed by an enemy- or tormentor- and a victim. In this closed universe, in which 'making history' consists of annihilating one's enemies, politics is conceived as a sacrificial process, and history, in the end, is seen as participating in a great economy.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "The crisis in Zimbabwe".

<sup>45</sup> The elections between 2000 and 2008 were the June 2000 parliamentary, November 2000 Local Council, the 2002 Presidential, the 2005 parliamentary, the October 2005 senatorial elections, the harmonised 2008 and the infamous June 2008 Presidential runoff elections. See for example "Graveyard governance", p 2, for more details. See also Brian Raftopoulos, "Nation, race and History in Zimbabwean politics" in Brian Raftopoulos and Tyrone Savage, eds, *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town, 2004, p 164 for an in-depth look at violence at election times.

<sup>46</sup> I shall come back to these examples, see the section titled, "Types of violence in Shurugwi" in this chapter.

<sup>47</sup> Achille Mbembe, "African Modes of Self Writing" in *Public Culture*, 14,1, 2002, p 252, he uses sacrifice in two categories: firstly, to denote risking oneself for others; and secondly to kill others/enemies/identified with the enemy. Thus on both ends, deaths are unavoidable.



Inadvertently, issues around gender, masculinity and femininity have surfaced around the violence. While the violence was not necessarily against women in the country and in Shurugwi district, it could not adequately escape these entrapments. Masculinities became heavily militarised to the detriment of women who ended up victimised. Participating in war and violence generally raises the social profile of masculinity of men who are in charge, while at the same time it apports femininity to those on the sidelines.<sup>48</sup> The other end result was the entrenchment of patriarchal oppression of the weak, not only women but also men who do not have political power in society. As Kizito Muchemwa and Robert Muponde suggest, wars and conflict situations in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods in Zimbabwe have resulted in the dominance of masculinities. In their words:

Diachronic and synchronic approaches show how pre-colonial and post-colonial wars and the First and Third Chimurenga are important sites for the historical evolution of Zimbabwean masculinity. War consistently functions as a site of erasure and rearticulation of other sites of masculinity. Families and communities are fractured, erased and dispersed, turning individuals into drifters without allegiance. Outside the war ethic driven by an excess of masculinity, individuals whose gender does not contribute to the war economy are under threat. There are pressures to discipline, militarise and transform the male body into an instrument of surveillance and violence. Macho masculinity, in both the public and private spheres may be understood as a phenomenon unique to the Third Chimurenga but its aetiology...can be traced to pre-colonial times.<sup>49</sup>

In Zimbabwe these various versions of dominant masculinities were well encapsulated in the *amadoda sibili* narrative.<sup>50</sup> The overall effect was to alter the gender relations in the country, as gender roles were violently spelt out in the face of an increased domination of a virulent discourse of male superiority. It was in this context that in Zimbabwe homosexual men, those in the opposition and those whose masculinities

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<sup>48</sup> Kizito Muchemwa and Robert Muponde, eds, "Introduction: Manning the Nation", in *Manning the Nation: Father figures in Zimbabwean literature and Society*, Weaver Press and Jacana, Harare and Johannesburg, 2007, p xviii.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p xviii.

<sup>50</sup> See the General Introduction for a pithy discussion of this.

were not in sync with those of ZANU-PF were feminised and brutalised because they did not conform to the ZANU-PF definition of *amadoda*.

In some other cases, however, women were deliberately targeted as well. This was particularly true under *Operation Tsuronegwenzi/Operation Attack the Hunted and those that Shelter them*.<sup>51</sup> Under this operation, women whose husbands or sons were thought to belong to the MDC were attacked in addition to those that were violated for supporting or suspected to support the MDC. As Cockburn asserts “attacking enemy women both emasculates the enemy (male) and reinforces the masculinity of the perpetrator. The rape and murder of women and children are an act of war, often applauded by women as well as the perpetrators.”<sup>52</sup> Those men whose women have been raped are humiliated for having failed to “protect their women” and hence are categorised as weak.<sup>53</sup>

The spaces given to women were largely in the private sphere, in the homes and far away from the public or political spaces. Even women leaders like Vice President Joyce Mujuru, who had been masculinised through her role in the Second Chimurenga and her later role as Vice President,<sup>54</sup> felt it best for women to remain domesticated. As she said, “women have a great role to play in uniting the nation because they are the household builders, mothers, of future generations and wives to the rulers. The more women cooperate, the more prosperous will be our nation”.<sup>55</sup> As we discussed in the Introduction, while this perception was strong, it also ran counter to another ZANU-PF

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<sup>51</sup> See Solidarity Peace Trust, *Desperately seeking sanity: What prospects for a new Zimbabwe?*, Durban 29 July 2008, p 29.

<sup>52</sup> Cockburn cited in Jane. L. Parpart, “Masculinities, race and violence”, p 104.

<sup>53</sup> See “Sexual violence and armed conflict: United Nations response”, *Women 2000*, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, department of Economic and Social Affairs, 18 April 1998, p 3.

<sup>54</sup> Joyce Mujuru fought as a ZANLA guerrilla in the Second Chimurenga under the name of Teurai Ropa, which loosely means spill blood, and she is also famed for shooting down a Rhodesia airforce helicopter using an AK47 rifle in 1977 when she was pregnant. In 2003, following the death of Vice President Simon Muzenda, she was appointed as the first woman Vice President of Zimbabwe.

<sup>55</sup> Joyce Mujuru, cited in Lene Bull Christansen, “Mai Mujuru: Father of the Nation?” in Kizito Muchemwa and Robert Muponde, (ed), *Manning the Nation*, p 88.

programme to encourage more women to participate in politics. In Shurugwi this latter policy resulted in more female representatives in local politics than males. To this end, there was a 50 percent female representation at Council level and one female out the three representatives at parliamentary level.

The violent episode also occurred at a time when there was an upsurge in cases of domestic violence in the country due to the economic meltdown. Mrs Masawi, a counsellor with Musasa Project in the Midlands, said that there was an increase in domestic abuse of women between 2000 and 2008. As she stated, domestic violence was multi-faceted and it encompassed economic abuse, physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse and ill-treatment around inheritance.<sup>56</sup> Domestic violence, as Mapimhidze further clarifies includes

... yelling, threats and acts meant to purposely humiliate the other in public. There also can be isolation of a partner from family or friends. Physical abuse includes hitting, punching, shoving, restraining, destroying property and choking. Abusive sexual behaviour is rape and any coercion or forcing of a partner to engage in sexual activity.<sup>57</sup>

Astounding statistics from Musasa Project state that more than 60% of murder cases that went through the High Court in the first decade of the millennium in Harare stemmed from domestic violence, and that at least one in three Zimbabwean women was in a violent and abusive marital relationship.<sup>58</sup> Mrs Masawi further highlighted that as the political crisis worsened, the economic meltdown also worsened, which further exposed women to abuse by their spouses, family and neighbours. To this end, women were opened up more to sexual violations as they sought to survive through selling their bodies. In some instances they were not given cash by their husbands to purchase family provisions. Inheritance problems also compounded the plight of the women as

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Mrs Masawi, Musasa Project offices, Gweru, 09 April 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Ropafadzo Mapimhidze, "Domestic violence most tolerated abuse", in *Newsday*, 15 October 2011, accessed 16 October 2011.

<sup>58</sup> Musasa Project, quoted in Mapimhidze, *Ibid*.

relatives more than ever sought a claim to the deceased estates.<sup>59</sup> The above also helps to account for the rise in the HIV infections in the Midlands province as the political and economic pinch worsened.<sup>60</sup>

### **TYPES OF VIOLENCE IN SHURUGWI DISTRICT**

In an interview, a middle aged woman, Barbara, said:

A group of ZANU-PF supporters led by Z, a war veteran, came to our home looking for my husband. They told me they had proof that he was an MDC member. They asked me about his whereabouts. I told them that my husband was attending a funeral in Lower Gweru and would only be coming back after a few days. They insisted that he was there and hiding in one of the houses and so they started a room by room search for him. When they could not find him they then began to assault me claiming that my screaming and cries would make him emerge from hiding. After a while they stopped and asked me to cook *sadza* and chicken for them. By this time my neighbours had gathered to witness my humiliation. Meanwhile my seventeen year old son had also returned with our cattle which he was herding. They stated to interrogate him on his dad's political activities and his whereabouts. After failing to get anything useful from my son, they later took him to the base where they kept him for about two days in an effort to entice my husband to come out of hiding and come to the base. I suffered a lot in those few days: I had to tend to cattle and other household chores. In addition I had to check on my son who was at the base and was also worried what they were going to do with my husband on his return. I phoned my husband not to return until after the situation had improved. Unfortunately my husband went to Johannesburg and he has not come back.<sup>61</sup>

From the interview above, Barbara and women in similar positions suffered complex forms of violence. In this instance there were multiple violations occurring simultaneously. These violations included the beatings that the woman suffered. There was also psychological trauma of dealing with the forced separation from her husband, who had not returned by the end of 2011, which potentially might trigger a permanent collapse of the family union and spell worse fortunes for the larger family. She also suffered psychologically when her son was taken hostage for two days. In addition she

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with Mrs Masawi, Musasa Project offices, Gweru, 09 April 2010.

<sup>60</sup> See for example the *T5 Programme of the Ministry of Health and Child welfare*, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe, 2000 to 2008.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Barbara, a mother of four, at Chironde, 12 May 2010.

had to multitask so as to spread her responsibilities and duties to keep the home and other needs like cattle herding and caring for the other three young children running. There was also the added dimension of the humiliation that she had to endure with her neighbours whom she had to interact with in her everyday course of life. Moreover the violence impacted directly on three people of the same family. These were herself, her son and her husband. It also caused social discomfort for the family. Thus violence at times occurred in layers, which makes it difficult to unpack it into individual types.

It was not, however, always that violence occurred in such compounded ways. In some instances the women suffered only one of the genres of violence. This could either have been a beating, dressing down in public, rape, torture, kidnapping of family members, torture of close family members, being forced out of jobs or denied access to social goods and services. The interview below illustrates this case:

It was in May 2008 when my son was abducted by unknown people at the shops after he had been drinking “scuds” (opaque beer) with his friends. My son is a well-known MDC supporter. They blindfolded him, drove him in an unregistered CAM pick up, beat him thoroughly and dumped him close to Boterekwa Mountain. He walked back home the following day, but he really was struggling to walk. They had beaten him under his feet. He was in pain. We took him to the police station to obtain a report to enable us to take him to the clinic. The police refused saying they did not deal with political cases and so we could not get him treated at the clinic. Due to the severe beatings he lost his sense of hearing and his brains do not work so well anymore. He has become useless, non-productive and he is of very little help to the family compared to what he used to do.<sup>62</sup>

In this case the central theme of the violence is the abduction and torture of the son. It was him alone who suffered the direct physical torture. He was the one who was abducted and beaten. However, the idea of a sole form of violence occurring on its own is tenuous. The broader family, including his mother, endured indirect tremors of the violence. They had to nurse him and provide for him outside the state health care system, because they could not access it without a police statement on what had transpired. They worried about his safety and their safety too, because his open support

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<sup>62</sup> Interview held with Molly, at Gakaka shopping centre, 23 March 2010.

for the opposition exposed them to scrutiny, which increased their chances of being also tortured.

In other cases, indirect violence came through the deaths of the relatives of the women. In Ward 24 in the Mapumbu area, I was informed of a woman whose son was severely beaten by alleged ZANU-PF supporters in the lead up to the June 2008 Presidential election runoff. The son was allegedly picked up from his sleeping hut at night and taken to the nearby bush. There, he was subjected to prolonged beatings until he collapsed. It is alleged that the perpetrators poured cold water on his body in an attempt to revive him. The following day he was taken to Shurugwi hospital where he was detained for a few days. Unfortunately he passed away due to the effects of the beatings. A similar case was reported by *Kubatana.net* which alleges that Nigel Dube, an MDC youth, was murdered in Shurugwi in early May 2008.<sup>63</sup>

On the other hand women also endured primary violence. Primary violence is taken to mean that which the women suffered personally because it had been committed on their persons. Mostly it was of a physical nature and it targeted corporal punishment and property destruction. From the interviews, these included violent abduction, physical assaults, beatings, tortures, and victims being forced to walk on foot for a long journey to return home. Other cases also involved denial of food, verbal assaults, labelling and rape.

The commonest form of primary violence was the physical assaults on the women. These included strokes on the back, buttocks and under the feet using whips. At times these were so severe that victims developed deep wounds on the buttocks and backs. Some of the victims still carry the visible permanent scars of these severe beatings. An example of this comes from Tineyi of Ward 6 in the Zvamatenga area. She told me that a

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<sup>63</sup> Kubatana.net, 06 May 2008, in [http://kubatana.net/html/archive/demgg/080506ba.asp?sector=ELEC&year=0&range\\_start=1](http://kubatana.net/html/archive/demgg/080506ba.asp?sector=ELEC&year=0&range_start=1), Accessed 01 August 2011.

group of six well-known ZANU-PF supporters comprising four men and two women wielding sticks burst into her room. She knew them because they came from two neighbouring villages. According to her,

As soon as they entered, they tied my hands to the back and pushed me out of my bedroom. They also shoved me, beat me, threatened me and accused me of being MDC. They dragged me to a nearby bushy area where for a long time, say a full hour; they severely assaulted me all over the body, especially my back and buttocks. I cried and pleaded with them but they would not listen and they kept beating me. As a result of the beatings my clothes were torn.<sup>64</sup>

As this research was done more than two years after the 2008 election violence, it was not easy to distinguish between the scars due to political violence and scars from other causes. One woman, for example, showed me burn marks on her arms and legs she said were due to political violence because of her support for the MDC.<sup>65</sup> However, her neighbours claimed that she had always had these burns from early childhood. What I found out was also that she had one of her huts burned down, but neither she nor any members of her family were inside. This case illustrates the possible exaggerations of victimhood that people suffered for some as yet to be named gain. It also shows the elements of opportunism that may be exploited by some to claim extended victimhood. At another level, however, she may have used old scars to draw attention to invisible fears caused by burned hut.

Another violation was to force the women to confess being opposition supporters at rallies. In most cases this was done in a humiliating manner involving admitting to being sell-outs. Once they had made their confessions, they were expected to surrender their regalia, or to throw it in fires specifically made for this purpose. Tatenda said:

There was a ZANU-PF rally at Tongogara growth point in May 2008, and everybody was supposed to attend. My husband and I went to the township for that rally. We were made to sit on the grass in the open sun. As it got hotter my husband decided to remove his jersey. Unfortunately he was wearing an MDC T-shirt underneath and he quickly wore his jersey back. This was picked by

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Tineyi, Zvamatenga, 17 May 2010.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Juliet, of Mukandapi area, 27 March 2010.



someone who reported to the *chefs* seating in front. My husband was invited to go to the front and asked why he was wearing the T-shirt. He realised immediately that he had to escape, and so he sprinted away with the youths in hot pursuit. As he was running my husband managed to remove the T-shirt but did not stop. After they failed to catch him they demanded that I take his place in the front. I was told to confess my “sin” of belonging to the sell-out party, the MDC. As part of the repentance I was asked to repeat ZANU-PF slogans and to burn the MDC T-shirt that my husband had been wearing.<sup>66</sup>

Some female teachers also suffered humiliation at rallies. In most of the interviews they told me that they were forced to sing liberation war songs, repeat ZANU-PF slogans, renounce MDC membership, and were forced to join Ward committees. Others told me also that they had money extorted from them as “protection fees” by some village boys who also doubled up as ZANU-PF youths. What was worse, they said, was that some of the people who made them to do these things were their former students, who had assumed the role of ZANU-PF youths. In worst instances some of these were still in school, which meant that after the electioneering the two groups met at school. Now in an apparent reversal of roles, their former students were in control. More than anything, this was double humiliation for the teachers.

In some parts of the district, teachers were forced to buy ZANU-PF membership cards to show their loyalty to ZANU-PF and most importantly as insurance against public humiliation or physical abuse. The Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN), for example, reported that teachers at Nhema Primary School and Svika Secondary School were made to buy such cards for their security.<sup>67</sup>

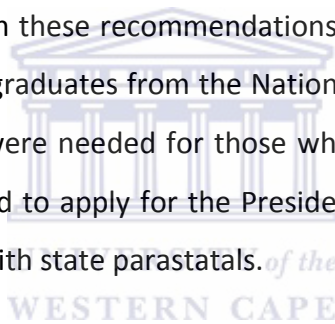
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<sup>66</sup> Interview with Tatenda of Gonye village, 27 April 2010.

<sup>67</sup> See Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN), *Pre-election Update No 5, 6-11 March 2008*, cited in <http://www.zesn.org.zw>, accessed 1 March 2011.

Nationally, besides the humiliations at rallies, it was also reported that about eight (8) teachers were murdered in the 2008 violence.<sup>68</sup> The Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe further reported that 51 percent of rural teachers had experienced political violence, while a further 55 percent stated that they had been forced to vote for a particular political party because of intimidations or threats of violence between 2000 and 2008.<sup>69</sup>

At another level, the violence emanated from the strong interpenetration between ZANU-PF administrative structures and state structures in Shurugwi district. Deployment of what are known commonly as temporary teachers or relief teachers was controlled by ZANU-PF whose officials issued letters of recommendation to the District Staffing Officers. Those candidates with these recommendations were in most cases favourably considered together with the graduates from the National Youth Service (NYS) colleges. The same recommendations were needed for those who required enrolling at training colleges, for those who wanted to apply for the Presidential scholarship funds, and for those requiring employment with state parastatals.



At times these structures ordered known MDC civil servants to transfer from Shurugwi rural. In this regard ZANU-PF leadership also engaged in deliberate witch-hunts of MDC civil servants, especially teachers. As seen above, some teachers were publicly humiliated or physically assaulted. At times such recommendations enabled party supporters to partake in some government duties activities meant for civil servants only. For example, I was informed that Jerry<sup>70</sup> recruited party supporters to do voter

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<sup>68</sup> *Newsday*, 10 October 2011, "Political parties must stop violence against teachers — PTUZ", in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-10-10-political-parties-must-stop-violence-against-teachers-ptuz>, Accessed 10 October 2011.

<sup>69</sup> See *Zimonline*, 13 February 2012, in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6905>, Accessed 16 February 2012.

<sup>70</sup> Jerry lived in one of the villages and was a known ZANU-PF official. Later he was employed by the Ministry of Youth as a Ward Coordinator. Apparently he did not possess any qualifications for this job. His only qualification was his membership of ZANU-PF.

education, census counting and as polling officers.<sup>71</sup> These were roles that were supposed to be performed by civil servants.

Of significance was the existence of some civil servants who also engaged in or encouraged the abuse of their fellow workers. In one school, a male teacher is alleged to have caused the beating of his colleague in 2008 by accusing him of being an MDC-T supporter. This led the victimised teacher to go to South Africa to escape further victimisation. He left behind his wife who was also teaching at the same school. He returned in early 2009, and re-joined his old school. This meant that the two began working together at the same school.<sup>72</sup>

There were cases where teachers were forced to make donations towards national holidays. These included Independence and Heroes Days. Failure to pay, I was informed, was taken to reveal disloyalty. Making contributions on the other hand, demonstrated that one supported ZANU-PF. Payment was thus some kind of insurance against future abuse. Because in many instances lists of those who had made contributions were produced, this pushed the others to make contributions.

Women who were active supporters of the MDC also reported verbal harassment from the perpetrators and the police. Usually they were insulted as prostitutes who were out to look for men, or as women who neglected their families for politics. More generally they were seen as uncultured. Even a high-ranking civil servant at the Provincial Government Complex in Gweru admitted to having suffered such stigmatisation that was also extended to women in leadership positions. As she said:

There are a lot of prejudices that women leaders face. We are firstly viewed as fulfilling a quota, and others see us as products of affirmative action. On the other hand we are viewed as being of questionable morals. It's a struggle to rise up this far. It's a man's world and all the time they are trying to keep you down,

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<sup>71</sup> In some interviews, I was told that some senior ZANU-PF officials and war veterans also participated in such activities, which not only compromised the quality of delivery but also intimidated the locals.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Ndaka, at Chachacha, 22 June 2010.

in some cases through smear campaigns. You get labelled and named. You get uncalled-for background checks. The more you rise the more difficult it will be for you to get married.<sup>73</sup>

The senior woman leader brings out ambivalences in this discussion. On the one hand she condemns “cultural” expectations for pulling women down and on the other she feels women have to conform to the grand social expectation of getting married.

Overall, the interview illuminates the amounts and levels of name-calling and labelling that aspiring women politicians and leaders faced. These women were made to feel that they were in the wrong, doing wrong things and did not belong in such positions. If it could be felt by and done to a high-ranking civil servant, it stands to reason that the rural women in opposition ranks fared worse. That the name-calling was even done at times by the police officers, who are supposed to have been protecting them, made it worse for the rural women in the ranks of the opposition. Importantly, this underscored the perception that draws on the naturalisation of patriarchal tendencies inherited from the Greek polis tradition that considers politics and citizenship as male preserves.<sup>74</sup> In this way, leadership positions are supposed to be filled up by men, while women are supposed to remain in the private domestic sphere. These were transmitted through Christianity and through histories of colonial and political systems put in place during the decolonisation period.

Secondary violence was also experienced. It was when women experienced violence through their relations, like husbands, siblings or children. Secondary violence also involved trauma and spirals of violence. It was largely through secondary manifestations of violence that violence seems to have made the descent into the ordinary everyday lives of Shurugwi rural residents. Through secondary violence people lived side by side with trauma. Relations within the nucleus family, the extended family and neighbours

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<sup>73</sup> Interview with a senior provincial government employee, 14 April 2010, Gweru.

<sup>74</sup> See Oyeronke Oyewumi, “Visualising the body: Western theories and African bodies”, in Oyeronke Oyewumi, ed, *African gender studies: A reader*, Pelgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, 2005, p 8.

were physically, economically, socially and psychologically ruptured. This overall marked the “negative transformations of the institution of the extended family system” into one that was increasingly marked by “selfishness and individualism.”<sup>75</sup>

From the cases of Barbara and Molly, referred to earlier, we find that the family unit in Barbara’s case was torn asunder. Her husband has migrated to South Africa to escape ZANU-PF violence, but he left behind a wife and family without a husband and father. Moreover the family was more susceptible to economic violence as the family had lost a breadwinner. Violence had thus helped to shake the very root of the community of Shurugwi, the family. As for Molly, her son was now suffering from a mental condition from the assaults to the extent that he could not fend for himself. This also left the family at the mercy of poverty. More often than not men were the breadwinners in the district, and so losing a man either to migration or due to some psychological condition exposed families to greater risks of poverty and generally to inadequate provisions.

At times the violence was blended with gender violence. There were increases in recorded cases of wife beating and battering in the whole of the Midlands Province between the years 2000 and 2008.<sup>76</sup> I was informed of cases where women were beaten at home by their husbands after these men had been politically victimised. The cases point to a causal-effect between political abuse and domestic repression. The women themselves, however, did not bring out issues of their beating at the hands of their husbands or boyfriends as an important aspect of their lives in the era of unprecedented violence in the district. They acknowledged to having been beaten by their men but they did not link it to the macro-political environment. This could be the result that in the cultural trope of the Shona it is accepted that a wife could be beaten as a sign of disciplining her, and as a sign of loving her.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> See Maurice T Vambe, “Popular songs and social realities in post-independence Zimbabwe”, p 82.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Mrs Masawi, Musasa Project, Musasa Project Offices, Gweru, 9 April 2010.

<sup>77</sup> This tradition is taken from the pre-colonial practice that allowed men to beat their women who were regarded as minors and to some extent their “purchase”. For a nuanced discussion of wife beating in pre-

However, that there was an increase in domestic violence as the period of political violence extended may be indicative of the causal relationship of political violence to that in the domestic sphere. The question that begs further research is whether violence as a relation of interaction had become so trivialised that it became a part of what Gramsci would refer to as “common sense.”<sup>78</sup> At the same time, I am again grappling with whether the beatings at home then led the women to seek out political opponents upon whom to vent their frustrations.<sup>79</sup>

Gender violence involved another dimension when the members of the extended family abused women. More often it was verbalised violence especially regarding socially acceptable dress code and behaviour. Such comments from members of the family included: “*ihembe yemukadzi wemunhu iyoyi? Or, mafambire emukadzi wemunhu iwaya?* (Is this how a married woman should dress? Or, Is this how a married woman behaves?)<sup>80</sup> What is clear in these statements are the violations to the women’s rights based on assumed atemporal cultural expectations that are highly controlling of the woman. They set parameters that classified women’s behaviour as acceptable or disgraceful. These are a part of “patriarchal norms of female behaviour” among which a woman has to dress and conduct themselves “conservatively.”<sup>81</sup> There are traits that women have to follow if they have to pass the social test, for which there is no generally accepted standard but still to which women must still conform. These expectations

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colonial Zimbabwe, see Pauline Ada Uwakweh, “Debunking Patriarchy: The Liberational Quality of Voicing in Tsitsi Dangarembga’s ‘Nervous Conditions’” in *Research in African Literature*, Vol 26, No 1, Spring 1995, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3820089> Accessed 05 October 2010. See also Eunice Njovana and Charlotte Watts, “Gender violence in Zimbabwe: A need for collaborative Action”, in *Reproductive Health Matters*, Vol 4, No 7, May 1996, p 47, cited in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3775350>, accessed 19 March 2011, who say that it is common for women to be socialised to absorb beatings based on the Shona notion that says “*ndizvo zvinoita mudzimba/that is how matrimony is*”).

<sup>78</sup> See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from prison notebooks*, p 419, for a more nuanced discussion of the common sense phenomenon.

<sup>79</sup> See Chapter Four in which I discuss the agency of the women in the violence.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Mrs Masawi of Musasa Project Gweru office, 9 April 2010.

<sup>81</sup> See Marissa Moorman, “Duelling bands and good girls: gender, music and the nation in Luanda’s musseques, 1961-1974”, in *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 37, 2, 2004, p 280.

recall what Raftopoulos calls the “selective recourse to ‘tradition’ and ‘custom’” on the parameters of female “respectability” as set out by the men.<sup>82</sup>

What is worse, as Njovana and Watts posit, is that once the violence is perpetrated by someone so close it tends not only to be reinforced because it is repeated often. Additionally, the women often were put in a double bind because seeking redress at law puts their future and their children’s at stake due to their lack of earning power.<sup>83</sup> As a consequence, the impact of the violence is bound to be long term.<sup>84</sup>

Another aspect of the violence in the district was the denial of access for the victims to rights and services that were accessed by other citizens. Firstly, the victims were denied basic political rights as enshrined in the constitution, especially under two repressive laws: Political Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA).<sup>85</sup> These were the right to freedom of expression, association, and assembly. To fully appreciate the circumscription of human rights under AIPPA, Eddison Zvobgo, its key architect, described it as “the most repressive piece of legislation ever passed in this country since the Land Apportionment Act of 1930.”<sup>86</sup>

An MDC official at the Midlands Provincial Headquarters stated that “several” of their rallies were cancelled in Shurugwi district under POSA. This was corroborated by an MDC official from Shurugwi who estimated the number of MDC rallies that were

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<sup>82</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “Gender, Nationalist Politics and the fight for the city: Harare 1940-1950s”, in Patricia Macfadden (ed), *SAFERE*, Vol1, No2, 1995, p 31.

<sup>83</sup> See Eunice Njovana and Charlotte Watts, “Gender violence in Zimbabwe”, pp 46-47. As a result of this they have found that it takes an average of ten years for those suffering domestic violence to report such cases.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, p 46.

<sup>85</sup> See the impact of these two pieces of legislation nationally, in Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe”, p 214. See also, Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens: 60 years of institutionalised violence in Zimbabwe*, Jacana, Auckland Park, 2011, p 64

<sup>86</sup> *The Zimbabwean*, 09 July 2011, “AIPPA not necessary: Matonga”, in [http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/50762/aippa-not-necessary-matonga.html?utm\\_source=thezim&utm\\_medium=homepage&utm\\_campaign=latestarticles](http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/50762/aippa-not-necessary-matonga.html?utm_source=thezim&utm_medium=homepage&utm_campaign=latestarticles), Accessed 10 July 2011.



cancelled in the district from 2001 to 2008 at over sixty.<sup>87</sup> He said that the major reason was that the police told them that they did not have enough manpower to provide security at their rallies. As such their rallies were not cleared to take place as required under POSA. He went on to allege that at no point were ZANU-PF rallies cancelled, for similar reasons.

In addition the victims were also denied access to societal protection as the police refused to record or to act upon their cases. In most of the interviews, like in the case of Molly, people stated that they could not open dockets for their cases because the police refused to receive their complaints. However, there were a variety of other reasons. At times victims simply did not bother to report cases to the police because they had lost confidence in the impartiality of police services. For some it was fear of a backlash from their perpetrators and generally a fear of the unknown. Yet elsewhere, as the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum has reported, some victims knew that sections of the police force had also abused opposition supporters. In this regard, for example, the Law and Order section of the police services embarked on a systematic programme of torture of women civil society leaders. The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum concluded that “the behaviour of the ZRP is not random violence by a few officers but they are apparently acting on instructions from their superiors. Instructions have sometimes been heard given on the spot.”<sup>88</sup>

At other times some victims suffered violence of denial. They were denied access to subsidized groceries, agricultural inputs, health care, legal representation, and food hand-outs. Denial of food and access to basic amenities can best be summed up in Chief Fortune Charumbira’s words that: “we [ZANU-PF] cannot continue to feed the enemy

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<sup>87</sup> See also Solidarity Peace Trust, *Disturbing the peace: An overview of civilian arrests in Zimbabwe: February 2003-January 2004*, July 2004, for a national overview of the instrumentalisation of POSA in Zimbabwe against the opposition.

<sup>88</sup> See Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *Who guards the guards?: Violations by Law Enforcement Agencies in Zimbabwe, 2000-2006*, Harare, December 2006, p 15.

because they are sell-outs.”<sup>89</sup> In the Midlands Province, the words of a ZANU-PF councillor that “even if stone was to melt, MDC children will not get food because it is ZANU-PF food” further reinforce the basis of this discrimination.<sup>90</sup> These denials contravened various international conventions that the government had ratified.<sup>91</sup> These practices of discrimination compounded the traumatic encounters the women had in the violence. In some sense they represented denial to existence because of the cataclysmic collapse in their socio-economic standards of living under the debilitating crisis. The crisis, as described in the General Introduction, was exemplified by the informalisation of the economy, massive unemployment, record inflation and a fall in the standards of living. Under these conditions food and other forms of hand-outs for daily necessities played an important part in sustaining the bare existence of these women. What perhaps made it worse was that these denials occurred at the same time the various operations of NGOs were severely circumscribed.

## ENCOUNTERING THE FIELD: SILENCE AND THE OTHER CHALLENGES

Researching violence is never an easy project, but trying to do so in the place of its recent occurrence is even harder. I embarked on my main field research between December 2009 and July 2010. The follow up was between November and December 2011. Although the physical wounds for many of the victims had healed, the emotional wounds were still fresh. Because of this some known victims refused to share their

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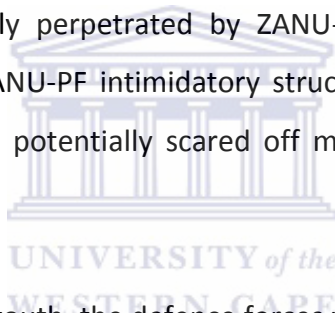
<sup>89</sup> Chief Fortune Charumbira, the President of the Chiefs Council, quoted in “Zimbabwe: Between a rock and a hard place: Women human Rights defenders at risk” in <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR46/017/2007/en/d9609e02-d38d-11dd-a329-> accessed 10 September 2010.

<sup>90</sup> This is a quotation from a statement allegedly made by a ZANU-PF councillor from the Midlands Province in 2002. See Physicians for Human Rights, Denmark, *Zimbabwe: Post Presidential Election March-May 2002*, 21 May 2002, p 15.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, for a pithy discussion of these conventions and their implications for the women of Zimbabwe. Just to state, some of these are: Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, the United Nations Convention against Torture and other cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Punishment. Apparently the government violated its own constitution, for example Section 20(1) says; “No person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression, that is to say freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference and freedom from interference with his correspondence”. And Section 21 guarantees the freedom of assembly and of belonging, see the *Constitution of Zimbabwe*.

encounters, preferring to keep to themselves. There were other problems such as selective memorialisation, an unfriendly political environment, cultural taboos, and in-built self-policing mechanisms. The other challenge was that the period when the research was done offered a lot of opportunities to various people to claim victimhood.

To begin this section I wish to return to the issue of silence by answering the following questions. Why did the women choose to be silent? And, what do the silences reveal or obscure? One plausible explanation could be to refer to Foucault's suggestion that silence by the victims is based on the group policing and prohibition mechanisms by those in power.<sup>92</sup> In the Shurugwi situation, the currency of Foucault's argument lies in the fact I established that politics was a major taboo. Discussing MDC-ZANU-PF politics and political violence allegedly perpetrated by ZANU-PF was never easy. This was particularly so because the ZANU-PF intimidatory structures led by war veterans and youth were still visible. These potentially scared off many victims from sharing their encounters.



Besides the war veterans and youth, the defence forces were under Minister Emmerson Munangagwa, General Constantine Chiwenga and Air Marshal Perence Shiri, while the Police were under Commissioner Augustine Chihuri. These were staunch ZANU-PF loyalists and members of the JOC, that had appropriated state power in the country since 1999 and who were blamed for coordinating violence.<sup>93</sup> In addition, the traditional leadership structures involving the chiefs and headmen were still not reformed and their patronage to ZANU-PF and President Mugabe was not in doubt.

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<sup>92</sup> For a more detailed reading, see Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol 1, Panthen, New York, 1978.

<sup>93</sup> See Chapter Four for more details on this. Of interest is the fact that the hierarchy of authority that is largely blamed for the Matebeleland massacres of the 1980s was at this time calling the shots in government in 2009 and 2010. Most notable of these were Emmerson Munangagwa, the Defence Minister, who was minister responsible for the dreaded CIO; Perence Shiri, of the Airforce of Zimbabwe who was the commander of the Fifth Brigade.

The constitutional consultations from the beginning of June 2010 in the district highlighted this. As part of the GPA, the GNU was supposed to gather people's views and produce a new people-driven constitution to replace the Lancaster House constitution. However, a lot of cases of coaching of the people on what they wanted in the constitution were witnessed.<sup>94</sup> In most cases village heads and known war veterans spoke at these meetings. In addition the chiefs and headmen also had embarked on their own consultations before the COPAC consultations, attended by senior ZANU-PF politicians, not only from the district but even provincial leaders.

Under these challenging conditions we had to halt some of the scheduled interviews in wards where the COPAC meetings were taking place for our personal safety and that of the respondents. In this scenario the victims decided to privatise their memories due to the potential threats to their security in the uneasy peace environment where ZANU-PF still had control of the coercive arms of the state. The continued existence of these structures was salient in muzzling the victims because in a country where violence and impunity had assumed cultural statuses, there was a threat in the air which meant that speaking about previous encounters could invite future violation.

That the violence was committed by close relatives, co-workers, fellow villagers, former friends and neighbours, especially in 2008, and who were also articulating the dominant ZANU-PF discourse against "sell-outs"<sup>95</sup> as the ZANU-PF youths and war veterans, did not help matters. They continued to share the same spaces like homes, churches and workplaces. The presence of the perpetrators in their everyday lives was intimidating and became a constant reminder of the violence they suffered and potential violence they could suffer in the future. In other cases, as RAU established, there were instances when the perpetrators threatened their previous victims that they would suffer repeat

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<sup>94</sup> Refer to Chapter Five for more on this.

<sup>95</sup> See also CCJP, *Graveyard governance: A report on political violence following the March 2008 harmonised elections*, for a detailed national outlook of the same occurrence.

violations.<sup>96</sup> The victims thus still lived in fear and felt powerless as the perpetrators continued to receive immunity from prosecution<sup>97</sup> and roamed the district freely. As such, some feared to talk about their experiences in and with violence. It was also as if speaking about it further exposed them.

Due to fear and the continued presence of the structures that had sustained the previous pogrom, the use of research equipment became difficult. Ordinarily people would not speak in the presence of a tape recorder, camera and even a note book.<sup>98</sup> These tools scared away responses. I ended up employing more the informal ways of getting the information, where I would discuss in ordinary conversations with women about their memories of the violence.<sup>99</sup> I also used the observation technique and less-structured questions on those things that we could not comprehend. However, I still retained the core of the questions that I needed to ask. This happened despite strong assurances of anonymity. At the end of the day for most of our (me and my assistant) interviews the golden rule applied, no tape recorder, no camera and no notebook. We would write down what we got in the discussions and observations in private or after we had gone back to our bases to avoid unnecessarily scaring away potentially fruitful discussions.

Where we got reluctant victims to speak there tended to be other variations of silences in their responses. As Veena Das says, silence is not necessarily the absence of speech. It has more to do with how an event is told, which might be language that is

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<sup>96</sup> RAU, *When the going gets tough the man gets going*, p 8.

<sup>97</sup> As with the other cycles of violence, the 2008 one ended with Clemency Order No 1 of 2008 which pardoned political crimes committed between March and June 2008. See Human Rights Watch, *Perpetual fear: Impunity and cycles of violence*, March 2011, p 25, in [www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/.../zimbabwe0311NoPage8Full.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/.../zimbabwe0311NoPage8Full.pdf), Accessed 14 June 2012.

<sup>98</sup> Even senior women politicians refused me to use these preferring rather informal discussions.

<sup>99</sup> This method was adapted from Mats Utas, "Agency of victims: Young women in the liberation civil war" in Alcinda Honwana and Felip de Boeck, (eds), *Makers and Breakers: Children and youth in Post-Colonial Africa*, Africa World Press Inc, Trenton and Asmara, 2005, p 54, who used it in researching women's encounters in the Liberian civil war.

...general and metaphoric ... that evaded description of any events with specificity so as to capture the particularity of their experience, or by describing the surrounding events but leaving the actual experience [...] unstated.<sup>100</sup>

This, in essence creates fences around memories.<sup>101</sup> This also includes the deliberate editing of what to say, even some sort of a censorship, which might be a result of the need to avoid negative labels in the aftermath of their encounters with violence. In this case women who could have suffered rape, for example, would try to keep their experiences a secret for fear that they would be labelled prostitutes who invited the men to rape them. Such situations then bring to question the reliability of the words that are spoken by such women victims. This is true because “words can be relied on only if one is sure that their function is to reveal and not to conceal.”<sup>102</sup>

For Shurugwi, the question then is to what extent were the testimonies revealing or occluding? This is a particularly important question as some women could have felt the need to protect themselves and their families from the possible negative impact of certain disclosures. There is also a strong possibility that some of the women suffered gross violations, including rape, but they rather retained these memories to themselves than risk exposure with the danger of ostracisation especially by their husbands. In discussions with men in the district it became clear that almost all men were not prepared to take women tainted with a rape stigma.<sup>103</sup> As Greene says, such disclosures might bring unwanted divisions, conflicts and disharmony.<sup>104</sup> It might also be extended to mean safety from further persecution especially if the tormentors are still within

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<sup>100</sup> Veena Das, *Life and words: Violence and the descent into the ordinary*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 2005.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On violence*, Harcourt, Brace and World Inc, New York, 1970, p 66.

<sup>103</sup> This came out in most of the general discussions I had with men during the course of the fieldwork. Surprisingly even some women are also of the belief that women victims of rape cannot continue as wives because they would have become ‘dirty’, in their language.

<sup>104</sup> See Sandra. E. Greene, “Whispers and silences: Explorations in African oral History”, in *Africa Today*, vol 50, no2, *Oral Heritage and Indigenous Knowledge*, Autumn/Winter, 2003, Indiana University Press, cited in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4187571>, Accessed 16 August 2012.

sight, an “unfreedom” in Brecht’s lexicography.<sup>105</sup> On the whole, as Alexander, McGregor and Ranger, said, “[m]emorialisation has thus been forced into the realms of silence, of private arenas of discourse, and of possession and ritual.”<sup>106</sup>

Related, I am also still grappling with issues around words written down as a means of representation. My problem is: Can words really represent violence, and can the testimonies that the women gave adequately represent their experiences? True, words can be the only weapon the women have to confront their trauma. Words convert their silences into speech, and are a means of expressing their pain, means of identifying perpetrators, generally of bringing the hidden to light, means of retelling the events and a possible step towards healing. But are these words adequate to fully articulate the violence? To what extent can I also be able to represent these voices? In the latter I find one of Ranciere’s guiding questions, in relation to representing the “others”, “from what position do we speak and in the name of what or whom?”<sup>107</sup> to be instructive.

There are a lot of translations involved and certain statements tend to be diluted and mean less when translated and without the context in which they were made.<sup>108</sup> An example is a statement like *Ndinoty mwanangu*/I am afraid my son, which one respondent made. It only verbalises the fear without showing the bodily expressions, such as, on the face, in the eyes, general body language, the social meaning, the emotional feelings and also the atmosphere or context in which it was said. Thus, words at times tend to be empty and at best half able to represent the encounters the women had with militarised violence. More often I find them to be orphaned outside context

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<sup>105</sup> Ernst Bloch, George Lukacs, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetics and Politics*, Translated by Ronald Taylor, Verso, p 74.

<sup>106</sup> Jocelyn Alexander, Joann McGregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory*, pp 8-9.

<sup>107</sup> See Gabriel Rockhill, “Translator’s introduction Jacques Derrida’s politics of perception”, p 2.

<sup>108</sup> See Jacques Derrida, “Force of law: The ‘Mystical Foundation of Authority’”, in Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfield and David Gray Carlson, eds, *Deconstruction and the possibility of justice*, Routledge, New York and London, 1992, p 5, who says that “...translation, however, excellent it necessarily remains a translation, that is to say an always possible but always imperfect compromise between two idioms.”



and outside their setting.<sup>109</sup> The question then is what or who is she afraid of? Was it me? Or was it those who surrounded her or even the obtaining political environment? All could be relevant. As mentioned earlier, issues of who to trust with your encounters in the violence were really crucial so that she could have simply been afraid of me. On the other hand, I also think that she felt unsafe to be discussing these matters with me in the aftermath of a ZANU-PF rally that had recently taken place.

At another level then it becomes a problem of translation. In this regard, the statement “I am afraid my son” above which the woman used when she refused to be drawn into discussing her experiences in the 2000-2008 violence is also instructive here. More than the fact that it was isolated from its context(s), and at a deeper level, it intimates a deep-seated fear, a fear that now constitutes her everyday lived existence. Thus she lives a life as a perpetual victim. Her life is ever regulated by the Shirlow’s “spaces of fear”.<sup>110</sup> In these spaces, she cannot discuss her encounters in and with the 2000-2008 violence.

Silences might also be related to the fact that the women might not have felt comfortable relating their experiences to a male researcher. Culturally, women of Shurugwi are supposed to share their problems with women relatives or relations such as their mother, aunt or a female village councillor. However, even after the recruitment of a female assistant silences remained, which might point to other causes for it, such as the security situation and an unsupporting social environment. Another possibility of this silence could be that the violence had taken a domestic dimension. As discussed earlier, and in Chapter Four, close relatives and family members contributed to the ways that led to the targeting of women. Some kept lists that implicated their neighbours and

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<sup>109</sup> See also the argument by Veena Das, *Life and Words*, which alludes to the fact that words carry more weight in certain contexts. These contexts include their original language, time and political agency.

<sup>110</sup> See Pete Shirlow, cited in Nils Zurawski, “‘I know where you live’ - Aspects of watching, surveillance, and social control in a conflict zone (Northern Ireland)”, in *Surveillance and society*, 2 (4), p 502, in <http://www.surveillance-and-society.org>, Accessed 28 May 2012.

fellow villagers, while others participated in the public humiliation or beating of the victims.

At other times, as discussed earlier in this chapter, some husbands also began to take out their frustrations on their wives. This was either through physically beating their wives, or through emotional abuse or even abandoning their families which put extra financial strain on the women. In these circumstances the silence might be explained in terms of the rise of general gender-based silence. In a study in South Africa, which might inform us here, Morrell discusses the fact that economically weak women do not confront domestic violence by speaking out against it because they risk expulsion from the home.<sup>111</sup>

The above also speaks to the findings of the Musasa Project (cited earlier) that recorded an increase in domestic violence in the Midlands province in the period 2000 to 2008. Besides this, I established also that social transactions that engender disparities between men and women in the home still persisted unchallenged in Shurugwi. Dowry was still demanded. In addition women, in the highly commercialised and “mercenary”<sup>112</sup> transactions around lobola, still received a single cow when their daughters got married and left the men to get the bulk of the bride price. Also going by the NAC study,<sup>113</sup> and my field observations, most of the women in the district lived as housewives while men sought wage labour.

The other challenge was that the accounts that I got were more often embedded in, and pervaded by, the two meta-narratives on the violence.<sup>114</sup> These were more broadly the

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<sup>111</sup> Robert Morell, “Silence, sexuality and HIV in South African Schools”, in *The Australian Educational Researcher*, Vol 30, No 1, April 2003, cited in <http://www.aare.edu.au/aer/online/30010e.pdf>, Accessed 28 February 2011.

<sup>112</sup> See Maurice T Vambe, “Popular songs and social realities in post-independence Zimbabwe”, p 78, who, using Oliver Mtukudzi’s song “Nyanga yenzou”, describes the evils of the extortionist demands placed on sons-in-law.

<sup>113</sup> See General Introduction, for the statistics of employment ratios in the district.

<sup>114</sup> See Chapter One for a nuanced discussion of these discourses on the violence.

emancipatory discourse that was used by ZANU-PF, and the human rights narrative that was associated with the human rights NGOs and the MDC. This was tricky for me because these narratives impacted on the informants' memorialisation. There was, I suspect, an incitement towards these domineering discourses, so to speak. In this way they invited respondents to a certain perceptive recalling of their experiences and to a certain way to speak about them.

Related to the above, the research aimed to look at violence and its memory from 2000 to 2008. In most cases women, however, tended to remember with ease the later violence, especially that of 2008. Earlier encounters were only referred to after a lot of probing. Violence of earlier periods seemed to have been cast to distant memory. While shortness of memory could be important, it seems though that the intensity of the violence in 2008 which overshadowed other periods of violence made it a common reference point. As discussed in Chapter one, the latter episode was organised under the twin operations *Mavhoterapapi and Tsuru negwenzi*. Maybe its recent occurrence also made people easily recall the events. It could also potentially point to the selective recalling, which privileged "psychological truths" over "forensic truths".<sup>115</sup> In this regard, women victims might have deliberately left out episodes and encounters that did not support their claim for victimhood. In the highly politically polarised society of Shurugwi, it was thus difficult to take given statements without cross-checking with neighbours, for example, which was not always easy.

### **VICTIMHOOD, OPPORTUNITY AND VIOLENCE**

Violence also presented itself as a time of opportunity to claim victimhood. A lot of hope for compensation was high in the district. With the GNU in place there were widespread rumours that some form of restorative justice mechanisms would be implemented.

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<sup>115</sup> See Shari Eppel, "A tale of three dinner plates" in the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, 4, for more elaboration. Forensic truths are "essential facts of what happened such as might be used in a court of law" or for lobbying purposes, pp 5-7.

There were as well some NGOs<sup>116</sup> collecting information about the violence. These included the CCJP, Centre for Violence and Conflict Resolution (CVCR), ZZZICOMP, and the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum. The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum transitional also held a transitional justice consultative meeting at Makusha Community Hall on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2010.<sup>117</sup> These were in addition to the other relief NGOs operating in the district.

The flurry of activities by these NGOs sent mixed messages. First, it sent shivers through the perpetrators because they could be held to account. Second, it also sent hopes that victims could be compensated. Both sets of messages led many to lay claim to victimhood. Even some well-known perpetrators claimed to be victims of their political party affiliation and of their superiors' instructions. A well-known war veteran in the district claimed to have committed violence in the name of his party and indicated that he should therefore not be called to account.<sup>118</sup> Instead he clamoured for victimhood. To him, his association with the ZNLWVA and ZANU-PF is to blame. He also claimed that he was suffering from ostracisation by fellow community members.<sup>119</sup> This case while showing elements of in-house coercion in ZANU-PF, importantly, however, highlights the instrumentalisation and fluidity of victimhood. The shifting meanings and contexts around who was a victim again reinforce the perceived profits of victimhood.

For some, they saw an opportunity to settle old scores or to fight petty jealousies, and to assert political power. It was also a period to accumulate wealth and try to escape poverty, while for some it was an opportunity to find work in ZANU-PF through engaging in political violence. Work for some was created and they worked in the newly

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<sup>116</sup> Among some of the NGOs that have worked on violence in the district are CCJP, Centre for violence and conflict resolution (CVCR). Musasa Project has also been working on domestic violence, while the National Aids Council has worked on the trends in HIV and AIDS.

<sup>117</sup> See Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *Who will dare begin the process of recovering the truth?* Vol 2, 2010, cited in [http://www.hrforum.com/special\\_hrru/outreach-report-07-10.pdf](http://www.hrforum.com/special_hrru/outreach-report-07-10.pdf), Accessed 19 May 2011, p 119.

<sup>118</sup> I explore his and other cases in Chapter Five.

<sup>119</sup> Interview with a senior war veteran in Shurugwi, 30 June 2010, Ward 22.

established posts of Ward Coordinators, and also in various government departments as a reward for engaging in the Third Chimurenga.

### **PATTERNS AND STRUCTURES OF THE VIOLENCE**

The narratives point to episodic violence especially around election time, which had turned into some sort of a culture. Even more than a culture, these election bouts of organising violence constituted a kind of economy.<sup>120</sup> At these moments the violence was generalised and deliberate against the opposition. However, there was no evidence of systematically targeting women in Shurugwi. In many ways violence was systematic and used as a technology to retain political power in the seven elections held between 2000 and 2008.

The way that politics of coercion, intimidation, physical assault and displacement in Shurugwi was crystallised around election times between 2000 and 2008 is captured in the words of an informant, Tendai. She said:

We have not known peace in Shurugwi since the MDC was formed [in 1999]. At every election time we experience violence. For me 2000 parliamentary elections and the 2008 Presidential runoff elections were the worst, there was too much violence. ZANU-PF was losing ground here. It was fashionable to want change. I also wanted change. We were open in 2000 about our support for the MDC. Mugabe has been too long in power, and so we needed change. We could not do anything against ZANU-PF violence. Many violations occurred, we were forced to sing ZANU songs, shout their slogans, we were humiliated and threatened and some were beaten at rallies. Yet others were abducted, while others ran away to escape punishment. It was terrible. Every time I think about an election my heart is filled with fear. I do not look forward to another election soon.<sup>121</sup>

The above interview also fits the analysis by Makumbe and Compagnon following the 1995 elections, in their book *Behind the smokescreen*. To them, the violence before, during and after the elections was related to the need by ZANU-PF to crush the

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<sup>120</sup> Many NGO reports, for example, CCJP, *Graveyard Governance*, and the Solidarity Peace Trust, *Desperately seeking Sanity: What prospects for a new Zimbabwe?*, Durban, 29 July 2008, p 15, also point to a similar trend in other parts of the country.

<sup>121</sup> Interview with Tendai of Mukandapi area, 26 May 2010.

opposition. They posit that “everybody knows in Zimbabwe that any other outcome is unthinkable in the current political system and that the ruling party would never concede a nationwide defeat at the ballot box”.<sup>122</sup> Despite falling out of the period under discussion, their analysis is spot on. In the 2000s with the emergence of a strong opposition in the form of the MDC, which actually threatened to unseat ZANU-PF, ZANU-PF “lost its façade of tolerance and unleashed its repressive party and state machinery”.<sup>123</sup>

Importantly, the analysis by Makumbe and Compagnon illustrates how the genealogy of the ZANU-PF intolerance against strong opposition predates the year 2000. It goes even to the days of the liberation struggle when the liberation movements sought to be the “sole” and “authentic” movements,<sup>124</sup> through the 1980s and 1990s elections.<sup>125</sup> Violence at election times was used to try to keep the project of a one party state alive.<sup>126</sup> Moreover it was in keeping with Mugabe’s views on elections. In 1976 he argued that “our votes must go together with our guns; after all any vote.....shall have been the product of the gun. The gun which provides the votes should remain its security officer, its guarantor.”<sup>127</sup> He repeated similar sentiments in 2008 when he said “we shed a lot of blood for this country; we are not going to give up the country for a

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<sup>122</sup> See John Makumbe and Daniel Compagnon, *Behind the smokescreen*, p 20. The sham re-election of President Robert Mugabe in a one man election rerun in 2008 fits perfectly the analysis. President George W Bush of the USA castigated the manner in which President Mugabe won following the last minute withdrawal of Morgan Tsvangirai citing unprecedented levels of violence on his supporters. The diplomatic standoff between President Mugabe on the one hand and Presidents Ian Khama and The late Levy Mwanawasa of Botswana and Zambia, respectively, also centered on this election of June 2008.

<sup>123</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, “The state in crisis” in Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen, eds, *Zimbabwe’s Unfinished business*, p 234. This was in the context of the first defeat for ZANU-PF at the ballot in the constitutional referendum of February 2000 and other impending elections.

<sup>124</sup> See Ibbo Mandaza “The one party state and democracy in Southern Africa: Towards a conceptual framework, in Ibbo Mandaza and Lloyd Sachikonye, eds, *The one party state and democracy: The Zimbabwe debate*, SAPES Books, 1991, Harare, p 27.

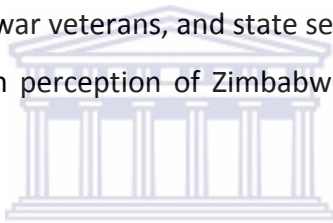
<sup>125</sup> See for example, Norma Kriger, *Guerilla veterans*, M.J Matshezi, *Zimbabwe: With Robert Mugabe to the brink of the abyss*, University of Fort Hare Press, Alice, 2007, Ian .D. Smith, *Bitter Harvest: The great betrayal and the dreadful aftermath*, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 1997, See also Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, pp 17-20, for detailed accounts of this intolerance.

<sup>126</sup> See for example the discussion by Jonathan Moyo,

<sup>127</sup> See Robert Mugabe, “Fight Harder, Fight Harder”, in *Our War Of Liberation: Speeches, Articles, and Interviews*, Mambo, Gweru, 1980, p 12.

mere X on a ballot. How can a ball point pen fight with a gun?”<sup>128</sup> At another level, the deployment of violence speaks to the ideals of a revolutionary party that we discussed earlier in which the use of the army and violence is pivotal to advance political objectives.

It thus becomes strongly evident that elections were apportioned as a space where the ruling party waged a war against its enemies. In these “battles”, as Muzondidya suggests, “political opponents” were viewed as “enemies to be annihilated rather than as political competitors.”<sup>129</sup> Traditionally in the post-independence era, this “war” was waged by the women and youth leagues to seek subordination of opponents.<sup>130</sup> However, in the post-millennium, as we highlighted earlier it was militarised and increasingly performed by the war veterans, and state security forces. This furthered the importance of the Foucauldian perception of Zimbabwean politics as an extension of war by other means.



That election time was also a period of high levels of violence can be seen from the high number of election petitions presented to the courts by the MDC. Most of these petitions cited intimidation as the basis for seeking the nullification of election results.<sup>131</sup> In 2000, for example, the MDC petitioned the High Court to nullify results in thirty-eight constituencies because of the violence perpetrated in these constituencies.<sup>132</sup> In addition, between 2000 and 2004, about 90 percent of MDC parliamentarians suffered violence on their persons, while 60 percent reported attacks on their families and staff. Another 50 percent reported property vandalism, while other

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<sup>128</sup> See the *Report of the Pan African Parliament Election Observer Mission: Presidential Runoff and House of Assembly By-elections, Republic of Zimbabwe, 27 June 2008*, pp 13.

<sup>129</sup> See James Muzondidya, “From buoyancy to crisis, 1980-1997”, in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, eds, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p 177.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid*, pp 177 & 179.

<sup>131</sup> See for example Norma Kriger, *Guerilla Veterans in Post war Zimbabwe: Symbolic and violent Politics, 1980-1987*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p 196, See also Tony Reeler, “Subliminal terror?: Human rights violence and torture in Zimbabwe during 2008”, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Cape Town, pp 6-7.

<sup>132</sup> Norma Kriger, *Guerilla Veterans in Post war Zimbabwe*, p 195.



senior MDC officials had spent varying periods in prison on various cooked-up charges.<sup>133</sup> Most of these arrests, acts of property destruction and attacks on MDC members' families meant to demoralise and intimidate them were mostly done in the lead-up to elections. The violence around election times qualifies ZANU-PF as an "electoral-authoritarian regime," in which "competitive elections in Zimbabwe serve the useful purpose of demonstrating the incumbent's dominance, but only as far as the opposition can never win."<sup>134</sup>

The irony of it is that elections are supposed to epitomise "mass participatory democracy", where people exhibit their freedom of choice and also to lead to representative government.<sup>135</sup> In other words, it is hoped that elections will "broaden and deepen political participation", and serve "not just as a foundation stone but a key generator of further democratic reforms."<sup>136</sup> Above this, elections are supposed to be the tonic for democracy, where citizens by participating in elections help create a government of the people by the people and for the people.

The questions that need to be asked are on the relationship between election time and violence. What is the relationship between violence and elections in Zimbabwe? Why too has there been a sustained call for elections, and, also, why has the opposition consistently participated in these elections despite the expected brutalisation of their supporters, especially in the [hidden] rural areas? These questions stem in part from the increasingly evident correlation between elections and an increase in violence. The

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<sup>133</sup> See a discussion by Brian Raftopoulos, "Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics", in Brian Raftopoulos and Tyron Savage, eds, *Zimbabwe: Injustice and political Reconciliation*, Institute for Justice, and Reconciliation, Cape Town, 2004, p 164, for a more nuanced discussion.

<sup>134</sup> Michael Bratton and Eldred Masunungure, "Zimbabwe's Long Agony", *Journal of Democracy*, 19, 4, October 2008, p 43.

<sup>135</sup> For a more nuanced discussion of this, see John L Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, "Law and disorder in the postcolony", in Jean Comaroff and John L Comaroff, eds, *Law and disorder in the postcolony*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2006, p 3.

<sup>136</sup> See Carothers, cited in Brian Raftopoulos, "The global Political agreement as a 'Passive Revolution': Notes on Contemporary Politics in Zimbabwe," *The Round table*, in <http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/909/the-global-political-agreement-as-a-passive-revolution/>, Accessed 02 June 2011.

statement made by the MDC-T women's representative at a rally in Chegutu in 2011, who pointed out that MDC-T women did not want elections because "[a]s women we are tired of being beaten and we don't want elections because we will always be on the receiving end of violence,"<sup>137</sup> encapsulates such concerns. This also stems from the analysis by the Comaroffs in which they have argued that the advent of liberal democracy post-1990 has ushered increased disorder in the whole world.<sup>138</sup>

The above also prompts a recalling of the Derridaen formulation that violence and law are flip sides. To him, law originates in violence and also exists in and through violence.<sup>139</sup> In this formulation therefore the elections were useful in providing a façade of the rule of law and legitimacy to rule, and simultaneously through it was availed the avenue to persecute those that were known or thought to belong to the opposition. In Zimbabwe, this Derridean formulation holds water in the two senses that it has been deployed. Firstly, it was been deployed prior to elections. It was also been deployed post elections. In both cases, it was used as intimidatory violence to cow the electorate to vote for ZANU-PF, and also in a witch-hunt fashion to victimise those suspected of having voted for the opposition.<sup>140</sup>

In the end one also has to note the crucial role that elections play in terms of conferring legitimacy. As the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition aptly sums it up, besides ensuring the popular participation of the ordinary people to determine who governs them, elections also confer legitimacy to politicians, that is, in terms of "the right to govern and the

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<sup>137</sup> See *The Herald*, 25 July 2011, "Violent protests an option: Tsvangirai", in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=16281:violent-protests-an-option-tsvangirai&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16281:violent-protests-an-option-tsvangirai&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130), Accessed 25 July 2011.

<sup>138</sup> See the chapter by John L Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, "Law and disorder."

<sup>139</sup> See this chapter by Jaques Derrida, "Force of law: The mythical foundation of authority", in Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld and David Grey Carlson, *Deconstruction and the possibility of justice*, Routledge, New York and London, 1992, for a nuanced discussion.

<sup>140</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 19.

political right to make decisions that may be applied.”<sup>141</sup> Thus for ZANU-PF the faithful calling for inclusive participation in elections, but ones where it was guaranteed victory should be seen in that light. Thus in addition to its legitimacy to rule eternally based on its participation in the liberation struggle,<sup>142</sup> it also sought to renew its legitimacy through periodic election “victories” in a period dominated by Western liberalism that placed electoral democracy at the heart of human rights.

The trend also shows a pattern of the violence, with some organisation and coordination from a centre. This centre became the authorising centre and it again provided the authorising narrative for the violence.<sup>143</sup> To exemplify, the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum reported a well-developed structure of violence involving ZANU-PF leaders and the war veterans, where they seemingly sanctioned the use of violence and intimidation on political opponents during the June 2000 parliamentary elections.<sup>144</sup> This pattern was discernible in the other subsequent elections where war veterans spearheaded armed electioneering on behalf of ZANU-PF while drawing authorisation and strategic direction from the JOC.<sup>145</sup> That not any of the war veterans, or other perpetrators, who spearheaded violence in the district have been arrested lends credence to the collusion and cooperation between them and the JOC, which is also some evidence of centralised coordination of the violence.

In Shurugwi district there were well known and feared war veterans who terrorised the district. These include “General Nduku” and “Gunpowder”. The pattern was that these war veterans operated as individuals leading groups of non-war veterans who by association with these war veterans also became identified as such. In fact, there are

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<sup>141</sup> See Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, “The military factor in Zimbabwe’s political and electoral affairs” in <http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/The Military factor in Zimbabe.pdf>, Accessed 02 July 2011, p 9.

<sup>142</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “The GPA as a passive revolution”.

<sup>143</sup> See Chapter Four, especially section “Who were the perpetrators?”, and sections on the JOC and, war veterans and Youth militias.

<sup>144</sup> See The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum Report, July 2001, p 2 for details.

<sup>145</sup> Refer also to Chapter Four for a detailed discussion.

several cases reported about fake war veterans and war veterans by association in the district. In the early years, Gunpowder terrorised the district, moving from one part to the other, beating, humiliating and torturing MDC supporters.<sup>146</sup> There were other war veterans operating at more localised settings. Interestingly there were also female war veterans involved, for example in and around wards 19, 16, 12 and 13. Another prominent war veteran operated in the newly resettled wards including 20, 21 and 18.

Alongside them were prominent ZANU-PF councillors and workers like “Jerry” and “Marvellous” around wards 10, 11, 12, and 13. As mentioned earlier, by the start of the 2000s, Jerry was a simple villager who was later employed by the Ministry of Youth as a Ward Coordinator. His only qualification was his membership of ZANU-PF. Marvellous was a driver at the Shurugwi ZANU-PF offices, and he was known to be of a violent disposition. He was described as somebody who liked to be involved in fist fights at Chachacha township which was close to where he grew up. Chachacha became the hub of the illegal gold panners who established lodgings there. It was also where most pubs were located outside of Shurugwi town. In fact there are accounts that suggest that Chachacha at times overshadowed Tongogara Growth Point in terms of its growth and attraction. This was in part based on the nodal location that it occupies, and its closeness to the Boterekwa gold panning site in comparison to Tongogara. At the start of the millennium Chachacha also became a hotbed of politics and violence around political mobilisation.

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<sup>146</sup> See *The Daily News*, “Farmers in trouble with Gunpowder” in <http://www.dailynews.co.zw/daily/2000/June/June16/1177.html>, for more details. See also *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum*, “Who was responsible? Alleged perpetrators and their crimes during the 2000 Parliamentary Election Period”, July 2001, in <http://www.dogstoc.com/docs/17003921/Harare>, Accessed 8 March 2011. My own fieldwork has revealed that there were other war veterans, other than these two who were also fundamental in perpetrating violence on the farms. See also The Human Rights Watch, *Fast Track land Reform in Zimbabwe*, 8 March 2002, in <http://.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3c8c82df4.html>, Accessed 7 March 2011. See *The Daily News*, 1 April 2002.

My informants told me that Marvellous was part of *mabhuru* (bulls)<sup>147</sup>, who terrorised panners demanding some “tax” for their protection. They also told me that he got his job as a driver around 2000 partly on the basis of his mastery of violence and he continued to harass gold panners in combined portfolios, as a “bull” and as a ZANU-PF employee. Perhaps because of their backgrounds these two men, especially Jerry, felt compelled by their lack of academic qualifications for the jobs they held to employ coercive mobilisation tactics on behalf of their party as a way to retain their jobs.

From the information I gathered there were not many uniformed national youth service graduates fomenting violence in the district, but there were untrained ZANU-PF youths from the wards. These operated on the guidelines from the war veterans. Mostly it was the ZANU-PF youths and other local ZANU-PF structures and the supporters who were leading in violating their MDC or alleged MDC supporters. This might have been so because they were the “foot soldiers” in this district where the structures of violence permeated the lowest levels, especially towards June 2008.

Though some names of senior ZNA (army) personnel were given, it would be safe to suggest that the security forces in the district were even more guilty of complicity, through coordinating war veterans or youth militias and also through their failure to provide the security to civilians from the marauding perpetrators. It would seem that they had a behind-the-scenes role possibly to avoid international indictment for crimes against humanity as the country is a signatory to a number of these conventions. They could also have been responsible for imparting torturing skills to the war veterans. Their direct participation in the violence does not easily come out in the interviews held. However, more research is required to establish the exact role the security forces played at imparting torture skills and at the coordination level of the violence. However

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<sup>147</sup> *Mabhuru* was a colloquial term given to gold panners who used or threatened violence on other panners to get gold and or cash. In most cases these “bulls” did not want to pan for the gold themselves, rather they used violence to create a system of control over other panners.

this is a very difficult task, one that might never be accomplished considering the influence the army and other security organs have in the state.

The behind-the-scenes role of the security forces, however, buttressed the “battle-front” role taken by the quasi-military institutions like the youth militias and the war veterans. As the Zimbabwe Human Rights stated in 2001, the ZANU-PF government allocated a whopping twenty million Zimbabwe dollars to the war veterans in early 2000 for their campaign efforts, which enabled them to form “militias composed of party supporters, mostly unemployed youths, and paid the recruits [...] The party also provided transport and other logistical support, and the veterans enjoyed the support of CIO, army, and police personnel.”<sup>148</sup>

An important point is that the top army leadership are themselves war veterans and want ZANU-PF to remain in power. They, according to Kriger, “receive[d] excellent pay and benefits, augmented by patronage, including farms and lucrative opportunities in the DRC.”<sup>149</sup> They continued to reap the same benefits, and they grew into top business people, with interests in mining and agriculture. Because of this it was not surprising that the army leadership authorised the use of their personnel, cars, planes, and arms to aid the land invasions an election tool for the June 2000 elections.<sup>150</sup>

In Shurugwi there was extensive use of unmarked or unregistered cars, which were used to coordinate the activities of the war veterans and other ZANU-PF structures of violence. These vehicles are widely thought to have belonged to the state’s dreaded

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<sup>148</sup> See *Zimbabwe Human Rights Report*, July 2001. See also, Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe’s Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neo-liberalism and the search for social Justice*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003, p 74, trace the resuscitation of the ZANU-PF-war veterans relationship from 1997 when Mugabe allocated war veterans fifty thousand dollars payout each, which dynamic relationship was exploited from 2000 when ZANU-PF used them as “shock troops”.

<sup>149</sup> Norma Kriger, *Guerilla veterans*, p 198.

<sup>150</sup> See *Zimbabwe Human Rights Report*, August 2001, cited in Norma Kriger, *Guerilla veterans*, p198. It should also be realised that violence was not only witnessed before the elections. There was also violence after elections especially in 2000 directed at the judiciary. See for example Minister Patrick Chinamasa’s attack of the Supreme Court in *The Herald*, 19 January 2001.

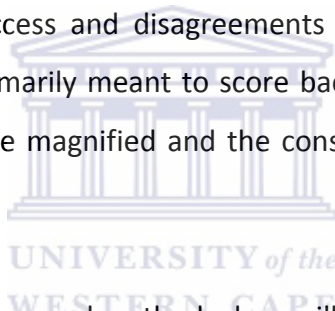
secret agents, the CIO. In the district many victims recall a “Major” in the hierarchy of their torture and intimidation in the district. Further investigations revealed that this “Major” indeed existed and was still with the ZNA in 2010 and he had a farm in the district.

The narratives also point to a pattern that was followed, that is, identification, abduction, torture, and forced confessions. Identification took two methods. Firstly, villagers would secretly inform PISI (Police Internal Security Intelligence), ZANU-PF leadership and the Central Intelligence Organisation operatives of the names of MDC supporters. At other times PISI officials attended MDC rallies and took note of all the key officials. These also included locals who attended these meetings. At yet other times, the names were from the lists that the village-based structures of ZANU-PF kept and which they passed to the higher party echelons. Usually the identifiers were people who were close to the victims, including members of the extended family, fellow workers or fellow villagers. In the interviews and informal discussions with women who had been victimised it was clear that they knew who had reported them and possibly why they had done so.

The reasons the victims gave bordered around petty conflicts or disagreements or even jealousies, which were married to the larger party political struggles and which were eventually fought on the political terrain. I met Naomi who, for example, told me that she had been labelled MDC by her late husband’s brother because she had refused to be inherited under the Shona system of *kugara nhaka* (wife inheritance). She also claimed that her late husband’s brother was jealous of her proficiency as an independent woman entrepreneur. I gathered that she was a cross-border trader, who by the village standards was doing well. Through cross-border trading, she ensured that her family was well looked after and well-nourished even during the worst famine of 2008.



From this discussion, personal issues between individuals were transformed into political issues and fought on the landscape of ZANU-PF and MDC terrain. What also comes out is the use of ZANU-PF as a franchise in which to package violence against those against whom one had a vendetta to settle. In this way private disputes were transformed into political confrontations. Even criminal attacks were at times fought in ZANU-PF-MDC battles. As will be demonstrated in Chapter Four, these localised confrontations and disputes while they did not trigger off the political violence, nonetheless helped to extend its reach and seriously sustained it at the village levels. To this list of private personal issues that extended and sustained politically authorised and directed violence I found issues like neighbours who had their cattle straying into the other's crops, families quarrelling over lobola, others feeling their neighbours were jealous of their children's success and disagreements at work places.<sup>151</sup> Once these "small" issues, which were primarily meant to score back at neighbours, pervaded the political discourse they became magnified and the consequences for the victims were dire.



This ran concurrently with the second method where village heads kept lists of the MDC supporters. These lists while having some positive functions were largely used for the negative role<sup>152</sup> of identifying "enemies" of ZANU-PF.<sup>153</sup> Those on the lists were targeted for abuse. They also showed the power of those that compiled them. These lists contained names of MDC supporters, who had to be excluded from ZANU-PF and government-sponsored programmes such as food hand-outs, agricultural inputs, land allocation under the fast-track scheme, government employment and police protection, among others.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Interviews in Shurugwi, December 2009- July 2010.

<sup>152</sup> I use the term positive list to denote those lists that were used to benefit the locals and negative lists for those lists that were used to identify political opponents.

<sup>153</sup> See Chapter Four for a detailed discussion of lists from the Second Chimurenga, the *gukurahundi* and into the Third Millennium.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

Broadly, many of the interviewees claimed that they were in a vulnerable state on so many fronts given their status as MDC supporters. They pointed to a host of discriminations, for example in the fast-track land scheme, and instances where the police were reluctant to receive their harassment charges for a number of reasons. Others claimed they were forced out of government employment, while others even mentioned that their children were discriminated against by ZANU-PF aligned teachers and school heads.

The abuse of the practice of drawing up lists accords with what Foucault describes as the practice of the devolvement of the sovereign's "power of life and death" to almost everyone in the state. As he says for NAZI Germany, "ultimately, everyone in the [...] state had the power of life and death over his or her neighbours, if only because of the practice of informing, which effectively meant doing away with the people next door, or having them done away with."<sup>155</sup>

The above also speaks to the devolving of violence to the lowest structures of the district, that is, the family. This showed that the levels of participation were quite complex, ranging from the conception, planning and coordinating of violence as a technology to remain in power at the national, provincial and district levels, cascading down through the ward, and cell levels to the family unit.<sup>156</sup> My argument in Chapter Four is that while there was coordination and sanitisation of the violence at higher levels, the main participants in its actual commission, however, were villagers. They identified MDC supporters, they played an auxiliary role of singing and praising perpetrators at meetings, were parents of perpetrators, were wives of war veterans. At other times they also sometimes participated in the torturing of the victims.

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<sup>155</sup> Michel Foucault, *Society must be defended: Lectures at the College de France 1975-1976*, Translated by David Macey, Picador, New York, 2003, p 259.

<sup>156</sup> See Chapter Four for a detailed discussion of this. See a similar argument by Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, pp 5-6.

In Shurugwi, once identified, victims would be taken from their homes, townships, places of work, from social gatherings or from anywhere they were to the homesteads of village heads, bases or the outskirts of villages where they would be subjected to different kinds of torture. These varied from beatings and assaults using logs, sticks, belts, and booted feet. At times the violations were undertaken at rallies in the presence of family and fellow villagers. However, if it was carried out by unknown assailants, generally suspected to be state secret agents, this was done in secret and at secluded locations. It was these victims who received the *felanga* type of torture. At times victims were locked up inside old farm houses, classrooms, shop backrooms and at times village head's houses for periods ranging from a few hours to several days. During the torture, the victims were made to confess and recant from the political "sin" of being MDC supporters.

We ought to realise that the humiliating "confessions" that led to "repentance" were not new. As discussed by Kanengoni, they were used by ZANU during the struggle for independence on suspected collaborators.<sup>157</sup> The same was also used in the immediate post-independence period in the 1980s and 1990s. Eddison Zvobgo, the late former ZANU-PF secretary for Legal Affairs, once said, speaking about members of his party who had decided to run for election as independents, that "the onus is on the person who had decided to go astray, to publicly recant his wrong doing and publicly proclaim contrition so that the party may be afforded a basis for considering their application to re-join the family."<sup>158</sup> The forced confessions at the rallies also draws parallels with what Foucault posits that: "...at the moment of execution, it seems that he [victim] was given another opportunity to speak, not to proclaim his innocence but to acknowledge his crime and the justice of his conviction."<sup>159</sup> The crime in Shurugwi was being MDC or

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<sup>157</sup> See Alexander Kanengoni, *Echoing silences*, Baobab, Harare, 1997, who discusses its use in both the outside camps and in ZANLA operational areas.

<sup>158</sup> See *The Chronicle*, 12 April 1995.

<sup>159</sup> See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish*, p 65.

perceived MDC supporter. The punishment ranged, as already discussed, from primary to secondary violent methods.

There were no “short sleeve” or “long sleeve” amputations of the Second Chimurenga type. During the Second Chimurenga ZANLA used various methods to punish collaborators and those that did not support it. Outside the severe beatings, forced confessions, killings of so-called sell-outs and other methods of torture such as *jato du povo*,<sup>160</sup> ZANLA cadres chopped off these people’s limbs: hands, legs, lips and tongues.<sup>161</sup> However, for Shurugwi district between 2000 and 2008, I did not come across anyone or a claim that they had any or alleged limbs that had been cut off.

The chopping off of limbs was, however, reported in other parts of the country. The gruesome murder of the wife of an MDC district chairperson of Mhondoro, who had her hands and legs chopped off before she was burnt in her hut, points to this practice. Patrick Chitaka, the MDC Manicaland Chairman, also hinted at the existence of such a practice in Manicaland province. Commenting on the alleged presence of foreign soldiers in Manicaland in 2008 aiding ZANU-PF terror campaign, he said:

We have observed that some people leading the violence are foreigners because they speak a different language and they do not understand our languages. Also the tactics they are using are not peculiar to Zimbabwe, because they are cutting out the tongue, removing eyes, and genital parts.<sup>162</sup>

There was the use of hate speech and strongly worded sloganeering in the district in line with the national trend. The hate speech was channelled through songs, poems and dances. In them the opposition MDC party leadership was vilified as stooges of the West, commonly articulated as Blair’s “tea boys” or Blair’s running dogs.<sup>163</sup> Between

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<sup>160</sup> See Alexander Kanengoni, *Echoing silences*, p 81.

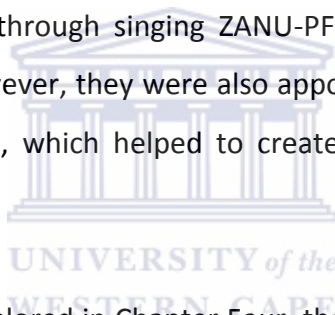
<sup>161</sup> See for example, Paresh Pandya, *Mao Tse-Tung and Chimurenga*, p 5, for a detailed discussion.

<sup>162</sup> See “Mugabe now using mercenaries”, *Cape Times*, 16 July 2008, in Solidarity Peace Trust, “Desperately seeking sanity”, p 25.

<sup>163</sup> In one of his many speeches, which have formed the core of *Inside the Third Chimurenga*, President Robert Mugabe said the MDC was not a local formation, but a front for the former colonisers and was also regressive and counter revolutionary. He said “the MDC should never be judged by its black trade union

April and June 27, 2010, these were done at the bases where *pungwes* were held.<sup>164</sup> Hate language stirs enmity and also tends to dehumanise those that are targeted. In the past such language was used with disastrous consequences in Hitler's anti-Semitic vocabulary, in the National Party language against blacks in South Africa, and in Rwanda leading to and during the infamous genocide of 1994.<sup>165</sup>

In Zimbabwe such language led to the deliberate victimisation of opposition supporters in several ways. The most condemning of it all was *Pasi na..!/Down with... !*, slogan. As already discussed those condemned to go "down" were physically attacked, emotionally blackmailed, discriminated upon in social services, inputs and food supplementary schemes run by the government. At *pungwes*, the major goal was to mobilise support for ZANU-PF. This was done through singing ZANU-PF party songs, dancing and the chanting of party slogans. However, they were also apportioned as a space to mete out severe floggings of "sell-outs", which helped to create "fear and trauma in affected communities."<sup>166</sup>



As will be more thoroughly explored in Chapter Four, there were other reasons that led women to be targeted. These included the fact that there was in 2002 a 52 percent female population in Shurugwi. This was worsened by the increasing depopulation of men as the crisis deepened. Again, the fact that with the depopulation of men, women assumed more political duties of keeping lists, further exposed women to negative

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face; by its youthful student face; by its salaried black suburban junior professionals; never by its rough and violent high density lumpen elements. It is much deeper than these human superficialities; for it is immovably and implacably moored in the colonial yesteryear and embraces wittingly or unwittingly the repulsive ideology of a return to white settler colonial rule. MDC is as old and as strong as the forces that control it; that converge on it and control it; that drive and direct; indeed sponsor and spot it. It is a counter revolutionary Trojan horse contrived and nurtured by the very inimical forces that enslaved and oppressed our people yesterday." , p 88.

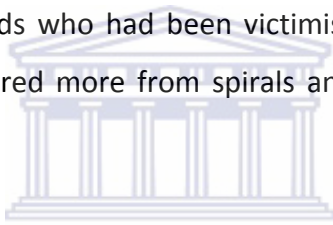
<sup>164</sup> Bases are places where meetings are held, while *pungwes* are all night meetings where political orientation and correction are held.

<sup>165</sup> See Geoff Hill, *What happens after Mugabe*, Zebra press, Cape Town, 2005, pp 64-65.

<sup>166</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 16.

scrutiny. Under these circumstances there was thus a greater probability that more women could be attacked.

Also as highlighted under the types of violence many women were not always the primary target of the violence. It was their family: their husbands and sons who were sought for their role in the MDC politics. In this scenario women were beaten, abducted or threatened so that their brothers, sons or husbands could emerge from hiding. What this also points to is that women were not actively engaged in opposition politics in the district. In most cases therefore women were only attacked once their relatives had escaped in an effort to force them to reveal the whereabouts of their husbands. In addition, there are cases that point to women being the extended victims in the domestic sphere from husbands who had been victimised publicly for supporting the opposition. Thus women suffered more from spirals and to some extent offshoots of political violence.



Related to this, rape that is generally used as a weapon on women and the opposition in conflict situations was not widely used in Shurugwi. Turshen, for example, says that men often use rape to “assert their power over women and groups of men assert their power over other groups by overpowering their women.”<sup>167</sup> Carolyn Nordstrom, cited in Beth Goldblatt and Sheila Meintjes, corroborates this and says sexual assaults are used to attack “the core constructions of identity and security in their most profound sense” and this is aimed to “breakdown the fabric of society, and thus to breakdown political resistance.”<sup>168</sup> More generally, sexual penetration, and by extension rape of women, is

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<sup>167</sup> Meredith Turshen, “Women’s war stories” in Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya (eds) *What do women do in Wartime: Gender and conflict in Africa*, ZED Books, London and New York, 1998, p 10.

<sup>168</sup> See Carolyn Nordstrom cited in Beth Goldblatt and Sheila Meintjes, “South African women demand the truth” in Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya, (eds), *What women do in wartime: Gender and conflict in Africa*, p 39.

widely viewed as a way men use to assert their masculinity and patriarchal power over women and the men whose women they rape.<sup>169</sup>

In the recent past rape and sexual assaults were systematically deployed as strategies of war in such countries as Yugoslavia, Mozambique, Uganda, and Zimbabwe during the *gukurahundi* crisis.<sup>170</sup> In the ground-breaking report on the disturbances in Matebeleland and the Midlands, CCJP/LRF concluded that rape was a systematic strategy used by the state agents against the people of Matebeleland. As they aver, this deployment of rape, was to try to “create a generation of Shona babies” in Matebeleland.<sup>171</sup> This also speaks to the deployment of rape in the 100 days of the Rwanda genocide by the Hutus in which up to 250 000 Tutsi women were raped,<sup>172</sup> out of whom an astounding 66 percent later tested positive for HIV.<sup>173</sup> The use of rape as a tool of war also led the United Nations Security Council to pass the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 (UNSCR1820) to specifically address the deployment of sexual violations in conflict situations across the world.<sup>174</sup>

It was not pervasive in Shurugwi between 2000 and 2008. Only isolated cases were recorded, which points to its random, if not sporadic, use. It was thus not a major

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<sup>169</sup> See Carol Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1988, for a nuanced discussion of this feminist discourse. See also “Sexual violence and armed conflict: United Nations Response”, in *Women 2000*, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, April 1998, p3, which also describes the various reasons for the commission of sexual violence against women in conflict situations. In addition to those cited already, it says these are meant for troop mollification; also to punish women involved/supporting men in opposition; to inflict terror on the population; and for ethnic cleansing.

<sup>170</sup> Meredith Turshen “Women’s war stories”, see also the CCJP and LRF report on the Gukurahundi era in Matebeleland.

<sup>171</sup> See CCJP/LRF (Abridged version) *Breaking the silence*, p 15. See also pp 22, 23 & 34.

<sup>172</sup> Adin Thayer, “Women in post-genocide Rwanda: Facing the past to build a future” in [http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1413:women-in-post-genocide-rwandafacing-the-past-to-build-a-future-&catid=169:multiple-intolerance-mounting-resistance](http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1413:women-in-post-genocide-rwandafacing-the-past-to-build-a-future-&catid=169:multiple-intolerance-mounting-resistance), Accessed 24 March 2012.

<sup>173</sup> See Jeanne Izabiliza, “The role of women in reconstruction: Experience of Rwanda”, p 2, in <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SHS/pdf/Role-Women-Rwanda.pdf>, Accessed 24 March 2012.

<sup>174</sup> See *United Nations security Council Resolution 1820*, 2008.



strategy of this violence, but just one of those methods at the bottom of the basket. The findings of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum from a country-wide study over eight years also suggest that rape was not systematically employed against women. That there were only 27 reported cases of rape out of a total of 40 559 incidences of violence goes a long way to show this.<sup>175</sup> On the whole, this shows clearly that rape ranked lowly compared to other violations perpetrated on the women and the opposition supporters in general. There could be other possible explanations like the fear of contracting HIV/AIDS as the rates in the Midlands province were rising.<sup>176</sup> However, it could also be that some cases went unreported or unrecorded.

In direct contrast to the Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, other NGO national reports, however, point to the deliberate and systematic deployment of rape as a tool of the political violence. The AIDS Free World posits, for example, that rape was used on a massive scale. They, for example, put the figure of rape cases at 2000 for the period from March to June 2008 countrywide.<sup>177</sup> The same portrayal was made by Everjoice Win in an open letter to Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma in 2004 claiming that there was indiscriminate rape of women by ZANU-PF agents, and that young girls between nine and ten had fallen victim to the rape crisis.<sup>178</sup> Similarly, others claimed that up to two percent of women victims were raped, while 3 percent felt that a family member had been raped and a further 16 percent stated that they knew of a woman in their community who had been raped.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> See *Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, adapted from "Subliminal terror?"* p 12. See the full statistical compilation in Appendix 1.

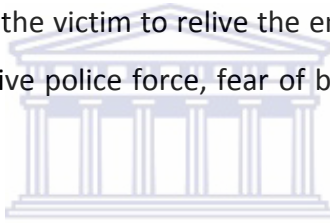
<sup>176</sup> See *T5 Programme of the Ministry of Health and Child welfare*, Midlands Province, Zimbabwe, 2000 to 2008.

<sup>177</sup> See [www.aids-freeworld.org](http://www.aids-freeworld.org), cited in Tony Reeler, "Subliminal Terror", for this and other estimates from other NGOs, p 31. See also Voice of America (VOA) "Zimbabwean women face HIV risk following rape as political violence" 14 July 2008.

<sup>178</sup> See Everjoice Win, "Open letter to Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and other women in South African cabinet", in *Feminist Africa: National Politricks*, Issue number 3, October/November, 2004, pp 74-75.

<sup>179</sup> See IDASA, ICTJ and RAU, *Women, politics and the Zimbabwe crisis*, May 2010, p 3.

However, the fact that I did not find rape as a general tool of the violence in Shurugwi could be based on the stigma attached to it, where the women affected feared rejection by their families. In addition to the fear of stigmatisation, as Njovana and Watts say, women often hush their rape encounters because rape in Zimbabwe is also associated with “bad” women such as drunkards and prostitutes. These two groups of women are often accused of “inviting” men to rape them, which often transfers the blame from the perpetrators to the victims.<sup>180</sup> The stigmatisation of rape victims has been reported in the DRC in 2011.<sup>181</sup> In this case, rape victims recounted narrations of rebuke by their husbands and relatives, as well as being openly ridiculed by fellow villagers who labelled them HIV positive after the attacks.<sup>182</sup> Some reasons that have also been proffered for rape victims to remain silent in Zimbabwe include: the fear of revictimisation, the feeling that opening up makes the victim to relive the encounter, fear of being arrested by the partisan and unsupportive police, fear of being laughed at and the fear of rejection.<sup>183</sup>



Another dimension the violence took was what we may term the repetitive dimension. This happened where the victims and perpetrators continued to share the common spaces. As we referred earlier, they intermingled in the everyday as neighbours and as work mates. They again met at church, and at other social events like funerals, *nhimbe* (collective village farm labour), ancestral appeasing ceremonies, and at local village courts. Because of this the victims were constantly reminded of their violations and also of their perpetrators. This kept reopening old wounds. This is suggestive of violence that had descended into the ordinary rather than one that has ascended into transcendence,<sup>184</sup> and one that had become a part of trivia. At another level, this helped to rupture the traditional communal support systems that helped to protect women

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<sup>180</sup> See Eunice Njovana and Charlotte Watts, “Gender violence in Zimbabwe”, p 48.

<sup>181</sup> See *Mail and Guardian online*, 10 July 2011, “DRC villagers spurn raped wives”, in <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-07-06-drc-villagers-spurn-raped-wives>, Accessed 10 July 2011.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> See RAU, *When the going gets tough the man gets going*, p 10.

<sup>184</sup> On this I borrow from Veena Das, *Life and Words*.

against abuse. As such these women victims endured it in their everyday lives, which placed a heavy strain on their lives especially psychologically. Suffice to say that there were no ostensible mechanisms to deal with trauma in the district, and the country.<sup>185</sup>

It was thus not surprising that anger, suspicion and fear were still rife at the time of the field work. By 2010, justice for the victims of the violence seemed elusive. This was notwithstanding the existence of the GNU and the ONHRI. The ONHRI was supposed, among other things, to coordinate efforts to finding a transitional justice mechanism for the country. However, the problems and contestations within the GNU watered down this prospect. Thus the recourse for the victims remained limiting and limited. The channels were limiting because it was expensive to take cases of violations to court. The police, as we saw earlier, were not forthcoming in investigating alleged political violence. However, the victims argued that they wanted to see justice done and possibly some form of restorative justice implemented.<sup>186</sup> Potentially, this pointed to the possibility of another cycle of retaliatory violence.

People also lived in suspicion. As demonstrated already in the section on silence, many were still not keen to share their experiences. They could not trust anyone with their memories for fear of victimisation again. This speaks to self-policing that people adopted in order to protect themselves. One woman victim jokingly but melancholically told me that she could not even trust her husband.<sup>187</sup> By extension she meant that she could neither trust me nor my assistant as she could not guarantee who we were and why we wanted to hear her experiences.

To further underscore the fact that violence had become a part of the trivia there was evidence in terms of the everyday language and norms that governed people in which

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<sup>185</sup> See Chapter Five for the discussion on the impact of the lack of post-violence support mechanisms, especially in terms of bottling up anger, suspicion and the need for revenge.

<sup>186</sup> See Chapter Six for a pithy discussion of this.

<sup>187</sup> Interview with Sinikiwe, Jobolinko, 07 February 2010.

there was overt and covert reference to violence. The term *jambanja*, for instance, which was used initially to specifically to define the violent farm takeovers in 2000, had by 2008 been appropriated in the everyday grammar to refer to misunderstandings, small conflicts even between two people or even contests at soccer matches.

## **CONCLUSION**

On the whole the chapter tried to centralise the narratives of the women in constructing the types, patterns and “silences” that animated the violence. Broadly, I contended that the violations suffered can be tentatively divided into two that is primary and secondary. In terms of the patterns, I elaborated that there were, firstly, discernible steps that followed from identification, to abduction and punishment. Most of these stages made use of locals who at times utilised personalised vendettas for political profit. The chapter also tried to make sense of the silence that was encountered in the field. As a shorthand, these silences were mediated by the conditions of incomplete political transition which, while offering hope were simultaneously pregnant with threats as the structures that were blamed for instigating the 2000-2008 violence remained visible and at times active in 2010 when the interviews were undertaken.

## CHAPTER FOUR: AGENCY AND OR VICTIMHOOD: CONTRASTING THE LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION IN, AND VICTIMHOOD FROM, THE VIOLENCE IN SHURUGWI.

### INTRODUCTION

“What man does”, and “what woman is”, because “after all, men do the soldiering, most women are civilians”<sup>1</sup>, and “men fight as avatars of a nation’s sanctioned violence” while “women work and weep”<sup>2</sup>, are expressions that give the impression that women are perpetual victims in wartime or situations of conflict or violence. At another level it also points to the notion that victimhood in conflicts is gendered. Broadly, this emanates from the dominant Western feminist discourse that has set *a priori* and universalised relations between sexes. In this regard, “whatever female[s] do is ‘femininity’ and whatever male[s] do is ‘masculinity’”.<sup>3</sup> As a consequence, the “universal social and cultural inferiority of women was a foregone conclusion.”<sup>4</sup>

The same discourse has also impacted on the discussion of the relationship between women and violence, as exemplified by the opening lines of this chapter. The assumption is even worse for rural women who because of their invisibility, and limited economic, social, academic and political standing, are lowly regarded and are thought of as weak, powerless, and as perpetual victims.<sup>5</sup> This is the same sort of inclination one gets when reading through the bulk of the human rights literature produced on the “crisis” period in Zimbabwe. Women are presented as vulnerable, weak, economically dependent and thus as victims.

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<sup>1</sup> See Meredith Turshen, “Women’s War Stories” in Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramaraya, eds, *What women do in Wartime*, ZED Books, London and New York, 1998, p 1. According to her more often than women erroneously are portrayed as silent victims in violent conflicts while men are the ones that are regarded as the perpetrators.

<sup>2</sup> See Mats Utas, “Agency of victims: Young women in the liberation civil war” in Alcinda Honwana and Filip de Boeck, eds, *Makers and Breakers: Children and Youth in Post-Colonial Africa*, Africa World Press, Trenton and Asmara, 2005, p 55.

<sup>3</sup> See Jeanne Boydston, “Gender as a question of historical analysis”, in Alexandra Shepard and Garthine, eds, *Gender and History*, Vol 20, Issue 3, November 2008, p 559.

<sup>4</sup> See Ifi Amadiume, cited in Jeanne Boydston, “Gender as a question of historical analysis”, p 565.

<sup>5</sup> See Oyeronke Oyewumi, “Visualising the body: Western theories and African subjects”, in Oyeronke Oyewumi, ed, *African Gender Studies: A reader*, Pelgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, 2005, p 11.

While it holds water to some extent, this generalised perception is problematic, and can be challenged on the basis of the events of the violence in Shurugwi between 2000 and 2008. In this chapter I would like to argue that it is true that women have several disadvantages: physiological, economic, social, and cultural in Shurugwi (and Zimbabwe in general), compared to men. However, the local conditions ensured that political agency transcended the sexed body of women. To this extent some of the women from Shurugwi actively encouraged the farm occupations, the perpetuation of threats and the actual terror against their counterparts. Outside their usually prescribed roles as wives and mothers, women in Shurugwi also became important political participants. However small a role they played, it significantly spurred the violence.

Also, as the violence wore on and as these acts cascaded to the lower levels of the extended family, the gap between victims and perpetrators became nebulous. This served to muddy the fixation of femininity or masculinity to a particular biological sex. Again in the context of the increased depopulation of men, who had moved to towns and the diaspora, women assumed some of the “manly” political duties that contributed to, and extended, the violence. Also through what one may refer to as “traditional” African women’s political activities such as ululations, songs, dances, praise poetry and by wearing different party regalia, they helped to push the levels of hatred, emotions, and related attacks or their threats, to new levels.

True, women have sung songs, performed dances and praised their leaders in rural settings throughout the past, but this time these had a different role and impact, that of encouraging and extending violence. As Michael Karlstrom would probably say, songs were performed for “political hospitality”.<sup>6</sup> In this chapter I try to discuss the different contributions of the various perpetrators of the violence. Crucially, besides articulating

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<sup>6</sup> I borrow this phrase from Michael Karlstrom, “On the aesthetics and dialogics of power in the postcolony”, in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, vol 73, no1, 2003, p 66, who uses it to differentiate it from domestic hospitality in the home. Under political hospitality the songs and various performances are done in the service of praising postcolonial party leaders and spurring party political ideologies and activities.

the political roles performed by women, which set their agency,<sup>7</sup> I also seek to analyse the effect on party political objectives of their various performances. Another important discussion point is why women participated in the violence. Taking the latter thread further, why did women discard their gendered (women) identity for party political identity in the violations of other women and other opponents? Having said this however, these women were not a homogenous group and need to be discussed in their plurality. Different women had differential experiences of and in the violence.

A related question is whether their participation was only due to coercion. In other words, how far is it possible to argue that without Mugabe there could not have been violence in Shurugwi? Is it possible to write on the history of violence in Shurugwi solely on Mugabe's terms? This question derives from the strong MDC, human rights, and generally Western discourse on the violence in Zimbabwe that portrays Mugabe and ZANU-PF as the authors and executors of the violence between 2000 and 2008. Violence is construed only in ZANU-PF leadership terms and in terms akin to Robert Mugabe's biography, which is partially incorrect because the structures of that violence extended beyond these two institutions.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, how much agency did the rural women of Shurugwi have between 2000 and 2008? If they did, as I would like to posit, where was that agency located? To what extent was it based on their party political membership, coerced agency or self-propelled?

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<sup>7</sup> In trying to locate this agency, I am cognisant of the warning given by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Subaltern studies: Deconstructing Historiography", in R Guha and G Spivak, eds, *Selected Subaltern Studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp 3-32, of not falling into the same trap as other practitioners of subaltern studies, who in an attempt to recoup agency from the past have ended up objectifying them as they had been in the archives they are trying to dismantle.

<sup>8</sup> I use the term institution to denote Robert Mugabe as a person, and those structures and powerful people that have over the years surrounded him and that have sustained him in power. See also Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "The meanings of Mugabeism in the postcolonial African present: Beyond the polemics" Unpublished paper presented at the *Re-Imagining Postcolonial Futures: Knowledge Transactions and Contests of Culture in the African Present Colloquium*, organised by the Centre for Humanities for Research of the Western Cape, and The Ferguson Centre for African and Asian Studies of the Open University, UK, 8-11 July 2009, UWC, Cape Town, especially p 14.



While an attempt is made to disrupt the overestimated power of men over women in the violence, the bottom line of the argument is to try to show the ambiguous nature of the relations of power between the women at the bottom and those in the political leadership positions. While these women from “below” are prone to victimisation, they sometimes used their same positions and conditions to their advantage, to influence their leaders, and to contribute to the violations of their peers.

To unpack the seemingly contrary position, I seek to draw on Michel Foucault’s thesis on power relations. By debunking a centralised source where power is generated and from which it is distributed, Foucault regards power as an immanent and relational quality that is not obtainable from an outside source. Rather, it is internally produced at different locations by the “divisions, inequalities, and disequilibriums” that occur in the multivalent situations.<sup>9</sup> As he says, “power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere.”<sup>10</sup> As such, power relations in any society are more than just hierarchical top-down, but that they are rather complex, multi-dimensional, and multi-directional.<sup>11</sup> Thus at times power “comes from below,” with local struggles and differences constituting the base for larger ones or instructing the larger hegemonic explanations.<sup>12</sup>

On the whole, Foucault’s notion widens our scope on relations that are not usually “captured by the Manichaean [...] dominant analyses” of power.<sup>13</sup> The above helps in understanding further the web of relationships between the “extrinsic site of legitimation” which produces the authorising narrative and the site of doing.<sup>14</sup> Crucially,

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<sup>9</sup> See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, An Introduction*, Volume 1, Translated by Robert Hurley, Pantheon Books, New York, 1978, p 94.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p 93.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p 94.

<sup>13</sup> See Blair Rutherford, “Belonging to the farm(er): Farm workers, farmers, and the shifting politics of citizenship”, in Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen, eds, *Zimbabwe’s Unfinished business*, p 196.

<sup>14</sup> See Allen Feldman, *Formations of violence: The narrative of the body and political terror in Northern Ireland*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1991, p 3.

it situates agency at the site of doing because “agency was not the author but the product of doing.”<sup>15</sup> The “doing” is measured in acts and effects. As a result, agency is temporal and spatial.<sup>16</sup> In this way, the political violence that rocked Shurugwi district can thus be perceived as not “anchored in ideological codes and conditions external to the situation of enactment and transaction.”<sup>17</sup> Instead it can be imagined as “being sedimented with its own local histories that are mapped out on the template of the body”<sup>18</sup> and not necessarily as the sole product of the external ideological constructions in Harare. The effect of this is that the justification for its occurrence, or what Feldman calls the “legitimation”, then “becomes performative and contingent.”<sup>19</sup>

Following in this modality in relation to the commission of violence in Shurugwi, it can then be argued that while there was the overall ZANU-PF narrative for the force-driven farm, factory and firm takeovers, the threatening and the physical lynching of MDC supporters, its success depended on local conditions. The acute land shortages, local politics, petty jealousies, as well as the presence of identifiable MDC supporters concretised the imperative in the “space[] of dispute”<sup>20</sup>, in Ranciere’s words, and provided the fuel that drove the violence in Shurugwi district.

It is in the Foucauldian complex web of interactions and relations of power between the local and the national that I seek to locate the various levels of agency the women of Shurugwi had in the violence. This take also enables a vocabulary of the violence that looks at women not only as objects but also as subjects (however unequal) whose actions generated effects which impacted on their neighbours and the overall direction of the ZANU-PF political strategy. I take a cue from Africanist feminist theory that is increasingly challenging the universalising Western feminist theory. In the latter,

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p 3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p 4.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p 3.

<sup>20</sup> Jacques Ranciere, *The politics of aesthetics*, p 51.

“differences and hierarchy [...] are enshrined on bodies; and bodies enshrine differences and hierarchy.” And, “male/female bodies [are] hierarchically ordered, differentially placed in relation to power, and spatially distanced from one another.”<sup>21</sup> Challenging the Western feminist explanation invokes the argument for the importance of spartial-temporalities in generating agency. It also invokes the articulations by James Scott in *Weapons of the weak* which established power and agency among the peasants in the everyday forms of benign resistance against oppression.<sup>22</sup> Scott challenges us to look at agency in its variegated forms, especially by those ordinarily considered weak.

Useful as this distribution of power and action is, it has to be read, however, alongside Immanuel Kant’s thesis on radical evil. It also has to be considered on the backdrop of a strong state presence in the people’s lives. Arguing in the realm of morality and rationality, Kant avers that evil is an immanent human quality that drives human beings to take certain courses of action, albeit without a positive being of its own.<sup>23</sup> Rejecting the theodical perception of evil as merely a negation, a subversion or a perversion of God’s will, he suggests that the immanence of evil means humans have the power to perform evil, and its (non)commission basically depends on the choice individuals take. The outcome of the commission had also to be gauged in terms of good or bad *vis a vis* moral law. For Kant, however, humans have a propensity for evil over good.<sup>24</sup>

However, Kant says that where there is no freedom of choice and where human beings are compelled by situations, both in time and space, to physically do evil there is no

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<sup>21</sup> See Oyeronke Oyewumi, “Visualising the body”, p 8.

<sup>22</sup> See James. C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of Peasant resistance*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985, who states that some of these include recalcitrance, chicanery, pilferage, foot dragging and minor forms of sabotage. On the whole he posits that the weak have some “weapons” with which to fight those in dominant positions.

<sup>23</sup> Steven R Grimm, “Kant’s argument for radical evil” in *European Journal of Philosophy*, 10, 2, in [http://faculty.fordham.edu/sgrimm/Site/Papers\\_and\\_Presentations\\_files/ejp-kant-radicalevil.pdf](http://faculty.fordham.edu/sgrimm/Site/Papers_and_Presentations_files/ejp-kant-radicalevil.pdf), Accessed 20 September 2011.

<sup>24</sup> Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt, “Introduction” to FWJ Schelling, *Philosophical investigations into the essence of human freedom*, Dennis J Schmidt, ed, State University of New York Press, New York, 2006, p xvi.

agency involved.<sup>25</sup> This is productive in assigning the agency that can be ascribed to women and other actors outside compulsion. The question then is: to what extent was the physical commission of “evil” by many constitutive of agency? In this regard what therefore seizes this discussion is whether the rural women of Shurugwi who participated in the violation of others, singing, or keeping of lists, which literally constituted “singing for their supper”, had any moral evil (agency), in the Kantian sense, since they did not have positive choices. This tension between Foucault and Kant animates the anxieties, and the causal-effect relationship between the “centre” that provide both institutional and narrative legitimation and, the site of the commission of violence. The same fault line also informs the shifting categories of actors between perpetrators and victims of violence that I grapple with throughout this chapter.

### **WHO WERE THE PERPETRATORS OF THE VIOLENCE?**

There are many groups of people that can fit the description of perpetrators in the violence in Shurugwi (and Zimbabwe) in the years between 2000 and 2008. Events in Shurugwi help to debunk the oft-conveyed narrative that equates the history of the post-1990s violence in Zimbabwe to the biographies of Mugabe and ZANU-PF. By 2008 the politics around raising fear, coercion, intimidation, threats and physical harm was so pervasive, structured, and “democratised” that it had reached deep into the extended family circles. To this extent therefore it meant that large sections of society participated and sustained the violence.

The pervasiveness of, and to some extent the “democratisation” of, the structures of violence therefore makes it imperative that we think beyond the two binary categories, first, the centre-periphery used in hierarchized power relations, and the perpetrator-victim binary. Rather, it would be productive to “fracture the appearance of lawful continuity between centres of legitimation and local acts of domination.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Allen Feldman, *Formations of violence*, p 2.

The move towards transcending these divisions enables us to look at the relations between the state and the women as complex and not as given. This also allows us to have a glimpse into the contrariness of the nature of the interactions, on the one hand between the women and the state, and on the other between women and the other perpetrators of the violence. By merely participating, either willingly, grudgingly, or coerced, whether to either gain from the fruits of participation and belonging to the key political parties in whose names the acts were committed, or to simply survive, this involved the agency of the women. As Foucault and Feldman argue, power and agency lie in the doing subject and not at some central place.<sup>27</sup> These various actions from the multiple situations that the women found themselves in pushed larger national politics further. It also opens us to the more intimate and hidden sources that sustained the hatred, intolerance, name-calling, the political bifurcation, the keeping of lists, denial of access to food and other social services at the lower levels of society.

Following in the Foucauldian line, the localised activities then fed into the national ideological grid where the commission of the “evil” at the village levels was used to showcase the necessity of the Third Chimurenga. It also gave more credence to the ideology. As already discussed in Chapter One, the violence experienced in Shurugwi, and elsewhere in Zimbabwe, was a product of planning and participation. Planning was done in Harare while the execution was led by the war veterans, villagers and local communities. The start of the nationwide violence was the period following the defeat of ZANU-PF in the constitutional referendum in February 2000. Besides marking the first defeat of ZANU-PF at the ballot, the constitutional referendum served as a sort of a “plebiscite on ZANU-PF rule since 1980.”<sup>28</sup> At another level, this defeat actualised the dwindling electoral fortunes of the ruling party and it inauspiciously pointed to subsequent election defeats for ZANU-PF.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> See Michel Foucault, *A history of sexuality*, p 94. See also Allen Feldman, *Formations of violence*, p 3.

<sup>28</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008”, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p 212.

<sup>29</sup> Lovemore Madhuku, “Law, Politics and the land reform process in Zimbabwe” in M Masiwa, ed, *Post-Independence Land Reform in Zimbabwe*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Harare, 2004, pp 137-141, for a

Following this, ZANU-PF leadership planned and started farm invasions, which became the harbinger of the post millennium violence in the country.<sup>30</sup> The same strategy of fomenting insecurity, steering emotions and the targeting of opposition was also repeated at intermittent times, especially around election times.<sup>31</sup> ZANU-PF party also organised the violence through its authorising narrative rooted in anti-imperialism that typecast and caricatured the MDC as a foreign face of Western colonialists. What gives credence to this thought is that besides having had the means to stop the violence, the party leadership condoned or openly supported it. Also, the duration, intensity, and recurrence of the violence point to some form of its encouragement and coordination.

It also has to be said that in time the mastermind of this strategy, that is, ZANU-PF's top echelons and the Joint Operations Command (JOC) seemed to have devolved control of the violence, which gave rise to local centres of control. As the violence deepened and was further extended there was little way they could manage it all, which gave rise to local initiatives and opportunities by the lower level structures. Thus, while the general strategy and authorising ideology were controlled from Harare, the tactics on the ground were not as firmly controlled.<sup>32</sup> For the violence to be sustainable at these levels it was suffused with localised struggles and localised histories.<sup>33</sup>

Importantly for Shurugwi, the national ideology was buttressed by the severe historical land shortages, and the conflicting legacies of the late ZANLA commander Josiah

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nanced discussion of this. Among other issues he says that the MDC had "visible and widespread support", p 137, which necessitated ZANU-PF to devise a survival strategy for the forthcoming June 2000 general elections. This strategy, as Madhuku points out, was violent political mobilisation.

<sup>30</sup> A lot of work has been done, and a key and instructive research has been done in Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen, eds *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the context of Crisis*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2003.

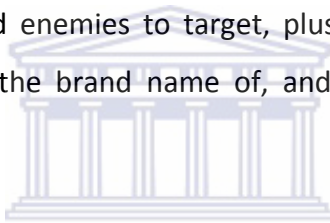
<sup>31</sup> See Pamela Machakanja, "National healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe: Challenges and opportunities", *Institute for justice and Reconciliation*, Wynberg, 2010, p 1.

<sup>32</sup> See also an interesting discussion of this on a nationwide scale by Solidarity Peace Trust, *Desperately seeking Sanity: What prospects for a new Zimbabwe?* Durban, 29 July 2008, p 25, which posits that: "In May and June (2008) there was a clear falling off of the direct role played by JOC in the actual day to day implementation of violence. The violence appeared to become self-perpetuating without the daily oversight of JOC". See also similar arguments summarised in Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing neighbours*, p 9.

<sup>33</sup> See a similar argument by Allen Feldman, *Formations of violence*, pp 2-3.

Tongogara and the late far-right Prime Minister of Rhodesia Ian Smith. The Tongogara legacy especially made for a strong case for emotive electioneering for ZANU-PF. He embodied the ZANLA struggle and triumph against the Rhodesia settler state. Ironically, Tongogara had worked on Ian Smith's mother's farm in his youth,<sup>34</sup> which in some sense symbolised the history of racialised economic inequalities and black suffering in Rhodesia.

Furthermore, there were various groups of people who contributed to the perpetration and sustenance of the orgy of political violence either in groups or as individuals. There were also instances when localised jealousies, competitions, examples, and conditions were used to justify the violation of the opposition MDC supporters. Locals again identified farms to invade and enemies to target, plus strategies to deal with them. However, this was largely in the brand name of, and in the service of, ZANU-PF's scheme to retain power.<sup>35</sup>



Addressing the violence in Shurugwi in terms of Foucault's discourse on the multivalent sources of power that takes into account the different relationships is also helpful in unpacking the various categories of perpetrators in Shurugwi. There were perpetrators at different levels depending on the political, social and economic power at their disposal. Others showed more active roles while others had more at stake. Yet for others their lowly positions meant that they had a smaller stake in the political violence, hence their minimal contributions. The latter's participation seemed to have been spurred by the need to benefit materially in an economy of severe shortages.

Among those who had some seemingly benign agency were rural women. This of course did not diminish their cumulative impact on the overall violence. However, I would like

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<sup>34</sup> See Luise White, *The assassination of Herbert Chitepo*, p 103.

<sup>35</sup> See for example Shari Eppel, "A tale of three dinner plates: forensic, narrative and psychological truths and the challenges facing human rights researchers in Zimbabwe" in [www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/.../...](http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/.../), pp 1-9., for a detailed discussion on the levels of the commission of political violence. The central point is that ZANU-PF structures were responsible for the highest percent of the violence. She also discusses the retaliatory violence from MDC structures.



to argue that the exhibition of one's agency depended on the amount of profit to be gained. The profits were either material gains or simply the need to survive. For the majority of the women in Shurugwi the profit was safety from being cast as the opposition. This meant that they were not beaten, threatened or had their property destroyed. They also needed the benefits that membership of ZANU-PF brought: access to food hand-outs, access to the GMB, access to agricultural inputs and access to social services or social grants, among others.

The above, other than merely highlighting the imperative of analysing the moral blameworthiness of the perpetrators, also calls for the troubling of the categories of perpetrators and victims. In this regard, following the vantage point provided by Fujii for the Rwanda genocide that posits for complexities, that is, tensions, blurred lines and ever-changing relations between and amongst perpetrators, victims and bystanders,<sup>36</sup> is productive. This is crucial in unpacking the complex forms of interactions between these different categories, as well as in sifting through the different shifts between these categories. It invites us to see the participants in these categories as transient between rigid categories.<sup>37</sup> Thus, this link again draws us to consider the 2000-2008 violence as "... a temporal and spatial unfolding of ambiguous actions, shifting contexts, and actors with multiple and contradictory motives."<sup>38</sup> What emerges on the whole therefore is that agency from such power relations is complex: at times covert, even suppressed, at others dominant, while at other times, benign.

But, where did that agency come from? In this regard we now turn to addressing the importance of coerced agency. For Shurugwi, in the face of the spread of the violence to the lowest social levels of the extended family, the distinction between willing and coerced participation is nebulous and difficult to articulate. Again the participation of

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<sup>36</sup> Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing neighbours: Webs of violence in Rwanda*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2009, p 8.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p 11.

women (and other categories) in the violence, either as victims or perpetrators, in the name of political parties further complicates it.<sup>39</sup> It then becomes tenuous to say whether the women got involved simply as members of their political parties which compelled them to participate, or whether they joined out of their own choice or to fight their own conflicts on the political stage.

The task of demarcating voluntary participation from coerced participation became further complicated by the circumstances around the period of the research. Besides the fact that this was the moment immediately after the violence, fraught with emotions and unsettled scores, there were more gains in claiming victimhood.<sup>40</sup> Informants told of rumours that promised compensation for the victims during 2010. There was also trepidation concerning reprisal attacks among those who had caused or threatened harm on their neighbours. These anxieties were exacerbated by the calls by human rights and the MDC for justice with regard to perpetrators.<sup>41</sup> Thus in this atmosphere it also became difficult to get to elicit complex narratives of what really happened. “Truths” became instrumentalised by those who gave their testimonies.<sup>42</sup> In this sense, there were various truths regarding the commission and organisation of the 2000 to 2008 violence.

Furthermore, the obtaining political polarity encouraged the polarisation of the “truth”. “Truth” was then only possible through the subjective political-party inclined perspectives. In the end it came to the questions: Whose truth, and, for what purpose? It might suffice to say that there was a ZANU-PF version of the events, which stood in sharp contrast to the MDC, human rights NGOs’ one. In brief, ZANU-PF’s version of events was aimed at the diplomatic community and for political indoctrination carried out in state-controlled media. On the other side was the human rights one that was

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<sup>39</sup> See a similar argument by Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing neighbours*, p 8.

<sup>40</sup> See Chapter Three for a pithy discussion of the reasons for claiming victimhood.

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter six here, for the various contestations around a possible TJ in the aftermath of the crisis.

<sup>42</sup> See Shari Eppel, “A Tale of three dinner plates” pp 6-7, for the core discussion of the various kinds of truths and how truths are important in claiming victimhood.

primarily aimed at keeping the “Zimbabwean problem” before the eyes of the international community. It also targeted the gaining of donor funding.

Although there may be collusions in some of the versions, for example, individuals at the centre of the violence, dates, and venues, for example, there are also fundamental contrasts between them. This polarity was even decipherable in the testimonies by the women at the lowest structures of the political movements, which mirrored that disseminated by their top structures. In the end I established that the versions of the “truths” were purposeful, and some of the versions of events by individuals even changed on repeat visits.

Arguing for the need to locate agency outside of the so-called “authorising centre” is not to demean the role of the state in the actual commission of the violations. The state had a strong hold in the rural areas especially as ZANU-PF has always regarded them as its powerbase. As for Shurugwi, the political symbolism regarding the legacy of Tongogara, the ZANLA commander, who hailed from the district, was strong. His legacy sat alongside that of Smith, who also came from Shurugwi, the hallmark of Rhodesian far right conservatism and settler colonialism that featured prominently in ZANU-PF’s authorising narrative. Boasting of degrees in violence<sup>43</sup> President Mugabe, the chief ideologue of the “Third Chimurenga”, and other senior party as well as government officials, constantly hammered on the importance of violence to ZANU-PF.<sup>44</sup> They explained this alongside Tongogara’s Second Chimurenga biography, in the simplified and overkill narrative of fighting against Western imperialism and its supposed local face, the MDC.

The pronouncements served to clear the path for ordinary members of the party and at times criminals to evoke their agency, taking advantage of the situation, to violate the

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<sup>43</sup> See David Blair, *Degrees in Violence: Robert Mugabe and the struggle for Power in Zimbabwe*, for more of these pronouncements by Mugabe.

<sup>44</sup> See Chapter One for a pithy discussion of this.

emotional well-being, as well as the social, political and economic rights of the members of the “ethnic” MDC group with guaranteed impunity. As we will briefly demonstrate below, and as we also intimated in Chapters One, Two and Three there were different state organs that committed violence, including the army, the police, the CIO, as well as quasi-government organs like the war veterans and the NYS graduates.

Crucially, however, once the process of inciting differences, “fears and hatred”,<sup>45</sup> as well as the targeting of opponents and enemies had been set in motion the government withdrew from the day to day overt supervision. With this, it was then left to local communities to extend the fears, hatred and differences, through marrying their struggles on to the larger party political discourse. In an atmosphere where the targeting of the opposition MDC supporters was acceptable, it was easy to convert personal battles into political battles between ZANU-PF and the MDC.<sup>46</sup> Once the framing of the “enemy” or “ethnicisation”, in Fujii’s language, was achieved and the emotions were drummed up,<sup>47</sup> it became easy to sustain the political violations through the family and village level confrontations and structures.

WESTERN CAPE

In Shurugwi there is “evidence” of people taking advantage of the violence to loot and grab property from their neighbours. As an NGO worker claimed:

Generally the violence provided an opportunity for some to move up the ladder largely through looting property from their victims. Look at what Gunpowder did in 2000, he chased away the owner of the farm and he harvested all the crops and retained the profits. After that he was not able to send anything to the Grain Marketing Board. I also know of criminals who looted their fellow villagers’ goats and chickens and hid in the name of their political party. Also state property was distributed along partisan lines. Scotch carts, ploughs and agricultural inputs

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<sup>45</sup> See Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing neighbours*, p 5.

<sup>46</sup> See Chapter Three, for a nuanced discussion on how petty jealousies were mapped on to the larger national political struggle.

<sup>47</sup> Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing neighbours*, p 5 posits an interesting brand on the reasons why neighbours turn against each other in what she terms an ethnicity-based (or race based in Foucault’s language). I find this useful in bringing together an ensemble of personal struggles that were put under the common denominator of politics. Thus political belonging became a form of ethnic formation.

were distributed through chiefs and headmen. It is all there to see. ZANU-PF supporters benefitted and MDC supporters were left out.<sup>48</sup>

From the interview above we have a glimpse of how people took advantage of their association with ZANU-PF to loot property from the white farmers and also from the generality of the MDC supporters. Criminals are also said to have benefitted from the confusion created by the statements that condoned violence against the opposition to deprive the defenceless peasants of their valuable property. There were numerous reports of theft of property from white farms. These included cattle, fence equipment, irrigation equipment, poaching, and theft of water pumping engines. Such actions were also witnessed in other sectors, such as gold panning. In this regard, criminal elements took advantage of their association with ZANU-PF to accumulate wealth.<sup>49</sup>

A useful analogy for the commission of violence that happened in the Zimbabwe comes from the Rwanda genocide. Contrasting the Rwanda genocide and the German holocaust, Mamdani writes that:

Unlike the NAZI holocaust, the Rwandan genocide was not carried out from a distance, in remote concentration camps beyond national borders, in the industrial killing camps operated by agents who often did no more than drop Zyklon B crystals into gas chambers from above. The Rwandan genocide was executed with the slash machetes rather than the drop of crystals, with all the gruesome detail of a street murder rather than the bureaucratic efficiency of a mass extermination. The difference of the technology is indicative of a more significant social difference. The technology of the holocaust allowed a few to kill many, but the machete had to be wielded by a single pair of hands. It required not one but many hacks of a machete to kill even one person. With a machete, killing was hard work; that is why there were several killers for a single victim.<sup>50</sup>

As a result of that the Rwandan genocide saw nearly whole populations affected and possibly millions participating in the killing. Mahmood Mamdani continues to say that in

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<sup>48</sup> A project officer with an NGO that worked in the district in an Interview held on 25 May in Gweru.

<sup>49</sup> See Chapter Two, especially the discussion of Marvellous who demanded that panners pay him "protection fees."

<sup>50</sup> See Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims become killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, Fountain Press, David Philip, and James Currey, Kampala, Cape Town, and Oxford, respectively, 2001, p 5.

the Rwanda case “the government did not kill. It prepared a population, enraged it and enticed it.”<sup>51</sup> While this analysis by Mamdani has courted controversy, in part because of his over reliance on Rwandans based in Uganda, recent studies on the genocide have affirmed his conclusion. However, they point to the initial direct role of the state in the killings.<sup>52</sup>

The Mamdani discursive framework is very instructive in unpacking the organisation, distribution, and execution of violence in Zimbabwe, and in Shurugwi in particular. In the Zimbabwe situation, and Shurugwi specifically, I would argue that the ZANU-PF government planned the attacks. In a series of hate speeches against the whites and opposition MDC supporters in general,<sup>53</sup> it prepared its supporters to launch onslaughts on them. It also enticed them with threats and rewards of various kinds.<sup>54</sup>

What I have established for Shurugwi is that patronage drew people to participate rather than the oft-claimed spontaneity by the land hungry citizens. As Alexander and Chitofiri said for Norton, ZANU-PF also used state resources for its patronage system.

They say:

ZANU-PF relied on the state’s assets and the state’s ability to control assets, and it deployed its resources to encourage and coerce performances of loyalty and- crucially- to mobilise violence... Our point here is to emphasise the way in which

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p 6.

<sup>52</sup> See for example, Charles Kabwete Mulinda “A space for genocide: local authorities, local population and local histories”, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Western Cape, September 2010, p 14, who contends that firstly the Rwandan government openly participated in the killings while simultaneously preparing and encouraging the population to kill. This is the same view I share and which I would like to also take on the role of the Zimbabwean government in the post February 2000 period. See my discussion on the distribution of the violence especially my discussion on the JOC in the following pages.

<sup>53</sup> See the rather inflammatory speeches of Mugabe in *Inside the Third Chimurenga*, for example.

<sup>54</sup> A serious culture emerged from the violence in Zimbabwe, that of patronage, where participants in the violence against MDC supporters were rewarded with farms or land, jobs in the government, food hand-outs, protection from violence or harm and agricultural inputs, among others. Due to this people were lured to partake in the violence against family members, neighbours and workmates, in the district. Shari Eppel, “A Tale of Three Dinner Plates: Truth and challenges of Human Rights Reports in Zimbabwe”, p 3, gives a detailed discussion of this in his study of Gomoza village of Lupane. For a pithy insight into the levels of hate speech see Robert Mugabe *Inside the Third Chimurenga: Our land is our prosperity*, Ministry of Information and Publicity, Harare, 2001, which contains some of Mugabe’s speeches

such practices were woven into the organisation of violence, creating particular kinds of incentives, expectations and relationships.<sup>55</sup>

They go on to say the MDC also created its own version of patronage as a counter by giving food and a support network to its supporters to counter the ZANU-PF model.<sup>56</sup>

What this translated to in a situation of severe shortages basically was that everyone had to belong to either party to gain provisions and to survive. This also meant the entrenchment of the binary of belonging. The two political parties controlled the scarce resources; in the case of ZANU-PF it was state resources through its control of government, and for the MDC because of its internal and external donor resources. However, for the MDC, this was rather a counter and at times subterranean patronage system because its supporters were being discriminated against and it feared for its supporters.

Once this binary of belonging was established people had to prove the worth of their belonging in order to continue to access the benefits or they could be labelled “sell-outs.” Importantly, this helped to complicate the already tenuous zone between perpetrators and victims. By belonging to a side, one became guilty by association in cases of violence committed by or in the name of the party. This character of the execution of the violence added a group dimension to the individualised commission for most of the women in Shurugwi.

From Shurugwi the case of Chipo, a middle aged woman, illustrates the importance of patronage.

I was a secretary of an MDC ward set up from 1999 to 2005. Thereafter the ward committee became non-functional because the national executive of the MDC abandoned us at the height of the inter-party struggles. I became an ordinary card carrying MDC supporter. My membership was known by all in my area and I did not want to renounce it. I was MDC at heart and I believed in its policies. As a

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<sup>55</sup> Jocelyn Alexander and Kudakwashe Chitofiri, “The consequences of violent politics in Norton, Zimbabwe”, p 5.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.



result of my known associational membership of the MDC I was ignored for government welfare programmes. At school my children were not considered for BEAM (Basic Education Assistance Model). Other people received free farming inputs, food hand-outs, and had access to cheap groceries. My children were also discriminated at for National Youth Training, which was important for one to enrol at teacher's training and nurse training, because the councillor could not give them a recommendation due to my MDC membership. Things got worse from 2006 to 2008. There was high inflation, my farming activities failed. My shop closed as well because I could not stock it. It became tough to survive. I eventually renounced my MDC membership in 2007 and publicly declared my support for ZANU-PF. I began to be considered for the benefits (outlined above). I had to show that I was ZANU-PF now. I had to dress up in its regalia. I had to sing at rallies. I had to do the slogans with passion. I had to attend all rallies and had to also accept a position in the ward.<sup>57</sup>

The interview confirms the impact of the economic catastrophe that hit the country between 2000 and 2008 in Shurugwi. This was due to industrial closures, economic sanctions, and the collapse of the agricultural sector under the twin pressures of unplanned farm takeovers and a combination of natural disasters in the form of floods and droughts. As a consequence there were unprecedented job losses, which led to rampant unemployment; astronomical and historical inflation, high poverty levels and a desperate need for citizens to survive.<sup>58</sup> It was in this environment that desperate women participated in politics as performers at rallies.

Under such dire conditions, rural women of Shurugwi renounced their support for the opposition for ZANU-PF with its access to and power over state resources, which it selectively distributed on patronage lines to its supporters. Chipso transformed herself over night from supporting the MDC to supporting ZANU-PF and has even risen over such a short space of time to the ward executive. While the public renouncements were humiliating, they at the same time provided the women with spaces and opportunities to reap some rewards, especially financial, material and security. In the environment where daily commodities were scarce, performing at rallies in Shurugwi enabled women

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<sup>57</sup> Interview with Chipso, 22 July 2010.

<sup>58</sup> See for example, Brian Raftopoulos, "The crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008", for more.

to access them. At times such goods as mealie-meal, the staple in the district, were sold or were given for free at rallies. Having participated actively in the political aesthetics,<sup>59</sup> such women, as Chipso did, were placed in a good stead to receive the hand-outs or to be placed in front of the queue to purchase the goods in short supply but which were available at the rallies.

Besides the basic goods such as mealie-meal, maize and cooking oil that were either given or sold at rallies or the GMB, active membership of ZANU-PF, and to a limited degree of the MDC, again entitled one to other goods and services. These included the agricultural inputs, scotch carts, ploughs and other agricultural implements handed out. Jobs in the civil service were also accessed on the basis of one's strong participation in ZANU-PF politics. The desire to live and escape poverty was therefore quite crucial in enticing women to participate in political performances.<sup>60</sup> This ought to be put in the perspective of a clear patronage system from the national ZANU-PF hierarchy. The President, for example, gave out computers, food, buses, farm equipment and cows at rural rallies,<sup>61</sup> and in other cases he announced pay rise for civil servants; and distributed vehicles and agricultural equipment to ZANU-PF supporters.<sup>62</sup>

Elsewhere, giving alcohol, selling goods that were in short supply such as soap, mealie-meal and cooking oil, offering free uniforms, making promises to pay kids' school fees, and handing out cellphone lines (sim packs), were used to attract performances and

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<sup>59</sup> I am here guided by the thoughts of Jacques Ranciere on the relationship between aesthetics and politics in his discussion of "the distribution of the sensible." Broadly, one of the issues he raises is the close relationship between politics and aesthetics. See Jacques Ranciere, *The politics of aesthetics*, Translated by Gabriel Rockhill, with an afterword by Slavoj Zizek, Continuum, London, 2006, pp 7-34.

<sup>60</sup> See a similar contention by John Lwanda, *Promises, Power Politics, and Poverty: Democratic Transition in Malawi, (1961-1999)*, Dudu Nsomba Publications, Glasgow, p 19.

<sup>61</sup> See *Mail and Guardian online*, 18 February 2008, titled "Economic chaos may deny Mugabe rural vote", Accessed 18 February 2011.

<sup>62</sup> See *Congressional Research Service (CRS)*, "Zimbabwe: 2008 Elections and the implications for US Policy", 22 May 2008, cited in [fpc.state.gov/documents/organisation/106142.pdf](http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organisation/106142.pdf), accessed 12 January 2010.

attendances at rallies.<sup>63</sup> High Court Judge Rita Makarau also made reference to this practice of patronage. In passing judgement in the Elton Mangoma vs Didymus Mutasa election petition she said:

I am satisfied that throughout the constituency, villagers were threatened with the withholding of food and other hand-outs and were denied these if they supported the MDC... the perpetrators of this practice were the leadership of ZANU-PF at the village levels and the war veterans residing in the constituency.

She also stated that “It has been my finding that corrupt practices were committed in respect of the election of the [ZANU-PF] respondent. Villagers were denied food and other hand-outs and resettled farmers were intimidated with loss of their land if they voted for the [MDC] petitioner.”<sup>64</sup>

Professor Heneri Dzinotyiwei also established that many people attended ZANU-PF rallies in rural areas to benefit from these goods that were given at these rallies, and not necessarily out of genuine support for ZANU-PF.<sup>65</sup> Further, the Physicians for Human Rights established these cases of “politically motivated discrimination” were also extended to children of MDC supporters who were excluded from accessing social services such as schooling and donor feeding schemes for those of school-going ages and the under-fives.<sup>66</sup>

In addition, I established also that party attire, such as wrap-around materials commonly referred to as *mazambia*, and t-shirts, scarfs, whistles and flags were not

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<sup>63</sup> See Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN), “Pre-election Update No3, 22 January-6 February 2008” cited in <http://www.zesn.org>, Accessed 20 February 2011.

<sup>64</sup> Part of Justice Rita Makarau’s judgement delivered in the Elton Steers Mangoma vs Didymus Mutasa: Judgement on Electoral Petition for Makoni North: Justice Rita Makarau, cited in Solidarity Peace Trust, *Operation Taguta/Sisuthi: Command Agriculture in Zimbabwe: Its impact on rural Communities*, April 2006.

<sup>65</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, 18 February 2008, Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> See Physicians for Human Rights, Denmark, *Zimbabwe: Post Presidential Election March-May 2002*, 21 May 2002, pp 11-22 for more insights into this. This however, can be succinctly encapsulated in the words of one ZANU-PF councillor they quoted as bragging that: “Even if stone was to melt, MDC children will not get food, because it is ZANU-PF food.” In addition they also say that known or suspected MDC supporters were excluded from a range of services such as purchasing maize from the GMB, “food for work” programmes.

randomly given. They were allocated according to the levels of participation by individuals in party political activities. The most active, besides providing entertainment, also advertised the political parties on national media. Except for flags and whistles, most of these became important fashion apparel in an era in which it had become luxurious to buy clothes. This meant that the apparel came in to fill the gap, and they became important everyday fashion items both inside and outside of the political contexts and spaces. This was in addition to the symbolic role the attire played in identifying those who supported or belonged to whichever political party. The role of political paraphernalia became especially crucial around election times, which also came to signify moments of intense onslaught against non-supporters.

In the above scenario one cannot help but notice the contrariness between women being forced to participate, in order to benefit, on the one hand, and the symbolic empowerment that they experienced from the material benefits they acquired, on the other. They might have been “forced”, literally and figuratively, to perform, but they ended up surviving the scathing poverty of that infamous decade. One might be tempted to posit that this ended up as somewhat skewed, though contemporaneously mutually beneficial, relationship.

However, we ought to note that as the economic conditions became dire and overall made survival a mammoth task, state repression and coercion also worsened. This was, as we discussed in the General Introduction, the result of the transformation of politics into an extension of war by the ruling party. Faced with a strong opposition, which perhaps was the strongest in the post-independence period, ZANU-PF increasingly called upon its coercive apparatus in the form of the security forces to mobilise support for its survival. Alongside this was also the deployment of a “war” language, reminiscent of the Second Chimurenga, which clearly categorised opponents as outsiders and enemies who had to be annihilated.

In this background, as Mbembe has established for Cameroon and Togo, there was always the possibility of a resort to violence to enforce compliance whose aim was “not just to bring a specific political consciousness into being but make it effective.”<sup>67</sup> This placed the women in an untenable position. To navigate their survival in such an economy women had to, among others, engage in active politicking. For example, dancing at rallies became somewhat dancing for survival. This further complicates the symbiosis we attempted to posit above because what the women got was nowhere near what they were forced to give out.

Confronted with state excesses that demanded unquestioned loyalty to ZANU-PF, women had to participate as a form of public gesture. Threats to violence, and examples of what could befall “sell-outs,” sustained the belief in the strength of the tactics of intimidation. Aware of their shortcomings women felt obliged to take part in the economy of these performances in the public rallies. They saw more reward in being seen as belonging and being co-opted as insiders than to seek resistance and disengagement that amounted to being labelled as sell outs, or public violation. The women had to know the slogans by heart, and were expected to keep abreast with changes within these slogans as part of this scheme of ZANU-PF’s version of biopolitics. By repeating these slogans and songs the women were put through a regime of indoctrination. Through this, the images and words were engraved as epitaphs on their minds. The above speaks to Ruddick’s assessment of fear in generating for the underclasses moments of empowerment. In this way, faced with little freedom, the women passively participated in order to avoid painful encounters, such as threats and actualised physical violence.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Achille Mbembe, “Provisional Notes”, p 4.

<sup>68</sup> See, Susan Ruddick, “The politics of affect: Spinoza in the work of Negri and Deleuze”, in *Theory, Culture and Society*, cited in <http://tcs.sagepub.co/>, accessed 23 July 2012.

At another level the annual military drills that were undertaken in the Mufiri area<sup>69</sup> of the district served to intimidate the women residents. As much as they are supposed to be regular and “normal” military exercises to help in the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA)’s readiness for emergencies, they had another meaning to the locals, that of a state which conspicuously displayed its machinery of violence. Once the military drills were viewed in this light of the fetish state power, it meant that the rural women in the district saw more need to take part in the sloganeering, singing, dancing and other ritual performances at rallies.

The above has to be taken together with the dissemination of a powerful state propaganda, that of a nation at war against the British, the European Union, the United States of America and their agents in the form of the MDC. In the propaganda campaigns, graphic images of the suffering during the Second Chimurenga, the aggressive speeches and calls for sacrifice to retain national sovereignty compelled the submission of women. We ought to note, however, that in the ZANU-PF narrative there were a range of very emotive issues that were raised, which had a powerful resonance among the poor citizens of the district. These included, inter alia, land redistribution and the fight against Western imperialism that targeted the re-colonisation of the country.

The combination of political repression and harrowing economic climate leading to forced participation as a negotiating mechanism is amplified by the performances of music stars at what were termed national music galas.<sup>70</sup> These were music festivals organised at or around important national days including Heroes’, Independence, and Unity days or anniversaries marking the birth of Mugabe on 21 February or the death of Joshua Nkomo on 1 July.

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<sup>69</sup> The army has a training field in this area, which it regularly uses for its drills.

<sup>70</sup> Watching such galas between 2001 and 2005, for example, I remember all the big names in the Zimbabwe music industry such as Alick Macheso, Tongai Moyo, Charles Charamba, Nicholas Zacharia and Sandra Ndebele participated in these galas. These big guns performed alongside the young and upcoming musicians, who were eager to be known because the galas were all beamed live on the sole television station in Zimbabwe, the ZTV.

Besides the dollars they made, musicians indirectly showed their allegiance to ZANU-PF, which was the “official custodian” of these important national days on the calendar of Zimbabwe. This is notwithstanding the fact that some songs and performances could have contained anti-ZANU-PF or subversive subtexts. The galas also advanced the image of ZANU-PF the sponsoring political party. The background stage was covered in ZANU-PF colours and campaign messages. These differed at various moments from “Land is the economy and the economy is land”, to “100 percent indigenisation.” In the end, these popular musicians, as Mbembe suggests,

by dancing publicly for the benefit of power, the ‘post-colonised subject’ is providing his or her loyalty and by compromising with the corrupting control that state power tends to exercise at all levels of everyday life (over benefits, services, pleasures...) the subject is reaffirming that it is incontestable ...<sup>71</sup>

Again, performances by the different groups were often interspersed with excerpts of speeches made by President Mugabe and other leaders associated with ZANU-PF including Tongogara, Chitepo and Joshua Nkomo. At times there would be images from the Second Chimurenga shown. All these buttressed ZANU-PF’s emancipatory narrative and its claims to power. In this fashion, galas were an important component of the “cultural nationalism”<sup>72</sup> that ZANU-PF deployed to further legitimate itself.<sup>73</sup> Thus the performances helped to buttress the reimagining of the history of the nation, and the history of the struggle for Zimbabwe, especially the Second Chimurenga, along ZANU-PF terms.<sup>74</sup> Crucially, also, was the fact that because some of the most popular musicians performed their songs and dance routines meant that ZANU-PF got maximum marketing

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<sup>71</sup> See Achille Mbembe, “Provisional Notes”, p 25.

<sup>72</sup> See Hutchinson cited in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Making sense of cultural nationalism and the politics of commemoration under the Third Chimurenga in Zimbabwe”, in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 35, No 4, December 2009, URL, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03057070903314226>, Accessed 22 August 2012, p 946.

<sup>73</sup> I am here drawing on the mode of the deployment of cultural nationalism to aid a certain kind of politics that Askew has argued for Tanzania. See Askew cited in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Making sense of cultural nationalism”, p 952.

<sup>74</sup> Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Making sense of cultural nationalism”. It is also vital to note that galas ran alongside a battery of other cultural projects that were sponsored by the government, including the introduction of the 75 percent local content on radio and TV, virginity tests in Manicaland as well as attacks on homosexuals.



to both the rural and urban constituencies. Advertising to the young people and to urban constituencies was especially crucial for ZANU-PF that was suffering constant defeats in urban-based constituencies to the MDC and whose policies did not carry much support from the younger voters.

At another level the galas were organised to offer a monologic function. In this way, “rally organisers attempt[ed] to control the messages that emerge to ensure that they conform[ed] to the party’s goals.”<sup>75</sup> In this fashion, galas were to be the “reincarnation of the night vigils (pungwes) that whipped people into common liberation thinking and kept them informed, educated and informed.”<sup>76</sup> It was thus in this context that some musicians went out of their way to compose such praise songs for ZANU PF as Tambaoga’s “Blair is a toilet”, and Hosiah Chipanga’s *VaMugabe vanopa asi njere ndodzatisina*/Cde Mugabe gives but we lack wisdom. I recall watching on television, Minister Saviour Kasukuwere giving Tambaoga Zimbabwe \$50 000-00 after a performance. While it showed his appreciation of the performance, it also emphasises the economic and political hierarchies between those who were performing and ZANU-PF leadership.<sup>77</sup> More than this, some of these big stars wore the gala regalia, especially T-shirts and caps which produced a huge impact. As Rappaport says, these performers “are not only transmitting messages they find encoded in a canon. They are participating in this-that is, becoming part of- the order to which their own bodies and breadth give life.”<sup>78</sup> Thus, they link “their presentation of identity at the event to the party.”<sup>79</sup>

At another level, performing at these galas went beyond aggrandizing ZANU-PF. It was simultaneously a space for pursuing personal benefits for the musicians. Strategically

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<sup>75</sup> Lisa Gilman, “Genre, agency, and meaning”, p 339.

<sup>76</sup> See *The Herald*, 26 July 2005, cited in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Making sense of cultural nationalism”, p 953.

<sup>77</sup> See also Lisa Gilman, “Genre, agency, and meaning”, p 353.

<sup>78</sup> See Rappaport, cited in Lisa Gilman, “Genre, agency, and meaning”, p 349.

<sup>79</sup> Lisa Gilman, *Ibid*, p 349.

utilising the “alliances as well as lines of cleavages,”<sup>80</sup> the galas meant that the participating artists benefited from the publicity at such events, as their music got more air play or remained playing on the sole state-controlled media. Performing at galas was especially important for young and up-coming musicians who were involved in a fledgling “Urban grooves” genre.<sup>81</sup> These artists sought all the publicity they could get in order for them to compete with established musicians and music genres. There were instances when certain musicians were barred from national radio and television for being seen as anti-ZANU-PF. More air play too meant more royalties. It also stands to reason that the ZANU-PF tried in the same process to calm if not win over the restive urban population through providing entertainment at subsidized prices amid a worsening economic decline. Below I will now turn to look at the different categories of “participation”, which is linked to the murky issue of “perpetrators”.

#### **JOINT OPERATIONS COMMAND (JOC)**

In this section I return to the highest authority so that I can explain fully the structures of the violence. This is also intended to demonstrate the importance of the central body, whose control however loose, in allowing for the commission of the violence. The JOC was created in 1999, and was “based on a Rhodesian military structure and staffed by heads of security services, all of whom are former guerrillas.”<sup>82</sup> We must hasten to add that there were civilians in JOC as well. Notable among these were Emmerson Munangagwa and Reserve Bank Governor, Gideon Gono. This conflation of the security-political oligarchies should not be seen as novel in ZANU-PF history because during the prosecution of the armed guerrilla war in the 1970s there was a strong overlap between the commanders of both ZIPRA and ZANLA and their respective political parties.<sup>83</sup> To this end, guerrilla commanders, especially ZANLA ones, were also active political

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<sup>80</sup> See Stuart Hall cited in Maurice T Vambe, “Popular songs and social realities in post-independence Zimbabwe”, in *African Studies Review*, vol 43, No 2, 2000, p 76.

<sup>81</sup> See also Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Making sense of cultural nationalism”, p 954.

<sup>82</sup> See Paul Sorenson, “Zimbabwe’s Security Services: Views from the Inside” in *RUSI Journal*, August/September 2010, vol 55, no4, p 60.

<sup>83</sup> See Paresh Pandya, *Mao Tse-Tung and Chimurenga*, pp 147-148.

commissars for their respective parties. In this role, they were responsible for mobilising and raising party support. However, in the end the JOC became a powerful ZANU-PF - security forces junta.<sup>84</sup> There was a strong interpenetration between these two parts, with the result that security forces became heavily politicised and the ZANU-PF polity became heavily militarised long after the struggle for independence was achieved.<sup>85</sup>

One major feature of the JOC was its reliance on coercive tactics in dealing with matters of the state. It is little wonder therefore that between 2000 and 2008 the country witnessed an increased resort to military-style operations. These military-style operations were performed on purely civilian governmental issues. The most notable of these include Operation *Murambatsvina*/Drive out Filth of 2005, Operation *Maguta*/Drive out hunger and Operation *Mavhoterapapi*/How did you vote in 2008. The pre-eminence of the military and military-style leadership led Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the MDC, to complain that “the country [had] witnessed a *de facto coup d’etat* and [was] effectively run by a military junta.”<sup>86</sup> Newspaper headlines in the independent media depicted the scenes graphically illustrating a country at war between April and July 2008 during Operation *Mavhoterapapi*. As an example *The Zimbabwe Independent* of 23 to 29 May 2008, and 13 to 19 June 2008, were headlined “Mugabe orders warlike campaign”, and “Army boosts Mugabe campaign,”<sup>87</sup> to capture the insane levels of armed electioneering and accompanying fires of retributive violence spearheaded by the JOC in the Presidential election runoff of June 28, 2008.

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<sup>84</sup> See James Muzondidya, “Our guns our votes’: The Political-Military Alliance in Zimbabwe and Prospects for Democracy”, Paper presented at the *European Conference on African Studies 2009, Institute of African Studies*, University of Leipzig, Germany, 4-7 June 2009, p 3, for a more detailed discussion.

<sup>85</sup> See Michael Bratton and Eldred Masunungure, “Zimbabwe’s Long Journey” in *Journal of Democracy*, 19, 4, October 2008, p 42, for a more extended analysis of the JOC. See also the *Report of the Pan African Parliament Election Observer Mission: Presidential Runoff and House of Assembly By-elections, Republic of Zimbabwe, 27 June 2008*, pp 14-15.

<sup>86</sup> See “Zimbabwe opposition leader says country run by military” in *Voice of America*, 10 April 2008, cited in Michael Bratton and Eldred Masunungure, “Zimbabwe’s long agony”, p 50.

<sup>87</sup> See *The Zimbabwe Independent* newspapers, 23 to 29 May 2008, and 13 to 19 June 2008.

The major role of the JOC in the violence in Shurugwi (and in other parts of Zimbabwe) was to act as the headquarters of the violence. It planned, directed and financed the violence. As Sorenson posits, the JOC provided “tactical direction, human resources and logistical support” to the war veterans and militia groups, as well as general coordination.<sup>88</sup> Added to this organisation, Eppel says, the JOC gave “very systematised instructions [while] structures of command were set up in every district across Zimbabwe.”<sup>89</sup> Indeed as Bratton and Masunungure have found, in the 27 June 2008 Presidential election runoff the JOC was in charge of the election campaign for ZANU-PF, and it

divided the country into ten provincial command centres staffed by two hundred serving army officers who were dispatched to rural areas to supervise operations by war veterans and party youths militias.....The JOC ordered the Reserve Bank to print money to fund pay hikes for war veterans, allowances for party youth, and payoffs for chiefs and headmen. These combined forces were instructed to invade farms, burn down houses, and incite violence.<sup>90</sup>

At times also, members of the JOC participated directly in the execution of violence. An example is that of Perence Shiri who is said to have mobilised about 1 500 war veterans to spearhead farm invasions in 2000 and who is also said to have masterminded the bloody “Operation *Mavhoterapapi*” of 2008 on the national level.<sup>91</sup>

The JOC had operational structures of violence in Shurugwi. Under *Operation Mavhoterapapi*, for example, there was a Major in the ZNA who led the war veterans and ZANU-PF aligned structures. The Major hails from the district and he owns a commercial farm in the district which he got during *jambanja*. Together with known war veterans, he is said to have led a campaign that terrorised known MDC supporters and that campaigned for the re-election of President Mugabe. This structure was joined to

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<sup>88</sup> Paul Sorenson, “Zimbabwe’s Security Services”, p 60.

<sup>89</sup> See Shari Eppel, *A Tale of three dinner plates*, p 3. See also Solidarity Peace Trust, *Punishing Dissent, Silencing Citizens*, 21 May 2008. See also Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, “The military factor in Zimbabwe’s”, for a detailed view of the role of JOC in setting up structures of violence in the districts.

<sup>90</sup> See Michael Bratton and Eldred Masunungure, “Zimbabwe’s Long Agony” in *Journal of Democracy*, 19, 4, October 2008, p 51.

<sup>91</sup> See Paul Sorenson, “Zimbabwe’s Security Services”, p 60.

the national one via the provincial one that was headed by a leading Airforce of Zimbabwe commander.<sup>92</sup>

Over time the JOC metamorphosed into a wealth-accumulating structure that used its power and influence to amass resources for its members as well as to retain ZANU-PF in power. In a complex cause-effect matrix, ZANU-PF needed these men in the JOC for its political survival and in turn the JOC capitalised on its close alliance with the ruling ZANU-PF to gain economic power. The JOC members also realised that they wanted the continuation of ZANU-PF hegemony so that they could continue to have privileged access to the country's resources. A rather symbiotic but kleptocratic relationship thus developed between the JOC and ZANU-PF, which however negatively bled the country on so many fronts. Using the systems of patronage and privileged access to state resources, mainly through cheap finances via the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, as well as economic opportunities that were availed by the DRC war, and taking advantage of their privileged position to grab fertile farms and mining, the JOC members engaged in some kind of "primitive accumulation."<sup>93</sup>

As a result, many became super rich and had a diverse hold on key government economic sectors as well as in lucrative private enterprises.<sup>94</sup> These ranged from mining,

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<sup>92</sup> See Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, "The military factor in Zimbabwe's"

<sup>93</sup> See *Newsday*, 22 June 2011, "ZANU-PF engages in primitive accumulation of wealth", in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-06-22-zanu-pf-engages-in-primitive-accumulation-of-wealth>, Accessed 27 June 2011. It is also rumoured that some members of JOC have serious investments in the Gecca diamond mines in the DRC and also in the two mining concerns responsible for mining of diamonds in the controversial Marange mines. For Zimbabwe security forces investments in the DRC, see the United Security Council "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo" 16 October 2002 which lists the company COSLEG as the vehicle through which the security chiefs are mining diamonds. The report also says key officials were Emmerson Munangagwa, Vitalis Zvinavashe, Sydney Sekeramayi, Brigadier Sibusiso Moyo. Other companies linked to the senior security officials include Thorntree, Oryx Natural Resources, OSLEG Company, and Tremalt. Other members had multiple farms, for example Gideon Gono, who has proclaimed himself to be the largest individual chicken and egg farmer in Africa. See also Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, "The military factor in Zimbabwe's", pp 18-25.

<sup>94</sup> See Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, "The military factor in Zimbabwe's political and electoral affairs", pp 18-25, for a pithy discussion of the economic interests and gains to befall members of the JOC.

industrial, transport and included agriculture. Richard Saunders has aptly captured the central economic relations between the members of the JOC and ZANU-PF. He says:

In the 2000s, elite accumulation went off rig: out of reach of transparent regulation by government, primarily benefitting a small cadre without systematic empowerment redistributive concerns; the frequently overlapping with regional 'parallel markets' and crucial networks. If accumulation and new class formation were driven in the first two decades of independence by state based policy making, in the third it was often hidden behind a veil of secrecy, operating on the edges of the state and fuelled and protected by business-security networks patronised by competing ZANU-PF factional blocs with links to the military and political wings of the party.<sup>95</sup>

Because the JOC had become a bizarre mixture of political, business and security interests, with powerful tentacles in the state through patronage benefits, it sought, through the *commandement*<sup>96</sup>, to retain President Mugabe and ZANU-PF in power seemingly in the face of loss of popular mandate based on elections. As already discussed in earlier chapters, this retention scheme started from about 2000 in the form of state-orchestrated but war-veterans led farm takeovers, through the 2002 security forces' pronouncement that they would suspend the constitution in the event that ZANU-PF and President Mugabe lost elections. Similar pronouncements continued to be made, for example in the lead to the 2008 elections and even in the era of the GNU by senior army personnel. Most notable of these were made by General Chiwenga, Brigadier-General Nyikayaramba, Major-general Chedondo and Brigadier General Mugoba between 2008 and 2012.

The threats were visibilised, so to speak, in the June 2008 runoff when the JOC crafted violence under "Operation *Mavhoterapapi?* and *Operation Tsuru negwenzi*. President Mugabe has unconditionally stood by members of JOC. For example, he unilaterally

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<sup>95</sup> See Richard Saunders, "Zimbabwe: Liberation Nationalism, Old and Born Again" in *Links International Journal of Socialist Renewal*, in <http://links.org.au/node/1831>, Accessed 12 January 2010.

<sup>96</sup> The *commandement* is described as "images and structures of power and coercion, the instruments and agents of their enactment." In other words it relates to structures of authoritarianism. See Achille Mbembe, "Provisional Notes on the postcolony", in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, vol 62, no 1, 1992, p30, cited in <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9720%281992%2962%3A1%3C3%3APNOTP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-N> Accessed 20 October 2010.

extended the terms for Police Commissioner and Army Commander Constantine Chiwenga despite provisions of the GPA that he needed to consult other principals who wanted them replaced. Their reappointments together with that of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) governor, Gideon Gono, and those of provincial governors and ambassadors perennially threatened the survival of the GNU.<sup>97</sup>

## WAR VETERANS AND YOUTH MILITIAS

These became the main storm troopers for the ZANU-PF government and are largely blamed for fanning the flames of the violence that engulfed Zimbabwe. Many human rights reports cite war veterans as being behind the largest percentages of violence committed. This may have resulted because unlike the proper security organs, this quasi-state organisation often operated on the margins of the law. It also lacked the discipline associated with regular security forces. It also benefitted from their closeness with the President, who ensured their impunity through a number of amnesties.<sup>98</sup>

With the 2000 constitutional referendum defeat, ZANU-PF organised the war veterans to lead farm occupations in an attempt to punish the whites who had spearheaded the NO vote campaign in the rural areas, their workers who had allegedly voted with their employer farmers, and more generally to eviscerate MDC's encroachments into the rural areas.<sup>99</sup> It has, however, to be stated that war veterans operated on the guidelines and orders from the state. As Raftopoulos puts it, "while the leadership role of the war veterans was prominent, the organisational, logistical and coercive support provided by

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<sup>97</sup> See *Newsday*, 05 June 2012, "Tsvangirai address to Sadc in full", <http://newsday.co.zw/article/2012-06-05-tsvangirai-adress-to-sadc-in-full/>, Accessed 11 June 2012.

<sup>98</sup> See for example the Clemency Order of 2000, in Pamela Machakanja, "National healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe", p 10. See Human Rights Watch, *Perpetual fear: Impunity and cycles of violence*, March 2011, p 25, in [www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/.../zimbabwe0311NoPage8Full.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/.../zimbabwe0311NoPage8Full.pdf), Accessed 14 June 2012, for Clemency Order No 1 of 2008, which pardoned political violence between March and June 2008.

<sup>99</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "The crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008", p 212, and Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Zimbabwe*, for nuanced discussions on the dynamics of the relations between the war veterans and ZANU-PF and their leading role in the farm invasions.



the state were crucial distinguishing features of the post 2000 occupations.”<sup>100</sup> These however, strengthened the local war veterans’ operations at the local levels.

As illustrated above, the state power rested with the JOC. In turn the war veterans were guided by the terms set out by the JOC. While operating under the general JOC guidelines, the war veterans in Shurugwi were also small centres for the coordination of farm invasions in the district with independent powers of decision making. To this extent they identified farms for occupation. They also mobilised groups of people for the invasion of the identified farms. They again coordinated the security for the occupiers. After this the war veterans were at the head of parcelling out these farms to those who would have participated. Usually the war veterans allocated themselves the homesteads and fields that were previously utilised by the former owners. They also decided the fate of the farm workers on occupied farms.

At times, personal gains informed war veterans’ invasions. In an interview with Mrs Ndlovu of Ward 24, she highlighted among other issues that war veterans led in the invasion of more than one farm for personal gain. She stated that:

It was the war veterans who led the occupation of many farms. They wanted to make a name for themselves, and they also wanted to get land for their sons. For some they took to these invasions because they wanted to genuinely reduce overcrowding in the district. For some however, they went to enrich themselves, they took things from the farms like doors, locks, fences, asbestos sheets and cattle. They also became leaders of those farms they invaded with powers to evict and bring in people on to the farms.<sup>101</sup>

At another level, they were responsible for the setting up of base camps and the re-enactment of the *pungwes*. They also determined how the sell-outs were punished. At times they determined if civil servants and local government remained or not in their positions. In like manner they had a strong role in the selection of new recruits especially relief teachers in the district. They were responsible, through

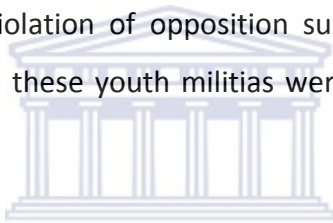
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<sup>100</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008”, p 213.

<sup>101</sup> Interview held with Mrs Ndlovu of Ward 24, Mazivisa area, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2010.

recommendations, in choosing NYS recruits. They also had a say in who accessed inputs or maize from the GMB. Together with the local traditional leaders and party leadership, war veterans also discussed the agenda for the political rallies held by ZANU-PF.

Youth militia, who were also known as the green bombers, were another category of perpetrators. These received a dose of “patriotic history” in their three-months’ stay in the training camps, which “extolled the pre-eminence of ZANU-PF in the liberation struggle and government” and which also glossed over the opposition as “sell-outs and Western puppets.”<sup>102</sup> Because they had received this essentialised brand of history, they were already indoctrinated hence they also formed a readily available hegemonic arm that articulated ZANU-PF propagandist renditions. They too played an important role in the farm invasions and the violation of opposition supporters at the national level. There were some cases where these youth militias were joined by ZANU-PF youths in these farm invasions.<sup>103</sup>



In Shurugwi, the NYS graduates seem not to have had a big impact in causing the ill-treatment and the public humiliation of opposition supporters. Potentially, this points to the pre-eminence of other structures especially the war veterans in the humiliations and public floggings of the MDC supporters. It too points to the laid-back position they took and their absorption in other sectors of the economy. This notwithstanding, however, there was one Tonderai who was one of the first NYS graduates in the district. He had trained at Dadaya NYS centre. He was easily identifiable because he favoured wearing the green fatigues. He was also said to have worked very close with Jerry whom we discussed in Chapter Three in the violent threats against MDC supporters. His major role, I was informed, was in reciting the history of the land in the country. He was again famed for introducing new songs at rallies.

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<sup>102</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 21.

<sup>103</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, “The crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008”, p 213.

As intimated above, many of these youths however worked under the ZANU-PF structures. In this role they were not conspicuous. At times they were confused with the other “ordinary” ZANU-PF youths who had not undergone NYS training. For their roles in fomenting violence they received government employment in the civil service. More often than not they have had first preference in this employment. At some stage by 2009, there were about 29 000 youth militias in government employment costing the state in excess of three million United States dollars per month.<sup>104</sup> In an atmosphere where there was widespread unemployment in the country, and in an economy that was not able to create jobs, these statistics represent an enormous figure.

While I could not get the employment statistics for Shurugwi district, I observed quite a significant number of the NYS graduates working as temporary school teachers and at the Grain Marketing Board at Tongogara Growth Point. Lots more were employed as Ward Coordinators, which was a relatively new job title having been introduced around 2009. Because many staffers were NYS graduates and others were known ZANU-PF members, many people in Shurugwi associated it with ZANU-PF grassroots mobilisation structures. Officially, these Ward Coordinators were supposed to supervise and encourage self-help projects in their wards. However, we heard from civil servants in the district that more often than not these coordinators did nothing more than to mobilise support for ZANU-PF. However, more research needs to be done on it. From the above we can discern the fact that these NYS graduates were “easy to mobilise ... as they were unemployed”, and that they were also drawn from local ranks hence they easily knew who to target.<sup>105</sup>

### **WOMEN AS PERPETRATORS**

The starting point here is to reject the notion that women are always mute victims in violent situations. They had power of different sorts that influenced the nature and

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<sup>104</sup> See Paul Sorenson, “Zimbabwe’s Security Services”, p 61.

<sup>105</sup> See RAU, *When the going gets tough*, p 12.

direction of the violence in the disparate categories which hugely impacted on the violence in Shurugwi. From field research, it emerged that there was a very small group of women who took an active role in the physical commission of violations. Many, however, had a rather indirect role in perpetuating and sustaining the violence. This speaks to Meredith Turshen's assertion that women in conflict situations "are also combatants, women resist and fight back; they take sides, spy, and fight among themselves; and even when they don't see active service, they often support war efforts in multiple ways, willingly or unwillingly."<sup>106</sup>

For women in Shurugwi their agency in the violence largely depended on the need for survival and gains to be made. In the politics of patronage that evolved, as the political and economic situations deteriorated, one had to be seen to belong. It was difficult to survive without political membership. Under such conditions women were left with little choice but to associate with or join either of the two parties, especially ZANU-PF, and reap the food hand-outs, protection and survival as well as obtain land. For these rewards therefore women had to perform and be active members of their political party.

From the foregoing, one gets a sense of tactical and strategic agency by the women. Strategic agency refers to long-term goals that have to be achieved, while tactical agency is about immediate goals, gains and circumstances to be achieved.<sup>107</sup> As Utas avers,

The agency of any human being is set within certain societal confines. This is not unique to womanhood. Rather the amount of individual agency or the amount of victimcy changes from situation to situation, from one social relation to another, whether you are a man or woman. In war men and women are situated on the same sliding scale between abundant agency and victimcy. Even the so-called perpetrators are severely limited in their agency: to survive, civilians are forced to participate in war trade, while fighters are forced by their commanders to

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<sup>106</sup> Meredith Turshen, "Women war stories", in Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya, eds, *What women do in war time*, ZED Books, London and New York, p 1.

<sup>107</sup> Mats Utas, "Agency of victims", p 56.

participate in atrocities. Likewise the commanders are forced to command so as to keep their men in place and the enemy terrified.<sup>108</sup>

The women in Shurugwi by engaging in patronage relations with either of the parties appear to have done so out of necessity in the face of widespread shortages. As such patronage was one of the major means that the women employed for their own and families' survival. Also, in an economy of shortages, crime, especially plunder, had become a way of survival. Hence some participated in the violence to find Stuart Hall's "cleavages"<sup>109</sup> to loot or to be fed from the proceeds of the violence. In this regard, the fact that there was food, cool drinks and even alcohol at bases meant that those considered first were the ones engaged directly in the perpetration of violence. In a way therefore people took advantage of the opportunity presented to survive, through the looting, presented by the politics underlined by plunder and threats.

When looking at the role of women in the violence in Shurugwi it is, however, useful to ask the questions that Shari Eppel asked relating to moral justification, in the Kantian sense, of the participation in the violence by those at the bottom. As she put it:

If you genuinely believe that you are defending the nation against re-colonisation and defending the land, if you are following orders from powerful people outside your village who have given you impunity, do you have diminished responsibility or not? How does this influence your own and others perceptions of your guilt? [...] If somebody who has been provoked by ZANU-PF then attacks a ZANU-PF supporter who was not among his own persecutors, will the MDC community perceive this as acceptable street justice, or as an offence?<sup>110</sup>

These are crucial questions that open up the discussion of the levels of agency on the one hand and of victimhood on the other. Put for Shurugwi women, the key question could be whether the women who participated in the victimisation of political opposition have a reduced responsibility and guilt? The answer is not simple, but to me

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid , p 57.

<sup>109</sup> See Stuart Hall cited in Maurice T Vambe, "Popular songs and social realities in post-independence Zimbabwe", p 76.

<sup>110</sup> Shari Eppel, "A tale of three dinner plates", p 2.

the women, and men for that matter, who participated at the local levels in the violence share in the blame with senior ZANU-PF officers who planned and sanctified the violence. Those at the village-level were responsible by doing. They executed the violence by assaulting their neighbours, by destroying their neighbours' crops, by drawing up lists that implicated their neighbours, which extended the scale of participants, and by participating in dancing that spurred the morale at the bases; and should therefore share in the actual responsibility.

In Shurugwi district there were some women ex-combatants (war veterans) from the Second Chimurenga who went around terrorising civilians. To this group we can also add some women councillors. At the forefront of the violence were one woman war veteran from one of the old resettlement wards, and another long-serving woman councillor from the same ward. Some highly active ZANU-PF women councillors included the councillor for Ward 14 and councillor for Ward 18, who was also the wife of the late notorious war veteran, Gunpowder. There was also a woman war veteran and councillor for Ward 16. Together with the male war veterans, they actively participated in serious campaigning for their positions, and in the controversial Presidential election rerun of 2008. Some like the councillor for Ward 16 who was also the wife of a war veteran who terrorised the district, usually accompanied her husband when he went around the district, campaigning and performing political "exorcising" duties. The councillor for Ward 19 was alleged to have been responsible for dressing down women in the opposition and for threatening opposition supporters.

Overall war veterans, councillors, together with traditional authorities, were responsible for farm invasions, organising political meetings and political education on behalf of ZANU-PF. As one female councillor said "I am a servant of the party (ZANU-PF) and I participated in the farm invasions. I wanted to give land back to the landless. I went to war for the land and I also respect my President (Mugabe). I have campaigned for him since 1980 and I will continue to do so." She however, refused to admit her role in the

violence, saying “There was no violence in the district, never. I certainly do not know of anyone who was beaten in the name of ZANU-PF. People take advantage and in the process tarnish the name of the party (ZANU-PF).”<sup>111</sup> What is clear from the interview is that she campaigned for ZANU-PF and for herself. Information gathered from the other interviewees, however, point to the fact that it was at these campaign rallies or meetings that ordinary people were subjected to torture, threats and name-calling. Also the women war veterans, councillors and the Members of Parliament were a part of a ZANU-PF institution that thrived on violence and coercive technologies of mobilisation.

It was here also that the differences between male and female perpetrators were blurred. As well, the binary between perpetrators and victims became too grey and tenuous to distinguish. In this case for example, whilst one might have exhibited great agency, they could have been at the same time unseen victims of their belonging with ZANU-PF (or the MDC) in whose names the violence was committed. Many people, however, participated at these rallies either as cheer-leaders, politicians, ordinary women and men, youth militias or also as war veterans.<sup>112</sup> At times these roles were confused and conflated, making the distinction more difficult.

Besides these office-bearing women in political organisations the majority of the ordinary women also helped to foment political violence. These women sang, danced, ululated, wore party regalia and made various performances. I shall, however, return to political performances in the next section.

Outside these performances ordinary women played a key role in identifying opposition supporters. This was made possible by a number of factors. First, was the deliberate

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<sup>111</sup> Interview with a woman Councillor 14 June 2010.

<sup>112</sup> See Meredith Turshen “Women War Stories” in Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya, eds, *What Do Women Do In Wartime*, ZED Books, London and New York, 1988, p 1, for a discussion on how the gender boundaries are blurred and disappear in conflict/violent situations. For example she says that “in modern forms of war especially civil wars and wars of liberation, women are also combatants, women resist and fight back; they take sides, spy, and fight among themselves; and even when they don’t see active service, they often support war efforts in multiple ways, willingly or unwillingly”.



ZANU-PF policy of increasing female political participation on a country-wide scale. For Shurugwi, as discussed in the General Introduction, this policy led to the rise to twelve of the number of female councillors in a twenty-four member TRDC in the post 2008 period. There was also a female MP. By comparison there were twelve male councillors, and two male MPs, one for each of the two houses of parliament. These positions were buttressed by some monetary rewards they received. For example, councillors were paid one hundred United States dollars a month in 2010, and were also entitled to a sitting allowance.<sup>113</sup> As such women were encouraged by the opening up of the political space and eventually held more political clout in the district. On balance Shurugwi fared way ahead of other constituencies. It had a 50 percent female representation at the Council level and a 33 percent female representation at the parliamentary level. This was way above the lowly 18 percent<sup>114</sup> female parliamentarians. However, this was a strong motivator for Shurugwi women to participate in violence.

Secondly, there was a significant depopulation of men in Shurugwi between 2000 and 2008. While the 2002 census results show a female-male ratio of fifty-two to forty eight, the situation was exacerbated as the economic crunch deteriorated. While we do not have the statistics, the field survey undertaken between December 2009 and July 2010 revealed that most homes were female-headed. Men had left for Shurugwi town, Unki Mine, other towns or had escaped the country to South Africa, Botswana or elsewhere. While the phenomena of labour migration might not be new to the district,<sup>115</sup> it reached extreme proportions in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the “crisis” deepened. By randomly asking if the fathers were around at various homes, I concluded that between 40 and 60 percent of the households had male heads working away from home.

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<sup>113</sup> At face value one hundred dollars might seem a little amount, but most government professional workers were earning about one hundred and fifty dollars.

<sup>114</sup> See RAU, *When the going gets tough the man gets going*, p 6.

<sup>115</sup> Shurugwi like other districts has a long genealogy of male migrant workers, either in or outside the country. See Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders and wives: Shona women in the history of Zimbabwe*, Heinemann, baobab, James Currey, Portsmouth, Harare, London, 1992, p 3.

The other reason that enabled the women to assume this political agency was because the identification was more localised, which meant that it was easy for the women to identify those who did not belong from among their peers. This presented the women with a political vacuum to fill. Thus women became active at the grassroots, especially among their neighbours at “branch” and “cell” mobilisation for their political parties. In these roles, among other duties, they kept registers of membership and of attendance at rallies. It is from these registers that non-members were identified and put on the infamous lists.

Names from these lists, drawn by the women, were passed on to the war veterans and ZANU-PF leadership who then called out the names thereon at rallies or would secretly abduct the victims from shopping centres or from their homes. In some cases the registers and or lists played a positive role of locating those members who needed help. However, they were more often used for the negative reasons. They were used for identification of torture victims and for exclusion purposes, and on their basis non-members were left out of government schemes aimed at alleviating poverty and mitigating the effects of the widespread shortages. In other words, these lists became the right hand tools in the patronage economy that defined the terrain of survival.

This recalls the use of lists during the Second Chimurenga, and the most (in)famous one was the Cletus Chigowe’s list which contained names of those who had to be punished for allegedly supporting the Nhari rebellion.<sup>116</sup> Shari Eppel also discusses the negative use of lists in the post-independence Matebeleland. As she says, “lists” decided who would receive food support, who would qualify for social grants or who needed to be incorporated in food for work programmes. They have also been used to identify political enemies for ZANU-PF: during the *Gukurahundi* massacres, where the Fifth

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<sup>116</sup> See Luise White, *The assassination of Herbert Chitepo*, p 42. Chigowe was ZANU’s chief of security at the time and his list has been imagined by some as a death list, p 43.

Brigade used them to identify ex-ZIPRA cadres, and also later to identify MDC supporters countrywide in the new millennium.<sup>117</sup>

As also argued in Chapters Two and Three, petty jealousies were fought out on the political stage, which meant also that those with access to the registers and lists at times abused their positions to score back at those against whom they had personal vendettas. On the whole, lists had a paradoxical role that of maintaining group solidarity, and simultaneously for the identification of the enemy, that is, those who had to be “disciplined”, punished or excluded from patronage benefits.

### **POLITICAL PERFORMANCES AND WOMEN IN VIOLENCE**

At a typical rally in Shurugwi:

Everybody is expected to be at the venue at least two hours before the arrival of the guest of honour, be it the Member of Parliament, the Senator, the Governor, or any senior ZANU-PF official. This is to ensure that all are settled and that the stage is warmed for the guest. We sing our party songs; these are usually derived from the Second Chimurenga. They also depict the current struggle for land in the Third Chimurenga. We also dance and do dramas as part of the entertainment. These keep the morale high and we also teach our people the history of our struggle against imperialism. School children, women and men do these. Everyone is free to do it. This is the time to rehearse the slogans, and to gather people’s grievances that need to be conveyed to the leaders of the party. When the guest arrives we also sing and dance to welcome them and to settle them. Some of the dignitaries also love to participate and this creates an atmosphere of joy and camaraderie. There are also entertainment breaks in between the speeches.<sup>118</sup>

The above describes the general atmosphere at a political rally in Shurugwi. Political education and the articulation of party policies take place at the same time and are interposed by singing, dancing, dramas, poetry and other forms of entertainment. Throughout these performances people make use of drums (*ngoma*), whistles, *magagada*, *hosho* and horns, among other equipment, to add flavour to the forms of

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<sup>117</sup> Shari Eppel, “A tale of three dinner plates”, p 8.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with a War veteran, on 16 June 2010.

entertainment. The value of these various arts, as already intimated, is multi-faceted: ranging from educating the people about their political party's policies, praising party leadership, political entertainment, providing interludes in the programmes at rallies, welcoming guests and new-comers, introducing speakers, and occupying the people before the guests arrive, is crucial for the sustenance of these rallies.<sup>119</sup>

Beyond the above, this section is informed by the need to understand what happens when political performances become ritualised. This question encapsulates other issues around why women performed at rallies, as well as the result of the adulteration of various genres of dances to suit political goals. In their book, *Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History*, Leroy Vail and Landeg White trace the history, and, illuminate the positive functions of praise poetry done by the lower classes in pre-colonial and colonial Southern Africa. Drawing from case-studies from pre-colonial and colonial Southern Africa, they point out that besides informing the chiefs and work foremen of their followers' grievances, the poetry also served to critique these leaders' decisions.<sup>120</sup>

In the latter way it acted as commentary from below, as licensed criticism, which was a system that checked the abuses of rulers. This genre of poetry was in some sense similar to the performances under the *oriki* of the pre-colonial Yoruba of Nigeria<sup>121</sup> and the bards and folk culture of Europe. As Bakhtin has tried to portray, folk culture, that includes bawdy humour and carnival tradition performed by commoners, offered a benign subversion of the official discourse of the church and the state.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> See for example, <http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7583128.stm> Accessed 26 August 2008, which in an article titled "Fuming Mugabe rattled by hecklers" describes how President Mugabe was welcomed by songs to the occasion of the opening of parliament in 2009.

<sup>120</sup> See Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History*, University of Virginia Press, 1991, for a pithy discussion of the value of bards in pre-colonial and colonial Southern Africa in traditional rule and in the emerging capitalist urban environments.

<sup>121</sup> See Karin Barber, "Obscuring the exegesis in African oral praise poetry" in Duncan Brown, ed, *Oral literature and performance in Southern Africa*, Ohio University Press, Athens, 1999, pp27-49.

<sup>122</sup> See Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his world*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington. However, Bakhtin's work was severely denounced by Achille Mbembe "Provisional notes on the postcolony", for its lack of

In a nutshell therefore we are able to see that even in some seemingly autocratic governments of the pre-colonial past, the subjects utilised poetry to contest their difficult positions. An interesting case is that of Mzilikazi of the Ndebele state, who at one time had to suspend meetings with Robert Moffat and Andrew Smith because of the recitation of poetry that did not approve of their meetings in the face of the British massacres of the Xhosa in the 1835 Sixth Xhosa war in which Xhosa fields were burnt, their land and cattle seized.<sup>123</sup> From the above we can deduce that power relations are not rigidly top to bottom, but that they are also, as Foucault argues, from below. This also gives a good starting point in the understanding of the importance of performance in the politics of Africa. This was often to check the abuse of political authority by the kings and chiefs.

In a similar way women could also perform dances to register complaints against abusive husbands or relatives from the husband's side. In this regard, performances were useful for claims to better their positions and to contest repression. Among the Shona these performances were done during collective labour times called *nhimbe* or close to the *dare* (meeting place for men)<sup>124</sup>, which meant they received attention and reprieve. What needs to be emphasised is that due to the patriarchal nature of pre-colonial Zimbabwean polities, songs were the most common and effective informal ways that women used to draw community attention to their plight.

However, the resort to songs was just but one of the informal methods that women utilised to confront abuse. As discussed in Chapter One, women also resorted to child and dog naming to register their unpleasant situations. To this extent, there were names

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relevance in postcolonial Africa. Instead Mbembe argues in the opposite and avers instead that it is the postcolonial state that has arrogated to itself the grotesque to affirm its power.

<sup>123</sup> See Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Power and the Praise Poem*, p 91 for a more nuanced discussion.

<sup>124</sup> See Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders, and wives*, pp 20-21, for a nuanced discussion of these techniques. Lisa Gilman has also established that across the African continent songs were more widely recognised channels through which women conveyed their displeasure in society. Lisa Gilman, *The dance of politics*, p 17.

among the Shona that registered tribulations in polygamous marriages, those that told of husband abuse, unfair family or societal treatment, times of plagues, and that highlighted displeasure with rulers.<sup>125</sup> In addition to this, however, there were acknowledged dynasty-based kinship channels that safeguarded women from victimisation.<sup>126</sup> Moreover, the Shona governing code “*Ishe vanhu*”, that is, a king is not one without subjects or a ruler’s worth is measured by the number of subjects under his rule, ensured that most of the people’s rights were respected. Failure to respond to the demands of the subjects resulted in the subjects switching allegiance, emigrating, rulers being forced to drink poison (*muteyo*) or other forms of censure.<sup>127</sup>

Elders from Shurugwi corroborated the importance of using songs by the pre-colonial women in Shurugwi in tackling abusive marital, family-based or societal injustices. An interview below with Gogo Madhuve exemplifies this. To her:

Women who were in abusive marriages sang songs to make their situations public knowledge. It was a report to the clan elders to highlight their plight. Remember women were married by the community elders for their sons, and it remained the duty of the elders to ensure that these women were protected. Usually, such women would wait for an occasion that drew the most attendances and sing their complaint. Other women would join in the singing to shame the abusive man. Once the ceremony for which people had gathered passed the elders would sit the abuser down, and implore him to respect the wife and them, which in most cases brought an end to the abuse.<sup>128</sup>

The interview, besides highlighting the importance of songs in redressing abuse, also shows the importance of the community mediation in resolving family disputes and in helping to protect women. Also arising from the interview with Gogo Madhuve, women

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid, pp 19-21.

<sup>126</sup> See David Norman Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, p 93. See also Gerald Chikozho Mazarire’s interesting study of pre-colonial Chivi dynasties, in “The politics of the womb”.

<sup>127</sup> See David Norman Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*, p 94, for the Shona. See also similar methods across Africa: TW Bennett, “Human rights and the African cultural tradition”, p 32, and, Edward Kofi Quashigah, “Legitimate governance: The pre-colonial African perspective” in EK Quashigah and C Okafor, eds, *Legitimate governance in Africa: International and domestic legal perspective*, Kluwer, The Hague, London, Boston, 1999, p 43.

<sup>128</sup> Interview with Gogo Madhuve Gakata Village 26 April 2010. Gogo is a Shona term for an elderly woman (granny).

used the songs to draw on the support of other women which in some sense resembled women's solidarity against abuse. From the above, songs were therefore important tools used by those in weak positions in mediating violent relationships of power, in the home and the larger communities. They were used as a form of language outside the everyday language to convey grievances. It enabled them to dialogue with those who exercised various forms of power over them. They were also used generally to speed up, and correct, social processes such as marriage issues.<sup>129</sup>

Besides women, men in Shurugwi also used poetry to complain to their in-laws in cases where there was a delay in the handing over of newly-married wives or where the lobola was deemed too high. Such men would wake up very early in the morning, go out of their sleeping hut, and sing complaint songs while playing a traditional form of guitar, *chipendani*, till dawn. After such an early morning "free show" the in-laws would gather together and usually initiate the process of handing over the wife to her husband. Songs and poetry were also used by other weaker groups generally for the betterment of their living conditions or against autocratic leadership.<sup>130</sup>

During the Second Chimurenga songs and poetry were crucial in aiding African nationalism. These were performed both inside and outside Rhodesia. Outside the country, this was usually in the camps. This was where most of the songs were composed. Most of the songs were adapted from traditional songs.<sup>131</sup> Crucially, the songs "musicalized and transformed the woes of everyday life"<sup>132</sup> to help create political awareness among the Africans through hammering on the ills of the settler regime, the

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<sup>129</sup> See also Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1992, pp 214-24, for a more nuanced discussion of the functions of the pre-colonial poetry.

<sup>130</sup> See Paresh Pandya, *Mao Tse-Tung and Chimurenga*, pp 133-143.

<sup>131</sup> See Paresh Pandya, *Mao Tse-Tung and Chimurenga: An investigation into ZANU's strategy*, Skotaville Publishers, Braamfontein, 1988, p 132. See also, Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU guerrilla warfare*, p 97.

<sup>132</sup> See Marissa Moorman, "Duelling bands and good girls: gender, music and the nation in Luanda's musseques, 1961-1974", in *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 37, 2, 2004, p 264.



evils of colonialism in general, and the need for the armed struggle to supplant the systems.<sup>133</sup> They also sought to drum up ancestral spirits' protection and support for the war, appeal for help, and to thank foreign countries.<sup>134</sup> In some instances however these songs were adapted from Christian songs.<sup>135</sup> This is notwithstanding the rather ambiguous and at times strained relations between the nationalists and the church.<sup>136</sup> These songs, as well as providing entertainment to the refugees and combatants, were aimed at educating and reinforcing the nationalist grievances. They were also meant to venerate nationalist leaders and condemn the rival nationalist movements.

A crucial aspect that Gilman highlights is that while in the pre-colonial past songs were used as spaces to criticise leaders in the pre-colonial past, they lost this function once they were appropriated in the service of nationalism. As she says, they were used increasingly to "aggrandise political leaders [...] through such means as metaphors, the listing of achievements and strengths, and the expression of gratitude."<sup>137</sup> This speaks to formalism. Under formalism, "people (in power) are represented in a superstitious fashion or better, in a fashion that encourages superstition."<sup>138</sup> This genre of aesthetics, more than others, abstracts and simplifies reality and when used in politics it tends to create super-politicians.

For Zimbabwe, Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Ranger have established a similar adulteration. Nationalist leaders were portrayed in the aesthetics as saintly and above criticism, and

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<sup>133</sup> Ngwabi Bhebe, *Ibid*, p 97.

<sup>134</sup> Paresh Pandya, *Mao Tse-Tung and Chimurenga*, pp 134-139.

<sup>135</sup> See Joseph Mtisi, Munyaradzi Nyakudya and Teresa Barnes, "War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980", p 58.

<sup>136</sup> See Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZIPRA and ZANLA guerrilla warfare*, pp 78, & 81-87.

<sup>137</sup> Lisa Gilman, "Genre, agency, and meaning", p 345. See also Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU guerrilla warfare*, p 97. See a somewhat similar contention by Achille Mbembe, "Provisional Notes", p 26, who avers that at times some songs and performances may belie their true meaning and end up contesting authority. However, for Shurugwi, I did not come across evidence to this effect.

<sup>138</sup> See Bertolt Brecht, in Ernst Brecht, George Lukacs, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetics and Politics*, Translated by Ronald Taylor, Verso, p 80.

to condemn opponents within and outside these movements.<sup>139</sup> For ZANU-PF, this stemmed from the fact that the leadership commissioned artists at Mpagao, Tembwe and Chimoio to sing about the central role leaders played and how leaders were able to articulate the problems facing the “masses.”<sup>140</sup> It was therefore not uncommon for leaders to be referred to in laudatory terms. Joshua Nkomo was nicknamed Chibwechitedza or a slippery stone. Other leaders such as the spirit medium Nehanda had their importance extolled as well.<sup>141</sup>

Inside the country, most of the songs were sung at all night rallies called the *pungwes*.<sup>142</sup> These songs while carrying similar messages with those sung in the camps were rather allusive and more coded “to mislead and fool the [Rhodesian] authorities.”<sup>143</sup> In the process this obscurity, while allowing for the audience to map their grievances to the lyrics, ensured security for the performers and the audiences who could be attacked by the Rhodesian state agents. The *pungwes* were, at the same time, also meant to create a bond between the communities and the guerrillas as well as to motivate the guerrillas.<sup>144</sup> A crucial aspect of the *pungwes* was that whilst primarily meant for ZANU political mobilisation through the addresses by ZANLA political commissars,<sup>145</sup> they were also characterised by violence against witches and sell-outs.<sup>146</sup> The slogans shouted also praised ZANU and its leader Robert Mugabe, while consecutively condemning the

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<sup>139</sup> See for example the levels of the valorisation of the nationalist leaders during the second Chimurenga in Terence Ranger, Introduction, *Historical Dimensions to Human Rights and Democracy*,

<sup>140</sup> See Maurice T Vambe, “Popular songs and social realities in post-independence Zimbabwe”, in *African Studies Review*, vol 43, No 2, 2000, p 75.

<sup>141</sup> See the poem Nehanda Nyakasikana, that the late vice President Simon Muzenda recited during and after the Second Chimurenga, in Solomon Mutsvairo, *Feso*, 1956. The “guardian” of the spirit was also transported to Mozambique. See Josiah Tungamirai, “Recruitment to ZANLA: Building a war machine”, in Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence Ranger, eds, *Soldiers in Zimbabwe’s liberation war*, James Currey, Heinemann, University of Zimbabwe Publications, London, Portsmouth and Harare, 1995, p 42.

<sup>142</sup> See Josiah Tungamirai, “Recruitment to ZANLA: Building a war machine”, in Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence ranger, eds, *Soldiers in Zimbabwe’s liberation war*, James Currey, Heinemann, and University of Zimbabwe Publications, London, Portsmouth and Harare, 1995, p 42.

<sup>143</sup> Paresh Pandya, *Mao Tse-Tung and Chimurenga*, p 134.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, p 134.

<sup>145</sup> Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU guerrilla warfare*, pp 92 & 97.

<sup>146</sup> See Paresh Pandya, *Mao Tse-Tung and Chimurenga*, p 145.

Rhodesian state and rival nationalist movements.<sup>147</sup> This aspect was carried over into the post-1999 era. However, there were other groups who were organised as popular musical bands that composed protest songs. Some of these were Thomas Mapfumo<sup>148</sup> and the Blacks Unlimited, and the Harare Mambos.<sup>149</sup>

In the post-colonial set-up and most specifically in the post-1999 era the ritualization of performances continued.<sup>150</sup> Cultural practices of singing and dance routines were employed to enhance party leadership and party ideology. These performances resulted, as in the Second Chimurenga, in the extolling of the political movements. For ZANU-PF, the songs and poetry performed [re]framed and reinforced the mythical powers and the invincibility of ZANU-PF, firstly, and secondly, the indispensability of its leadership. The leadership was extolled for “organising, executing, and winning the war, and for ‘freeing’ the masses from colonial bondage.”<sup>151</sup> This further supports the view on the adulteration of the performative role of music as a means used by the lower classes to contest arbitrary power. Rather, “it is now a conduit for supporting a party, not social commentary.”<sup>152</sup> Even popular artists like Thomas Mapfumo and Oliver Mtukudzi too joined the bandwagon of hero-worshipping and creating cult-personality the new ZANU-PF government and its leaders in their songs in the early 1980s.<sup>153</sup>

However, Vambe has warned against the narrowing of the relationship between popular artists and the state to the genre of “containment and resistance” because there could be other factors at play. For example, certain artists may have had a genuinely similar view to state policies, or their support might have been due to the euphoria of

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid, pp 146-147, for an example of the typical sloganeering.

<sup>148</sup> See Maurice T Vambe, “Popular songs and social realities in post-independence Zimbabwe”, p 77.

<sup>149</sup> See Paresh Pandya, *Mao Tse-Tung and Chimurenga*, p 139, for an in-depth discussion of Thomas Mapfumo’s songs.

<sup>150</sup> See Lisa Gilman, “Genre, agency, and meaning in the analysis of complex performances: The case of a Malawian political rally”, in *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol 122, No 485, Summer 2009, p 340, for a similar view on independent Malawi.

<sup>151</sup> Maurice T Vambe, “ Popular songs and social realities”, p 75.

<sup>152</sup> See Lisa Gilman, “Genre, agency, and meaning, p 346.

<sup>153</sup> See Maurice T Vambe, “ Popular songs and social realities”, pp 76-78.

independence, marketing reasons, the need to get radio airplay and the record companies' policies.<sup>154</sup> But what is unfortunate about the 2000-2008 period is that frequently, songs by prominent musicians were performed alongside the condemning, naming and shaming, threatening, and the violating of the rights and dignities, of the opposition.

The dramatisation of this relationship at rallies was meant to create a profound impact on the ordinary people. That is, the public displays of the humiliations and terror methods were deployed in a similar strategy they were used by the Rhodesia Front in the late 1970s. The strategy involved "the use of terror and psychological terror in trying to 'convince the minds and win the hearts' of the people."<sup>155</sup> The strategy also invoked the guerrilla methods of coercive mobilisation and for the indoctrination of the masses during the Second Chimurenga. They were thus intended to shore up the support for ZANU-PF. Crucially, by bringing up Second Chimurenga methods and narrative, it also sought to raise the status of ZANU-PF as an eternal heir and guardian of Zimbabwe's sovereignty against revitalised Western imperialism for which it had participated in both the subsequent *zvimurenga*, that is struggle for independence, and in the Third Chimurenga. In this way, the songs cemented the myth that Robert Mugabe and his government were the "natural and indisputable political heir[s] ... of the past." Concurrently, they also reinforced "anti-pluralistic tendencies in political thinking in Zimbabwe."<sup>156</sup>

In my own research, I established that there were no special groups of people that sang and performed at rallies in Shurugwi. Anyone could start the songs. However, everyone was supposed to join in. Non-singing was equated with disloyalty and non-belonging which invited severe punishment. Singing, especially new songs, on the other hand, was taken as demonstration of positive support for ZANU-PF. The point that I intend to

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid, pp 76-77.

<sup>155</sup> See Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU guerrilla warfare*, p 111.

<sup>156</sup> See Maurice T Vambe, "Popular songs and social realities", pp 76-77.

stress here is that of the generalised participation of women and men, in the singing at rallies that served to spur violence and mythologise the power of ZANU-PF. The fear of being negatively labelled which contributed to “everyone” singing fractured the distinction between performers and spectators. Besides the noticeable difference between those who led in the singing, there were no other clear modes of separation because all who were in attendance were supposed to know the songs and to participate in the singing. Thus if the songs valorised blood or the party leaders (as shall be discussed later on in this chapter) in the making and sustenance of the nation of Zimbabwe, then the women by joining in the singing, coerced or not, also pushed that theme forward.

At another level, by singing such songs the women also helped to spread political party policies, which as Finnegan says, “reinforce[d] their own beliefs and ensure[d] that all members of the movement ha[d] mastery of their political aims and the means needed to achieve them.”<sup>157</sup>

Notwithstanding the fact that all were supposed to participate, from the interviews I conducted it became clear that women were placed at the centre stage of the rituals at political rallies: in dances, songs and poetry. This was because the women were the largest group that wore party attire: the wrap-around cloths with leaders’ faces and emblems, party t-shirts and head gear. It was usually in these paraphernalia that women welcomed party dignitaries and provided entertainment at the rallies. By attending the rallies in 2010, which I describe in detail in Chapter Five, I also established that the above was true. More than this, the attire that the women were draped in simultaneously displayed party colours and the leaders’ faces. This applied to both ZANU-PF and the MDC-T. For me this helped to reinforce the “irreplaceable” notion of the respective party leaders Mugabe and Tsvangirai.

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<sup>157</sup> Ruth Finnegan, *Oral poetry*, p 220.

As I have already discussed in Chapter Three, most of the dignitaries were men. Women performed the central performing role at such occasions, and literally kept rallies going. Added to this, women generally constituted the majority of the audience at the rallies. This in part was a result of the depopulation of men that we discussed earlier. Thus as Lisa Gilman contends, women “make substantial contributions to political parties in their capacities as symbols, advertisers, voters, morale boosters, and mobilizers of support.”<sup>158</sup>

Put in the Shurugwi context, women were the faces of politics: they were the most visible and most vocal participants at political gatherings. They led in singing, in the slogans, in welcoming guests and in providing entertainment to all those that gathered. From attending some rallies in 2010 it also became clear that for those who had been coerced to attend, the entertainment the women generated provided a refreshing site to the overkill and ritualised attacks on the MDC, and the threats to its supporters. However, the speeches also contained compelling promises of development for the district. In addition, these various political-aesthetic roles by women at rallies helped to mythologise the standing of the party officials and the contribution of ZANU-PF in the Second and Third Chimurenga. The women in these roles contrasted to most ordinary men who were usually mute participants and who took a back stage. The most active men were usually those in leadership roles. In some sense one gets the feeling that if there was anyone who exhibited qualities of forced attendance it was the men in their back-seat role.

Importantly, these various performances by the women also reified the hierarchy of inequalities between sexes. We must admit these songs and dances provided a potential platform where women could air their grievances and problems and to thank their political leaders. Women also felt in control of the proceedings by their ubiquitous roles. Nevertheless, we should not lose sight of the fact that these dances, songs and poetry

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<sup>158</sup> Lisa Gilman, *The dance of politics*, p 4.

had lost their social commentary function for the political glorification of the parties and especially the leaders. They were mostly performed by women at the lowest economic and political hierarchies<sup>159</sup> who showered praise on the male political leadership. Suffice it to say that in Shurugwi they were drawn largely from traditional<sup>160</sup> communal peasant farming wards. These were the most vulnerable to hunger and poverty that characterised the district and the country between 2000 and 2008.

In turn these male dignitaries would usually offer prepared speeches mostly in the English language, which no doubt was above the comprehension of most of the ordinary women who were more conversant in local languages. Besides offering speeches, which constituted the core business of the rallies, the dignitaries also led in the recitation of party slogans. Occasionally the dignitaries offered gifts to some outstanding performers. The latter symbolically underscored the inequality of the patron-clientship not only between the political-economic hierarchy between political leaders and the women, but also gendered differences between men and women.<sup>161</sup>

In such situations therefore women sweated from the performances, while men sat as spectators who occasionally clapped their hands to the speeches and to the dances performed, and the senior party dignitaries were officials at the high table. After the dances women would then go to sit on the ground, and if there was no shade they sat in the sun. They were usually separated from the men who sat in a different area. In most cases the two groups were separated by the dignitaries who sat in the centre. Unlike the women, the ordinary men sat on whatever raised seats, chairs or platforms they could find.

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<sup>159</sup> Lisa Gilman, "Genre, agency, and meaning", p 345.

<sup>160</sup> Here I use traditional to emphasise the difference between these areas occupied by these peasants before colonisation from the newly created resettlement wards that were started from 1980. These are also the wards that contain the bulk of the population of the district. For more details on this see the General Introduction.

<sup>161</sup> See also Lisa Gimán, "Genre, agency and meaning", p 353.



An even bigger difference existed between the women and the chosen delegates and or the leadership who were placed on the high table littered with fruits, water and cool drinks. Gilman<sup>162</sup> and Leong posit that this dramatises the distinctions of power. As Leong says, “officials and authorities are not the participants [ in the singing]. They are reviewers, and their position of dominance is marked off from subordinates by an elevated platform from which they can look down upon people and comfortably observe the event.”<sup>163</sup>

Thus on the whole, the differences in the stages occupied by the three categories at rallies symbolically and literally reinforced the gendered power hierarchies in the district, and the country. The hierarchy of difference is also further highlighted by the apparel worn between the women and the distinguished guests. As already pointed out, the women would be wearing party regalia including head scaffs, T-shirts, and wrap-arounds on their waists. In contrast the guests wore suits, and on a few occasions, caps that identified them with the party.<sup>164</sup> At other times some leaders wore shirts made in the party colours, which represented more affluence compared to the T-shirts worn by women.

The description of the performances by women at political rallies in Cameroon by Mbembe is illuminating when considering those done by women in Zimbabwe. He writes:

They stamped the ground with their feet, blanketing the air with dust. Wearing the party uniform with the picture of the head of the state printed on it, women followed the rhythm of the music and swung their torsos first forward, then back; elsewhere they pulled in, then thrust out their bellies, their undulating movements evoking as usual the slow, prolonged penetration of the penis and its staccato retreat.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid, p 338.

<sup>163</sup> See Laurence Wai-Teng Leong, “Consuming the Nation: National Day Parades in Singapore” in *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 13, 2, December 2001, p 9.

<sup>164</sup> See also Lisa Gilman, “Genre, agency and meaning”, p 349.

<sup>165</sup> Achille Mbembe, “Provisional Notes”, p 17.

In their dancing, the women from Shurugwi usually performed the *kongonya* dance. It is a dance that thrives on throbbing singing and emphasises a lot of energetic body movement coupled with hip twisting and body vibrations.

### **SONGS AND THE PROMOTION OF VIOLENCE**

In Shurugwi performances were also used as spectacles showcasing ZANU-PF power in violence and also as spaces to denounce, if not condemn, the opposition. A look at one of the commonest songs provides an insight into this.

*Zimbabwe ndeyeropa,  
Zimbabwe ndeyeropa baba,  
Zimbabwe ndeyeropa remadzibababa,  
Ndati ndiudzei baba,  
Takaiwana neropa remadzibaba.*

Another song that became a theme song at ZANU-PF rallies was *Nyatsoteerera* (Listen carefully). This song became popular towards the presidential runoff, and was eventually recomposed and put out as a part of an album by Mbare Chimurenga Choir. Another was *Handimbochema kana vaMugabe varipo* (I will not cry if Cde Mugabe is there) which exalted the standing of party president, Mugabe. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni points out, the song which was adapted from a Christian hymn in some way drew parallels between a party President and Jesus Christ.<sup>166</sup> Such songs were performed alongside those that denigrated the MDC and its leadership. The other popular song was *Nora* that was also repackaged into a commercial video by the late minister Elliot Manyika and Taurai Brian Mteki. In essence therefore these songs created a particular kind of the “distribution of the sensible ... that divide[d] the [Zimbabwe] community into groups, social positions, and functions.”<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> See Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans exist*, p 275.

<sup>167</sup> See Gabriel Rockhill, “Translator’s introduction Jacques Derrida’s politics of perception”, in Jacques Derrida, *Politics and aesthetics*, p 3.

These songs that were sung at rallies were buttressed by songs and videos that also glorified ZANU-PF played on the sole national television and radio stations. To this end, musicians like Simon Chimbetu released *Hoko (Peg)* and *Kustate House kure* (it's a long and winding route to the state house). Others like Amos Mahendere, Delani Makhalima, and The Born Frees did similar videos. In these videos, "Mugabe is the main character", and/ or his old speeches are superimposed on music tunes.<sup>168</sup> On its side the MDC-T also had praise-singing musicians, who also glorified the party and the leadership. Notable examples were Member of Parliament Paul Madzore and Francia Chikunguru.<sup>169</sup> Its Department of Information also launched a five track album by the end of 2011.<sup>170</sup>

Alongside these songs were equally powerful slogans. In Shurugwi they went like:

<i>Pamberi na comrade Robert Mugabe,</i>	Forward with cde Robert Mugabe
<i>Pamberi!</i>	Forward
<i>Pamberi ne ZANU-PF,</i>	Forward with ZANU-PF
<i>Pamberi!</i>	Forward
<i>Pamberi nekuzvitonga,</i>	Forward with self-determination
<i>Pamberi!</i>	Forward
<i>Pamberi nevhu!</i>	Forward with the land
<i>Ivhu kuvanhu,!</i>	Land to the People
<i>MAZDA woye,!</i>	MAZDA woye
<i>Woye!</i>	Woye
<i>Pasi naTsvangirai,!</i>	Down with Tsvangirai
<i>Pasi!</i>	Down
<i>Pasi neMDC,!</i>	Down with the MDC
<i>Pasi!</i>	Down
<i>Pasi na Mativenga/Banda/Fundira</i>	Down with Mativenga/ Banda/Fundira
<i>Pasi nezvimwasungata.</i>	Down with sellouts
<i>Pasi!</i>	Down

The words in the songs and slogans emphasised spilling blood and or the importance of letting blood in the struggles that ZANU-PF had engaged in. Violence was also valorised, because it is in and through it that blood is let. For ZANU-PF as discussed in Chapter

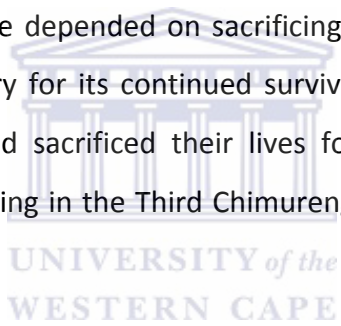
<sup>168</sup> See Maxwell Sibanda, "Explosive cocktail when music is mixed with politics", in *Music freedom Report No.5*, p 6, 3 March 2012, in [musicfreedomday.org](http://musicfreedomday.org), Accessed 25 June 2012.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, p 7.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

One, this violence was, as in the official state discourse, emancipatory and in defence of Zimbabwe's sovereignty. Blood was also conceived as sacrificial in the songs. The song *Zimbabwe ndeyeropa* encapsulates this. It is a song made up of one stanza, and four out of these five lines (80%) refer to the spilling of blood. Blood was at the heart of ZANU-PF rhetoric. Besides extolling the history in spilling blood, the song shows how "violence was ingrained into the political culture of ZANU."<sup>171</sup>

These songs also openly invited people to engage in violence in the name of defending the country against sell-outs. Those that supported the opposition became enemies rather than citizens with a democratic right to belong to a political party of their choosing. They stressed that the formulation of Zimbabwe before independence and its sustenance after independence depended on sacrificing blood. Blood was shed for its birth, and blood was necessary for its continued survival. Those that had died in the struggle for independence had sacrificed their lives for the land and the country's independence, and those fighting in the Third Chimurenga were also sacrificing for the defence of that independence.



Speeches by senior government officials buttressed the need for continued sacrifice. President Mugabe for example, taking from his numerous rabble rousing speeches, once said: "We shed a lot of blood for this country; we are not going to give up the country for a mere X on a ballot. How can a ball point pen fight with a gun?"<sup>172</sup> Sacrifice, in this *amadoda sibili* fashion, was therefore conceived in blood of the guerrilla and civilian victims during the Second Chimurenga, and that shed during the Third Chimurenga. Thus sacrifice is a relation to the ability to "gift" one's own life, a sort of immeasurable gift.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a state turns on its citizens*, p 11.

<sup>172</sup> See the *Report of the Pan African Parliament Election Observer Mission: Presidential Runoff and House of Assembly By-elections, Republic of Zimbabwe, 27 June 2008*, pp 13.

<sup>173</sup> I borrow the Gandhian concept of immeasurable gift, that is, the ultimate sacrifice of one's life, from Professor Ajay Skaria's discussions at CHR Winter School, 2-13 July 2012, Cape Town.

It is true that it was largely through the waging of the armed struggle that forced the minority Rhodesia Front government to negotiate the transition to majority rule. However, its articulation in the post-1999 era was essentialised to privilege ZANU-PF's heroism, at a time when it was facing dwindling support even in the rural areas that had been its stronghold since the 1960s and 1970s struggle for independence.<sup>174</sup> This rendition by the state also conspicuously ignored the importance of negotiations in contributing towards independence.<sup>175</sup> The articulation again misses to point out the role that the regional and international countries played in coercing the armed belligerents to the negotiating table.<sup>176</sup> It also ignored the contributions of other liberation movements like ZAPU and the importance of the international community in the struggle for independence. As such the refreshing of the people's memories about that role of ZANU-PF in violence should be seen in this context of an essentialised recalling of the Second Chimurenga. Also the liberation era songs that were adapted and repeated in the 2000s re-inscribed that violence on the minds of the rural Shurugwi subjects. Indeed, as Kahiya has posited, slogans have been "used as a war cry to crush opponents; physically that is. We all recall the violence that was unleashed on *mabhunu* (whites), 'Ngomo' (Nkomo) and the MDC."<sup>177</sup>

Insidious violence against those in the opposition was also encoded in the songs. The education or reorientation mentioned in the song *Nora* for example was a soft packaging for violence because that education was done via beatings at rallies.<sup>178</sup> This was a subtle reference to violence against those in the opposition. The condemnatory slogans that said: "down with Tsvangirai, MDC, sell outs or running dogs" also intimidated

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<sup>174</sup> ZANU-PF lost the constitutional referendum in February 2000, and won narrowly (63 to 57 seats) in the June 2000 parliamentary elections, lost the parliamentary majority and the first round of the Presidential poll in 2008 despite many constituencies falling in rural areas.

<sup>175</sup> Among other things, it was on the basis of the Lancaster House Agreement that the constitution for the independent state of Zimbabwe was produced.

<sup>176</sup> See Luise White, *The assassination of Herbert Chitepo*, p 18.

<sup>177</sup> See *Zimbabwe Independent*, 25 February 2010, "Editor's Memo: Hate-slogans cannot win the day anymore", in <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/comment/25491-hate-slogans-cannot-win-the-day-anymore.html>, Accessed 02 August 2011.

<sup>178</sup> For a more pronounced discussion of this see for example Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*.

this genre of violence. “Down” had a loaded meaning. It could be down to the grave, simply being ridiculed, or literally being forced to lie down to receive a thorough political life changing beating, which was the commonest form of punishing dissent in the district. By also referring to the issue of land at a juncture of increased joblessness and pressure on the communal lands of the district, it played on the emotions of the peasants who needed a redress to their plight.

Crucially this also helped to forge a very close and dangerous link between land and violence, and also between land and national sovereignty. Whilst land was an important rallying point of the struggle for the independence of Zimbabwe, other issues were equally important. For example democracy, workers’ rights, women and students’ rights also made different people to join the liberation struggle.<sup>179</sup> It would therefore be simplistic to reduce the independence struggle to an agrarian reform. Some of the worst scenes of brutalities in Shurugwi happened on the farms as the land hungry wrestled with the farm owners and their workers for land. It was therefore not surprising that people in the district to refer to the land seizures as *jambanja* and those that had been resettled or resettled themselves as *majambaja*.<sup>180</sup>

In addition to this, the person of President Mugabe was valorised and glorified. He is equated with the bravery of heroes and is equated with the struggles running from the Second to the Third Chimurenga. Above all the person of Mugabe was portrayed as indispensable. A look at the slogan MAZDA reinforces this personality cult notion about Mugabe. MAZDA<sup>181</sup> was an acronym for *Mugabe Achatonga Zimbabwe Dakara Afa* which means Mugabe will rule Zimbabwe till he dies. In other words Mugabe was to rule forever, as a form of a life president. Its continued repetition, in the backdrop of the

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<sup>179</sup> A lot has been written on the causes of the Second Chimurenga, but for a dense discussion see Terence Ranger, ed, “Introduction”, *Historical Dimensions to Human Rights*, vol 2.

<sup>180</sup> *Jambanja* is a Shona colloquial for violence, which in the course of the 2000s became synonymous with the Third Chimurenga and the land (farms) where that violence had occurred, and *majambanja* was to be used to refer to those that had obtained land in this period.

<sup>181</sup> Incidentally MAZDA is the most popular car and the only locally assembled car, in Zimbabwe.

incessant campaign of intimidation characterised by widespread displacement, torture, and an increase in murder of the opposition supporters in the run-up to the Presidential election runoff of 2008 and the military commanders' threats of a coup in the event of President Mugabe's loss, meant that it was internalised, fixed in the people's minds and naturalised to the extent that his succession as leader of his party or President of the country had become a political taboo.

As David Kertzer says, the repeating of rituals is an "important means of channelling emotion, guiding cognition, and organising social groups."<sup>182</sup> It also "works to inculcate messages and values and also to create an enhanced ritual space."<sup>183</sup> Life without the "great leader" was in some sense difficult to imagine. He was to be revered, unquestioned or unchallenged. This also comes out strongly as well in the song *Nora*, where his bravery is exalted. At one level Mugabe was personified as ZANU-PF. At yet another level he was personified with the struggle of Zimbabwe. In songs and slogans there was a scramble to shower praises on President Robert Mugabe, who many began to refer to as *Mudhara* (father or elder), or by his family praise name Gushungo. On the whole the President's personality was reified and his long presidency and his grip on both his party and country were venerated as both God-given and uncontested.

However, as his one-time right hand man, and one who claims to have thrust Mugabe to the helm of ZANU-PF, Edgar Tekere tried to demonstrate, it may be a travesty of justice to the Second Chimurenga history.<sup>184</sup> As such, in songs and in slogans that were hallmarks of the campaigns, and rallies people that sang reinforced Mugabe's continued reign, and above all, they helped to naturalise violence as an integral part of ZANU-PF culture. People would be violated, beaten, threatened and shamed amongst such songs

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<sup>182</sup> David Kertzer, cited in Lisa Gilman, "Genre, agency, and meaning", p 352.

<sup>183</sup> See Lisa Gilman, *Ibid*, p 352.

<sup>184</sup> See Edgar "2boy" Zivanai Tekere, *A lifetime of struggle*, SAPES, Harare, 2007, who argues, among other things, that Mugabe reluctantly joined the struggle and also reluctantly assumed presidency of ZANU-PF and that he had problems of getting accepted by the ZANLA guerrillas.



and chants, which made women accomplices in the violence even when they did not always willingly participate in them.

In this way the performances were thus staged for and meant to be consumed by large numbers. The target was for more people to witness them and be intimidated. Rallies where these different genres were performed attracted a lot of people, some were forced to attend, while for others they willingly attended. In addition, threats to violence were issued on national television and through mass circulating print media owned by the state were sent out to an even larger audience. The clearest case of this was the statement by Elliot Manyika that vouched for the “death of the tea boy”<sup>185</sup> in apparent reference to the need to assassinate Morgan Tsvangirai.

The rallies thus became places for publicly punishing the opposition members. They were at times convened with the aim of victimising those perceived to be in the opposition. Here the public is required to witness the power of that violence, and the various performances acted as fuel for that violation. Victims would be beaten, violated and shamed amongst these dances. Politicians’ speeches that intimated violence were punctuated by songs and dances. As Michel Foucault posits in such situations of the punishing of the criminals there was a sort of theatrical representation which required an audience to witness its execution. He writes:

An execution that was known to be taking place, but which did so in secret, would scarcely have any meaning. The aim was to make an example, not only by making people aware that the slightest offence was likely to be punished, but by arousing feelings of terror by the spectacle of power letting its anger fall upon the guilty person.<sup>186</sup>

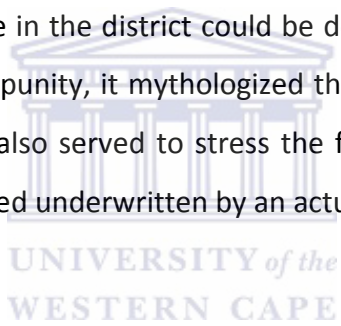
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<sup>185</sup> Elliot Manyika was at this time the governor for Mashonaland West Province and he would rise to the powerful Political Commissar role in ZANU-PF. He was here quoted at a rally in Bindura on 17 December 2001 by the Zimbabwe television (ZTV), cited in <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/elliott-manyika-dies-in-mysterious-accident> Accessed 07 November 2010.

<sup>186</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Routledge, New York, 1979, pp 58-59.

From adopting the pre-modern punishment there was thus a lot of mileage gained by ZANU-PF by conducting public punishments to those that did not toe its line. It was above all a show of power meant not only for those that were victimised but also for all those in attendance, as well as those who would hear of these beatings and other forms of torture. It was meant to show ZANU-PF's power over people's lives. This mirrors the sovereign power that Michel Foucault discusses as a pre-modern form of governmentality based on the sovereign's "right to decide life and death", which in essence was exercised through taking away people's lives to show the sovereign's power over his subjects. This was largely to re-enact power rather than as a means to justice.<sup>187</sup>

To the extent that the violence in the district could be done in the public glare and the perpetrators got away with impunity, it mythologized the power of the perpetrators in the eyes of the spectators. It also served to stress the fact that ZANU-PF's rhetoric of "degrees in violence" was indeed underwritten by an actual apparatus of violence in real terms.



Besides providing a catalyst for the perpetrators, these songs provided entertainment to the audience, some of whom also found entertainment and amusement in the tortures committed at these rallies. In Shurugwi it is in this latter category of political performances that the agency of women in the violence was higher, and it is in this category that the central role of women as participants in the dances and in the violence is located. This genre necessitates reference to Bakhtin's "grotesque and obscene."<sup>188</sup> For Bakhtin, this refers to the adoption of a language that subverts authority.

Mbembe, however, has established that in post-colonial Africa the "grotesque and obscene" had been embraced by most post-colonial governments. This was, first, "in the

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<sup>187</sup> For more details on this notion, see Michel Foucault, *A history of sexuality*, pp 135-136.

<sup>188</sup> See, Bakhtin, cited in Achille Mbembe, "Provisional Notes", p 4

timing and location of those occasions which state power organises for dramatising its own magnificence” and secondly, “in the actual materials used in the ceremonial displays through which it makes manifest its majesty”, and “the specific manner in which it offers these, as spectacles, for its subjects (*cibles*) to watch.”<sup>189</sup> Following up on this, the performances at rallies, and portrayed in radio and television, exhibit the grotesqueness and obscenity of state’s “principal locus of both the self-narration of power and the places in which it imagines itself.”<sup>190</sup> And at rallies women took a central role in the execution of those performances that valorised the power of violence.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter, utilising Foucault’s theory on the distribution of power, highlighted the ambiguous nature of power relations of the state in the district of Shurugwi. Power relations were complex and exhibited a matrix of relations. It is in this web of interactions that I have tried to show the powerful role of the agency of rural women in sustaining and spurring the political violence. Through the often neglected performances, coerced or not, at rallies, such as dances, women played an important role in the violence. Women also sometimes played important roles as perpetrators, which has attempted to challenge the notion of their mute victimhood in conflict situations. Women war veterans, politicians, and those that kept lists, actively engaged in the violation of the rights of other women, among a range of victims in the period. This role as perpetrators has, however, to be taken in the context of a generalised violence mediated by the state, especially by the JOC. At another level, perhaps we are challenged by this discussion on violence to reconsider our perception on victimhood and gender.

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<sup>189</sup> Achille Mbembe, “Provisional Notes”, p 4.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid*, p 19.

## CHAPTER FIVE: FROM HOPE TO FEAR: ANALYZING THE “POST-VIOLENCE” PERIOD, 2009-2011.

### INTRODUCTION

The political violence that engulfed Zimbabwe in the post-millennium era officially ended with the Global Political Agreement (GPA) signed on 15 September 2008 and the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in February 2009. The GNU was supposed to mark a transition from an era that was dominated by state-militarised violence against those who supported the MDC and those regarded as sell-outs, to an era, in Prime Minister Tsvangirai’s words, “where knives, machetes, knobkerries, guns and booted feet as instruments of violence and repression are no longer fashionable.”<sup>191</sup> Regarding the GPA and GNU, Sekai Holland, the co-minister in the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), also sounded positive: “we have managed to get ourselves together as Zimbabweans at last working as one people at the political level after nearly ten years of conflict.”<sup>192</sup> The question however, remains: was there the kind of transition Tsvangirai hoped for? Also, to what extent has the “working together as Zimbabweans at last” translated into tangible benefits for the grassroots?

I would like to posit that to a very large extent that the GNU marked a change in the composition of the government without necessarily transforming the state administration. In serious ways it was a difficult marriage of convenience, “a co-habitation of ‘totally uneasy souls’ who d[id] not like each other at all, who in fact

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<sup>191</sup> See “Security chiefs a security threat-PM”, in *Newsday*, 27 May 2011, cited in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-05-27-service-chiefs-a-security-threat-pm>, Accessed 29 May 2011.

<sup>192</sup> See Sekai Holland, “Realigning input markets to former needs as a strategy on national healing, reconciliation and integration at grassroots based communities in agricultural production in Zimbabwe”, in [http://www.farnpan.org/documents/d00738/presentation/Review\\_of\\_the\\_Organ\\_On\\_National\\_Healing\\_Final.pdf](http://www.farnpan.org/documents/d00738/presentation/Review_of_the_Organ_On_National_Healing_Final.pdf), Accessed 15 May 2011, p 2.

resent[ed] each other,”<sup>193</sup> born out of sustained pressure by the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU).<sup>194</sup>

The situation on the ground remained tense with pockets of violence reported countrywide, especially from the middle of 2010. Effective power also remained in the hands of ZANU-PF at the national level that had ruled the country since 1980. In essence, the GNU was de facto a “ZANU-PF government by another name.”<sup>195</sup> This was concretised by the fact that almost always ZANU-PF wishes prevailed over those of the MDC be it on the appointments of Provincial Governors, diplomats, and service chiefs; or in terms of policy interactions with the international community; the control of key government levers, both hegemonic and coercive; or even the flow of diamond revenue. On the whole, as Chamisa stated, Mugabe was the pilot of the “aeroplane”, and “[his] wisdom makes sure the plane does not crash”<sup>196</sup>. Because of the skewed power balance the Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai quit the government on two occasions between 2009 and 2011 to protest arbitrary appointments, arbitrary rule by Mugabe, and the continued violence and harassment of members and supporters of his party, and more generally the unworkability of the GNU.<sup>197</sup>

President Mugabe was also to be officially addressed (rather conspicuously) by the titles of Head of State and Government, and Commander In Chief of the Defence Forces. This

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<sup>193</sup> See Brian Kagoro, in Hot Seat interview with Violet Gonda, “Let’s hope this marriage of convenience will work” cited in Zimonline, 03 February 2009, in

<http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=4197>, accessed 1 June 2011.

<sup>194</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “The Global Political Agreement as a ‘Passive Revolution’: Notes on Contemporary Politics in Zimbabwe”, in The Round Table, in

<http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/909/the-global-political-agreement-as-a-passive-revolution/>,

Accessed 02 June 2011, for a more nuanced discussion of this. Even Prime Minister Tsvangirai alluded to this coercion. See *The Herald*, 31 May 2012, “Tsvangirai meets NATO commander”, in

[http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=43079:tsvangirai-meets-nato-commander&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=43079:tsvangirai-meets-nato-commander&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130), Accessed 31 May 2012.

<sup>195</sup> See Stewart Chabwinja, “GNU: ZANU-PF govt by another name”, in *Zimbabwe Independent*, 24 May 2012, in <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/comment/35631-gnu-zanu-pf-govt-by-another-name.html>, Accessed 26 May, 2012.

<sup>196</sup> Nelson Chamisa, cited in Stewart Chabwinja, *Ibid*.

<sup>197</sup> See for example <http://www.zimdiaspora.com>, Accessed 31 January 2011, which describes how Tsvangirai disengaged from the GNU in October 2009.

was meant to symbolically and effectively fetishise and mythologise Mugabe's power in comparison with the other Principals in the GNU, Morgan Tsvangirai, and even more so for Mutambara. Tsvangirai and Mutambara were effectively junior partners in the GNU. Tsvangirai, for example, headed the useless Council of Ministers, and more often than not, could not even chair the cabinet in the absence of Mugabe. This was a *de facto* expression about who was really in control.<sup>198</sup> To further exemplify this, *The Herald*, reporting on why President Mugabe, and not Tsvangirai or Mutambara, had been invited to attend the SADC meeting in Namibia in May 2011 leading to the deferment of the discussion on Zimbabwe, wrote "leaders of the MDC formations - Mr Morgan Tsvangirai and Professor Arthur Mutambara - had not been invited to the summit since it was high-level, that is at the level of Heads of State and Government."<sup>199</sup> This perception in ZANU-PF was well encapsulated in the words of Jonathan Moyo who asked "Who is Tsvangirai?" His own answer was "He is just a senior minister....."<sup>200</sup> The situation on the ground also underscored that indeed Tsvangirai was "just a senior minister" as some ministers refused to report to him, while some District Administrators and senior civil servants refused to meet with him on his national tours.<sup>201</sup>

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The statements should be taken alongside the fact that Morgan Tsvangirai was not a member of the powerful JOC that continued to meet and formulate state policy despite it having been formally dissolved in 2009 and replaced by the National Security Council where Tsvangirai sat as an equal to Mugabe.<sup>202</sup> This was open contempt of the figure

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<sup>198</sup> See Eldred Masunungure, "Zimbabwe's agonising but irreversible political transition", a paper presented at the *European conference on African Studies 2009*, Institute of African Studies, University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany, 4-7 June 2009, and Shari Eppel and Brian Raftopoulos, "Political Crisis, mediation", pp 5-6.

<sup>199</sup> See "President, Zuma thrash out issues", in *The Herald*, 11 June 2011, in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=12385:president-zuma-thrash-out-issues&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12385:president-zuma-thrash-out-issues&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130), Accessed 11 June 2011.

<sup>200</sup> *Newsday*, 23 June 2011, "Plot to arrest Tsvangirai" in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-06-22-plot-to-arrest-tsvangirai>, Accessed 23 June 2011.

<sup>201</sup> See *Newsday*, 8 November 2011, "Lets go for polls", in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-11-08-lets-go-for-polls>, Accessed 08 November 2011.

<sup>202</sup> See Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, "The military factor in Zimbabwe's political and electoral affairs", in [http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/The\\_military\\_Factor\\_in\\_zimbabwe.pdf](http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/The_military_Factor_in_zimbabwe.pdf), Accessed 02 July 2011, p 27.

who in the GPA was supposed to be head of government. More importantly it flew in the face of the GPA and the GNU agreements that were supposedly signed, formed and guaranteed, by equal partners. The terms of this dismissive discourse also represent President Mugabe and ZANU-PF's refusal to share executive power as demanded in the GPA.<sup>203</sup> Largely because of the bickering and open contempt for each other, some fundamental goals such as "media and electoral reforms, the adoption of a new constitution, the issue of violence and targeted sanctions as well as the entrenchment of freedoms of association and assembly"<sup>204</sup> set out in the GPA remained unfulfilled by July 2011.

Practically, at the local level also little changed regarding the socio-political relations in Shurugwi. People remained polarised as during the 2000 to 2008 era. The GPA and the GNU remained largely tenuous elite agreements, which did very little to solve the problems that people had at the village and lower echelons of society. It is worth noting that it was at the village level and to some considerable degree the family level that most of the violence was fought, albeit with the blessings of the JOC, government security apparatus and ZANU-PF national structures.<sup>205</sup> On their part the MDC supporters had the support of the national MDC structures and some internationally funded NGOs.<sup>206</sup>

Because the GNU was an elitist and superficial unity of three protagonists, it left the structures and ills of the 2000 to 2008 violence intact. Altogether this made the attainment of the goals set out in the GPA, such as the establishment of peace,

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<sup>203</sup> See also, Michael Bratton and Eldred Masunungure, "The anatomy of political predation: leaders, elites and coalitions in Zimbabwe", *Development Leadership Programme*, in <http://www.dlprog.org/ftp/download/Public%20Folder/Executive%20Summary%20-%20An%20Anatomy%20of%20Political%20Predation%20in%20Zimbabwe.pdf>, p 2, Accessed 03 July 2010.

<sup>204</sup> See *Financial Gazette*, 01 July 2011, "GPA negotiators in crucial poll meeting", in <http://www.financialgazette.co.zw/top-stories/8887-gpa-negotiators-in-crucial-poll-meeting.html>, Accessed 02 July 2011.

<sup>205</sup> See Chapter Four of this thesis, "Agency and or victimhood", See also Shari Eppel, "A tale of three dinner plates", Jocelyn Alexander and Kudakwashe Chitofiri, "The consequences of violent politics in Norton, Zimbabwe", for more.

<sup>206</sup> In Shurugwi there were suggestions that some certain NGOs refused to offer assistance in old and new resettlement areas allegedly because these areas were associated with ZANU-PF.



reconciliation and healing without foundation at the local levels, hence transcendental.<sup>207</sup> Suspicion, hatred, fractured socio-political relations, bitterness, and structures blamed for the 2000 to 2008 violence remained entrenched in Shurugwi.

It was therefore largely unsurprising that since the “moment of madness”<sup>208</sup> of the 2000-2008 period had not been completely stamped out, and continued low key, that I came across victims who were living in fear. Others were calling for a degree of justice. On the other hand, some perpetrators were trying to reach out to their victims. Yet in other cases, there were alleged supernatural attacks on the perpetrators who were supposedly afflicted by witchcraft or *ngozi* orchestrated by their victims.

It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss the implication of these ills on the post-2008 dispensation in Shurugwi. The overall thesis of this chapter is that the GPA and the GNU did little to transform the socio-political conditions that served and promoted political violence, which conditions may prove detrimental if they remain unresolved. To do this, I intend to visit some of the problems faced in the time of the GNU by looking at the unfounded hopes raised by, and the dangers that emanated from, the imperfections of the GNU and the ONHRI, that were supposed to herald a new day for Zimbabweans as they looked towards the democratic “promised land”.

I also intend to use the conceptual framework of the Gramscian “passive revolution” to delineate the contours of the unworkability under the GNU. As Morton says, passive revolution is “marked by violent social upheaval, but it involve[s] a relatively small elite leading to the creation of state power and institutional framework consonant with capitalist property relations.”<sup>209</sup> Neil Davidson, cited in Morton, also posits that passive revolution largely describes a “revolution from above.”<sup>210</sup> In this regard the agency

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<sup>207</sup> See Section VII of the *Global Political Agreement*, 15 September 2008, Ministry of Parliamentary and Legal Affairs, Harare.

<sup>208</sup> “Moment of madness” was a phrase coined by Mugabe in a veiled admission of the horrors of *gukurahundi*. I use it here to denote the continuing violence post-2008.

<sup>209</sup> See Adam David Morton, *Unravelling Gramsci: Hegemony and Passive Revolution in the Global Political Economy*, Pluto Press, London, 2007, p 66.

<sup>210</sup> Neil Davidson, cited in Adam David Morton, *Ibid*, p 65.

driving the change is provided by a few leading individuals and organisations, largely in a process characterised by “dictatorship without hegemony”.<sup>211</sup> In the French revolution, for example, it was provided by the Jacobins, the enlightened bourgeoisie and rationalists who were backed by the army,<sup>212</sup> while in the *Risorgimento* it was from the so-called moderates led by Cavour, the big southern landowners and northern bourgeoisie.<sup>213</sup> The majority of the people’s interests and “active participation” were largely ignored.<sup>214</sup> While Gramsci primarily developed “passive revolution” to describe the changes that were ushered by the Italian *Risorgimento*, he extended it to other moments related to the French Revolution, the post-1815 European state reorganisations and to the 1848 revolutions.<sup>215</sup>

For Zimbabwe, as will be highlighted later, the idea of a passive revolution helps significantly to understand the GPA and its “baby,” the “distorted unitary state”, the “bastard”<sup>216</sup> GNU, in place of a proper transitional government for Zimbabwe state. This is due to the competing demands of the reformist and the reactionary elements, which resulted in a “revolution-restoration”, a moment of “reformation” that enables the preservation of the political and economic position of the old powerful classes, thus avoiding complete overhauls and side-lining interests of the “popular masses”.<sup>217</sup> On the whole, the GPA and the GNU were imperfect solutions that Zimbabweans were forced to embrace with their warped agendas.

## **GNU EUPHORIA AND THE COSTLY EXPOSURE OF MDC SUPPORTERS**

The formation of the GNU on 13 February 2009 brought a great deal of excitement to the people of Shurugwi district, as indeed most Zimbabweans, who had witnessed and experienced unprecedented levels of violence from 2000 to 2008. There was also hope

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<sup>211</sup> Antonio Gramsci, cited in Brian Raftopoulos, “The Global Political Agreement as a ‘passive revolution’.”

<sup>212</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, International Publishers, New York, 1971, p 59.

<sup>213</sup> Adam David Morton, *Ibid*, pp 63-4.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid*, p 65.

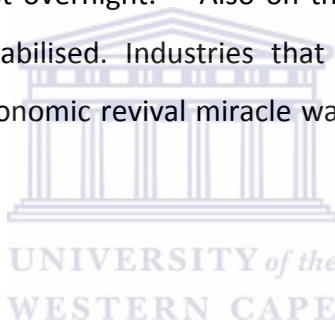
<sup>215</sup> See Adam David Morton, *Ibid*, p 65.

<sup>216</sup> Adam David Morton, *Ibid*, p 68.

<sup>217</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from prison notebooks*, p 119.

that the attendant economic problems of shortages, hunger, poverty, joblessness and economic free-fall would end. Indeed, the economic collapse was halted. In this regard inflation, once described by Gideon Gono as the number one enemy of the economy,<sup>218</sup> was arrested. As Morgan Tsvangirai, the Prime Minister under the GNU, stated in his first 100 days in office, inflation came down from the astronomical levels of 500 billion percent per year in 2008<sup>219</sup> to single digit figures like 3.2 percent in December 2010.<sup>220</sup> Inflation continued to fall into 2011 with the Zimstats department reporting that it had further receded to 2.5 percent in May 2011.<sup>221</sup>

Shortages were also ended with the adoption of the multiple currency regimes rooted in dollarization, which not only stabilised prices but saw many goods that had disappeared from the shelves return almost overnight.<sup>222</sup> Also on the national scale, the struggling Zimbabwe Stock Exchange stabilised. Industries that had closed reopened. It was regarded as certain that an economic revival miracle was in the offing. True to this, for



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<sup>218</sup> See "Zimbabwe's comatose economy: Enemy number one is Gono", in <http://www.gonogonow.com/?p=388>, Accessed 09 June 2011.

<sup>219</sup> Different statistics have been provided, for example, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, in an interview with the South African *Sunday Times* gave the figure as having reached 500 billion percent per year in 2008, see "Tsvangirai reviews his 100 days in office" in <http://www.zimgreats.com/index.php?>, accessed on 09 June 2009, while <http://www.zimonline.co.za>, say it had reached 231million percent per year – accessed 09 June 2009.

<sup>220</sup> See "Zimbabwe December inflation slows to 3.2 percent" in *Byo24News*, 18 January 2011, in <http://bulawayo24.com/index-id-business-sc-economy-byo-751-article-Zimbabwe+December+inflation+slows+to+3.2+percent+.html>, Accessed 11 June 2011.

<sup>221</sup> See *The Herald*, 17 June 2011, [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=12831:annual-inflation-declines&catid=41:business&Itemid=133](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12831:annual-inflation-declines&catid=41:business&Itemid=133), Accessed 17 June 2011.

<sup>222</sup> For the impact of dollarization, see "Has Zimbabwe's Runaway Inflation Been Tamed?" in <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1887809,00.html>, Accessed 13 June 2011. See also Tapiwa Chagonda, "Dollarization of the Zimbabwean Economy: Cure or Curse? The Case of the Teaching and Banking Sectors.", Paper presented at the *The Renaissance of African Economies*, Dar Es Salam, Tanzania, 20-21 December 2010, organised by CODESRIA, in <http://www.codesria.org/IMG/pdf/papers14.pdf>, Accessed 13 June 2011, for a pithy analysis of dollarization of Zimbabwean's economy up to late 2010. See also African Economic Outlook, in <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/southern-africa/zimbabwe/>, Accessed 28 July 2011.

the first time since 1999 the economy recorded positive growth in 2009 and 2010 of 5,7% and 9,3% respectively.<sup>223</sup>

On the political front, the GNU also promised a new dawn. In that regard, notwithstanding its flaws, the GNU, through the provisions of the GPA, tried to enforce a regime of accountability which was unfamiliar when ZANU-PF was the only party in government. As Raftopoulos says: it “[...] forced ZANU-PF into closer accountability for its behaviour at different levels including cabinet, parliament, JOMIC, the constitutional reform process, SADC, the AU and its relations with the West.”<sup>224</sup> At the national level the President, Prime Minister and Service chiefs met briefly in the National Security Council, and there were also weekly cabinet meetings involving ministers from across the political divides. Ministers were also supposed to account to the Prime Minister, who headed the Council of Ministers and to President Mugabe who headed the cabinet. At other levels, such as SADC, ZANU-PF and the MDCs were constantly monitored by the SADC mediator and his facilitation team. However, the level of such accountability and its effectiveness remained open to debate.

In addition, numbers of people who had gone into hiding or into exile returned to take up their places in the village or their positions in their places of work. The latter group mostly included civil servants, most notably teachers, who were lured back by the introduction of pay cheques in United States Dollars (US \$) and promises of ending political violence under the GNU. Noteworthy is the fact that civil servants were among the most affected by the violence, and were also among the most affected by the economic down-turn. Once the government had announced that all civil servants who had abandoned their posts would be allowed back into their old posts without charge, many heeded the call and returned. Many of these had tried and failed to make it in the “greener pastures” of South Africa.

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<sup>223</sup> See *Zimonline*, 08 July 2011, “Gov’t lunges towards dysfunction: PM”, in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6748>, Accessed 08 July 2011.

<sup>224</sup> See *Zimonline*, 28 June 2011, Brian Raftopoulos, “Opinion: Beyond Livingstone”, in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6740>, Accessed 28 June 2011.

In discussions with some of the teachers who had crossed the border into South Africa and elsewhere in the region I established that many had ended up in menial jobs that were not only poorly paying but which were also demeaning given their qualifications. Many had ended up as gardeners, security guards, house maids, bar-tenders, waiters or waitresses, agricultural labourers, car washers, while some ended up working as call ladies.<sup>225</sup> Yet others had also tried the “greener pastures” of the United Kingdom again with limited success.<sup>226</sup> As such, once their dream of an Eldorado was rudely shattered, and they were called upon to return to their old jobs, they trekked back to reassume their teaching positions. To this end the majority of the massive 70 000 teachers countrywide who had left their jobs between 2000 and March 2009 returned.<sup>227</sup> David Coltart, the Minister of Education under the GNU, affirmed this large-scale return of teachers stating that “our offices are inundated with people seeking readmission. We have made it easier to be readmitted than before, hence the influx.”<sup>228</sup>

However, the promises of a violence-free environment for teachers and for other ordinary Zimbabweans, especially in rural areas, proved unfounded. By September 2009, a few months into the GNU, youth militia bases were reportedly re-established at some schools despite Minister Coltart’s declaration to ban “partisan political” groups and activities from schools.<sup>229</sup> What made the plight of teachers worse was the

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<sup>225</sup> See also Mavis Marongwe, who also posits similarly and states that “For Zimbabwe, the majority of its emigrants are working in menial jobs or jobs which although not menial do not pay a lot of money. In fact a good number of those in Britain for example work in care jobs in hospitals and old age homes, in nursing and in teaching. A good number of those in South Africa are gardeners, maids, security guards etc.” in *The Standard*, 06 October 2006.

<sup>226</sup> See Beacon Mbiba, “Zimbabwe’s global citizens in ‘Harare North’: Some preliminary observations”, Paper presented at the Skinning the skunk-Zimbabwe Futures, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala 2005, cited in [kms1.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/...ef7a.../30+-+3+chapters.pdf](http://kms1.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/...ef7a.../30+-+3+chapters.pdf), Accessed 07 June 2011, pp 29-30, who discusses the nature of jobs for Zimbabwean diasporans living in the UK, where most work(ed) in what is called BBC, that is, British Bottom Cleaning- pp 30-31. These jobs fall in the Castles ‘3D’ classification for dirty, difficult and dangerous, p 33.

<sup>227</sup> See “Zimbabwe: Exiles start to return”, in *ReliefWeb*, 19 March 2009, cited in <http://reliefweb.int/node/302127>, Accessed 21 May 2011. See also *The Zimbabwean*, 19 February 2009, “Govt is broke, says Coltart as he asks teachers to end strike”, in <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/index.php?option=com>, Accessed 22 May 2011.

<sup>228</sup> See “Zimbabwe: Exiles start to return”

<sup>229</sup> See “Undoing two decades of neglect”, in *Prime Minister’s Newsletter*, 2 September 2009, in <http://davidcoltart.com/?p=829#respond>, Accessed 22 May 2011.

introduction of the Human Rights course in the History Subject.<sup>230</sup> The course was meant to educate the students to respect other people's human rights, and brought teachers into conflict with ZANU-PF structures who accused teachers of preaching MDC politics in the classrooms.<sup>231</sup>

That "former" bitter rivals, Morgan Tsvangirai and Robert Mugabe had started working together gave very strong indications that things were getting better. Or were they? Problems about the full implementation of the GPA continued unresolved into the second half of 2011, with no solution in sight.<sup>232</sup> A chief reason was the security sector reform, in which both sets of the MDC negotiators called for the transformation of the army, police and the CIO into impartial arms of the state.<sup>233</sup> The security arms were widely fingered in the fomenting of violence.<sup>234</sup> Other problems that were unresolved and hampered the implementation of the GPA included election-related reforms, appointments to key government positions, including provincial governors, ambassadors, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) governor and the Attorney General (AG). The result of these political tensions was to negate the economic gains made especially in the first one and half years of the GNU.<sup>235</sup>

Looking at the signing of the GPA and the consummation of the GNU through the lense of "passive revolution" sheds important light on the problems and tensions that were

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<sup>230</sup> See "Truth, reconciliation and justice in Zimbabwe: Report of the Commission of Inquiry Appointed under article 26 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation to examine the observance by the Government of Zimbabwe of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No.87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No.98), December 2009, cited in [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afpro/harare/download/commission\\_of\\_inquiry\\_report.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afpro/harare/download/commission_of_inquiry_report.pdf), Accessed 22 May 2011.

<sup>231</sup> Interviews with History teachers from the district.

<sup>232</sup> See *Fingaz*, 08 July 2011, Bornwell Chakaodza, "GPA talks: One step forward, two backwards", in <http://www.financialgazette.co.zw/comment/8955-gpa-talks-one-step-forward-two-backwards.html>, Accessed 08 July 2011.

<sup>233</sup> See *Zimbabwe Independent*, 08 July 2011, "Army, police, CIO talks divide negotiators", in <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/local/31646-army-police-cio-talks-divide-negotiators.html>, Accessed 08 July 2011.

<sup>234</sup> See *Zimonline* 06 July 2011, "Volatile situation in five Zim provinces", in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6747>, Accessed 08 July 2011.

<sup>235</sup> See *Zimonline*, 08 July 2011, "Gov't lunges towards dysfunction: PM", in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6748>, Accessed 08 July 2011.

met. As Raftopoulos avers, both the GPA and the GNU represented passive revolutions as they were forced on unwilling adversaries, ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations. According to Raftopoulos, ZANU-PF it was largely pushed into accepting the GPA and the GNU due to the serious political-economic meltdown in the country and the pressure from SADC and the AU. For the MDCs their acceptance was the result of a combination of state repression and violence, their failure to assume state power after an election victory, the limits of Western diplomacy in Africa against ZANU-PF's role in the SADC and the resonance of its Pan-African anti-colonial message in the AU, as well as the continued erosion of their urban workers' powerbase due to retrenchments.<sup>236</sup>

At another level, ZANU-PF's intransigence, which was based on its control of the coercive arms of the state, set against the MDCs' wish for the full implementation of the GPA,<sup>237</sup> represented another facet of ZANU-PF domination. The above also demands a recall of Raftopoulos' writing that: "since entering the Inclusive government... the MDCs have on the other hand pushed for full implementation of the GPA, while on the other hand they have struggled to position themselves in a state whose structure is still largely shaped by the imperatives of ZANU-PF's military-economic elite."<sup>238</sup> This resulted in the creation of a "bastard" Zimbabwe state in place of a reformed one that promised a new beginning. The struggles between ZANU-PF and the MDCs, and at times between the MDCs, also represented the "class struggles" that characterise passive revolutions, which result in the Gramscian "revolution-restoration", a "revolution without revolution."<sup>239</sup>

The other reason that underscores the importance of the passive revolution concept comes from the perceptions of Shurugwi rural residents. In most of the responses to the question soliciting their views on the GNU, many were of the opinion that the GNU did

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<sup>236</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, "The Global Political Agreement as a 'Passive Revolution'" .

<sup>237</sup> See *The Sunday Mail*, 5-11 February 2012, "PM Tsvangirai's letter to President Mugabe" for a nuanced discussion of the impediments and frustrations that ZANU-PF-aligned structures have offered in stalling the vision of the full implementation of the GPA.

<sup>238</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, "The GPA as passive revolution."

<sup>239</sup> Adam David Morton, *Unravelling Gramsci*, p 66.



not represent their interests. Many felt that the MDC had “sold-out” the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. They felt that the MDC formations, especially, the MDC-T needed to have “hung on there” a little longer and ZANU-PF would have abdicated. The fear was that the MDC would be “swallowed” by ZANU-PF the same way that PF-ZAPU was. The feeling was not helped by the “high level” tensions between the MDCs and ZANU-PF in parliament, government or at the SADC level over policy, positions or the implementation of the GPA, which did not include the ordinary people.<sup>240</sup> Related, the alleged cases of corruption involving senior MDC officials in central or local government led many to also conclude that the MDC had become a “part of them” (a part of ZANU-PF) and interested in lining their pockets to the neglect of their pulverised supporters’ interests.<sup>241</sup> Research by NGOs also corroborates this with 71 percent of the sampled women saying that they felt that they needed to be consulted before the GPA was instituted.<sup>242</sup> A further 43 percent of the women felt that the GNU did not represent their interests.<sup>243</sup>

With the façade of a promising political-economic environment MDC supporters threw caution to the wind and brought out from the vault their party (MDC) regalia, including T-shirts, caps, veils, wrap around cloths which were worn once again and other party regalia and insignia. They began to openly express their support for their party. In the excitement they inadvertently and dangerously exposed themselves. In Shurugwi, some of the insignia included bandanas, red cards, and red whistles. From interviews I was told that it had become common for some people to be identified as *Machinja*, street lingo for those who supported the MDC.

A number of MDC meetings were also allowed to take place in Shurugwi which further exposed the MDC supporters and their local leadership. The MDC-T and MDC-M for

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<sup>240</sup> See RAU, *When the going gets tough*, p 19.

<sup>241</sup> See *Zimbabwe Standard*, 28 September 2012, “Politics a stepping stone to gravy train”, in <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2012/09/28/politics-a-stepping-stone-to-gravy-train/>, Accessed 04 October 2012.

<sup>242</sup> See IDASA, ICTJ and RAU, *Women, politics and the Zimbabwe crisis*, May 2010, p 12.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

example, held meetings at the following venues, dates and under the following party leaders:

Date	Venue	Political Party	Meeting head/leader
19 March 2010	Tongogara	MDC-T	Juliet Chauke
03 April 2010	Tongogara	MDC-M	Paul Themba Nyathi
17 May 2010	Kushinga Secondary School	MDC-T	Samuel Sipepa Nkomo
10 June 2010	Mupambadzire Shopping Centre	MDC-T	Gift Mudhara
15 June 2010	Mukandapi Shopping Centre	MDC-T	Gift Mudhara

**Source:** Based on the field findings by the author.

These meetings by the two MDC formations were to prove costly. They portrayed the dawn of “liberation” on the political front. To many this raised the hope that days of violence had ended and that unfettered democracy was ushered where all could express their political will freely. In this regard, besides attending the meetings, some of which are listed in the table above, many MDC supporters (also as stated above) began to wear their party (MDC) regalia, to symbolically showcase their support for their party.

From interviews conducted and highlighted below, numerous accounts are given about how MDC supporters exposed themselves and the dangers that it invited.

In the first case I met a woman in December 2009 wearing MDC party regalia in Mugwira village. She was just coming from the shop via the borehole. On asking her why she was wearing an MDC T-shirt and a veil, she replied: “*Nekuti kune hurumende yemubatanidzwa, tave kutongawo, tangofanana neZANU* (Because there is a government of National Unity, we are also in power like ZANU-PF)”. When I further

asked her if she was not afraid of being targeted in the future, she said that time was past, and that no one would want to go back to those days of “Armageddon”.

But that was to prove a fallacious, if not a short lived political honeymoon lasting only a few months before the terror of ZANU-PF was again unleashed on those that had exposed themselves. Indeed the COPAC meetings checked her euphoria, and showed how wrong she was of the power relations in the GNU.<sup>244</sup> In December 2010, I went back and met the her. This time she told me how wrong she indeed had been by coming out in the open about her support for the MDC-T. Although she was not physically abused, she told me that she had been verbally threatened in July 2010 by a well-known ZANU-PF activist, whose name she supplied. Further to this she was also asked to “repent”, that is, to renounce her MDC-T support before the next round of elections. She was also told to keep her MDC-T regalia, which she was supposed to surrender at a yet-to-be announced ZANU-PF rally.

A bottle store owner at Chinhoye shopping centre recounted how some of his frequent customers used to come to his shop in MDC T-shirts. He told me that up to about January 2010 there were no problems. However, as the constitution view-gathering process gained momentum he was visited by a local “chef” who accused him of organising MDC meetings at his shop, an accusation he refuted. He was threatened that if he did not prevent anyone wearing any MDC regalia access into his shop his business would be shut down. He told me he was left with no choice but to ask his patrons to heed the call or his shop would be closed.

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<sup>244</sup> See Eldred Masunungure “Zimbabwe’s agonising but irreversible political transition”, a paper presented at the *European conference on African Studies 2009*, Institute of African Studies, University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany, 4-7 June 2009, for a more nuanced discussion of the unequal power relations in the GNU.

## **ORGAN FOR NATIONAL HEALING RECONCILIATION AND INTEGRATION: FALSE HOPES.**

Pursuant to Article VII.1.C, of the GPA, the ONHRI was formed in March 2009. ONHRI's official objective "[was] to facilitate the creation of a society imbued with values of mutual respect, tolerance and development; a society where individuals enjoy freedoms enshrined in the Constitution."<sup>245</sup> Overall the formation of ONHRI offered the promise and raised high hopes for victims of the violence that they would see justice being served for themselves and meted out to their perpetrators seen roaming the villages almost on a daily basis. The formation of the ONHRI, with three co-Ministers, all of whom were considered very senior and who held very high positions in their respective political movements, also added to the euphoria.<sup>246</sup> *Prima facie*, the appointment of three co-Ministers also seemed to point to the seriousness with which the three parties in the GNU attached to the process of healing the nation.

In addition, the grand launch of the ONHRI by the three GPA Principals, which was done simultaneously with the launch of the "three days of dedication" to reconciliation from 24 to 26 July 2009,<sup>247</sup> also hugely added to the euphoria. In some serious sense this pointed to the potential to deal a decisive blow to the recurrent problem of violence and impunity. Many hoped, as senior government officials such as Prime Minister Tsvangirai hoped, that the ONHRI would open the space for truth telling, open and frank dialogue between victims and perpetrators, come up with strategies that promoted healing, and ensure that violence "never again" happened.<sup>248</sup> However, the rather

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<sup>245</sup> See Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration, "Concept Paper", p 3.

<sup>246</sup> John Nkomo was ZANU-PF National Chairman and was the fourth most powerful man in ZANU-PF after the three in the Presidium. Gibson Sibanda was the Vice President of MDC-M. Sekai Holland was a senior member of the MDC-T National Executive. See Tirivavi Mukundi, "National healing and reconciliation", in <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk>, 29 October 2010, Accessed 15 May 2011. See also *The Standard*, 06 May 2010, "National healing has no clear mandate- Holland", in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw>, Accessed 21 June 2011.

<sup>247</sup> See *Government Gazette Extraordinary*, 15 July 2009, *General Notice 92 of 2009*.

<sup>248</sup> See "Truth, reconciliation and justice in Zimbabwe: Report of the Commission of Inquiry Appointed under article 26 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation to examine the observance by the Government of Zimbabwe of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No.87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No.98), December 2009, cited in

ambivalent tone in the speeches by Tsvangirai and Mugabe at the launch of ONHRI, offered a dissonance that would characterise the life of the ONHRI. The main difference lay in what would constitute the ethos of healing. For Tsvangirai, no doubt because he had suffered innumerable violations together with various structures of his party at the hands of ZANU-PF, called for justice while Mugabe, on the other hand called for peace as the basis for healing.<sup>249</sup>

Following the promulgation of the 3 days of national reconciliation or days of dedication, the ONHRI embarked on a country-wide exercise to gather people's views on the healing, reconciliation and integration process.<sup>250</sup> The delegates for the district of Shurugwi received the ONHRI representatives at Senga Training Centre in Gweru in September 2009. The delegates included chiefs and headmen representing the traditional authorities. There were also senior government authorities including the Provincial Governor, the Provincial Administrator, District Administrators for all the districts in the Midlands, representatives of NGOs, as well as representatives of the three major political parties (ZANU-PF, MDC-T AND MDC-M). Amid fanfare, pomp and ceremony, ONHRI co-ministers encouraged people to participate in fashioning healing processes at their local levels. Delegates who attended the Senga workshop received T-shirts, mugs and other regalia, which were meant to spread and to advertise the activities and aims of ONHRI. According to delegates, there were to be follow-up meetings at district and even lower levels later. However, no such meetings were ever held in Shurugwi district.

The other cause for the excitement with the ONHRI was that it was supposed to work in a consultative and non-prescriptive role, because "the exact character, scope and

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[http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afpro/harare/download/commission\\_of\\_inquiry\\_report.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afpro/harare/download/commission_of_inquiry_report.pdf),

Accessed 22 May 2011.

<sup>249</sup> See "Mugabe urges end to violence, Tsvangirai seeks justice", in <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com>,

Accessed 18 April 2011.

<sup>250</sup> See Sekai Holland, "Realigning input markets to former needs as a strategy on national healing, reconciliation and integration at grassroots based communities in agricultural production in Zimbabwe", in

[http://www.farnpan.org/documents/d00738/presentation/Review\\_of\\_the\\_Organ\\_On\\_National\\_Healing\\_Final.pdf](http://www.farnpan.org/documents/d00738/presentation/Review_of_the_Organ_On_National_Healing_Final.pdf), Accessed 15 May 2011.

parameters of a process of national healing being in question” there was need to “consult widely and seek best practices to make the process credible and legitimate and above all .... Zimbabwean.”<sup>251</sup> This was also to be in a more “African” way of widespread participation and inclusion.<sup>252</sup> In terms of consultations, the ONHRI held meetings with traditional leaders, churches and civil society to chart the way forward on how best to bring healing to Zimbabwe.<sup>253</sup> It was also supposed to liaise with regional and international partners such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), bilateral partners and donors.<sup>254</sup> Over and above this, the Organ was supposed to offer “oversight, monitoring, facilitation and evaluation of the national healing programme.”<sup>255</sup>

However, the Mass Public Opinion Institute reported at the beginning of 2010 that sixty-five (65) percent of rural residents in ten provinces were not aware of the healing initiative and process led by ONHRI.<sup>256</sup> A further look at the ONHRI reveals that in 2010 it suffered irreparably from the death of co-minister Gibson Sibanda of the MDC-T, who was eventually replaced by Moses Mzila Ndlovu. The same year also saw the elevation of co-minister John Nkomo of ZANU-PF to become Vice-President. Although Nkomo retained his position in the ONHRI, his attention became more concentrated with the powerful presidium than with the Organ. This is despite the conspicuous launch of the three days of dedication by the GPA principals. This could have been hardly surprising because ONHRI, up to June 2011 when this chapter was written, remained without a

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<sup>251</sup> See Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration, “Concept Paper”, p 3.

<sup>252</sup> See

[http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afpro/harare/download/commission\\_of\\_inquiry\\_report.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afpro/harare/download/commission_of_inquiry_report.pdf), Accessed 15 May 2011, p 142.

<sup>253</sup> See Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *Who will dare begin the process of recovering the truth*, Vol 2, 2010, cited in [http://www.hrforum.com/special\\_hrru/outreach-report-07-10.pdf](http://www.hrforum.com/special_hrru/outreach-report-07-10.pdf), Accessed 19 May 2011, p 12.

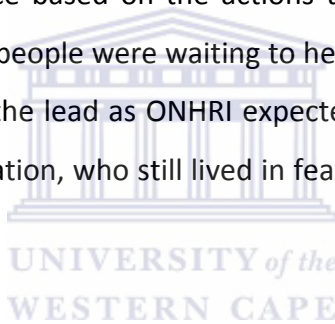
<sup>254</sup> See Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration, “Concept Paper”, p 3.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid*, p 3.

<sup>256</sup> See “Zimbabwe’s national healing elusive”, in *radiovopZimbabwe*

clearly spelt out programme<sup>257</sup> other than to be “consultative” and not “prescriptive,”<sup>258</sup> and whose other stated targets or plans remained far behind.<sup>259</sup>

Regarding the absence of a clear mandate and plan of action Holland also stated that “our terms of reference are to establish an organ of national healing, reconciliation and integration of Zimbabwe society”. Its role would be to “coordinate, which is really to see what progress is being made and it is to guide, it is not to do”. It would invite Zimbabweans to participate in its activities and determine the programme.<sup>260</sup> The question to be asked is to what extent was the organ going to be dictated by the people? And, under such a scenario, would its operations be far away from hit and miss? The argument here is that people looked up to the organ for direction and they looked up to it for pragmatic guidance based on the actions that it took. Indeed, as the ILO Commission of Inquiry put it, “people were waiting to hear what the ONHRI could do for them,”<sup>261</sup> rather than to take the lead as ONHRI expected. Indeed it was expecting too much from a pulverised population, who still lived in fear for their lives to take a lead in formulating their healing.



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<sup>257</sup> See *The Standard*, 10 July 2011, “Organ struggles to find healing formula”, in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/local/30468-organ-struggles-to-find-healing-formula-.html>, Accessed 10 July 2011.

<sup>258</sup> See Sekai Holland, Sekai Holland, “Realigning input markets to former needs as a strategy on national healing, reconciliation and integration at grassroots based communities in agricultural production in Zimbabwe”, in [http://www.farnpan.org/documents/d00738/presentation/Review\\_of\\_the\\_Organ\\_On\\_National\\_Healing\\_Final.pdf](http://www.farnpan.org/documents/d00738/presentation/Review_of_the_Organ_On_National_Healing_Final.pdf), Accessed 15 May 2011, p3. See also *The Standard*, 06 May 2010, “National healing has no clear mandate- Holland”, in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw>, Accessed 21 June 2011.

<sup>259</sup> See *Financial Gazette*, 16 June 2011, “Cabinet Polarised”, in <http://www.financialgazette.co.zw/top-stories/8711-cabinet-polarised.html>, Accessed 19 June 2011.

<sup>260</sup> See “Hot seat interview with George Bizos, Sekai Holland, Glen Mpani and Mary Ndlovu: Reconciliation, justice and national healing”, cited in SW Radio Africa, 10 April 2009, in [http://kubatana.net/html/archive/demgg090410swradio.asp?sector=DEMG&year2009&range\\_start=751](http://kubatana.net/html/archive/demgg090410swradio.asp?sector=DEMG&year2009&range_start=751), Accessed 21 May 2011.

<sup>261</sup> See “Truth, reconciliation and justice in Zimbabwe: Report of the Commission of Inquiry Appointed under article 26 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation to examine the observance by the Government of Zimbabwe of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No.87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No.98), December 2009, cited in [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afpro/harare/download/commission\\_of\\_inquiry\\_report.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afpro/harare/download/commission_of_inquiry_report.pdf), Accessed 22 May 2011.



In addition, Holland also admitted that ONHRI did not have legal force, except that it was rooted in the ambivalent Article VII of the GPA. In her admission she said, “the organ has no legal framework to work within, making it powerless to implement concrete policies.”<sup>262</sup> This lack of legal force led to its characterisation as a “paper tiger” by the Civil Society Organisations,<sup>263</sup> one that offered so much hope, yet was able to deliver little if anything. Indeed the organ was powerless to act on reported cases of violence reported across the country.<sup>264</sup> It ended up issuing statements without force, for example that political parties desist from violence, pronounced guidelines for demonstrations, “instructed” the police to engage the communities on the role of the security forces, as well as announcing the setting up of the National Security Council to deal with the conduct of the security forces.<sup>265</sup>

At another level the weakness of the organ was its top-heavy structure of three co-ministers drawn from the three parties in the GNU, each representing their party interests. In this regard questions began to be asked about how the three would work outside the imperatives of their parties’ invested interests in the healing process. Yet for others, this helped to give credence to such assumptions that the Organ was set up by politicians to hoodwink people and to buy time.<sup>266</sup> Because of its ineffectiveness,

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<sup>262</sup> See “National healing organ a paper tiger”, in *Newsday*, 06 March 2011, cited in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-03-06-national-healing-organ-a-paper-tiger>, Accessed 21 May 2011, for more details. See also “Truth, reconciliation and justice in Zimbabwe: Report of the Commission of Inquiry Appointed under article 26 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation”. See also, Ishmael Muvingi, “Transitional justice and political pre-transition in Zimbabwe”, *ACCORD*, Issue 1, 2011, cited in [http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/ct/ct\\_2011\\_1.pdf](http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/ct/ct_2011_1.pdf), Accessed 19 May 2011, p 5.

<sup>263</sup> See “National healing organ a paper tiger”.

<sup>264</sup> See “Hot Seat interview with George Bizos, Sekai Holland and Mary Ndlovu”, where some panellists to the interview session questioned the commitment of ZANU-PF to the healing process where once again there were reports implicating it in cases of renewed violence.

<sup>265</sup> See “Truth, reconciliation and justice in Zimbabwe: Report of the Commission of Inquiry”.

<sup>266</sup> See *The Standard*, 10 July 2011, “Organ struggles to find healing formula”, in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/local/30468-organ-struggles-to-find-healing-formula.html>, Accessed 10 July 2011.

parliamentarians showed no confidence in ONHRI by forming a parliament committee on healing, further denting the credibility of ONHRI.<sup>267</sup>

Budgetary problems also dogged ONHRI, especially in the first year of its launch. Having been launched well into the GNU, it was not catered for in the government budget in its first year. This made its broad plans after its launch difficult to implement. It had two broad plans of action namely to visit the provincial capitals and engage with the civil society organisations; and secondly to launch research on the history of violence which would culminate in a conference where the findings would be presented.<sup>268</sup> Following a seminar in January 2010 at the Midlands State University in Gweru I was chosen together with other history and social science students, scholars and practitioners mostly from the University of Zimbabwe and the Midlands State University to carry out this research. More prominent academics at this meeting were Professor Ngwabi Bhebe, Dr Kenneth Manungo, and emerging historians like Gerald Mazarire and Percyslarge Chigora. We were given a programme of action to follow, and were also promised grants to enable us to do the research. However, nothing much has come up from that meeting except a follow-up meeting in Kariba in mid-2011. Furthermore by the end of 2011 researchers were still stuck mostly at the theoretical stage of their researches awaiting the grants to go into the field to engage with the people and establish what has really been behind the cycles of violence.

The healing process itself helped to reinvigorate tensions between MDC and ZANU-PF supporters who were the major participants and victims of the 2000-2008 violence. In this regard, for example, tensions were about how the healing process would be done. Was it to be via an amnesty as in the other episodes of the past,<sup>269</sup> or retributive as

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<sup>267</sup> *Financial Gazette*, 18 August 2011, "Lawmakers to form national healing organ", in <http://eu.financialgazette.co.zw/top-stories/9507-lawmakers-to-form-national-healing-organ.html>, Accessed 26 August 2011.

<sup>268</sup> See "Truth, reconciliation and justice in Zimbabwe: Report of the Commission of Inquiry".

<sup>269</sup> See Pamela Machakanja "National healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe: Challenges and opportunities", *Zimbabwe Monograph Series*, No 1, 2010, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation Africa Programme, p 10, who lists the recurrent patterns of violence and impunity in the post-independence period. These are the 1980 amnesty, the 1988 Clemency Order, the 1995 Presidential Amnesty and the

wanted by most MDC supporters?<sup>270</sup> This polarisation also points to the role the two sets of supporters and their respective political parties played in the recent violence. The Civil Society Monitoring Mechanism reported that NGOs trying to gather information in Shurugwi in 2010 on transitional justice were accused by ZANU-PF structures of promoting the MDC agenda and told to leave the district.<sup>271</sup> There were similar reports of the police stopping healing meetings by other organisations such as the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance.<sup>272</sup> The end result was that the search for transitional justice (TJ) ended up as a contest between the two main political parties, ZANU-PF and the MDC-T. In the process furthering the passive revolution set in motion from 2008 with the signing of the GPA. Like the GPA, the ONHRI was a top-down organ which paid little regard to the aspirations of the common citizens.

Notwithstanding its various incapacities, it is also prudent to accept that the formation of ONHRI marked a serious departure in government policy as regards transitional justice. To this extent, it should be highlighted that it was for the first time that some space was officially opened at government level for ordinary people and civil society stakeholders to participate and engage in dialogue in the search for a healing process

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2000 Clemency Order. See also Shari Eppel, cited in Shari Eppel and Brian Raftopoulos, "Political crisis, mediation and the Prospects for transitional justice in Zimbabwe", *IDASA*, November 2008. Tony Reeler, *Subliminal terror?: Human rights violence and torture in Zimbabwe during 2008*, Centre for the study of violence and Reconciliation, Cape Town, p 3, who discusses this at great length, and who also adds a fourth period of serious human rights violations as the 1998 period of the food riots. See also Sabelo J Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?*, p 190, who posits that the history of Zimbabwe is one of violence coded under different names, such as wars between the Ndebele and the Shona in the pre-colonial period, the First Chimurenga, colonialism, The Second Chimurenga, Gukurahundi, and Third Chimurenga. See also Terence M Mashingaidze, "Zimbabwe's illusive national healing and reconciliation processes", p 21.

<sup>270</sup> See Mass Public Opinion Institute's survey results cited in "Zimbabwe's National Healing Elusive", in *radiovopzimbabwe*, which point to a dichotomy of opinion along ZANU-PF vs MDC political faultlines. In the statistics, 62 percent of ZANU-PF supporters wanted perpetrators of the violence pardoned by an amnesty, while 59 percent of MDC supporters wanted the arrest and trial of the perpetrators.

<sup>271</sup> See Civil Society Monitoring Mechanism (CISOMM), "Periodic Report, March to April 2010", in [www.cisomm.org/index.php?option=com](http://www.cisomm.org/index.php?option=com), p18, Accessed 12 may 2011.

<sup>272</sup> See *The Standard*, 10 July 2011, "Organ struggles to find healing formula", in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/local/30468-organ-struggles-to-find-healing-formula.html>, Accessed 10 July 2011.

for Zimbabwe.<sup>273</sup> Theoretically, this policy of inclusion was a marked departure from the trend followed in the post-independence period where the government in a top-down way imposed blanket amnesties, which tried to force amnesia of the past horrors on the population. In this regard, the government had pronounced the General Amnesty Order of 1980 at the end of the Second Chimurenga; then there was the 1988 Clemency Order ending the *gukurahundi*; the Presidential Pardon of 1995 for the violence of the 1995 elections; as well as the October 2000 Clemency Order for the violence under *jambanja* and the FTLRP.<sup>274</sup>

Secondly, the formation of ONHRI signified an “admission of wrong doing” by ZANU-PF<sup>275</sup>, which had never admitted to institutionalised violence, except when President Mugabe thinly admitted that the *gukurahundi* was “a moment of madness.”<sup>276</sup> Thus while theoretically the GPA sought to undercut the previous passiveness of the population in the search for a TJ, in practice, however, the contests between the MDCs and ZANU-PF over which TJ model to follow, as well as the stifling of the space for debate led by NGOs point sadly towards a re-inscription of another forced amnesia that will conceal violations.

### **CONSTITUTION SELECT COMMITTEE (COPAC) MEETINGS: ANOTHER “BLOODY” POLITICAL BATTLEFIELD**

COPAC meetings were premised on the GPA Article VI, which stated, among other things, that “...it is the fundamental right and duty of the Zimbabwean people to make a constitution by themselves and for themselves”; and also that, “...the process of making this constitution must be owned and driven by the people and must be inclusive and

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<sup>273</sup> See *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum*, “Who will dare begin the process of recovering the truth”, pp 12-13.

<sup>274</sup> See “National healing organ a paper tiger”.

<sup>275</sup> See Ishmael Muvingi, “Transitional justice and political pre-transition”, p 7.

<sup>276</sup> See Terence Mashingaidze, “Zimbabwe’s illusive national healing and reconciliation processes”, p 23.

democratic.”<sup>277</sup> The ethos of this democratic process of participation and inclusion was also neatly captured in the COPAC logo: “ensuring a people driven constitution.”<sup>278</sup> In Shurugwi, COPAC meetings started with consultations by traditional chiefs and headmen soliciting views of the people on the role to be ascribed to traditional authorities in the new constitution. This was in line with Talking Point number twenty-four (24).<sup>279</sup> These consultative meetings were held from early January to the end of April 2010 and were held in all the 24 wards.

At times, however, they combined several wards and held joint meetings with the villagers from adjacent wards. This was especially where the wards were close to one central site like a township. Although these consultations were meant to solicit the people’s views on the future role of traditional authorities under the emerging constitution, ZANU-PF district and provincial personnel also attended and played crucial roles in the discussions at these meetings. At some of these meetings, the District Administrator (DA) for Shurugwi; ZANU-PF District and Central Committee members, and Members of Parliament for the district were in attendance. People who attended some of the meetings say they were turned more or less into ZANU-PF campaign platforms for the Kariba draft constitution, and that the meetings were punctuated by ZANU-PF sloganeering. At another level this teaming up led to the campaigning for the Kariba draft constitution that ZANU-PF favoured because it left many of the Presidential powers in the Lancaster House Constitution intact.

The impact of these meetings was to revive hate language against the MDC, and against the West mostly Britain and the United States of America, who, not surprisingly, were cast as enemies of Zimbabwe’s sovereignty. Fear was reintroduced, and a return to the days of intense violence of 2008 was in the air. This anxiety rose as claims concerning the role of the ZANU-PF in the Second and Third Chimurenga were reinstated especially

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<sup>277</sup> See Ministry of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, *Global Political Agreement*, Article VI, 15 September 2008, for more details.

<sup>278</sup> See the COPAC logo.

<sup>279</sup> See COPAC, “Talking Points”.

during discussions on the preamble to the new constitution, as well as the future position and role of the war veterans and the traditional authorities themselves in the envisaged constitution. This brought back the discourse of “sell-outs” and “enemies of the state.”

The “actual” COPAC process of gathering views on the constitution was marked by more threats and intimidation in Shurugwi. This was in the period between July and early August 2010. Consultative meetings took more political party campaign language mostly featuring two of the biggest parties, ZANU-PF and MDC-T. In many cases it took a narrow, short term goal and was fought more on a ZANU-PF versus MDC terrain and ignored the imperatives of building a constitution for the future. In some cases, however, the constitution-making process reflected the intra-ZANU-PF succession struggles.<sup>280</sup> Between March and July 2010, I managed to attend a total of ten meetings in the district that featured the two main political parties, ZANU-PF and the MDC-T, as well as the smaller MDC-M. In this regard, some of the ZANU-PF meetings we recorded were as follows: 19 March 2010 chaired by Member of Parliament for Shurugwi North Francis Nhema at Tongogara Growth Point; 04 April chaired by Maybe Chinyongo at Tongogara Growth Point; 24 June chaired by Simon Tibugare at Tongogara Growth Point; 28 June chaired by Levison Mahlahla at Gamwa; and on 02 July chaired by Simon Tibugare at Gundura. For the MDCs’ schedule see the table referred to earlier.

It is necessary to underscore that this was the crucial period, literally the home stretch, towards the COPAC consultative meetings. These meetings by the major political parties were significant for the coaching of supporters regarding party positions on the Constitution Talking points. Coaching involved telling people in prior meetings how to respond to questions on the Talking Points. This underscored the importance of the domination from above that had been the hallmark of the GNU politics because it defeated the whole purpose of engaging in the consultations to make the constitution

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<sup>280</sup> See Ibbo Mandaza “Draft constitution: Are we now almost home and dry?” in *The Standard*, 10 August 2012, Accessed 12 August 2012.

which was meant to set a democratic foundation for the future and more urgently the holding of democratic elections that were free of violence.

In the end the process of gathering views re-enacted the violence of coercive mobilisation for support by the two major political parties, as well as the parroting of party official positions. This set in motion waves of violence and intimidation between MDC and ZANU-PF supporters. The violence of the constitutional outreach programme was coordinated under Operation *Vhara Muromo* (Operation Shut Your Mouth) by ZANU-PF country-wide which was meant to silence those with opinions that were at variance with the ZANU-PF ones.<sup>281</sup> Countrywide Operation Shut Your Mouth was coordinated through the appointment of community mouthpieces. In Mudzi and Murehwa North, for example, chiefs and headmen were chosen to respond to questions by the COPAC teams.<sup>282</sup> This should not be surprising because chiefs and headmen had received intensive coaching in the Kariba draft, preferred by ZANU-PF, prior to the COPAC outreach meetings. These views were again contained in a booklet that was disseminated across the country.<sup>283</sup> In other instances, state security agents, most notably soldiers, were also reportedly chosen to speak on behalf of the local communities.<sup>284</sup>

In Shurugwi, ZZZICOMP (the Zimbabwe Peace Project, Zimbabwe Election Support network and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights Independent Constitution Monitoring Project) reported that at one such meeting to gather views for the constitution on 21 July 2010, at Musasa Ward 18 where some 800 people were in attendance, a Zimbabwe National Army officer dominated the discussion on the highly emotive and contentious

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<sup>281</sup> See <http://swradioafrica.com/News290710.htm>, Accessed 15 May 2011 for a nuanced discussion on the operation.

<sup>282</sup> See Civil Society Monitoring Mechanism (CISOMM) "Periodic Report, March to April 2010" in [www.cisomm.org/index.php?option=com-](http://www.cisomm.org/index.php?option=com-), Accessed 12 May 2011, p 19.

<sup>283</sup> See Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) "Positions for inclusion in the new constitution."

<sup>284</sup> See Civil Society Monitoring Mechanism (CISOMM) "Periodic Report, March to April 2010" in [www.cisomm.org/index.php?option=com-](http://www.cisomm.org/index.php?option=com-), Accessed 12 May 2011, p 19.



issues on Talking Points 2, 3, 6, 8, 9 and 10.<sup>285</sup> My own investigations have established that more often than not war veterans and senior local ZANU-PF leadership dominated these meetings. Village heads were also roped in to lead in the discussions. What this eventually meant was that many attended, pushed the numbers of attendees up, without adding value to the process. It was only on less-sensitive “Talking Points”, such as, women and gender issues; the disabled; labour; public finance; religion; and languages, art and culture that the “ordinary” villagers were allowed to air their views “freely”.

In addition to the above, the main political protagonists, MDC-T and ZANU-PF, distributed fliers and pamphlets outlining the respective party positions. As reported by ZZZICOMP, some of the fliers were distributed just before the COPAC meetings.<sup>286</sup> More generally, however, fliers and political parties’ standpoints were disseminated in advance. These fliers clearly articulated responses that participants at the COPAC meetings were supposed to recite for particular Talking Points.<sup>287</sup> For the MDC-T this was through fliers as well as through their weekly newspaper *Changing Times*.<sup>288</sup> For ZANU-PF its position was outlined in its 95-page document on the constitution.<sup>289</sup> It was

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<sup>285</sup> See ZZZICOMP, “Weekly Report Shadowing the Outreach process”, 19-25 July 2010, in <http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/WeeklyReport19-25July2010.pdf>, Accessed 12 May 2011, p 9. These highly charged Talking Points were on issues that had recently affected people’s lives and socio-political relations, as well as affected Zimbabwe’s economic and political relations with the International Community: 2-Arms of the state; 3-Systems of Government; 4-Bill of Rights and Citizenship; 6-Youths; 8-Media; 9-War veterans; 10-Land, Natural resources and Empowerment; 12-Elections, Transitional Mechanisms and Independent Commissions; 13-Executive Organs of the State; 24-Traditional leaders.

<sup>286</sup> See ZZZICOMP, Weekly Report Shadowing the Outreach process, 19-25 July, p 11. See also Civil Society Monitoring Mechanism (CISOMM), “Periodic Report, March to April 2010”, in [www.cisomm.org/index.php?option=com](http://www.cisomm.org/index.php?option=com), p 19, Accessed 12 May 2011.

<sup>287</sup> See also See <http://swradioafrica.com/News290710.htm>, Accessed 15 May 2011 for the details. See Civil Society Monitoring Mechanism (CISOMM), “Periodic Report, March to April 2010”, in [www.cisomm.org/index.php?option=com](http://www.cisomm.org/index.php?option=com), p 19, Accessed 12 May 2011, for a national outlook with regards coaching of attendees to the COPAC meetings.

<sup>288</sup> See *Changing Times*, for the months of January 2010 to July 2010, for the details on the MDC talking points.

<sup>289</sup> See for example *Newsday* 24 June 2010, “ZANU-PF roots for longer presidential term for Mugabe” in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2010-06-24-as-zanu-pf-roots-for-longer-presidential-term-mugabe>, accessed 14 June 2011.

also in fliers as well as in the consultative meetings the traditional leaders held in the wards between January and April 2010 way before the coming of the COPAC teams.

There were other cases related to these meetings where, on the actual days and just before the start of the scheduled consultations, people were reminded of the party positions. In this regard both the MDC-T and ZANU-PF, which were the main political contenders were almost equal culprits. Because of the pervasiveness of the fliers and coaching I was also told in many interviews of people referring to “scripts” such as written notes or official party fliers or newspapers during the outreach programmes.<sup>290</sup>

In some cases I was informed that the mere presence of war veterans, ZANU-PF youths and known state security agents like police officers and PISI operatives was enough to shut the locals’ mouths. This was not very surprising because, as seen in Chapter Four, these were the structures that were responsible for fomenting and spreading violence in the district, as in the whole of the country. In an atmosphere that was dominated by fear and misinformation about the presence of the COPAC teams’ recording equipment including voice and video recorders, people were generally intimidated. Word, I was told, went round in some wards to the effect that the recorded sessions would be used to identify all who would have attended and who would have contributed. As such the presence of the recording equipment and state security functionaries helped Operation Shut Your Mouth because they reinforced the apprehension of surveillance amongst the ordinary people.

In some cases rather unconventional methods were employed. Among the ones that stand out include the reiteration of party preferred responses in opening prayers. In this regard ZZZICOMP reported, for example, that a local ZANU-PF leader reportedly summarised the responses for all the Talking Points that might touch a raw nerve, and

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<sup>290</sup> See also ZZZICOMP, *Weekly Report Shadowing the Outreach process*, 19-25 July 2010, p 9.

during the opening prayer threatened those who might make ultra vires contributions.<sup>291</sup>

This, however, does not mean there were no individuals who spoke on their own accord. There were some meetings where people with divergent views debated the touchy “Talking Points” such as the status of war veterans, bill of rights, elections and system of government. A few cases recorded by ZZZICOMP included meetings meetings that were held at Selukwe Primary School, Nhema Primary school, Zhaugwe Primary School and Marishongwe Business Centre.<sup>292</sup>

Barring these few “free” consultative meetings recorded, what this however meant was that many gathered for these COPAC meetings without their consent and without the privilege of airing their concerns and wants in the proposed constitution. For this study, the importance of the COPAC meetings in Shurugwi was to revive the political tensions and structures that promoted violence, like the war veterans who again threatened the villagers with violence if they pushed for the promotion of their ideas outside those they were supposed to air from the coaching that they were subjected to prior to the COPAC team’s arrival.

More than anything, the process was crucial in highlighting that the lingering problem of political contest and attendant violence still existed. Importantly, it demonstrated that the GNU still had “unfinished business” to deal with and it further demonstrates how the constitution-making process had been turned into a theatre to fight the long-standing MDC-ZANU-PF battles. In addition, it also sacrificed the opportunity to engage with people’s perceptions and real concerns with respect to the new constitution. As highlighted above, ZANU-PF campaigned for the Kariba draft. In this contest, as the ten meetings I attended demonstrated, the three main political parties utilised these moments not only to de-campaign their rivals but to portray their own party agendas

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<sup>291</sup> See ZZZICOMP, “Weekly Report Shadowing the Outreach Process: 26 July-1 August 2010”, in [http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/demgg/100825zicomp.asp?sector=LEGSL&year=2010&range\\_start=61](http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/demgg/100825zicomp.asp?sector=LEGSL&year=2010&range_start=61) Accessed 15 May 2011.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid, p11.

and positions regarding the “touchy” talking points as well. In this regard, ZANU-PF deployed the historic-nationalist-redistributive-anti-colonial discourse especially on land, national emblems and war veterans’ issues. On the other hand, the two MDCs tried to exploit the general disillusionment among the electorate with the past decade of political and economic meltdown by blaming it on ZANU-PF and the figure of Mugabe. The MDC-T went even further to highlight the significant improvements in the people’s lives under the GNU as its own successes. Across these polar opposites, the three sides fought the “COPAC battle”.

However, the violence should be seen in the context of the importance of the constitution in the future survival of either political party. Control of the constitution-making process, the ultimate constitution, and possibly a victory in the scheduled elections would usher in some guarantees of long terms in office especially under a winner-take-all (first-past-post) scenario that both political parties seemed to want.<sup>293</sup> Its control was effectively a barometer to gauge the power and influence of the parties in the GNU. The constant bickering between ZANU-PF and MDC-T throughout the tenure of the GNU testifies to this difficult co-existence. In this regard Morgan Tsvangirai “quit” the GNU on two occasions between 2009 and 2010.

At another level, the violence should also be set against the backdrop of the humiliation of ZANU-PF, barely ten years after its defeat in the 2000 referendum. In that referendum, ZANU-PF had campaigned for the adoption of the Constitution, but was defeated by the NO vote that the coalition led by the National Constituent Assembly and the then opposition MDC campaigned for.<sup>294</sup> As such, one could try to explain the employment of violence by ZANU-PF as an attempt to avoid another humiliation at another constitutional referendum.

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<sup>293</sup> See Pamela Machakanja, “National healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe: Challenges and opportunities”, in *Zimbabwe Monograph Series*, No 1, 2010, Institute for Justice and and Reconciliation Africa Programme, p 4.

<sup>294</sup> See *The Daily News*, 17 February 2000, “Referendum results rock ZANU-PF foundations”.

At the national level, some districts witnessed more overt violence. In certain cases people were beaten for airing views that were contrary to those held by ZANUPF. To this extent *The Zimbabwean* reported for example that three MDC supporters were abducted and beaten at Watsomba Business Centre in Manicaland province by CIO operatives for being “too talkative” at an outreach meeting.<sup>295</sup> In some cases this censorship was through the reincarnation of the infamous bases, which had been used for the violent mobilisation of ZANU-PF support in previous years, and most importantly for the violent reorientation, through beatings and torture, of MDC supporters. Bases were reportedly been set up in Nyanga North, Makoni, Chegutu and Gokwe-Gumunyu districts where people were reportedly threatened that they must support the Kariba draft constitution.<sup>296</sup> The reincarnation of bases at the time of the COPAC hearings brought back home the harsh reality of the return to the dark days witnessed between 2000 and 2008. The open violence during the COPAC meetings as well as the reincarnation of bases spelled recidivist tendencies to violence by ZANU-PF as a tool to get its way on important matters by cowing the populace.

The reasoning behind coaching and threats came from the thinking that COPAC responses would be assessed on the basis of their quantity, rather than their quality or the atmosphere in which the responses were given.<sup>297</sup> In this way it was hoped that the more particular responses were repeated, the more chances for their inclusion in the draft constitution, rather like in a ballot where people who get more votes get office. Overall, this resulted in the altering of people’s views so that they would align with their respective party affiliation, which the ZZZICOMP described as the promotion of “party” rather than “personal” views.<sup>298</sup> One could also be forgiven for extending this to say that the contest was at times even reduced to the struggle between Mugabe and Tsvangirai,

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<sup>295</sup> See *The Zimbabwean*, “MDC supporters harassed”, in <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/human-rights/32543/mdc-supporters-harassed.html>, Accessed 27 June 2011.

<sup>296</sup> See “Zimbabwe’s healing elusive” in *radiovopzimbabwe*, for a pithy discussion of the re-emergence of bases.

<sup>297</sup> See *Newsday* 18 May 2011 “New template delays Copac process”, in <http://www.newsday.co.za/article/2011-05-17-new-template-delays-copac-process>, Accessed 18 may 2011.

<sup>298</sup> See ZZZICOMP, 19-25 July, p 11.

who personified their parties.<sup>299</sup> The impact of this was felt at the thematic stage where the views gathered during the outreach programme were to be summarised. In this regard ZANU-PF pushed for a quantitative analysis of the views gathered, whereas the two MDC formations in COPAC wanted a qualitative analysis of the views.<sup>300</sup>

It is also vital to say that this bickering happened slightly over a month after the three COPAC chairmen, Douglas Mwonzora, Paul Mangwana and Edward Mkhosi had issued a press statement to say that they had agreed, firstly, to merge the quantitative and qualitative approaches in the collation of the views; and secondly, to collapse three meeting points in rural areas into one in order to reduce the differences between urban and rural wards.<sup>301</sup> This caused the stalling of the important process of writing the constitution, which many hoped would usher in more democratic reforms leading ultimately to a democratically elected government.

That the constitution-making consultations were political also comes from the fact that the 210 COPAC rapporteurs were drawn equally from the three political parties in the GNU. This indicated “that the constitution making process remain[ed] highly politicised and demonstrates how each and every step is a matter of political compromise. This contestation continues to make it difficult to fulfil the notion of a people-driven constitution making.”<sup>302</sup> The danger was also with the partisan rapporteurs, chosen on the basis of their political affiliation rather than for their professionalism, would try to map their own political party positions over the views gathered from the people. This

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<sup>299</sup> See for example, *Newsday* 24 June 2010, “ZANU-PF roots for longer presidential term for Mugabe” in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2010-06-24-as-zanu-pf-roots-for-longer-presidential-term-mugabe>, accessed 14 June 2011.

<sup>300</sup> See *Zimonline*, 21 June 2011, “Fresh row stalls Zim reforms”, in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6731>, Accessed 21 June 2011.

<sup>301</sup> See COPAC Press Statement, 13 May 2011, in <http://www.copac.org.zw/news/179-13-may-2011.html>, Accessed 26 June 2011.

<sup>302</sup> See Civil Society Monitoring Mechanism (CISOMM), “Periodic Report, March to April 2010”, in [www.cisomm.org/index.php?option=com](http://www.cisomm.org/index.php?option=com), p 18, Accessed 12 May 2011, which highlights that the space for Civil Society Organisations trying to educate people before that start of COPAC meetings were stifled, harassed and stopped either through the invocation of POSA, or through the machinations of state machinery or functionaries, who in most cases were aligned to ZANU-PF. See also the Global Political Agreement, 15 August 2008, Ministry of Legal and Parliamentary affairs, Article VI, for a detailed discussion on the need for including people to make a “people-driven constitution.”

overall pointed to the likelihood of a three-party negotiated constitution rather than a people-driven one as demanded by the GPA because the immediate political survival imperatives prevailed over the need for a democratic and inclusive process meant to draw up, in the COPAC brief, a “people-driven constitution”.<sup>303</sup>

The other factor is that rules, for example on the collation of data from the consultative meetings, were changed and/ or introduced at the agreement of the three political parties as and when a problem or a stalemate arose. This “tripartism”<sup>304</sup> not only sidelined the other stakeholders like other opposition parties, academics, the NGOs and mostly the ordinary people for whom the constitution is supposed to serve, but also flew against the ethos of “a people driven constitution.” When one adds to this allegations that some data from the consultative process had disappeared or been tampered with, the gloom deepens.<sup>305</sup>

On the whole, the constitution view-gathering battles further buttressed the importance of the “passive revolution” lens in the era of the GNU. Firstly, the ordinary citizens by being frog-marched to the venues and being coached on what to say participated passively showing the importance, as Gramsci, cited earlier, would probably say, of “domination without hegemony”. Crucially important is the fact that the party positions reflected favoured international constitutional trends. The above led to the development of a constitution that reflected internationally accepted best practices, but one where citizens participated, in Gramsci’s terms, in a project beyond their control.<sup>306</sup> As highlighted earlier, fear of going against party positions cowed many into silence or

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<sup>303</sup> See Shari Eppel, “Initial Thoughts on the Matebeleland Constitutional Outreach Experience”, who posits that the intensely polarised political environment was conducive for the political parties involved in the COPAC consultations to push forward their versions of what they wanted in the new constitution. See *The Herald*, 18 July 2011, “New constitution to be negotiated: Ncube”, in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=15605:new-constitution-to-be-negotiated-ncube&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15605:new-constitution-to-be-negotiated-ncube&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130), Accessed 14 August 2011.

<sup>304</sup> See Ibbo Mandaza “Draft constitution: Are we now almost home and dry?”, *The Standard*, 10 August 2012, Accessed 12 August 2012.

<sup>305</sup> See *The Herald*, 27 January 2011, “COPAC data disappears”, see also COPAC, 10 February 2011, “COPAC response to *The Herald* article: COPAC data disappears”, in <http://www.copac.org.zw/news/176-27-january-2011.html>, Accessed 26 June 2011.

<sup>306</sup> See Adam David Morton, *Ibid*, p 116.



into religiously reciting party positions. Secondly, political party actors and to some extent state actors monopolised the agency of the processes, which made the constitution-making process elitist, and part of a “passive revolution.” At another level the resurgent violence was a reminder of the days of *Operation Mavhoterapapi*, which resulted in the establishment of bases at the village, ward and district levels. Whilst there were no bases established during the constitution-view gathering process in Shurugwi, there was established coaching sessions running from the village levels through the Ward levels superintended by party officials and traditional leaders’ structures.<sup>307</sup> Thus between coaching and *Operation Vhara Muromo*, the overall effect was to foster intolerance and the production of a ZANU-PF MDC negotiated constitution that largely ignores the citizens’ views.

#### **FRACTURED SOCIAL RELATIONS IN THE POST-2008 PERIOD**

Under the veil of normalcy ushered in by the consummation of the GPA through the formation of the GNU that characterised most of the life in the district, there in fact existed broken social relations. As discussed in Chapter Four, towards 2008 political violence entered the intimate spaces of the extended family, work place and the communal space between villagers, leading to some social paralysis.<sup>308</sup> Largely as a result of the fact that the formation of the GNU was more due to pressure from SADC and the international community, and not arising out of the interests of the parties involved in the violence, ZANU-PF and the MDC, scant regard was paid towards normalising relations at the local level structures. This is notwithstanding the symbolic gestures of the ONRHI and the superficial work it did regarding the gathering of stakeholders in the provinces in preparation for the process of compilation of people’s perceptions of the transitional justice process.

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<sup>307</sup> Interviews, January-July 2010.

<sup>308</sup> See Chapter Four, for a detailed discussion of this.

Again, elements of the passive revolution of the GPA/GNU were seen here as the citizens were “forced” to co-exist in the aftermath of the violence without serious attempts at mending the broken relations. No due regard was given to the inputs and interests of the residents in terms of transitional justice following the 2000-2008 violence. The programme of reconciliation was statist, led and controlled by ONHRI, although practically the ZANU-PF favoured policy of letting by-gones be by-gones seemed to prevail. There was also some dissonance between those that sought justice and those that favoured unfettered reconciliation, both at the state and village levels, which gave more credence to passive revolution in terms of the tensions in the emergent state structures.

During the field research period I was reminded of the conclusions made by the CCJP/LRF. Although written primarily for Matebeleland and the Midlands following *gukurahundi*, the words encapsulate what I established: “there are many problems that remain in communities as a result of what happened, in particular from the murders and beatings...” In addition,

Some tell of how members of their families were taken at night and have never been seen again. Many individuals have to live with physical injuries, which means that they cannot work well in their fields, or travel easily on buses...And still others lost homesteads or possessions and have been poor ever since. There is still much pain in the communities as a result of what happened. This affects not only the bodies, but the hearts and minds of those who suffered. Some people are bitter...<sup>309</sup>

During the interviews period, I was informed of the simmering hatred of the victims towards those who had allegedly perpetrated violence against them. These victims needed to see some justice done to bring to book those who had allegedly caused them suffering. Due to the above, tensions remained at an all-time high even between close relations. Cases emerged where relatives and neighbours did not speak to each other as a result of the recent violence.

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<sup>309</sup> CCJP/LRF, p 8.

To exemplify this, W of ward 12 told me that he would not speak to the people who caused him to flee his home in 2008. To prove this, in December 2010, one of the men with whom I had previously worked with at Tongogara High School came to greet me as an old workmate. We also used to drink socially when I was still teaching there. When he was approaching and smiling in my direction, W stood up, dusted himself, swore and left. I was put in a rather difficult position, these were both old comrades from the past. What I was to do became an issue for me. Was I to leave with W, or to remain where I was, receive and chat with the other comrade? I chose the latter option. In the interest of hearing his side of the story, X told me that W had become a “greedy” and “unreliable” ZANU-PF cadre. This was because he had benefitted from ZANU-PF significantly in the period. For example, he had been recommended on numerous occasions for temporary (relief) teaching posts. However, he had turned his back on ZANU-PF towards 2008 and had joined the MDC-T, hence he had to be taught a lesson. X went ahead, however, to say that he missed socialising with W because he was his long time “friend”.

In addition, they had many common friends. As a result their tension was affecting their other friendships. More importantly, they were related in the extended family system as distant cousins, *sekuru nemuzukuru* in the Shona custom, because W’s mother came from X’s family. Their families had also been brought into the conflict. Although they came together at social functions, there was a general air of suspicion and hatred. In the end he (X) told me that he wanted to talk to W as well as ask for forgiveness from him.

In another case I was told of serious tensions between teachers at the same schools also emanating from the past period of political strife. In one school, there were two families who are neighbours living in the school compound houses and are also workmates. One of the teachers is alleged to have caused the beating of his colleague in 2008 by accusing him of being an MDC-T supporter, leading to the victimised teacher going to South Africa to escape further victimisation. He left behind his wife who was also teaching at the same school. He returned in early 2009, and re-joined his old school,

which meant he would be working together with the other teacher. Colleagues of the two told me that the levels of animosity were so high that the two avoided each other's paths as far as possible. However, there were situations that brought them together such as school assemblies or bereavements of colleagues or families. Even these occasions, I was told, did not bring the two to shake hands as is required when offering condolences in the usual Shona manner.<sup>310</sup>

Related cases involved teachers and the local community members. These mostly involved teachers who were violated by certain members of the community. In some of these, teachers refused to pay close attention to kids from the families of their violators. There were also minor cases where teachers deliberately targeted kids from the families of the perpetrators. This may be taken as a deliberate ploy to get back at their perpetrators. This then affected teaching and learning in some schools. Again as people living in a district where communal relations are central, this offered problems in situations where the schools required community help, and also at such times when there were problems between teachers and the kids or when there were consultation days, which require that the teachers and parents or guardians closely interact. In a way, cycles of violations continued at different tangents in the district.

On the other hand the alleged perpetrators of the violence lived in fear of counter-violence as some of the people they violated were returning to the village. I heard of cases where previous victims engaged in or planned retaliatory violence. In most cases, however, the police were quick to bring such perpetrators to book. The first example involved an alleged perpetrator of violence, a ZANU-PF local official, who himself was threatened with an attack by two brothers whose mother he had victimised. The official is said to have temporarily escaped in March 2009 and returned in April of the same year. Upon his return the brothers had gone back to their work places. The brothers are said to have threatened revenge at the "appropriate time." The problem, however, is when is this appropriate time? As in the other cases highlighted above, the two families

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<sup>310</sup> Interview with Ndaka, at Chachacha, 22 June 2010.

were said not to be as cooperative as they would have previously. This fed into the fears that the calling of another round of elections would witness the resurgence of this hostility, resentment and intolerance. Indeed, amongst the ordinary citizens, there was by 2011 a fear that elections would usher in another round of violence.<sup>311</sup>

There have also been similar cases reported country-wide. Among these were the cases of war veteran Misheck Gora of Masvingo who claimed that after 2008 he had been abandoned by ZANU-PF to face the neighbours he had violated.<sup>312</sup> Another case comes from notorious war veteran from Mberengwa district, Biggie Chitoro, who also claimed being used and dumped by ZANU-PF to live alongside his former political victims.<sup>313</sup>

In other cases, perpetrators were afflicted or threatened with witchcraft. Others were “diagnosed” as having fallen victim to the witchcraft of their former victims. Below are some cases of witchcraft fears in Shurugwi that we recorded.

According to one interlocutor her family suffered the misfortune of having three of its assets, a cooking hut, a cattle pen and a sentinel shed, struck by “a single bolt” of lightning allegedly sent by a man whose children had been victimised by her husband in the run-up to the June 2008 Presidential election re-run. This case allegedly occurred in November 2008, almost five months after the election. According to her, her husband, a local ZANU-PF official, was at the fore-front of the beatings which resulted in the young men sustaining severe injuries. She further alleged that the father of the two victims promised to avenge the beatings. As she said:

One bright Sunday afternoon we got the shock of our lives and we were awakened to the threat that X had made. At almost the same time, in fact it was

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<sup>311</sup> See *Newsday*, 08 December 2011, “Zimbabweans too afraid of elections”, in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-12-09-zimbabweans-too-afraid-of-elections--research/>, Accessed 08 December 2011.

<sup>312</sup> See Solidarity Peace Trust, *Desperately seeking sanity*, See also, cases cited in *The Daily Nation*, also cited in the Solidarity Peace Trust, *Desperately seeking Sanity*, in an article headlined “Mugabe’s party deserts supporters”, p 24.

<sup>313</sup> See “I need forgiveness-Chitoro”, in *The Zimbabwean*, 6 May 2009, <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/20976/ai-need-forgiveness-a-biggie-chitoro.html>, Accessed 23 June 2011.

in one strike, our cooking hut, our sentinel shed and kraal were struck by a bolt of lightning. We were lucky that no one was killed. I was sleeping in our bedroom because I was not feeling well, our children had gone to herd cattle and my husband was on his way from the shops. We certainly believe that it was him (X) because he knew that by striking at the hut, shed and at our cattle we would lose economically. The targets were well aimed. Also on that day he had passed by the road close to our homestead, I think to check if my husband was there. We have even heard from his friends that it was him. We also went to *n'angas* (traditional healers) who also told us that he would strike again. My husband was advised to leave because it was him that X wanted dead. We are planning to meet with X's family, ask for forgiveness and to also to pay him compensation (*kuripa*), so that my husband can come back and we can live in peace again as a family.<sup>314</sup>

There are also cases of insanity, death and misfortune attributed to the use of witchcraft by the former victims against those who led the way in their victimisations. In one case a senior ZANU-PF official who was allegedly "visited by ghosts" at his home. I was told that he played a leading role in the death of a man who was beaten severely for supporting the MDC and who later died at Shurugwi General Hospital.<sup>315</sup> In 2010 he was observed moving from one place to another talking to himself. He had certainly changed his character from a revered and feared one during the eight years between 2000 and 2008, to an object of scorn and ridicule. Speaking to his neighbours also revealed that strange fires and ghosts had become a daily "feature" at his homestead, which possibly contributed to his mental state.

Related cases involving occult attacks from other parts of the country include the Moses Chokuda's *ngozi* from Gokwe that allegedly ravaged the families of the Midlands Provincial Governor's and that of Isaac Gana, a ZANU-PF District Coordinating Committee Chairman seeking compensation.<sup>316</sup> From Buhera is a case of a war veteran who was terrorised by *ngozi* of the people he had allegedly killed in this period and who

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<sup>314</sup> Interview with Monalisa, Hanke, 12 May 2010.

<sup>315</sup> See Chapter Three for this case.

<sup>316</sup> See *The Herald*, 19 October 2011, "Governor pays US\$15 000, 35 cattle compensation to deceased family" in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=24181:governor-pays-us15-000-35-cattle-compensation-to-deceaseds-family&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=24181:governor-pays-us15-000-35-cattle-compensation-to-deceaseds-family&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131), Accessed 19 October 2011.

tried to appease it by offering sandals to the families of his victims.<sup>317</sup> Again from Buhera, African Crisis also mentioned the *ngozi* of Headmaster Tedi Chokuda that afflicted Walter Marwizi, Caiphas Chimhete, and Patrick Basopo.<sup>318</sup>

## **BROKEN HOMES AND FEMALE-HEADED FAMILIES**

Due to the violence, men who were in most cases active in the opposition politics fled from the rural areas of Shurugwi. Many of these men went into the diaspora, mostly to South Africa and considerable numbers to Botswana. These two countries were favoured because of their proximity by road transport from the district, as well as their potential to provide security to those that fled. The two are also arguably the most prosperous in the whole SADC region, which pointed to other economic attractions. The withdrawal of visa requirements by South Africa in 2009 also led to mass migrations into that country. During the field work, on an estimate there were between 40 and 60 percent households that were headed by women after the men went into the diaspora.

It was not, however, possible to conclusively determine if all the cases were due to political violence or for economic reasons. It should be borne in mind that economic problems were just as important, if not more important for some in causing their emigration to the diaspora. For some it was a combination of the two. At another level it also becomes a chicken and egg debate between political and economic reasons in causing people to migrate outside the borders. What is worse perhaps is the fact that more than 90 percent of these households are young households. This is not surprising because the MDC was largely supported by young people.

Some women told of how their husbands who were victimised for supporting the opposition left the country and their families and have never returned. Some have even

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<sup>317</sup> See article titled "*Ngozi*: Primitive superstition or reality?", in *The Standard*, 23 May 2010, cited in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw>, Accessed 21 June 2011.

<sup>318</sup> Walter Marwizi and Caiphas Chimhete, "Zimbabwe: Avenging spirits torment ZANU-PF terror militia" cited in <http://www.african-crisis.co.za/Article.php?ID=76100&>, accessed 30 January 2011.



“forgotten” about their families. Worse still others are rumoured to have established new marriage associations and seem to have cut ties with their old families in the district. This has hit their families hard as the women concerned are mere housewives. In Chapter Three, I carried out an interview with Barbara, whose husband fled the violence and sought refuge in South Africa. I visited this mother of four again towards the end of 2010 to find out if her husband had returned. She told me that he had phoned but had intimated to her that he was still afraid to return especially with the looming elections. His fears were based on that the war veteran Z was still around and had played a leading role in the COPAC meetings in mid-2010.

In a related case, I met another woman aged 35 whose husband also fled the violence in 2008 to South Africa. Her husband has not returned. It was rumoured that he had married another wife in Rustenburg. He left her and their three kids behind. She also told me that because of the desperate situation in 2008, she fell in love with a local cattle dealer. She hoped to use this relationship to get material support in the midst of the grinding poverty and shortages. Unfortunately, she said, she fell pregnant. Her husband heard about it and has since refused either to return or to support his other three children. She also told me that her family has also disowned her for her “shameful” act. The other man with whom she had the love child went back to his wife. Although he sends groceries for his child he did not want responsibility for the other kids. At the end of the day she literally had to struggle alone with raising four kids with little or no moral, social and very little economic support.

In terms of broken homes, I met James and his wife from Ward 1 in April 2010 repairing their cooking hut that was destroyed by alleged ZANU-PF supporters in June 2008. They were busy replacing the hut’s thatch that was razed by a fire. In discussions with them they were still afraid that their hut or their other huts might still be targeted for political arson as they still had not “repented” supporting the MDC. Their hope was that the district would not experience a similar orgy of destructive violence in the future, and that none of their assets would be targeted.

In ward 3 I came across two homesteads whose owners were said to be living in town. Both sets of families were said to have elected to remain in towns after having been targeted for supporting the opposition. Both left at almost the same time in the period leading to the Presidential election runoff in 2008. One of the families is said to have relocated to Harare where the husband is said to have found work. The other left for Bulawayo. It is alleged that the husband and wife have joined the trek to South Africa where they are seeking employment. A look at both homesteads reveals that the houses are collapsing and windows and doors have been vandalised making it difficult for the two families to rebuild their lives here again, should they return.

#### **FREEDOM FOR FORMER PERPETRATORS AND MORE THREATS OF VIOLENCE**

War veterans, ZANU-PF officials and the youth who were responsible for the commission of violence against the women of Shurugwi could be seen roaming the villages scot free. This caused anger and fear in the victims of their violence. That they were free increased the need for the victims to want to seek extra-judicial methods to get a measure of redress.

At the national level, threats of violence if ZANU-PF lost the elections scheduled for 2012/13 continued to filter through during this period. To this effect, Brigadier-General Douglas Nyikayaramba made astounding remarks that President Mugabe should rule until he dies.<sup>319</sup> Nyikayaramba went even further, openly castigating Morgan Tsvangirai whom he described as a security threat more than a political threat. He went further to say that Tsvangirai and the MDC were "daydreamers who want to reverse the gains of our liberation struggle [who] will continue daydreaming. They can go to hell . . . they will

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<sup>319</sup> See *The Standard*, 29 May 2011 "Brigadier throws ZANU PF into crisis", in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/local/29820-brigadier-throws-zanu-pf-into-crisis.html>, Accessed 1 June 2011, see also *Newsday*, 29 May 2011, "Army must not dabble in politics", <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-05-29-army-should-not-dabble-in-politics>, Accessed 29 May 2011, see also *Newsday* 27 May 2011, "Service Chiefs a security threat-PM", cited in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-05-27-service-chiefs-a-security-threat-pm>, Accessed 27 May 2011.

never rule this country. We cannot keep quiet. We will continue speaking and as the security forces, we will not sit back and watch things going wrong."<sup>320</sup>

Even more chilling was the statement by Retired Brigadier-General Tapfumaneyi who said that an MDC poll victory "mean[s] from the extreme either the military could stage a coup or Zimbabwe could go to war," because "the MDC represents a threat to everything we (soldiers both retired and serving) represent."<sup>321</sup> He went on to claim that their preferred candidate President Mugabe was going to win the elections, and also that Mugabe was as irreplaceable as a father in a family.<sup>322</sup> The further irony is that ZANU-PF was at this time gearing for elections after the constitution-making process. Whether Nyikayaramba and Tapfumaneyi were preparing for a transition as future ZANU-PF politicians as other senior retired military officers like Solomon Mujuru, Tungamirai, Zvinavashe and Mike Nyambuya did, remains open to debate.<sup>323</sup> There were also reports that the army was demanding 25 percent of seats in both houses of parliament for retired soldiers.<sup>324</sup>

On the whole one could be forgiven for positing that such utterances by senior military officials go beyond a mere king-making role. They should be taken as part of the maturation of the "deep state" by the military dating back to the 1975 Mgagao Declaration, and hence the 2011 utterances could be termed the Fourth Mgagao

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<sup>320</sup> See *The Herald*, 23 June 2011, "Brigadier-General Nyikayaramba responds to Tsvangirai", cited in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=13369:generals-respond-to-tsvangirai&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13369:generals-respond-to-tsvangirai&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130), Accessed 23 June 2011.

<sup>321</sup> See *Zimbabwe Independent*, 21 July 2011, "All eyes on the military ahead of Zim elections", in <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/local/31762-all-eyes-on-military-ahead-of-zim-elections.html>, Accessed 25 July 2011.

<sup>322</sup> See *Zimbabwe Independent*, 27 May 2011, "Army demands elections in 2011, in <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/local/31062-army-demands-elections-in-2011.html>, accessed 03 July 2011.

<sup>323</sup> See *Fingaz*, 01 July 2011, "PM Tsvangirai versus the army", in <http://www.financialgazette.co.zw/national-report/8867-pm-tsvangirai-versus-the-army.html>, Accessed 02 July 2011.

<sup>324</sup> See *Zimbabwe Independent*, 30 June 2011, "Military wants parly seats for retired soldiers", in <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/local/31581-military-wants-parly-seats-for-retired-soldiers.html>, Accessed 03 July 2011.

Declaration, following the 2002 and 2008 similar pronouncements.<sup>325</sup> A deep state "is a parallel secret government, organized by the intelligence and security apparatus, financed by drugs, and engaging in illicit violence, to protect the status and interests of the military against threats from intellectuals, religious groups, and occasionally the constitutional government."<sup>326</sup> In essence, it is an anti-democratic cabal, a parallel state within a state primarily interested in safeguarding its interests. Of note is the fact that the utterances while primarily targeting the MDC were also aimed at those in ZANU-PF who harboured Presidential ambitions.<sup>327</sup> Suffice to mention here that under Mugabe's rule the military has attained a privileged status in Zimbabwe that it wants to preserve.<sup>328</sup> In the end senior army officers have become members of the post-colonial bourgeoisie, through prebendalism, with wide economic interests ranging from mining to farming.<sup>329</sup>

It should also be highlighted that the utterances, especially by Nyikayaramba who was a serving general, not only undermined the GNU. They also went against international trends and democratic tenets where serving military personnel were expected not to dabble in politics. A parallel to these statements comes from the United States of America's army commander in Afghanistan who was dismissed for issuing a "political statement" that criticised the US policy in Afghanistan. In dismissing him, President Obama recounted that the general's "conduct ... [did] not meet the standard that should be set by a commanding general. It undermines the civilian control of the

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<sup>325</sup> See *Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 July 2011, Nyamutatanga Nyangombe, "Security reforms: The need to uproot the 'deep state'", in <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/local/31810-security-reforms-the-need-to-uproot-the-deep-state.html>, Accessed 31 July 2011. It is important to note that the Mgagao declaration of 1975 significantly contributed to the deposition of Sithole for Mugabe.

<sup>326</sup> See *AANGIRFAN Blogspot*, 08 April 2011, in <http://aangirfan.blogspot.com/2011/04/deep-state.html>, Accessed 01 August 2011.

<sup>327</sup> See *Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 July 2011, Nyamutatanga Nyangombe, "Security reforms: The need to uproot the 'deep state'", in <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/local/31810-security-reforms-the-need-to-uproot-the-deep-state.html>, Accessed 31 July 2011.

<sup>328</sup> See Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, "The military factor in Zimbabwe's political and electoral affairs", pp 23-25.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid*, p 20.

military that is at the core of our democratic system."<sup>330</sup> In contrast, ZANU-PF has defended Nyikayaramba by arguing that he had constitutional rights to freedom of speech.<sup>331</sup>

In addition, state security organs continued to harass and threaten human rights activists and ordinary Zimbabweans.<sup>332</sup> In some of these reports, for example, it was said "[t]he power-sharing deal in Zimbabwe has failed to stop extra-judicial killings, kidnappings and torture."<sup>333</sup> Brigadier Nyikayaramba himself, who headed all military brigades in Manicaland, was also accused of ordering the army units and chiefs not to allow any MDC meetings in Manicaland, as well as fomenting a violent campaign against MDC supporters.<sup>334</sup> The SADC Troika meeting in Livingstone at the end of March 2011 also demanded that ZANU-PF end the violence and intimidation recorded throughout the country ahead of proposed elections.<sup>335</sup> A follow up SADC Extra-ordinary Summit on Zimbabwe and Madagascar held from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2011, reiterated the need to implement the GPA fully, and also the need to end the violence and intimidation to help "create a conducive environment to the holding of elections that will be free and fair, under conditions of a level political field."<sup>336</sup> SADC went ahead to recommend that members of the South African mediation team work together with the

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<sup>330</sup> See *Fingaz*, 04 August 2011, "Defence forces under spotlight", in <http://www.financialgazette.co.zw/national-report/9317-defence-forces-under-spotlight.html>, Accessed 06 August 2011.

<sup>331</sup> See *The Herald*, 20 July 2011, "Brig-gen entitled to own opinions", in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=15867:brig-gen-entitled-to-air-own-opinions&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15867:brig-gen-entitled-to-air-own-opinions&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131), Accessed 08 August 2011.

<sup>332</sup> See *Newsday*, 04 July 2010, "Coalition government fails to stem out killings", in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2010-07-04-coalition-government-fails-to-stem-killings>, Accessed 27 June 2011.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>334</sup> See *The Zimbabwean*, "Nyikayaramba causes havoc", in <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/human-rights/35729/nyikayaramba-causes-havoc-.html>, Accessed 27 June 2011.

<sup>335</sup> See *Zimonline*, 06 April 2011, "Rallying region against Mugabe: Zuma's test", in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6656>, Accessed 28 June 2011.

<sup>336</sup> See "Full text of Communique from the SADC summit held on 11 – 12 June 2011", cited in <http://www.thezimbabwemail.com/opinion/8333-full-text-of-communique-from-the-sadc-summit-held-on-11-%E2%80%93-12-jun.html>, Accessed 03 June 2011.

Joint Monitoring Committee (JOMIC) as the country worked towards the full implementation of the GPA.<sup>337</sup>

The importance of the threats posed by the security agents and officers was to add to the atmosphere of insecurity and uncertainty. Firstly, to be using threatening language almost three years after the GPA such as used by Nyikayaramba against a principal in the GNU in a large circulating media showed that no love had been lost between Tsvangirai and the security sector, for whose reform Tsvangirai had for long been calling. It also added to the uncertainty over the authenticity of the intended elections. More importantly, it added to the threat of recidivism towards another *Operation Mavhoterapapi?* of 2008.

This threat of a recurrence seemed real for the rural constituencies as the leader of the war veterans, Jabulani Sibanda had launched *Operation Kubudirana Pachena* or Operation Come out clean in Masvingo province, which he was allegedly supposed to export to other provinces of the country.<sup>338</sup> From Masvingo, Sibanda went to Gwanda.<sup>339</sup> The programme, according to *The Herald*, was “meant to educate people about the history of the liberation struggle and the continued threats from neo-imperial aggression.”<sup>340</sup> However, under the operation Sibanda was accused of “rounding up and terrorizing civil servants, traditional leaders and villagers.” Additionally, “his endless rallies and meetings disguised as history lessons, had one clear message, vote for ZANU PF or face violent retribution.”<sup>341</sup> Other reports also pointed out that some schools were temporarily closed with teachers and students forced to attend Sibanda’s rallies.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> See *Zimonline*, 28 June 2011, Brian Raftopoulos, “Opinion: Beyond Livingstone”, in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6740>, Accessed 28 June 2011.

<sup>338</sup> See *The Herald*, 27 June 2011, “Sibanda to stay in Masvingo” in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=13699:sibanda-to-stay-in-masvingo&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13699:sibanda-to-stay-in-masvingo&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131), Accessed 27 June 2011.

<sup>339</sup> See *Newsday*, 16 September 2011, “Comment: Sibanda must be tamed” in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-09-16-comment-sibanda-must-be-tamed>, Accessed 17 September 2011.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>341</sup> See Lance Guma, “Sibanda intimidation campaign backfires” in SW Radio News, 24 June 2011, in <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news240611/sibanda240611.htm>, Accessed 27 June 2011. See also

The above acts of intimidation should also be seen in terms of the strong interpenetration between the senior security personnel's political and business interests in ZANU-PF.<sup>343</sup> Again Gramsci's passive revolution is useful in understanding the reconfiguration of Zimbabwe state power leading to the creation of a "military-economic class"<sup>344</sup> for ZANU-PF that has been at constant loggerheads with the MDCs structures in government. In other words, the senior security officers fear losing their economic interests should their guarantor lose power to the MDC-T, which does not seem to offer them such guarantees. Outside the land accumulation, the DRC investments, heading key government-controlled corporations, and being placed in all key sectors of the state, the military was also involved in the lucrative diamond mining and marketing from the controversial Marange area.<sup>345</sup>

Taken together, the bellicose utterances by senior security chiefs, the redeployment of violence under Operation *Kubudirana Pachena*, the resurgence of the National Youth Service training, and the resurrection of the infamous bases across the country, sent very dangerous signals to an already petrified population. These acts and statements were recidivistic and pointed to the dark days of "Armageddon" last witnessed in 2008. Firstly, the hawkish utterances smacked of those made by the security chiefs in 2002 and 2008 that were followed by violent military-led acts of aggression against the

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"MDC's Dumbu preaches peace", in <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/34794/mdcs-dumbu-preaches-peace.html>, Accessed 27 June 2011.

<sup>342</sup> See *Fingaz*, 01 July 2011, "Why has Sibanda found a new home in Masvingo?" in <http://www.financialgazette.co.zw/national-report/8871-why-has-sibanda-found-a-new-home-in-masvingo.html>, Accessed 02 July 2011.

<sup>343</sup> See Chapter Four of this thesis for a pithy discussion on the connection between the JOC and ZANU-PF, as well as how their economic interests were also tied to what Minister of Finance Tendai Biti has characterised as "primitive accumulation." For Biti's argument see *Newsday*, 22 June 2011, "ZANU-PF engages in primitive accumulation of wealth", in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-06-22-zanu-pf-engages-in-primitive-accumulation-of-wealth>, Accessed 27 June 2011. See also Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, "The military factor in Zimbabwe's political and electoral affairs", pp 20-22.

<sup>344</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, "The GPA as passive revolution".

<sup>345</sup> See Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, "The military factor in Zimbabwe's political and electoral affairs", p 22, which says the military structures have been figured in the illegal exports of gems via Mozambique, also two of the companies that are mining the diamonds were led by military officials and their main shareholders were also serving or ex-military.



opposition MDC. They also reinforced the fears the MDC had been raising of a military junta that had taken over the reins of power.<sup>346</sup>

More importantly, they also unmasked the army as the source of power for Mugabe, and to some extent ZANU-PF. At another level, they also strengthened the rumours of power struggles within ZANU-PF, where the army was allegedly working with certain faction in ZANU-PF's power struggle,<sup>347</sup> in the battle to succeed Mugabe whose health had become an Achilles heel for the party.<sup>348</sup> Such statements also helped to define ZANU-PF's engagement with the other parties in the GNU, as well as international relations, most crucially with South Africa whose President was the SADC facilitator of the Zimbabwean dialogue. Not least of this is that these statements came immediately after the Livingstone and the Pretoria summits on Zimbabwe.

At a very frightening level is that these statements potentially signified the strategy of violence in store for the citizens towards the elections envisaged for 2012 or 2013. According to Rupiya, there were unconfirmed sources from within the army that alleged that the senior military personnel were planning a bloody campaign to retain Mugabe in power. The plan allegedly involved the deployment of a massive 80 000 youth militia, war veterans and soldiers throughout the country ahead of the elections, who would be given the task to "unleash enough violence and terror, worse than that seen in the bloody 2008 presidential runoff poll....", in order to ensure that a petrified electorate

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<sup>346</sup> See Tsvangirai's comments in Thornycroft. P, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2008/06/mil-080610-voa08.htm>, Accessed 01 July 2011. See also *Zimonline*, "Interview: We are still under arrest", 24 April 2009, in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=4538>, Accessed 29 June 2011, in which Gandhi Mudzingwa, a former personal aide to Tsvangirai calls it a "Civil-military junta". See also comments by Welshman Ncube of the MDC-N, in *Newsday*, 27 June 2011, "Ncube blasts army generals", in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-06-27-ncube-blasts-army-generals>, Accessed 27 June 2011. See also see *Zimbabwean Mail*, 27 March 2011, in "Mugabe no longer in charge, Tsvangirai confirms Zimbabwe coup" in <http://www.thezimbabwemail.com/zimbabwe/7657-mugabe-nolonger-in-charge-tsvangirai-confirms-zimbabwe-coup.html>, accessed 03 July 2011.

<sup>347</sup> See *metrozimbabwe*, 03 June 2011, "Commander Chiwenga to take over from Mugabe", in <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/commander-chiwenga-to-take-over-from-mugabe/>, Accessed 03 July 2011.

<sup>348</sup> See Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, "The military factor in Zimbabwe's political and electoral affairs", see also *Zimonline*, 28 June 2011, Brian Raftopoulos, "Opinion: Beyond Livingstone", in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6740>, Accessed 28 June 2011.

votes for Mugabe.<sup>349</sup> The above resembled the deployment of the military under *Operation Mavhoterapapi* in 2008 aimed at both ensuring President Mugabe got re-elected, and simultaneously punishing those who were found to have voted for the MDC.<sup>350</sup> This seemed plausible considering also reports of the deployments of the military in several parts of the country in 2011, including in Gutu, Chitungwiza, Mbare and Budiriro,<sup>351</sup> the restructuring of ZANU-PF structures under Air Vice Marshal Muchena, *Operation Kubudirana Pachena* by Sibanda in Masvingo, as well as the resuscitation of the NYS training camps across the country.<sup>352</sup>

On the whole, this was pre-emptive talk, however not without substance, potentially pointing to another round where the Zimbabweans would vote without choosing, but merely rubberstamping and legitimating a farcical election, because the citizens' (voters) pens cannot "fight the AK rifle",<sup>353</sup> in Mugabe's language. The above again typified a potential "passive revolution" where the voters would participate in the voting process without being able to express their true interests but to rubber-stamp a ZANU-PF power retention project.

Further to this there were arrests and intimidation of senior MDC-T officials. Most notable of these were the arrests in 2011 of Douglas Mwonzora in March, Minister Elton Mangoma in April, and Minister Jonathan Timba in June. In addition, Professor Jonathan Moyo also called for the arrest of Prime Minister Tsvangirai in June. Minister of Finance Tendai Biti's house was bombed in May, and his office besieged by some war veterans over the issue of civil servants salaries.<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> See Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, "The military factor in Zimbabwe's political and electoral affairs", pp 26-27.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid, pp 14-17, for the military deployments in 2008 across the provinces and districts.

<sup>351</sup> See *Zimonline*, 18 January 2011; "MDC says military Deployed in rural Areas", Accessed 19 January 2011.

<sup>352</sup> See *The Standard*, 17 July 2011, "From the Editor's Desk: Obsession with polls stifles development", in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/local/30620-from-the-editors-desk-obsession-with-polls-stifles-development.html>, Accessed 25 July 2011.

<sup>353</sup> See *The Herald*, 23 June 2008.

<sup>354</sup> See *Newsday*, 29 June 2011, "Tsvangirai alarmed over attack on Biti", in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-06-29-tsvangirai-alarmed>, Accessed 29 June 2011.

Symbolic acts of intimidation by the army were also recorded in various parts of the country. In this regard drills were held in villages where peasants witnessed the power of the army.<sup>355</sup> In Shurugwi military drills were held in the Mufiri area, for example, which sent shivers down the spine of the residents as these brought back memories of Operation how did you vote? Chilling accounts also emerged regarding how the JOC planned to revitalise structures of the 2008 violence by deploying military and CIO officials in the ten provinces and 59 districts in an effort to thwart the MDC and retain Mugabe in power.<sup>356</sup> A more daring account is for Air Vice Marshal Henry Muchena who was quoted as telling the ZANU-PF Mashonaland Province that he and other army officers were “taking over” the party’s campaign in January 2011.<sup>357</sup>

Related to this, the infamous bases that had been used to house perpetrators of violence between 2000 and 2008 were resurrected in many rural districts of the country.<sup>358</sup> Much has been written about bases that were spread across the country, especially in 2008 in the run up to the Presidential re-run. They were also established in urban areas and were a little better than torture chambers. As such the rearing of the bases’ ugly heads as the country headed towards a very crucial election, aimed at not only ending the uneasy GNU marriage, but the very survival of ZANU-PF, demonstrated how far the party could go into people’s traumatised memories in order to try to keep afloat.

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<sup>355</sup> See *Zimonline*, 30 November 2010, “Soldiers hold drills in villages”, in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/>, Accessed 1 June 2011. See also *The Herald*, 01 August 2011, “Army presence in countryside normal — ZNA chief”, in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=17017:army-presence-in-countryside-normal-zna-chief&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17017:army-presence-in-countryside-normal-zna-chief&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131), Accessed 02 August 2011.

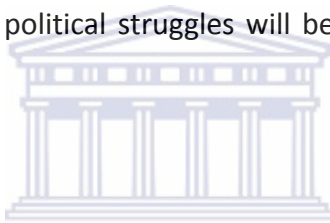
See also *The Deccan Herald*, 29 January 2011, Bangalore, India, “Mugabe’s iron grip not about to loosen”,

<sup>356</sup> See *Zimonline*, 19 January 2011, “Military plot to keep Mugabe in power”, in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6529>, Accessed 20 January 2011, for a frightening account of the plot.

<sup>357</sup> See <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?>, Accessed 28 January 2011. See also the role of Henry Muchena in the ZANU-PF election directorate in “Military plot to keep Mugabe in power” in *Zimonline*, 19 January 2011, cited in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6529>, Accessed 20 January 2011.

<sup>358</sup> See “Zimbabwe Monitors: Destroy Bases”, in *News24*, <http://www.news24.com/Africa/Zimbabwe/Zimbabwe-monitors-Destroy-militia-bases-20110601>, Accessed 02 June 2011. See also “ZANU shifts into election mode”, in *Zimonline*, 02 June 2011, in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6714>, Accessed 03 June 2011.

The utterances by the Brigadier-Generals could also be understood in terms of Foucault's "modern" schema for analysing power, that is, in terms of "struggle and submission."<sup>359</sup> Basically under this theorisation, power is defined by the inversion of Clausewitz's aphorism of war as a continuation of politics by other means to politics as a continuation of war, that is, as series of "struggles, conflict and war."<sup>360</sup> This means that power relations obtaining in any society "rest upon a definite relation of forces that is established at a *determinate, historically specifiable moment, in a war and by war*" (my emphasis). Again, with the end of physical war comes peace, and here also the role of political power is to continuously re-inscribe the relation of war "through a form of unspoken warfare; to re-inscribe it in social institutions, in economic inequalities, in language, in the bodies themselves of each and everyone of us."<sup>361</sup> At another level, this definition also implies that all political struggles will be ultimately decided by, and in, war.<sup>362</sup>



## ANTI-SANCTIONS DRIVE AND THE RE-EMERGENCE OF VIOLENCE

WESTERN CAPE

The signing of the anti-sanctions petitions also reinvigorated a strong "enemy" discourse, in Carl Schmitt's language,<sup>363</sup> against the MDC-T, which was generally cast as having invited the "illegal sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by the West."<sup>364</sup> Due to this

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<sup>359</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings: 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon, translated by Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham and Kate Soper, Pantheon Books, New York, 1980, p 92.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid, p 90.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid, p 90.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid, p 91.

<sup>363</sup> See Carl Schmitt and G. Schwab, *The concept of the political*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2007, p 19. According to Schmitt, the 'political', which should not be confused with politics, but from which politics in the state emerge, is characterised by the friend/enemy binary. When taken to the extreme this binary becomes life or death binary, with friend meant to receive life and enemy set for death.

<sup>364</sup> See *The Herald*, 18 June 2011, "Indigenisation not punishing foreigners: PM", in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=12947:indigenisation-not-punishing-foreigners-pm&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12947:indigenisation-not-punishing-foreigners-pm&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131), Accessed 18 June 2011. Also this comes out in the official discourse propagated by the state controlled media, both ZBC TV and radio stations, and the print media houses, Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC-T are cast as having invited sanctions to the country and are also cast as working to retain them. See "Zimbabwe opposition group working with West

portrayal, the imprecations against the MDC, especially Morgan Tsvangirai, continued as did hate speech more generally against “sell-outs” and the West that was blamed for the illegal sanctions.<sup>365</sup> These demonstrated the tensions that were at the heart of the GNU party members. The above view was reified by the absence of the MDC-T leadership at the official launch of the signing of the anti-sanctions petitions on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2011.<sup>366</sup> It was also underscored by the refusal by the MDC-T leadership to sign the anti-sanctions petition.<sup>367</sup> The official reason for the signing of the sanctions petitions was to gather a total of two million signatures which would, in Webster Shamu’s words, “alert the world to the fact that Zimbabweans have spoken against the sanctions, that they are diabolic, unjustified and are affecting their economy.”<sup>368</sup> After being signed in the various places the petitions were to be forwarded to President Mugabe for onward transmission to SADC, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN).<sup>369</sup>

However, the anti-sanctions campaign epitomised a ZANU-PF strategy for the envisaged 2012 elections, in the same mode as the land reform was used at the turn of new millennium. Sanctions created an easy scapegoat for ZANU-PF, and they blamed it as the

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on sanctions” says Wikileaks”, in

<http://redantliberationarmy.wordpress.com/category/zimbabwe/>, Accessed 11 June 2011. See also *The Herald*, 13 February 2011, “Zimbabwe opposition working with the West on Sanctions– Wikileaks”, in <http://herald.co.zw>, Accessed 11 June 2011.

<sup>365</sup> See *The Standard*, 12 June 2011, “Sunday View: Blaming Tsvangirai for sanctions baseless politics”, in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/opinion/30068-sundayview-blaming-tsvangirai-for-sanctions-baseless-politics.html>, Accessed 13 June 2011.

<sup>366</sup> See “Zimbabwe: Anti-sanctions campaign kicks off” in <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=92090>, Accessed 09 June 2011. See also *The Herald*, 28 April 2011 “Zim now fed up with sanctions”, in, cited in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=8707:zim-now-fed-up-with-sanctions&catid=48:blogs&Itemid=155](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8707:zim-now-fed-up-with-sanctions&catid=48:blogs&Itemid=155), Accessed 09 June 2011. See also “US rubbishes Mugabe sanctions petition” in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6595>, Accessed 04 March 2011.

<sup>367</sup> The reason given by the MDC-T for not attending the official launch of the anti-sanctions drive in March 2011, and for not signing the anti-sanctions petition is that the project was formulated as a ZANU-PF programme. See *The Herald*, 16 June 2011, in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=12777:biti-refuses-to-sign-anti-sanctions-petition&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12777:biti-refuses-to-sign-anti-sanctions-petition&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131), Accessed 17 June 2011.

<sup>368</sup> Minister Webster Shamu quoted in “Zimbabweans speak against sanctions”, in <http://redantliberationarmy.wordpress.com/category/zimbabwe/>, Accessed 11 June 2011.

<sup>369</sup> “Zimbabweans speak against sanctions”, *Ibid.*

monster on which all failure was rooted: be it economic, political or social, leading to the fetish of the anti-sanctions petition signing, a euphemism for another round of violent campaigning. The anti-sanctions petition signing also showed the ZANU-PF “Piedmont-type function” in the ensuing “passive revolution.”<sup>370</sup> As Piedmont took a leading role during the *Risorgimento*, so did ZANU-PF in a matter of national significance. In the process it forced its political-economic worldview on the civil society and the general populace, especially on the role of the MDC in “inviting” the sanctions and the role the West played on the sanctions. This was also in terms of the role ZANU-PF would play, as it had done in the Second and Third Chimurenga in fighting the machinations of Western imperialism, in fighting the sanctions. Suffice it to say that this stance ran counter to the spirit of the GPA that proposed a joint MDC-ZANU-PF effort in fighting off the sanctions. The cases of violence perpetrated by ZANU-PF during the petition-signing time also underscored the nature of the “revolution from above”, where the party tried to coerce people into toeing its line of social transformation.

Shurugwi rural was not spared and anti-sanctions signing centres were established at most of the business centres, council offices and schools. From interviews, there were allegations that people were coerced to sign the petitions. Those who did not sign were painted as sell-outs. Most oral testimonies collected point to the fact that ZANU-PF officials of various ranks, the newly employed Ward Coordinators in the Ministry of Youth, and traditional leaders encouraged people in their respective areas of jurisdiction to sign the petition. Cases abound where residents were threatened with unspecified actions if they did not heed the calls. With the memories of *Operation Mavhoterapapi* of 2008 still fresh in people’s minds, residents of Shurugwi rural rushed *en masse* to sign the petitions. I recorded two cases where ZANU-PF supporters beat up MDC supporters who had resisted signing the petition in Shurugwi. Both these cases were in Ward 19 and by the same group of ZANU-PF supporters led by a District official. Zimbabwe Peace

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<sup>370</sup> See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, p 83. By Piedmont-type role, I mean a domeneering role.

Project (ZPP), for example reported that “a ZANU-PF chairperson” beat up an MDC-T supporter who refused to sign the anti-sanctions petition.<sup>371</sup>

Another case that I was informed of in Shurugwi was of “suspicious” strangers that visited Mukandapi shopping centre that was used for the signing of the anti-sanctions petitions. From the descriptions that they were “suspicious” and “interested” in the activities of the signing of the petition, it can be concluded that they could either be ZANU-PF officials or state security agents. More generally however, many cases involved verbal threats.

Elsewhere, in Harare, *IRIN News* reported for example, that on the day of the launch of the anti-sanctions petition by President Mugabe, “Truckloads of militias escorted by army and police trucks descended on market stalls in the city and forced vendors to stop doing business. Some alleged they were beaten and ordered onto buses that transported them to the rally.”<sup>372</sup> More generally, the anti-sanctions petition-signing campaign occurred in the background of the rise in politically motivated violence. It can also be looked at as another campaign gimmick by ZANU-PF that offered it an excuse to violate people’s rights. Indeed, reports by the ZPP indicate that people across the country were coerced to attend rallies organised by ZANU-PF ostensibly to educate them on the importance of signing the petition.<sup>373</sup> Reports also alluded to the extensive violations of people’s rights by the army, youth militia and war veterans across the country. The most notable of these was Jabulani Sibanda who terrorised Masvingo province, especially Gutu district, compelling people to sign the petition.<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> See “Summary of politically-motivated Human rights and Food-related violations, February 2011” by the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), 18 March 2011, in [http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/ZPP\\_FEBRUARY\\_2011\\_REPORT\\_SUMMARY.pdf](http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/ZPP_FEBRUARY_2011_REPORT_SUMMARY.pdf), Accessed 09 June 2011, p 5.

<sup>372</sup> See <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=92090>, Accessed 09 June 2011.

<sup>373</sup> See “Summary of politically-motivated Human rights and Food-related violations, February 2011” by the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), 18 March 2011, in [http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/ZPP\\_FEBRUARY\\_2011\\_REPORT\\_SUMMARY.pdf](http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/ZPP_FEBRUARY_2011_REPORT_SUMMARY.pdf), Accessed 09 June 2011, p 18.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid*, p 8.



## CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated that there was unfinished business from 2008 in the “post-violence” period, between 2009 and 2011 in Shurugwi. The era showed clearly that there was enforced artificial unity in the GNU, and that there was incomplete political transition. Rather the acrimonious relations between ZANU-PF and the former opposition parties, MDC-T and MDC-N continued. This not only threatened the shaky economic recovery and political stability, but it dampened the hopes raised with the signing of the GPA, and the formation of the GNU. This also threatened to return the country to the dark days of open violence. The GNU programmes of finding a transitional justice under ONHRI and formulating a new constitution under COPAC did not help matters either. At the village level, the structures that were accused of fomenting and sustaining violence remained largely untransformed and a potential threat. Thus fear remained widespread. Many victims remained bitter, and were demanding justice and that justice had to be seen to be done. At another level, some of the alleged perpetrators were trying to reach out to their victims in an effort to normalise relations. Yet other perpetrators were allegedly being afflicted by *ngozi* or avenging spirits that demanded they compensate their victims.

On the whole, the period showed that there was a problem that was carried forward from 2000 to 2008 that needed to be stamped out. On the other hand, however, the fact that people were talking about compensating each other for the violations suffered in the 2000 to 2008 period provides a window of opportunity that the district and possibly the whole country need to adopt to help put to rest the demon of political violence, especially between neighbours. This will be articulated further in the next chapter devoted to transitional justice for the district, and more broadly for the other rural districts of Zimbabwe.

## CHAPTER SIX: *KURIPA NGOZI* AND THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE IN SHURUGWI RURAL DISTRICT THROUGH “TRADITIONAL”<sup>1</sup> MEANS.

### INTRODUCTION

During the course of my field work I came across several cases scattered across the district of alleged *ngozi* (avenging spirits) related to the 2000-2008 political violence. As discussed in Chapter Five, some of these included mysterious deaths in war veterans’ families, unexplained illnesses, as well as cases of some alleged perpetrators who had gone mad. There was also a case in which a family’s three assets were attacked by a “single stroke of lightning.” In this case the family’s cooking hut, the family’s sentinel shed and cattle pen were all struck at almost the same time allegedly in one stroke of lightning. The shed in the field is more than two kilometres away from the family homestead, while the cattle pen is at least two hundred metres from the cooking hut.

For the locals in Shurugwi, these cases and others to be looked at in the course of this chapter defy ordinary conceptualisations. For the locals these cases were the products of supernatural forces of witchcraft and *ngozi*, instigated by the victims of the just-ended violent episode, who sought revenge. Whilst one may discern some elements of lack of rationality in the allegations, what comes out, however, is the notion of *kuripa ngozi*. Of significance in this call for *kuripa ngozi* is the conceptualisation of justice in the locals’ worldview. *Kuripa ngozi* enables an opening into “conditions of possibility” and “conditions immanent in a particular system of thought”<sup>2</sup> of the locals. This incorporates Shurugwi people’s perceptions of the truth, the way the violence of the 2000-2008 era has to be concluded and how the locals project their view for how the healing is to be

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<sup>1</sup> Cognisant of the abuses and inventions of traditions, I am using the term traditional in the mode of “those cultural elements and practices that are directly connected to the past: super organic, bounded, static, transgenerational, ‘things’ or practices that can be inherited or passed from generation to generation.” See Lisa Gilman, “Traditionalisation of women’s dancing, hegemony, and politics in Malawi”, in *Journal of Folklore Research*, Vol 41, No 1, January-April 2004, p 33, cited in <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/jfr/summary/v041/41.1gilman.html>, Accessed 12 June 2012.

<sup>2</sup> See Jacques Ranciere, *The politics of aesthetics*, p 50.

carried out. In this case this will be through the perpetrators acknowledging culpability, seeking forgiveness and compensating their victims (*kuripa ngozi*). This is in tandem with ONHRI's vision as enunciated in its *Concept paper*, its Green Paper. In it, ONHRI, *inter-alia*, alluded to the need for the "recognition and reinforcement" of "traditional means and cultural mechanisms of settling disputes/conflicts" in the quest for a transitional justice mechanism.<sup>3</sup>

In the main, this chapter would like to posit that *kuripa ngozi* together with the other occult practices and beliefs to be discussed are a part of Shurugwi people's "common sense", in Gramsci's terms (herein-after without quotes). Thus besides articulating the cases related to these occult practices from Shurugwi (and from Zimbabwe), as well as attempting to discuss the potential of *kuripa ngozi* as a transitional justice (TJ) mechanism for Shurugwi following the violence of the 2000-2008 period, this chapter would also like to deploy Gramsci's concept of "common sense" as a useful tool in unravelling these people's belief systems that in a huge way fashion their worldview.

The common sense notion was developed by Gramsci as a double critique of the Enlightenment tradition that looked down upon the common people as bereft of any sense and of the pre-enlightenment notion that uncritically celebrated their worldview as philosophy.<sup>4</sup> According to Gramsci, common sense, "spontaneous philosophy" or "everyday philosophy" refers to the "conception of the world which is uncritically absorbed by the various social and cultural environments in which the moral individuality of the average man is developed."<sup>5</sup> Because it is philosophy by the "man on the street", common sense is dynamic (in time and space), deeply penetrative, "fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is."<sup>6</sup> This makes it "an ambiguous,

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<sup>3</sup> Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), "Concept Paper", p 22.

<sup>4</sup> See MSS Pandian, *The Image trap: MG Ramachandran in film and politics*, Sage Publications, New Dehli, 1992. p 5.

<sup>5</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, p 419.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p 419.

contradictory and multiform concept”<sup>7</sup> that is “embedded, incoherent and (composed of) spontaneous beliefs and assumptions characterizing the conformist thinking of the mass of people in a given social order.”<sup>8</sup> It is a product of fragments of “superstition, folklore, simple religious beliefs and the deposits of previous philosophy.”<sup>9</sup> It is also established by the ruling class hegemony, and is naturalised and universalised, which results in their being taken for granted as “the way things are”<sup>10</sup> in a society.

Clifford Geertz however contends that common sense is a “relatively organised body of considered thought rather than just what anyone clothed and in his right mind knows,” whose major function is the “immediate deliverance of experience, and not deliberated reflections upon it.”<sup>11</sup> He further argues that common sense is equal to a cultural system that has a genealogy, hence, it can be put through epistemological discursive framing, that is, “can be questioned, disputed, affirmed, developed, formalised, contemplated, even taught...”<sup>12</sup> Regarding hegemonic orders, Gramsci identified “theistic, Ptolemaic, anthropomorphic, and anthropocentric beliefs.”<sup>13</sup> An important aspect about common sense is that it contains “good sense”,<sup>14</sup> out of which, and in an important genealogy, emerges “philosophy and science.”<sup>15</sup> On the whole, common sense is an important framework that enables an understanding “of the part played by culture, [together with] consciousness and ideology, rather than political and economic structures alone, in shaping and transforming society.”<sup>16</sup> It is also crucial to highlight the fact that because it

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p 423.

<sup>8</sup> <http://faculty.washington.edu/cbebler/glossary/commonsense.html>, Accessed 4 March 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> <http://faculty.washington.edu/cbebler/glossary/commonsense.html>, Accessed 4 March 2012

<sup>11</sup> See Clifford Geertz, “Common sense as a cultural system”, in *The Antioch Review*, Vol 33, No 1, 1975, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4637616>, Accessed 6 March 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p 8.

<sup>13</sup> See Stephen Olbrys Gencarella, “Gramsci, Good Sense, and Critical Folklore Studies”, in *Journal of Folklore Studies*, Indiana University Press, Vol 47, No 3, 2010, p 230.

<sup>14</sup> Good sense is defined as “practical empirical common sense”, that is less fragmented and is more coherent, see Antonio Gramsci, *Selections of the prison notebooks*, p 323.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Olbrys Gencarella, “Gramsci, Good Sense, and Critical Folklore Studies”, p 231.

<sup>16</sup> <http://faculty.washington.edu/cbebler/glossary/commonsense.html>, Accessed 4 March 2012.

contains “good sense” it is not necessarily retrogressive hence it is an important site for the subaltern classes to contest hegemonic discourses or dominant ideologies.<sup>17</sup>

Drawing once again from Gramsci’s “passive revolution” is instructive in the discussion of the common sense-based *kuripa ngozi*. As discussed in Chapter Five, the GPA and the GNU were products of the “revolution from above” initiated by SADC, the African Union, as well as the weight of the domestic violence on the part of the MDCs, and a debilitating economic crisis for ZANU-PF.<sup>18</sup> As such they neither represented the true wishes of these belligerent political formations that made up the GNU nor the ordinary Zimbabweans. Going forward, I would also like to contend that the GNU also tried to institute a passive revolution of its own regarding the search for a TJ through the ONHRI. The ONHRI, which itself was born out of Article V11 of the GPA, was supposed to coordinate the efforts in the search for a TJ. It represented “state intervention [that] undermine[d] the capacity of popular forces to develop their own autonomous politics and to organise alternative hegemonic alliances”<sup>19</sup> in the search for a TJ. Because it was a product of the elitist “bastard” government that was characterised by reformations, accommodation and tenuous coexistence, it also ignored the needs of the people at the local levels.

It is with the above contention that I seek to posit for *kuripa ngozi*-based TJ, because ultimately “a people are the ideas they believe and practice- the worldviews they embody and around which they construct identities.”<sup>20</sup> Be that as it may, I am not completely discounting the role the state can play in the TJ. To begin with, ideally, the concept of the state, in the Hobbesian sense, emanates from the desire for justice and common good of its citizens who share a common history, culture and a common destiny.<sup>21</sup> This is also not an attempt to reduce the potential contribution of the modern

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<sup>17</sup> MSS Pandian, *MG Ramachandran in film and politics*, p 6.

<sup>18</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “The Global Political Agreement as a passive revolution”.

<sup>19</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, “The Global Political Agreement as a ‘passive revolution’”.

<sup>20</sup> See Stephen Olbrys Gencarella, “Gramsci, good sense and critical folklore studies”, p 223.

<sup>21</sup> I thank Ajay Skaria for alerting me to the need to highlight this aspect. See also Ajay Skaria, “Gandhi’s politics: Liberalism and the question of the Ashram”, in *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 101:4, Fall 2002, p 956.

prosecutorial transitional justice mechanisms that may deal a blow to the state and party agents' impunity. In fact, as illustrated in Rwanda and Sierra Leone, the traditional methods were used in combination with the modern ones.

## **WHAT IS NGOZI?**

*Ngozi*, according to John Mbiti, are spirits that come from relatives or strangers, who were murdered, were wronged or those with a vendetta to make. These avenging spirits, as Mbiti continues, come from the people who were improperly buried or were offended before they died which causes serious misfortunes that require the living to make sacrifices to appease them.<sup>22</sup> *Ngozi* should, however, not be seen as retributive. Rather, it performs a positive function of seeking redress for wrongs or murder through revealing a concealed crime, its perpetrator, the victim and his bloodline, as well as the form of restoration required.<sup>23</sup> It also seeks restoration through pushing the wrongdoer to restore the value of the loss for the victim and his family.<sup>24</sup>

At another level, and the mode in which I want to use *ngozi* in this chapter, is that besides referring to murder, *ngozi* also refers to any crime that requires settlement and possibly restitution. To Chivaura, the loss of land and the violence that accompanied it in 2000-2008 could be understood in the context of the avenging spirit of Nehanda, who, just before her execution, declared that "(her) bones shall rise", intimating that she would invoke her spirit to punish the whites.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, the intermittent and internecine violence in post-colonial Zimbabwe has been explained as *ngozi* by the national spirits that seek the nation to cleanse itself of the violence of the past,

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<sup>22</sup> John S Mbiti, *African religion*, p 83.

<sup>23</sup> See Tafataona Mahoso, "*Ngozi*: the philosophical foundation of African Living Law", in *The Sunday Mail*, 5-11 February 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, "Echoing silences", p 5.

<sup>25</sup> *The Standard*, 23 May 2010, "Ngozi: primitive superstition or reality?" in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/local/24789-ngozi-primitive-superstition-or-reality.html>, Accessed 05 January 2011. See also Rev Dr Leveee Kadenge, "No forgiveness without restitution" in *The Standard*, 10 April 2010, in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/letters/29218-no-forgiveness-without-restitution.html>, Accessed 01 July 2010.

especially related to the Second Chimurenga, and to thank them for assisting the nation to gain independence.<sup>26</sup>

Tirivangana sharpens Chivaura's definition, and says "*ngozi* is essentially a crime of depriving one group of their asset/s (tangible or intangible) ... it is to commit a crime especially of a sanguinary nature, that is, which involves the shedding of blood (archetypal *ngozi*)."<sup>27</sup> Once blood has been shed the spirit of the murdered comes to demand compensation.<sup>28</sup> Among the the pre-colonial Karanga and Korekore people this was usually in the form of women and cattle.

A crucial aspect of *ngozi* is that it is linked to both social and economic productions. In this way murder for example is considered in terms of a loss of economic productivity to a family. At one and the same time it is again a loss in the family's reproduction line. The same can also be said of other crimes which negate either of production or reproduction.

The notion of *ngozi* is based on the belief that the "living dead" metamorphose into super-spiritual beings who become interlocutors between the living and god.<sup>29</sup> It is thus linked to biological and economic production. Death represented the end of these productive lines. Because of this, the women and cattle used as compensation were supposed to revive economic and family [re]productive capacities. Because of this link,

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<sup>26</sup> Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, "Echoing silences", pp 13-15.

<sup>27</sup> See Augustine Tirivangana, "The metaphysical scope of Ngozi", in *The standard*, 29 May 2010, in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/opinion/24857-the-metaphysical-scope-of-ngozi-.html>, Accessed 01 July 2011.

<sup>28</sup> See John S Mbiti, *African religion and philosophy*, Heinemann, London, 1969, p 83.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p 83. The concept of the living-dead is properly explained by Tirivangana, who says that death in the African indigenous sense is not about "extinction" but is about "transition". This is where "the rite of passage" occurs where the spirit leaves the body (flesh) and it (spirit) transcends into a "higher and purer form of existence." And, this spirit is always around the living. See Augustine Tirivangana, "The metaphysical scope of Ngozi", in *The Standard*, 29 May 2010, in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/opinion/24857-the-metaphysical-scope-of-ngozi-.html>, Accessed 01 July 2011. See also Jens A Andersson, "Sorcery in the era of 'Henry IV': Kinship, mobility and mortality in Buhera District, Zimbabwe", in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol 8, No 3, September 2002, p 428, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3134534>, Accessed 14 March 2011, who says that in the Shona cosmology when a person dies, he reincarnates as a spirit (mwewa) that continues to influence the lives of the living. See also David Lan, *Guns and Rain*, who posits similarly.



in the pre-colonial Karanga and Korekore groups, female fecundity determined lineage reproduction and was mythically closely associated with the fertility of the land and rain making powers.<sup>30</sup> Female fertility determined lineage reproduction, hence women “were key to the foundation of the kingdom or chiefdom.”<sup>31</sup> At another level, “lineage sterility, or the failure to reproduce biologically, was associated with the sterility of the land.”<sup>32</sup> Ultimately also the number of children a woman had also determined the family’s wealth production.

Pathisa Nyati says that among the Ndebele, *ngozi* is usually manifested through the death of family members of the murderer until the perpetrator pays compensation.<sup>33</sup> However, *ngozi* manifests itself in several other ways. In some cases perpetrators or their families suffer innumerable misfortunes, like madness or loss of jobs, wealth and property such as cattle. They may also suffer divorces, ill luck, sickness or loss of spouses. For some, their children may fail to find marriage partners. In other instances *ngozi* manifests itself in dreams and visions that beset the perpetrator or perpetrator’s family member.<sup>34</sup> At other times it manifests itself through possessing a relative of the perpetrator who then re-enacts the murder, which pushes the families of the perpetrator and victim into negotiations over compensation.<sup>35</sup>

In Moses Chokuda’s *ngozi* story from Gokwe district in 2009-2011, various accounts also emanated about the *ngozi*. It is reported for example that the public prosecutor who tried to cover up the murder died mysteriously, while the presiding Magistrate went mad for the same reason. It was also alleged that at times the corpse would disappear from the morgue when the state wanted to perform a pauper’s burial. Yet other accounts say that as many as ten police officers failed to lift his coffin for the pauper

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<sup>30</sup> See Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, traders and wives*, p 26-27.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p 26.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid p 27.

<sup>33</sup> Pathisa Nyati, cited in *The Standard*, 23 May 2010, “Ngozi: primitive superstition or reality?” in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/local/24789-ngozi-primitive-superstition-or-reality.html>, Accessed 05 January 2011.

<sup>34</sup> See also Alexander Kanengoni, *Echoing silences*, Baobab, Harare, 1997, pp 29, 30, and 36, for example in which Munashe constantly sees ghosts of the woman and baby he killed.

<sup>35</sup> See *The Sunday Mail*, 12-18 February 2012, “Kupemba’s lone battle”.

burial. Other accounts also state that the body still dripped fresh blood three years after his murder (he was murdered on 22 March 2009 and buried in 2011). Yet others point to the fact that at times Moses could be seen seated by the mortuary door.<sup>36</sup>

The reason why *ngozi* affects other family members is because in the “traditional” Shona set-up, all assets, material, tangible and intangible (including ancestors and life), were shared by the family. In like manner, a deprivation of any asset, either through murder, injury or loss, signified a loss to the whole family and a curse to the ancestors.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, compensation also signified compensation to the whole family.<sup>38</sup> In an answer to the central and polarising question: If *ngozi* exists, why can’t all people who were murdered haunt their killers? Nyati says:

*Ngozi* is not in-born. It does not happen automatically. Certain things have to happen for it to take place..... The family has to resurrect the spirit of the deceased. They can do this by performing rituals on the corpse before burial or they can carry them on the grave. Medicine is involved. Others make sure that family members can always avenge for their murders by putting medicine through incisions (*nyora*) on their bodies when they are still alive.<sup>39</sup>

While Nyati’s explanation holds water, there have also been cases where avenging spirits have wreaked havoc on the perpetrators’ families without being invoked. To this extent there have been cases where families of the deceased had to be sought out by the perpetrators in order to make amends; and these families knew nothing, up until that point, of the *ngozi* activity. In the literary work, *Echoing Silences*, Alexander Kanengoni, demonstrates this clearly when the Mungates from Mhondoro, the family of the former guerrilla Munashe who had brutally murdered a woman and her baby, sought out Rudo’s family from Nyanga to settle the ravaging *ngozi*.<sup>40</sup> In other instances, as *The Sunday Mail* reported in the Gilbert Kupemba case, relatives of the perpetrators

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<sup>36</sup> Based on discussions held with Gokwe Town residents at Gokwe centre, October 2011.

<sup>37</sup> See Jocelyn Alexander, Joann McGregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory*, p 11. They say that epidemics, droughts and outbreaks of diseases were ancestral curses.

<sup>38</sup> See Augustine Tirivangana, “The metaphysical scope of Ngozi”.

<sup>39</sup> *The Standard* 23 May 2010, “Ngozi: Primitive superstition or reality?”

<sup>40</sup> See Alexander Kanengoni, *Echoing Silences*, Baobab, Harare, 1997.

may also be possessed by the murdered's *ngozi* spirit leading to its exposure.<sup>41</sup> A similar case comes from Buhera where Sosana Mhongoyo also discovered her son's murderers through one of the murderers' (Basopo's) sister being possessed by Chokuda's spirit.<sup>42</sup> In *Echoing silences*, Kanengoni also discusses how the avenging spirit of Rudo possessed Munashe some 23 years after her murder.<sup>43</sup>

The first theme that is cutting through the notion of *ngozi* is that it is not an esoteric belief system for Shurugwi and the Shona. As Nyati and Mbiti have shown, it is also an Ndebele, and an East African belief system. Secondly, and more importantly, its central ethos is the revelation of crimes and the desire to acquire justice for the victims especially through various forms of restitution, which help to buttress the notion that lasting peace is based on owning up and paying compensation or by appeasement which is the thesis of this chapter.

As Augustine Tirivangani cited in *The Standard*, 22 May 2010, says, there are five types of *ngozi*. These are: archetypal *ngozi*, which is directly linked to murder; marital *ngozi*, which occurs when a woman commits suicide in her marital home; transactional *ngozi*, which is related to credits, for example in the past Shona societies men who could not pay lobola would work for several years as payment for their women in a practice called *kutema ugariri*. However, if they were to die before they received their women, they would come back as *ngozi*. Fourthly, is political *ngozi*, where territorial spirits encouraged guerrillas to fight during the Second Chimurenga; and, ethical *ngozi*, which occurs when children abuse their mother (*kutanda botso*.)<sup>44</sup> Together with other occult

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<sup>41</sup> See *The Sunday Mail*, 12-18 February 2012, "Kupemba's lone battle".

<sup>42</sup> Walter Marwizi and Caiphas Chimhete, "Zimbabwe: Avenging spirits torment ZANU-PF terror militia" cited in <http://www.africancrisis.co.za/Article.php?ID=76100&>, accessed 30 January 2011.

<sup>43</sup> Alexander Kanengoni, *Echoing Silences*, p 77.

<sup>44</sup> See Augustine Tirivangana, "Towards a theory of Africa centred metaphysics: A critical exploration of the *Ngozi* theme in selected Zimbabwe fiction", Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, cited in *The Standard*, 23 May 2010.

practices of witchcraft and sorcery, *ngozi* is argued to be at the heart of “life forces”, that is, fertility, sex, disease and death in Zimbabwe.<sup>45</sup>

On the whole, *ngozi*, by seeking restoration against unfair treatment for the victims, as Muwati, et al, perceive it, is an indigenous instrument symbolising the inevitable and indispensable demand for truth and justice.”<sup>46</sup> In the current theme of this dissertation, this speaks to the crimes of political violence committed which demand to be revealed and told, and justice then served for the victims. Regarding this, the central goal would be to target the delivery of justice at the family level, as well as the larger community level, which in the Shona setup, represents a larger family. As I demonstrated in Chapters Three and Four, it was at these levels that most of the violence was played out by local actors.



### **KURIPA NGOZI AND THE EVERYDAY IN SHURUGWI**

The idiom “*mushonga wengozi kuripa*” is common in the everyday language in Shurugwi and it provides an important foundation of the social relations and constitutes an important aspect of the people’s worldview of this district, as in other larger parts of Shona-speaking Zimbabwe. In this way it is a strong constituent of the Gramscian common sense. Literally translated, it means that the only way to appease an avenging spirit is by accepting culpability and restoring previous relations. Taken in the everyday, it refers to the need to own up to one’s wrongs by acknowledging, showing contrition to and or compensating for the wrongs committed. While *ngozi* or avenging spirits affect people who would have killed other people, this idiom is extendable to any kind of crime or transgression that people commit on others in the everyday. Loosely extended it means, for example, that one has to pay for damages, or, replace what he destroys to retain previous balance.

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<sup>45</sup> See Jens A Andersson, “Sorcery, in the era of ‘Henry IV’”, p 425

<sup>46</sup> Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, *Echoing silence*, p 11.

In this way it is a restorative justice mechanism that seeks to “restore damage, loss or harm engendered by criminal behaviour.”<sup>47</sup> As we have already highlighted, *ngozi* and the related crimes are associated with loss of reproduction for which it becomes imperative they are atoned. While it focuses largely on the satisfaction of the victim’s needs, it also concerns itself with the “building of bridges” between the wrongdoer and the aggrieved through “cooperative and participatory efforts.”<sup>48</sup> Thus while the essence of restoration is to enable victims to cope with loss, it is also aimed at the two parties to continue to live together in peace. Thus as Ani, cited in Muwani et al, has posited for other indigenous African conflict resolution mechanisms, *kuripa ngozi* is rooted in harmony. In his words “the determining mode of African worldview is harmony. The point is that of discovering the point of harmonious interaction, so that interferences become neutralised, allowing constructive energy to flow and be received.”<sup>49</sup>

As already alluded to, in the pre-colonial past and in the case of murder under *kuripa ngozi*, for example, the family of the deceased was normally given livestock, or livestock plus an unmarried woman, as compensation. These restored the economic and social production and reproductive capacities lost with the murder. Cattle were paid to restore the economic value of the deceased. This was not surprising because cattle formed (and they still form) the basis of wealth among the Shona, and were also a measure of wealth. The young woman, it was assumed, would help with the [re]production, which helped to extend the deceased family line. The children born of the woman belonged to the deceased, who was assumed to continue living albeit in a spiritual form. The children were also supposed to continue the work the deceased was engaging in, hence continue the economic and social line of production of the slain victim. This is based on the Shona everyday philosophy that says *munhu haarovi*, meaning that death is not final. Instead, it represents a transition into a higher and purer spiritual life that looks

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<sup>47</sup> See Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, “Echoing Silences as a Paradigm for Restorative Justice in Post-conflict Zimbabwe: A Philosophical Discourse”, in *Zambezia*, XXXIII, p 4.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p 4.

<sup>49</sup> M. Ani, *Let the Circle be Unbroken: The Implications of African Spirituality in the Diaspora*”, cited in Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, “Echoing Silences”, p 5.

after the living.<sup>50</sup> This completes the *ubuntu* transformation stages, from the unborn, the living and the living-dead.<sup>51</sup> Although debatable, the livestock and the women in some sense enabled social and economic restoration between aggrieving families.

Thus this form of justice was (and is) also assumed to appease both the living and the “living-dead”. The importance of pleasing the living-dead is well captured in the words of Ramose:

The living dead are important to the upkeep and protection of the family of the living. This is also true with regard to the community at large. For this reason, it is imperative for the leader of the community, together with the elders of the community, to have good relations with their living dead. This speaks to the *ubuntu* understanding of cosmic harmony.<sup>52</sup>

In this way *kuripa ngozi* rendered various possibilities besides restorative justice: firstly, it offered a coping mechanism for both the victims and perpetrators. Secondly, it allowed the two parties involved and their community spiritual healing. It also afforded the perpetrators the opportunity to reconcile with the victim’s family and themselves. It also enabled perpetrators to be reintegrated into their communities.

However, in the unmediated form *kuripa ngozi* represented the problematic of the transfer of patriarchal control over fertile women. In the present such transfers would be illegal under the Domestic Violence Act. This illegality therefore, might make *kuripa ngozi* an unstable foundation for the development of a TJ system. However, I am not envisaging such unmediated importation of the concept. Rather, I am using *ngozi* in its broadest sense as defined by Chivaura as those crimes that require restitution for the basis of the TJ method of *kuripa ngozi*. In this regard, perpetrators acknowledge their wrongs, and for appeasement they would utilise forms of compensation that would not include women, girls or indeed any humans.

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<sup>50</sup> See Augustine Tirivangana, “The metaphysical scope of Ngozi”, for a nuanced discussion of this transition.

<sup>51</sup> Dani Wadada Nabudere, “*Ubuntu* Philosophy: Memory and Reconciliation” p 4.

<sup>52</sup> M. Ramose, cited in Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, “Echoing Silences”, p 13.

This idiom, and the possible justice it espouses in terms of restoration is relevant in the context of the district (and country) that has recently emerged from the horror of militarised political violence where the violence had then cascaded to the lower tiers of society including neighbours and family members by 2008.<sup>53</sup> In Chapter Four, I discuss how violence, although engineered by the JOC, was executed at the village level.<sup>54</sup> This mechanism of *kuripa ngozi* seems suitable because it targets the provision of transitional justice at the village level. Its potential to target the majority of the cases makes it even more desirable.

By trying to argue for a mechanism that targets the villages, I am positing for one that directly targets the theatre where the violence was played out. It is a historically transmitted transitional justice mechanism that is known, as already discussed, not only in Shurugwi, but in most parts of Zimbabwe as well as in other parts of Africa. In Shurugwi it is rooted in the village or community attempts at mediating in cases of disputes where all adults gather especially on *chisi* (rest days) and adjudicate on cases under the leadership of village heads, headmen or chiefs.<sup>55</sup> In the pre-colonial past these assemblies had power over all cases emerging within their areas of jurisdiction, including, but not limited to, murder, domestic disputes, and disagreements of whatever kind, either civil or criminal cases. It is vital to say that it was only chiefs who had power over life and death, with village heads referring to the chiefs such higher order cases. However, because of the fear of *ngozi*, the death sentence was sparingly

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<sup>53</sup> For a detailed discussion of this see Chapter Four of this thesis.

<sup>54</sup> See also *Organ for national Healing, Reconciliation and Integration, (ONHRI), "Concept paper"*, p 12.

<sup>55</sup> As discussed in the *General Introduction*, of the traditional leadership positions at headmen and chief levels in the district of Shurugwi are occupied by men. However, there are significant females who occupy positions within the headmen or chiefs councils and positions of village heads, which is a position lower in rank to the headmen. Participation at these community courts is also free and anyone is given the platform to contribute whether they are female or male.



used.<sup>56</sup> In the colonial and post-colonial times, these assemblies have been divested of powers over murders and their jurisdiction has largely been restricted to civil matters.<sup>57</sup>

It is also important to highlight the fact that besides the material compensation, the process of *kuripa ngozi* enables dialogue between the aggrieved and the perpetrator. This is usually at gatherings that bring together the two families, spirit mediums and the avenging spirit. This is in the form of Family Group Conferencing where the aggrieved, the perpetrator and the larger community interface and dialogue.<sup>58</sup> In the process an account of what happened is laid out through the perpetrator accepting the crime. In the murder-based *ngozi*, the “truth” comes out through an *ngozi* host, who is usually a relative of the perpetrator who is possessed by the spirit of the victim, who re-enacts the murder scene.<sup>59</sup> Following this re-enactment, the perpetrator accepts culpability. Perpetrators also ask for forgiveness, which, in Muwati et al’s words cited earlier, enables the “building of bridges” between the concerned parties that lays the foundation for the compensation and long lasting peace. In addition, the performance of certain rituals pertaining to cleansing also ensures that the *ngozi* spirit is brought to rest with its family whence it begins to look after the living, thus reuniting the hitherto avenging spirit with the living.<sup>60</sup>

At another level the participation of communities in the search for lasting peace and justice renders them active, rather than as passive recipients of top-down government or NGO-sponsored healing methods. This subverts the “passive revolution” introduced by the government-sponsored ONHRI, and the other methods, such as “Tree of life” (to

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<sup>56</sup> Tafataona Mahoso, “*Ngozi: the philosophical foundations of African Living Law*” in *The Sunday Mail*, 5-11 February 2012.

<sup>57</sup> The powers that traditional leaders have assumed between the colonisation of the country in 1890 and the present has largely been mediated by their relationship with the state. For a detailed discussion of the metamorphosis of this relationship, see G.C Passmore, *Hidden Conflict: A Documentary record of Administrative Policy in colonial Zimbabwe, 1950-1980*, Praeger Publishers, Westport, 2002, and *The Traditional Leaders Act*, for more details.

<sup>58</sup> Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, “Echoing silences”, p 4.

<sup>59</sup> Tafataona Mahoso, “*Ngozi: the philosophical foundation of African Living Law*”, in *The Sunday Mail*, 5-11 February 2012.

<sup>60</sup> See Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, “Echoing Silences”, p 14.

be discussed later) that NGOs are trying to import and adapt for the country, through the bottom-up participation at the villages. As Woodward, Hayes and Minkley have said, “performative acts like playing, dance, or metaphysical discourses of the marginalised or othered- curses, spells, spirit or ancestor connections- also incorporate their own genealogies of voices.”<sup>61</sup>

As discussed in Chapter Five, during my field research it became clear there was pent-up anger and those who had been victimised needed to see that some measure of justice was done in the district. The formal end to the hostilities as enunciated in the GPA and its sequel, the GNU, were inadequate in ending the tensions that belied normalcy in the district. People still harboured hatred, grudges and suspicions against their neighbours. More importantly, many looked forward to some form of compensation, which visibilised justice. This was particularly strengthened by the need to mend and heal the wounds of that violence that occurred between close relatives and work-mates whose bonds remained ruptured by 2011.

The CCJP/LRF words, although written primarily for Matebeleland and the Midlands following *gukurahundi*, encapsulate what I established: “there are many problems that remain in communities as a result of what happened, in particular from the murders and beatings...” Also, as the report proceeds:

Some tell of how members of their families were taken at night and have never been seen again. Many individuals have to live with physical injuries, which means that they cannot work well in their fields, or travel easily on buses...And still others lost homesteads or possessions and have been poor ever since. There is still much pain in the communities as a result of what happened. This affects not only the bodies, but the hearts and minds of those who suffered. Some people are bitter....<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> See Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley, eds, “Introduction”, *Deep HiStories: Gender and colonialism in Southern Africa*, Rodopi, Amsterdam and New York, 2002, p xxiii.

<sup>62</sup> Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the Legal Rights Foundation (LRF), *Breaking the silence, Building true peace: A report on the disturbances in Matebeleland and the Midlands 1980-1988*, CCJP and LRF, Harare, 1995, p 8.

Also, as the Heal Zimbabwe Trust says for the post-2008 violence, “thousands of people were traumatised and needed support urgently. They are failing to cope; some lost bread winners and children witnessed their parents being beaten to death.”<sup>63</sup> These wounds in Shurugwi might be reopened in the envisaged elections, and in the future. Suffice to say that election times have witnessed the worst human rights violations, especially from 2000, though the genealogy can be traced from the 1980s through to the 1990s.<sup>64</sup> This ugly pattern was worst seen in the 2000 parliamentary elections, the 2002 presidential elections and the infamous June 2008 presidential election rerun, which saw a low-scale war declared on the population under Operation *Mavhoterapapi* (Operation who did you vote for)?, and Operation *Tsuro negwenzi* (Operation attack the hunted and those who shelter them).<sup>65</sup> Such a legacy needs to be corrected through a transitional justice mechanism that caters for the needs of the community at various levels: their common sense beliefs, justice needs and above all, that helps to reconcile and reintegrate the communities. The traditional concept of *kuripa ngozi* might also be built upon the uneasy “negative peace”<sup>66</sup> obtaining, under the auspices of the GPA, but one that has strong potential to rupture once elections scheduled to occur “soon” materialise.

The demands by the victims for restorative justice which appeared reasonable, however, faced severe challenges. Chief of which were the problems that beset the Inclusive Government which appeared ambivalent and at times at odds with such demands. This is despite the fact that Article Seven and Article 18.5 of the Global

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<sup>63</sup> See Heal Zimbabwe Trust, cited in *The Standard*, 10 July 2011, “Organ struggles to find healing formula”, in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/local/30468-organ-struggles-to-find-healing-formula-.html>, Accessed 10 July 2011.

<sup>64</sup> See earlier discussion in Chapter Three on the correlation between elections and violence in Shurugwi. See also Daniel Compagnon and John Makumbe, *Behind the smokescreen*, and the numerous human rights reports including, Tony Reeler, *Subliminal terror?* p 6.

<sup>65</sup> See Solidarity Peace Trust, *Desperately seeking sanity: What prospects for a new beginning in Zimbabwe*, 29 July 2008, Durban.

<sup>66</sup> Negative peace has been described by Yasmin Louise Sooka, “The politics of transitional justice” in Chandra Lekka Sriram and Suren Pillay, eds, *Peace vs Justice: The Dilemma of transitional Justice in Africa*, UKZN Press, Scottsville, 2009, p 24, as aimed at ending violence without addressing the root cause of the conflict, as such does not promote lasting peace and it does not also promote lasting unity as the reasons for earlier conflict are not addressed.

Political Agreement called upon the government to establish some kind of transitional justice mechanism, and the prosecution of all offenders of the politically motivated violence between March and June 2008.<sup>67</sup>

However, this should not be surprising because there has not been a complete political transition in the country.<sup>68</sup> As the Church and Civil Society Forum (CCSF) aver, this incomplete transition is manifested through “the continued political tensions, the non-reformed judiciary and security sectors, the continued existence of a partisan media and a general impunity for ZANU-PF supporters and members even for violations carried after the signing of the GPA.”<sup>69</sup> At another level, looking at the GPA and the GNU as “passive revolutions” forced on the belligerent parties for various reasons offers invaluable insights into the tensions and contradictions in the GNU<sup>70</sup> that was fraught with continuous contestations and reformations for levers of power between ZANU-PF and the MDCs.

Confronted with the demands of the victims in the villages on the one hand, the attempts by NGOs to adapt healing methods for the country, and the state’s nebulous TJ spearheaded by the ONHRI, as well as the history of the absence of a state-led comprehensive TJ on the other hand, it is important to address some key questions. Notably: what sort of transitional justice method should be envisaged for Shurugwi under the conditions of negative peace in the era of the GNU’s passive revolution? What are its pros and cons? Is it practicable and will it achieve peace, justice and reconciliation in Shurugwi? Under what framework should it operate? What should be the role, and extent of the local communities and government intervention in this process? What other alternatives are available?

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<sup>67</sup> See Articles 7 and 18 of the *Global Political Agreement*, Ministry of Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs, Harare, 15 September 2008.

<sup>68</sup> For a nuanced discussion of this, see Ismael Muvingi, “Transitional justice and political pre-transition” in *ACCORD*, Issue 1, 2011, cited in [http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/ct/ct\\_2011\\_1.pdf](http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/ct/ct_2011_1.pdf), Accessed 19 May 2011, pp 3-10. See also Church and Civil Society Forum, (CCSF), *National Healing and Reconciliation Position Paper*, July 2009, p 45.

<sup>69</sup> See CCSF, *National Healing and Reconciliation Position Paper*, 2009, p 45.

<sup>70</sup> This phenomenon was adequately addressed in Chapter Five. See also Brian Raftopoulos, “The Global political agreement as a passive revolution”

These related questions stem from the fact that the state has never genuinely attempted a comprehensive TJ outside blanket amnesties. With that background in mind there is need to resuscitate and strengthen traditional bottom-up TJ methods like *kuripa ngozi* that incorporate a people's common sense, hence incorporate tenets of their "everyday experience" that is, how people construe the world they inhabit.<sup>71</sup> These methods have many advantages over the statist approach under ONHRI. As witnessed elsewhere in Africa, for example, traditional methods cover larger numbers in less time and with less financial resources. In addition, these methods are restorative, and foster reconciliation quicker than trials.<sup>72</sup> These methods have the added advantage of transcending the difficult binary between the need for peace on the one hand and the need for justice for the victims.<sup>73</sup> More so, they can be used in combination with ICC and TRCs.<sup>74</sup>

Secondly, the questions emanated from the presence of a battery of transitional justice methods that could potentially be used in Zimbabwe opened by Article VII.I.C of the

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<sup>71</sup> See Clifford Geertz, "Common sense as a cultural system", p 9.

<sup>72</sup> See Joe. A.D Alie, "Reconciliation and traditional justice: Tradition-based practices of Kpaa Mende in Sierra Leone" in [http://www.idea.int/publications/traditional\\_justice/upload/Chapter\\_5\\_Reconciliation\\_and\\_traditional\\_justice\\_tradition-based\\_practices\\_of\\_the\\_Kpaa\\_Mende\\_in\\_Sierra\\_Leone.pdf](http://www.idea.int/publications/traditional_justice/upload/Chapter_5_Reconciliation_and_traditional_justice_tradition-based_practices_of_the_Kpaa_Mende_in_Sierra_Leone.pdf), Accessed 16 June 2011, p 136.

<sup>73</sup> The dilemma of peace versus justice has been a perennial one for Zimbabwe dating to the end of the Second Chimurenga. However, the calls became acute following the Gukurahundi disturbances, see The CCJP/LRF, *Breaking the Silence, Building Peace*, for a nuanced discussion. In the present context following the violence that ended in 2008, see the differences of opinion between Mugabe and Tsvangirai in "Mugabe urges end to violence, Tsvangirai seeks justice", in <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com>, Accessed 18 April 2011. The book, edited by Chandra Lekka Sriram and Suren Pillay, eds, *Peace vs Justice: The dilemma of transitional justice in Africa*, gives a broader analysis of the transitional justice models that articulated either peace or justice, and the problems associated with such models. Chandra Lekker Sriram, in the "Introduction: Transitional justice and peace building", p 1, clearly foregrounds the dichotomy between proponents of peace and those for justice. To this end she says that victims, their families, NGOs and the international community demand accountability for atrocities and violations. On the other hand peace builders argue that such moves may destabilise states that are recently emerging from conflict situations.

<sup>74</sup> The use of the *gacaca* courts post-genocide has shown that traditional methods of addressing justice at the local levels can be used together with international trials for the differing levels of crimes committed. See the chapter by Helen Scanlon and Nompumelelo Motlafi, "Indigenous justice or political instrument?: The modern *gacaca* courts of Rwanda", in Chandra Lekka Sriram and Suren Pillay, eds, *Peace vs Justice: The dilemma of transitional justice in Africa*, for a pithy understanding of this. See also Joe. A.D Alie, "Reconciliation and traditional justice: Tradition-based practices of the Kpaa Mende in Sierra Leone".

GPA; and also proffered by the ONHRI. The debate was also widened by the calls by President Mugabe for peace, which potentially meant forgetting the past and casting bygones as bygones, and the calls by Prime Minister Tsvangirai for a mechanism that served justice and one where justice was seen to be served.<sup>75</sup> However, both the Mugabe and Tsvangirai paradigms have fatal weaknesses in the current context. Briefly, the emphasis on peace over justice has promoted cyclic patterns of violence and impunity in post-independence Zimbabwe,<sup>76</sup> while the call for unfettered justice faces the prospects of failure due to the asymmetrical balance of power in the GNU, (and potentially in the foreseeable future,) which Ismael Muvingi has already aptly described as “political pre-transition,” where ZANU-PF still holds the coercive arms of the state and the de facto powers of veto.

Here, I am also informed by Mamdani’s insightful questions on transitional justice systems. Writing against “victors’ justice”, including the Versailles settlement, the Nuremburg trials, the post-genocide Rwanda trials and the post-holocaust Jewish treatment of the Palestinians, he asks two vital questions: Is a form of justice possible that is not at the same time victor’s justice? And, is a form of reconciliation possible that is not at the same time an absence of justice, and thus an embrace of evil?<sup>77</sup> These are instructive questions that helped me in choosing *kuripa ngozi* as the most feasible one, and one that does not espouse excessive retribution, which has the potential of triggering another round of violence and counter-violence. This also accords with the

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<sup>75</sup> For a brief but insightful discussion of these two positions see “Mugabe urges end to violence, Tsvangirai seeks justice”, in <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com>, Accessed 18 April 2011. See also *Government Gazette Extraordinary*, 15 July 2009, General Notice 92 of 2009. See also “Tsvangirai’s speech on National Healing” 24 July 2009, in <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/politics/tsvangirais-speech-on-national-healing>, Accessed 18 April 2011. See also Sphosami Malunga, “Amnesty for Mugabe out of question”, in *newzimbabwe.com*, cited in <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/opinion265.16376.html>, Accessed 23 June 2011.

<sup>76</sup> See Pamela Machakanja, “National healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe: Challenges and opportunities”, *Zimbabwe Monograph Series*, No 1, 2010, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation Africa Programme, p 10, who lists the recurrent patterns of violence and impunity in the post-independence period. These are the 1980 amnesty, the 1988 Clemency Order, the 1995 Presidential Amnesty and the 2000 Clemency Order.

<sup>77</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *When victims become killers: Colonialism, nativism, and the genocide in Rwanda*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2001, p 272.

ONHRI's assertion that "there must be a degree of pragmatism that meets victims' demands for justice without derailing the newfound peace and the Inclusive Government."<sup>78</sup>

I was also aware of, and given direction by, the two objectives for any transitional justice as given by the Chilean lawyer Jose Z. Alaquett, who stated that these mechanisms should help prevent the recurrence of past abuses, repair the damage caused and help to achieve national unity and reconciliation.<sup>79</sup> This also accords with the five cornerstones of transitional justice, namely: trials, truth-seeking, reparations, institutional reform and memorialisation.<sup>80</sup> This method is also in sync with the five cornerstones to a complete transitional justice by Alex Boraine, which are: accountability, truth recovery, reconciliation, institutional reform and reparations.<sup>81</sup> However, some of the aims highlighted, like trials, and institutional reforms, are beyond the scope of the mechanism for which I am arguing.

This method (*kuripa ngozi*) could be very useful in solving the "not-so-big", but certainly the most numerous, cases between close relations emanating from the political violence. These are cases that occurred between villagers, neighbours and family who, in various degrees were caught up in the intricate web of the violence of the period 2000-2008. In addition, these are cases that are numerous. Some of these could be cases where people grazed cattle in other people's fields as political punishment, cases of witchcraft which ordinarily have no jurisdiction in conventional western style courts; gender-based cases of violence, excluding rape, and similar cases. These are cases that might forever never be solved in the conventional state justice system, cases, which are,

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<sup>78</sup> ONHRI, *Concept paper*, p 13.

<sup>79</sup> See Jose Z Alaquett cited in Yasmin Loise SSoka, "The politics of transitional justice" in Chandra Lekka Sriram and Suren Pillay, eds, *Peace vs Justice: The dilemma of transitional justice in Africa*, p 25.

<sup>80</sup> Church and civil society Forum, *Initial national healing discussion paper*, Harare, 2010.

<sup>81</sup> Alex Boraine, "Transitional Justice: A holistic interpretation", in A Boraine and S Valentine, eds, *Transitional Justice and Human Security*, International Centre for Transitional Justice, Cape Town, 2006, cited in Shari Eppel and Brian Raftopoulos, "Political crisis, mediation and the Prospects for transitional justice in Zimbabwe", *IDASA*, November 2008, p 5.



to me, “small” enough to result in the paralysis of social and other relations in the rural areas that are generally based on communal social relations.

My other contention is also that it was between the villagers that the violence was largely perpetrated.<sup>82</sup> Thus ONHRI averred that whilst a “national process is useful”, it is also “important to organise community level truth-telling exercises, tribunals, dialogue, healing sessions and also reparations.”<sup>83</sup> As such this could be an important starting point in the rebuilding of relations and the empowering of the locals in Shurugwi. In this way, by making perpetrators take responsibility the process will deter them from being willing tools for political violence. Other cases like murder, rape and others that relate to sexual violation can be dealt with at other levels.<sup>84</sup> At the time of writing this chapter not much had been done with the “big cases” of sexual violations, rape, and murders. It also remains to be seen if such cases will ever be brought to book, if another amnesty will be deployed to protect the perpetrators, or whether we have to wait for a fuller democratic transition.<sup>85</sup>

Arguing for a “historically constituted [justice] system”<sup>86</sup> is, however, not meant to minimise the role for a TRC and or ICC tribunal. It is simply meant to posit that we can achieve healing, forgiveness and justice without raising too much fear and suspicion, especially at a time when Zimbabweans are looking for a transition to a democratic dispensation. This is at a time when there are key, but baby, steps to the crafting of a new constitution, and where several commissions<sup>87</sup> have been set up under the auspices of the GPA that are meant to redress the recurrence of violence and the

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<sup>82</sup> See Chapter Four, “Agency and or victimhood”. See also ONHRI, *Concept paper*, p 12, for pithy discussions on how most violence was played out at the local/community levels.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p 12.

<sup>84</sup> These could be dealt with in the Common law courts, the ICC or through Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This hybridity was used with some measure of success in Sierra Leone. See Joe. A.D Alie, “Reconciliation and traditional justice: Tradition-based practices of Kpaa Mende in Sierra Leone.” He says transitional justice in Sierra Leone used a combination of a TRC, a Special Court and traditional justice methods. See pp 130 and 141 for example.

<sup>85</sup> See CCSF, *National Healing and reconciliation Position Paper*, p 7, which presents a similar argument.

<sup>86</sup> I borrow Jacques Ranciere’s phrase from *The politics of aesthetics*, p 50.

<sup>87</sup> These include the Human Rights Commission, the Zimbabwe Media Commission and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission.

deliverance of credible elections. Other methods seem ominous and might frighten those in power. In a sense, ZANU-PF's desire to retain state control at all cost could be seen partly in terms of fears emanating from calls for retributive transitional justice by the civil service organisations and to some extent the MDC.<sup>88</sup> This fear can also be broadly analysed as a fear of trials at The Hague. This latter strand broadly feeds into the larger fears by African leaders that the ICC specifically targets African leaders.<sup>89</sup> For Zimbabwe, however, an ICC trial may prove difficult because it is not a signatory to the Rome Accord.<sup>90</sup> Discussing the possibility of *kuripa ngozi* in rural areas is not also meant to vitiate its potential even at the national level. Cases abound from Africa where somewhat similar common sense based "traditional" methods were adopted at the state level, albeit with ambiguous effects, in Rwanda, Uganda and Mozambique.<sup>91</sup>

## THE CONTEXT FOR A TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE MECHANISM

### A) THE GLOBAL POLITICAL AGREEMENT AND THE FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

The signing of the historic Global Political Agreement (GPA) on 15 September 2008,<sup>92</sup> which established the Government of National Unity (GNU), provides the major

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<sup>88</sup> See Wikileaks cable in *The Insider*, "Goche negotiated Mugabe exit with MDC", in <http://www.insiderzim.com/stories/3200-goche-negotiated-mugabe-exit-with-mdc.html>, Accessed 02 February 2012.

<sup>89</sup> See *BBC News*, 12 December 2011, "Africa's Fatou Bensouda is new ICC chief prosecutor", in <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16029121>, Accessed 08 March 2012.

<sup>90</sup> See *Newsday* 28 June 2011, "CIO brute up for the Hague?" in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-06-28-cio-brute-up-for-the-hague>, Accessed 28 June 2011. The African Union also officially did not recognise the ICC, see *The Herald* 14 July 2012, "President leaves for summit", in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=47109:president-leaves-for-summit&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47109:president-leaves-for-summit&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130), Accessed 15 July 2012.

<sup>91</sup> See for example, the chapters by Helen Scanlon and Nompumelelo Motlafi, "Indigenous justice or political instrument?: The modern gacaca courts of Rwanda", and by Victor Igreja, "The politics of peace, justice and healing in post-war Mozambique" in Chandra Lekka Sriram and Suren Pillay, eds, *Peace vs Justice: The dilemma of transitional justice in Africa*, for a pithy understanding of this.

<sup>92</sup> The GPA was a tripartite agreement signed between ZANU-PF and the MDC formations, that is, the larger one led by Morgan Tsvangirai, popularly called MDC-T, and the splinter one led by Arthur Mutambara (now led by Welshman Ncube), the MDC-M. These parties that had won parliamentary seats in the 2008 harmonised elections agreed to form an inclusive government under the mediation efforts of

framework for the calling of a transitional justice mechanism. Article Seven states, among others, that the GNU: “shall give consideration to the setting up of a mechanism to properly advise on what measures might be necessary and practicable to achieve national healing, cohesion and unity in respect of victims of pre- and post-independence political conflicts”, and “will strive to create an environment of tolerance and respect among Zimbabweans and that all citizens are treated with dignity and decency irrespective of age, gender, race, ethnicity, place of origin or political affiliation.”<sup>93</sup>

In addition to this, Article 18 states that: “further recognising that violence undermines our collective independence as a people and our capacity to exercise our free will in making political choices”, the parties agreed “to promote the values and practices of tolerance, respect, nonviolence and dialogue as a means of resolving political differences”, “to remove and desist from the promotion and use of violence, under whatever name called, as a means of attaining political ends”. It was also agreed “that the Government shall apply the laws of the country fully and impartially in bringing all perpetrators of politically motivated violence to book”, “to work together to ensure the security of all persons and property”. Also “to work together to ensure the safety of any displaced persons, their safe return home and their enjoyment of the full protection of the law”. Furthermore, “that while having due regard to the Constitution of Zimbabwe and the principles of the rule of law, the prosecuting authorities will expedite the determination as to whether or not there is sufficient evidence to warrant the prosecution or keeping on remand of all persons accused of politically related offences arising out of or connected with the March and June 2008 elections.”<sup>94</sup>

From the preceding paragraph, we can discern that the GPA set out, albeit in ambiguous, but nonetheless milestone terms, the need for “some mechanism” to deal

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President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa. This was a historic moment because it was the first time for Zimbabwe that ZANU-PF had agreed to enter into a power-sharing agreement. Moreover, it was also historic for the SADC region that such an arrangement was effected.

<sup>93</sup> See *Global Political Agreement*, Ministry of Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs, Harare, 15 September 2008, p 7.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, p 11.

with transitional justice. Pursuant to this there was formed the seemingly dysfunctional state driven Organ for National Healing Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI).<sup>95</sup> In some sense ONHRI represented the “Piedmont type function”<sup>96</sup> in the search for a TJ by seeking to supercede, regulate and coordinate the efforts towards a TJ by the various players, including the civic organisations, political parties outside the GNU, and the general public. It did not also take into account the other earlier efforts by the civic organisations.

However, this was an historic formulation for post-independence Zimbabwe because it was the first time that political violence was officially acknowledged. It also marked the first instance that such a state-sponsored organisation as ONHRI had been formed to look into the need to heal the wounds of conflict. It too was a novel feature that called for the prosecution of perpetrators had been officially made under Article 18 where it also clearly mentioned the need to prosecute or keeping in custody all perpetrators of the March 2008 violence. ONHRI brought rays of hope to the victims and civil society alike because through it a window of opportunity for dialogue on national healing was opened.<sup>97</sup> More importantly, it marked the first instance that ZANU-PF had acceded to

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<sup>95</sup> ONHRI was formed in 2009, and it had three ministers from all the three parties to the GPA, namely John Nkomo (ZANU-PF), Sekai Holland (MDC-T) and the late Gibson Sibanda (MDC-M who was replaced by Moses Mzila Ndlovu). Its work in 2011, when I was writing this chapter, seems to be heavily circumscribed by the death of Gibson Sibanda, the promotion of John Nkomo to be vice President as well as the endless squabbles especially between the MDC-T and ZANU-PF. Between February 2009 and February 2010 ONHRI embarked on a nationwide campaign gathering people’s views on healing. However, nothing of this consultation has seen light of day. The major reason why the ONHRI seemed dysfunctional and a paper tiger is its lack of plan of action and that it has no legal force for its mandate. For more on this see Sekai Holland, “Realigning input markets to former needs as a strategy on national healing, reconciliation and integration at grassroots based communities in agricultural production in Zimbabwe”, in [http://www.farnpan.org/documents/d00738/presentation/Review\\_of\\_the\\_Organ\\_On\\_National\\_Healing\\_Final.pdf](http://www.farnpan.org/documents/d00738/presentation/Review_of_the_Organ_On_National_Healing_Final.pdf), Accessed 15 May 2011.

<sup>96</sup> See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, p 83, for the leading role that Piedmont played in the Risorgimento. For the ONHRI, I use it to denote the leading role it was assigned in the search for a TJ.

<sup>97</sup> See Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *Who will dare begin the process of recovering the truth?* pp 12-13.

promoting violence and the hope was that this would be translated into meaningful transitional justice under the GNU.<sup>98</sup>

However, as discussed in Chapter Five, this was an ominous task for the GNU beset by serious tensions and struggles for state power; together with the unreformed judiciary, media and security service chiefs. In addition, the milieu of looking into both pre-independence and post-independence violence was too onerous for the ONHRI, which was itself set in the context of the original temporary two-year GNU. ONHRI pondered how far it could go back in time without bringing ambiguities and different “interpretations and prescriptions.”<sup>99</sup> This interpretation gridlock was clearly manifested, for example, by the contradictions between ZANU-PF and the MDC over how far the newly established Human Rights Commission would go in investigating human rights abuses.<sup>100</sup> Potentially, the cyclic patterns of violence in Zimbabwe in the absence of comprehensive transitional justice mechanism will continue despite the formation of ONHRI as in the past.<sup>101</sup> As Jonathan Moyo avers, this will continue in order to cover up for the violations of human rights by the state.<sup>102</sup>

On the whole, by alluding to the need for some transitional justice mechanism the GPA, as the broad national signifier that it is, offers an important framework for the adoption of the indigenous based *kuripa ngozi* transitional justice method. The need for the

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<sup>98</sup> See Ishmael Muvengi, “Transitional justice and political pre-transition in Zimbabwe”, *ACCORD*, Issue 1, 2011, cited in [http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/ct/ct\\_2011\\_1.pdf](http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/ct/ct_2011_1.pdf), Accessed 19 May 2011, p 7.

<sup>99</sup> See ONHRI, *Concept paper*, p 17.

<sup>100</sup> See *The Herald*, 26 July 2011, “Parties’ differences disrupt Bill hearing”, in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=16419:parties-differences-disrupt-bill-hearing&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16419:parties-differences-disrupt-bill-hearing&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131), Accessed 26 July 2011.

<sup>101</sup> See Shari Eppel, cited in Shari Eppel and Brian Raftopoulos, “Political crisis, mediation and the Prospects for transitional justice in Zimbabwe”, IDASA, November 2008. Tony Reeler, *Subliminal terror?: Human rights violence and torture in Zimbabwe during 2008*, Centre for the study of violence and Reconciliation, Cape Town, p 3, who discusses this at great length, and who also adds a fourth period of serious human rights violations as the 1998 period of the food riots. See also Sabelo J Ndllovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?*, p. 190, who posits that the history of Zimbabwe is one of violence coded under different names, such as wars between the Ndebele and the Shona in the pre-colonial period, the First Chimurenga, colonialism, The Second Chimurenga, Gukurahundi, and Third Chimurenga. See also Terence M Mashingaidze, “Zimbabwe’s illusive national healing and reconciliation processes”, p 21, for more details.

<sup>102</sup> See also Jonathan Moyo, *Voting for Democracy: Electoral Politics in Zimbabwe*, University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 1992, pp 22 & 28, on the 1980 and 1988 amnesties.

payment of reparations central to the chosen traditional method of *kuripa ngozi* ensures restorative justice rather than retributive justice. As the CCJP argues, the payment of compensation to the victims might be the missing basis for a permanent peace in Zimbabwe. The CCJP posits that in addition to healing and reconciliation so emphasised in the GPA there is need for victims to also receive justice where “their assets need to be restored as a matter of justice and also so that they can be able to stand on their own two feet again and fend for themselves. This is true where cattle, goats, chickens and other assets were taken with devastating economic and broader livelihood consequences for victims.”<sup>103</sup> This also resonates with the findings of the RAU who stated that:

When we were in the rural areas having a discussion with the people there, someone was saying, how can I forgive someone who wronged me if he or she hasn't come to say I'm asking for forgiveness? How can I forgive somebody who killed my cow or took my cow still has it in his or her own kraal? And how can I forgive and forget a rape case of a child whom I'm nurturing? As long as justice is not seen to be done let's forget about peace. Once justice is seen to be done then it becomes easy to talk about peace. Even the Bible says, 'repent so that I can forgive you.' So until someone comes out to say it's me who torched your house on such and such a day please forgive me, and until the truth comes out in the open it's really very difficult.... People are not coming in the near future to say, I'm sorry I raped your child, I torched your home, I did this, so if we wait for that to happen then we'll have trouble and we'll never have peace.<sup>104</sup>

## **B) THREE DAYS OF NATIONAL HEALING AND RECONCILIATION: CONFLICTING PERCEPTIONS ON THE TRANSITION**

Following in the spirit of the GPA, and in a proclamation President Robert Mugabe “set out and dedicate[d] the 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> July 2009, as a period during which the nation may dedicate to the Inclusive Government, our new found peace, our freedom, our new spirit of nation building, National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration to

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<sup>103</sup> See CCJP, *Graveyard governance: A report on political violence following the March harmonised 2008 elections*, Harare.

<sup>104</sup> RAU, *When the going gets tough*, p 15.

inspire the nation going forward.”<sup>105</sup> In the gazette, the President also called upon all political parties to use the three days to call for peace and refrain from fomenting hostilities and political intolerance.<sup>106</sup> His speech was built upon the one he made in 1994. In arguing against further probing into the *gukurahundi* atrocities, he said:

if we dig up history, then we wreck the nation, we tear our people apart into factions, into tribes, and villagism will prevail over our nationalism and over the spirit of our sacrifices....We have sworn not to go by the past except as a record or register. The record.... will remind us what never to do. If it was wrong, if that went against the sacred tenets of humanity, we must never repeat....<sup>107</sup>

Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai went further to call for justice for the victims of the violence, not only the 2000-2008 episode, but also the pre-independence and post-independence *gukurahundi* eras.<sup>108</sup> In his words:

These three days of dedication must herald the beginning of genuine, open and frank process that includes and incorporates the concept of transitional justice, truth and accepting responsibility for the hurt and pain inflicted upon so many Zimbabweans....There can be no truth without justice. And, no justice without truth .... National healing cannot occur without justice and justice must be done, as well as be seen to be done.<sup>109</sup>

However, the opening ceremony and the long weekend set aside for the dedication came and went, vindicating Senator Obert Gutu’s prediction that the three days would merely be an “academic exercise that will do very little, if anything at all, in healing our

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<sup>105</sup> See *Government Gazette Extraordinary, 15 July 2009, General Notice 92 of 2009*. The three days were collectively referred to as the National Dedication Ceremony- see Sekai Holland, “Realigning inputs markets to farmer needs”, p 3.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> President Mugabe, cited in Terence M Mashingaidze, “Zimbabwe’s illusive healing and reconciliation processes”, p 23.

<sup>108</sup> See “Tsvangirai’s speech on National Healing” 24 July 2009, in <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/politics/tsvangirais-speech-on-national-healing>, Accessed 18 April 2011.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.



hurting nation.”<sup>110</sup> For Gutu, national healing needed more than the gazetting of three days, “a few workshops and conferences.... in posh hotels and holiday resorts...”<sup>111</sup>

The call by Prime Minister Tsvangirai for justice and for the visibilisation of justice remains instructive. However, what has changed is the *prima facie* unity of purpose displayed by the key principals of the GPA to promote the said values on the occasion of the launch of the period of dedication. As Raftopoulos has ably demonstrated, the adoption of the language of passive revolution is necessary to explicate the complications in the GNU.<sup>112</sup> To this extent, the ZANU-PF’s dominant role in the GNU, as well as the constant bickering between ZANU-PF and the MDC-T which smacks of the tensions between progressive and retrogressive forces constitutive of passive revolutions, have made the search for a TJ mechanism remain a pipe-dream. Further to this, the hold on the coercive arms of the state by ZANU-PF have also pushed the MDC-T to vacillate between a justice-based transitional justice, and offering a blanket amnesty to lure ZANU-PF and the military to hand over power.<sup>113</sup>

A closer analysis of the words and reasoning behind President Mugabe’s speech, reveals that rather than appeasing the victims and abating the culture of violence, not “digging up history” has, as already pointed out, promoted cycles of violence and impunity. Worse still has been the fact that their memories have not vanished. The spectre of the *gukurahundi* proves this more than any other historic moment in Zimbabwe. Starting with the calls by civic organisations for an inquiry into the *gukurahundi* in the 1990s, the calls have persisted into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The lingering calls, including in cabinet, resulted in President Mugabe agreeing in 2011 to the setting up of another committee to lead the debate on the *gukurahundi*.<sup>114</sup> Moreover these sentiments have taken more

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<sup>110</sup> See Obert Gutu, “National Healing impossible without truth commission”, 27 July 2009, in <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/gutu-national-healing-impossible-without-truth-commission.htm>, Accessed 18 April 2011.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “The Global Political Agreement as a passive revolution”.

<sup>113</sup> See Ishmael Muvingi, “Transitional justice and political pre-transition in Zimbabwe”, p 8.

<sup>114</sup> See “Gukurahundi splits cabinet” in The Standard 1 May 2011, in <http://www.co.zw/local/29542-gukurahundi-splits-cabinet.html>, Accessed 8 May 2011. See also *The Herald*, 23 June 2011, “Nkomo calls

overt, radical and ethnic/regional-inclined political expressions including the ominous calls for secession by the Matebeleland Liberation Front.<sup>115</sup> President Mugabe seemingly also spoke with a forked tongue because ZANU-PF went against the grain of his speech and went about “digging up” the history of the suffering of the Second Chimurenga.<sup>116</sup> However, it is clear that because of the asymmetrical power relations between Mugabe and Tsvangirai, Mugabe’s stance on enforced amnesia of the violence prevails. This potentially means enforcing the citizens to carry unacknowledged wounds of past and recurring wounds.

This notwithstanding, amnesties have promoted national unity; have led to political transitions from governments underwritten by strong armies; and they have the potential to reduce violence.<sup>117</sup> Arguably for Zimbabwe, amnesties were crucial for the difficult transitions: to independence in 1980 in the face of the threat of the Rhodesian JOC,<sup>118</sup> and also in the ending of the *gukurahundi*.<sup>119</sup> The signing of the Global Political

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for dialogue on Gukurahundi” in

[http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=13371:nkomo-calls-for-dialogue-on-gukurahundi&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13371:nkomo-calls-for-dialogue-on-gukurahundi&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130), Accessed 23 June 2011.

<sup>115</sup> See U Mhlahlo we Sizwe sika Mthwakazi, “Restoration of Ndebele sovereignty”, letter written to the Constitutional Parliamentary Committee, 22 January 2010, cited in [http://www.mthwakazian.com/attachments/393\\_UMHLAHLLOWEpc-1.pdf](http://www.mthwakazian.com/attachments/393_UMHLAHLLOWEpc-1.pdf), Accessed 5 May 2011. See also “Statement by Mthwakazi Liberation Front”, 3 February 2010, in <http://www.forum.newzimbabwe.com/index.php?topic/28620-statement-by-mthwakazi-liberation-front/>, Accessed 5 May 2011. See also <http://mthwakaziblogspot.com>, Accessed 5 May 2011, for more details.

<sup>116</sup> In April 2011 there have been the digging up of the evocative moments of the Second Chimurenga, literally through the digging up of supposed Second Chimurenga mass graves in Mashonaland Central. See the controversy of this in the digging up of over 600 human remains of Second Chimurenga victims at Chibondo Mine in Mount Darwin in April 2011, in “Preserve exhumed remains-Zipra” cited in *Newsday* 8 May 2011 cited in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-05-08-preserve-exhumed-remains-zipra>, Accessed 9 May 2011. See also Terence Mashingaidze, “Zimbabwe’s illusive national healing and reconciliation”, p 23 who discusses how the evocative second Chimurenga moments were fed daily in the 2000 period in the form of radio and television programmes.

<sup>117</sup> See Yasmin Louise Sooka, “The politics of transition”, for a more nuanced discussion, pp 22-26.

<sup>118</sup> James Muzondidya, “‘Our guns are our vote’”: The Political-Military Alliance in Zimbabwe and the fate for Democratic Transition”, Paper presented at the *European Conference on African Studies*, University of Leipzig, Germany, 4-7 June 2009.

<sup>119</sup> A lot of controversy has emerged with regards the impact of these amnesties. On the one hand is the discourse that the amnesties were necessary and that they contributed to the unity of the country. On the other hand are those that claim that the amnesties served only to foster top leadership unions without necessarily benefitting those at the grassroots levels. For some of the debates see Terence Mashingaidze

Agreement (GPA) in 2008 also partly owes its existence to the vagueness regarding the prosecution of the perpetrators of violence. On the other hand, however, the stalling and intransigence by ZANU-PF's towards the fuller implementation of the GPA has roots in the absence of guarantees of an amnesty in the future should it be ousted from power in an open election. Thus as Joe Alie, says, while retributive justice might potentially act as a deterrent, it may simultaneously make perpetrators to want to hold on to power and make the restoration of communal relations more difficult.<sup>120</sup>

### **C) CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE CALLS FOR TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE**

The other background for a TJ is the long-term call by the civil society in the country for the government to set up an equivalent of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Arguably, the civil society in Zimbabwe has the longest known genealogy for calling for transitional justice to solve the scourge of politically motivated violence. The first of such calls was made by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, and the Legal Resources Foundation, in their brave and ground-breaking report on the disturbances in Matebeleland provinces and parts of the Midlands province published in 1997.<sup>121</sup> Besides meticulously documenting abuses, the report proffered useful recommendations: the need for acknowledging conflict through truth-telling to ensure reconciliation; the removal of human rights violators from positions of authority; the institution of legal reforms to enable victims to claim compensation from the state; the setting up of community "Reconciliation/*Uxoleiwano* Trust" to spearhead communal reparations through fostering development projects in place of individual recompense;

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"Zimbabwe's illusive national healing and reconciliation process" and Pamela Machakanja "National healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe".

<sup>120</sup> See Joe JD ALie, "Reconciliation and traditional justice: Tradition-based practices of Kpaa Mende in Sierra Leone", p 140.

<sup>121</sup> See The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and The Legal Resources Foundation, *Breaking the Silence, Building Peace*.

and, for the government to make constitutional changes to avert future mass human rights violations.<sup>122</sup>

The CSOs also made another call in September 2008, following the violence associated with the controversial presidential election rerun in June 2008, and more generally for the 2000-2008 period. Importantly, they set out “minimum demands” for the required TJ. These were: 1) No amnesty for crimes against humanity, rapes and other sexually-based crimes, corruption and other crimes of greed; 2) Upholding of civil claims against the perpetrators or the state; 3) Removal from jobs of those found responsible for gross human rights violations and corruption; 4) Comprehensive reparations to victims of human rights violations; 5) A comprehensive, credible and independent truth seeking inquiry into the conflicts of the past which holds perpetrators to account and which provides victims the opportunity to tell their stories with a view to promoting national healing; 6) reforming and depoliticisation of: the security sectors; administration of justice; food distribution and other organs of state; 7) Development of enforceable interim or transitional rules to guarantee the rule of law and upholding of all basic rights during the transition, including the right to engage in political activities; 8) Achieve gender equality in official bodies and for transitional justice initiatives to pay particular attention to marginalised communities in Zimbabwe.<sup>123</sup>

Further attempts were from the Church and Civil Society Forum (CCSF), made up of twenty one organisations including heads of Christian denominations that produced a TJ framework in 2010.<sup>124</sup> On its part the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance embarked on “community healing dialogue meetings and ‘healing of memory’” that brought together

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid, pp 31-32.

<sup>123</sup> These demands came out of a conference of the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum held at the Meikles Hotel Harare, 9-10 September 2008, see Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, “Call by Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum on Parliamentarians attending the African Pacific Caribbean-European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly”, cited in <http://www.hrforumzim.com/press/20090403ForumResolutionto17thJPA.pdf>, accessed 23 January 2011.

<sup>124</sup> See Church and Civil Society Forum, *Initial National Healing Discussion Paper*, pp 20-24, discusses the various branches of transitional methods and the methods of achieving them.

victims of the violence.<sup>125</sup> In 2009 the Catholic Church through the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops also stated that:

[f]or national reconciliation and healing to take place effectively, it is necessary that the entire nation participates in a comprehensive, all inclusive, holistic and clearly defined process underpinned by strong political will and desire to reconcile and heal the nation. We envision National Healing and reconciliation as a home grown inclusive process that will lay the foundations for a peaceful cohesive Zimbabwe society; where the dignity of individual is respected; where broken relationships are healed; where trust is restored; and where diversity is celebrated.<sup>126</sup>

These are no doubt important salient points mapped out by the civic organisations. They offer important nexus points with *kuripa ngozi* in terms of holding individual (and also the state actors) to account and the calling for restoration through restitution and the incorporation of common sense-based justice mechanisms.

While the recommendations are important, it is necessary to heed the caution from Eppel and Raftopoulos who state that there is need to factor in historical and structural factors in the search for a TJ. In their words:

[s]uch transitional justice recommendations tend to gloss over the long term structural injustices that have engendered Mugabe's authoritarian nationalism and the anti-colonial discourse that has constructed the human rights question as a Western imposition. In the context of the failures of neoliberal economic policies in Africa, the efficacy of transitional justice processes that are not connected to broader structural changes in the economy can very quickly be undermined by revived nationalist politics around the redistributive agendas.<sup>127</sup>

The crucial point raised by Eppel and Raftopoulos necessitates a look at the country's historical trajectories and the inclusion of racialised structural inequalities ushered in by

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<sup>125</sup> See *The Standard*, 10 July 2011, "Organ struggles to find healing formula", in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/local/30468-organ-struggles-to-find-healing-formula-.html>, Accessed 10 July 2011. This was a programme they ran under "positive vomiting" where it was hoped that victims would heal by interacting and sharing with other victims.

<sup>126</sup> Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference, "National Healing and Reconciliation: God can heal the wounds of the afflicted", Harare, 01 October 2009.

<sup>127</sup> Shari Eppel and Brian Raftopoulos, "Political crisis, mediation", pp 5-6. For detailed discussions on the redistributive justice issues in Zimbabwe, see Mahmood Mamdani, "Lessons of Zimbabwe".

colonisation, which benefitted the whites while disadvantaging the blacks.<sup>128</sup> This renders the need to factor in the ZANU-PF demands for the inclusion of colonial-structural violations.

At another level TRCs have tended to be negatively perceived in Africa. Besides being associated with the engendering of the passive revolutions in Africa by the liberal West and paying scant regard to local conditions, they have also been viewed as being targeted at “rebel” African leaders who do not toe the line set by the liberal West.<sup>129</sup> They are also costly and demand a lot of top-level support.<sup>130</sup> These limitations are clear in the Zimbabwe case where the government is struggling financially, as evidenced by the failure to raise about \$9 billion to “jump start” the economy,<sup>131</sup> and the perennial struggle to pay its workers who were earning below the poverty line.<sup>132</sup> A TRC for example, would require significant funding, as well as a great deal of political support, which might be difficult to get under present conditions of incomplete political transition, in Muringi’s terminology. Potentially, the squabbling in the GNU could reach

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<sup>128</sup> See comments on the structural explanations of the violence by the state by Slavoj Zizek, Sam Moyo, Paris Yeros and Mahmood Mamdani, for a more pithy discussion. Slavoj Zizek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, Picador, New York, 2008, see also Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros, “Intervention: The Zimbabwe question and the two lefts” in *Historical Materialism*, 15, 2007, p 199, see also, Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros, “Zimbabwe Ten Years On: Results and Prospects” *Pambazuka News*, 419, 2009. See also Mahmood Mamdani, “Lessons of Zimbabwe” in *London Review of books*, 04 December 2008, contends that the independence obtained in 1980 did not alter the structure of the Zimbabwean society. He cites the willing buyer-willing seller land clause and the racial constitution that reserved for the 5% whites 20% seats in parliament in the Lancaster House Constitution as major drawbacks to unqualified independence.

<sup>129</sup> In Africa, there is a wide claim, for example that the ICC is being used by the West to target African leaders and might be contributing to long serving dictators staying in power to avoid prosecution, like what happened to Charles Taylor of Liberia, and the calls on the Sudanese president Omar Al-Bashir to be tried at the ICC in the Hague, see Chandra Lekha Sriram, “Introduction: Transitional Justice and Peace building”, in Chandra Lekha Sriram and Suren Pillay, eds, *Peace vs Justice: The dilemma of transitional justice in Africa*, pp 2-3, who avers that the ICC, besides promoting “victor’s justice”, it was also primarily viewed as targeting African leaders unfairly. In Zimbabwe, there have been mild calls for the trial of Mugabe at the Hague for alleged crimes against humanity. See for example, Tony Reeler, *Subliminal terror?*

<sup>130</sup> ONHRI, *Concept paper*, p 11.

<sup>131</sup> See *Fingaz*, 08 July 2011, “President Mugabe launches MTP”, in <http://www.financialgazette.co.zw/top-stories/8971-president-mugabe-launches-mtp.html>, Accessed 08 July 2011.

<sup>132</sup> Reports abound in the early months of 2011, for example, of civil servants through the Apex Council, threatening to go on strike, also magistrates and court interpreters having gone on a go-slow. See *Newsday*, 21 February 2011, cited in <http://www.newsday.co.zw>, accessed 21 February 2011.

fever pitch and might paralyse the already shaky GNU when it comes to such an emotive issue as the perpetration of violence, which also has far reaching consequences on senior people in government who might be indicted and jailed. Additionally, there is also no love lost between human rights NGOs calling for a TRC and the state in Zimbabwe.<sup>133</sup>

Between February 2009 and February 2010, the *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum* embarked on TJ consultative meetings in fifty-one of the eighty-one constituencies that had witnessed high levels of violence between 2000 and 2008 to gather people's views on transitional justice.<sup>134</sup> For Shurugwi, this was held at Ironsides Community Hall on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2010, and was attended by a cross-section of society ranging from women, youths, local leaders, peasant farmers, political activists, perpetrators of, and victims of, violence and government workers.<sup>135</sup> Among the agreed points at the meeting was the need to award reparations to the victims of political violence in accordance with their wishes because "it is the victims who know best what is appropriate for them."<sup>136</sup>

Further to this, the participants also felt it was the duty of individual perpetrators, and not the government, to pay restitution to their victims. Only in cases where the perpetrators were not known was the government to pay such compensation. This was aimed at freeing the government to concentrate on resuscitating the economy.<sup>137</sup> While acknowledging the advantages of a TRC, the participants were of the opinion that instituting a TRC would scuttle peace and promote retributive justice and that

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<sup>133</sup> The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed the deterioration of relations between NGOs/civic society and the ZANU-PF government. Most have been characterised as agents of imperialism and have at different times faced various sanctions from the state. Others have been deregistered, threatened with deregistration, arrests of their workers and various other threats. See Solidarity Peace Trust, *Desperately seeking sanity*, for a pithy discussion of this cat and mouse relationship.

<sup>134</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *Who will dare begin the process of recovering the truth?*, Vol 2, 2010, cited in [http://www.hrforum.com/special\\_hrru/outreach-report-07-10.pdf](http://www.hrforum.com/special_hrru/outreach-report-07-10.pdf), Accessed 19 May 2011, p 13.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p 119.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*



perpetrators might not come forward for fear of prosecution, which would result in people not forgiving each other resulting in unending cycles of violence.<sup>138</sup>

The CSOs have also been calling for the overhauling of the constitution of Zimbabwe to institutionalise issues of transitional justice. To this end the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), as early as 1997, started to make calls for a new constitution for the country.<sup>139</sup> In the envisaged constitution, among other important changes, would be the purging of the government to rid it of the strong interpenetration with ZANU-PF and the security organs whose members have been seconded to key positions.<sup>140</sup> More importantly, the NCA draft constitution included the need to incorporate a “Truth, Justice, Reconciliation and Conflict Prevention Commission.”<sup>141</sup>

There have been other tenuous healing methods initiated by some CSOs, such as the “Tree of Life”.<sup>142</sup> Tree of Life that brings survivors of violence together is “a healing and empowerment workshop that combines the concepts of story-telling, healing of the spirit, reconnecting with the body and re-establishing a sense of self-esteem and community.”<sup>143</sup> The method is originally Native American, and was adapted to the Namibian victims of the war of independence. Under this method, victims gather together, are put into smaller groups where they congregate in circles and share their experience and are empowered.<sup>144</sup> On the whole however, the Tree of Life promotes a foreign concept derived from the Native American philosophy, one which has very little

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> See Ishmael Muvingi, “Transitional justice and political pre-transition in Zimbabwe”, *ACCORD*, Issue 1, 2011, cited in [http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/ct/ct\\_2011\\_1.pdf](http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/ct/ct_2011_1.pdf), Accessed 19 May 2011, p 6.

<sup>140</sup> See Zeff Sithole “Is the army taking over?”

<sup>141</sup> See Ishmael Muvingi, “Transitional justice and political pre-transition in Zimbabwe”, p 6. See also the remarks by George Bizos in “Hot Seat Interview with George Bizos, Sekai Holland, Glen Mpani and Mary Ndlovu: Reconciliation, justice and national healing”, cited in SW Radio Africa, 10 April 2009, in [http://kubatana.net/html/archive/demgg090410swradio.asp?sector=DEMGG&year2009&range\\_start=75\\_1](http://kubatana.net/html/archive/demgg090410swradio.asp?sector=DEMGG&year2009&range_start=75_1), Accessed 21 May 2011.

<sup>142</sup> See Tony Reeler, Kudakwashe Chitsike, Fungisai Maizva, Beverley Reeler, “The Tree of Life: a community approach to empowering and healing survivors of torture in Zimbabwe”, in <http://www.google.co.za/#q=TREE+OF+LIFE+HEALING+IN+ZIMBABWE&hl=en&prmd=ivns&ei=ONMjTojKJYPSrQfNmISJAg&start=10&sa=N&fp=90e7b8f8b9d5966d&biw=1366&bih=627>, Accessed 18 July 2011.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, p 182.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, pp 184-185.

connection with the communities of Zimbabwe, but one that communities of Zimbabwe are forced to imbibe. It thus represents a sort of imposition by the NGOs that ignores the “common sense” demands of the local communities. In a way, the NGOs that have been sponsoring it should instead have utilised the culturally-based or everyday philosophy-based traditional practices from Zimbabwe itself that would have been widely-known, easy to implement and possibly more cost-effective.

#### **D) MTHWAKAZI, SECESSION AND THE URGENT CALLS FOR TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE**

The post-2000 also witnessed renewed calls by the Mthwakazi or Matebeleland Liberation Front (MLF) for a separate state for those areas that were ruled by the old Ndebele Kingdom.<sup>145</sup> Basically, these are the groups of people that are collectively known as the Ndebele, but which include the Nambya, Kalanga, Venda, Sotho, Tswana and Tonga. Broadly speaking, these are people that are found in the Matebeleland provinces and parts of the Midlands province.<sup>146</sup> Among other reasons for calling for the secession are allegations of deliberate underdevelopment in the post-independence period. There are also politics of fomenting regional-based identities and ethnic-based political mobilisation involved drawing in part from a [re-] “invented tradition” of the masculine Ndebele kingdom.

A further analysis reveals also that the envisaged separate state coincides with areas that were largely affected by the menace of the *gukurahundi*. An underlying theme, as we have seen in the CCJP/LRF report,<sup>147</sup> is that the victims of that violence have not been acknowledged, compensated and afforded the opportunity for closure. For many MLF activists, the *gukurahundi* is viewed as a part of ethnic cleansing of the Ndebele.<sup>148</sup> Because no justice was served, anger was bottled up and sustained for too long and

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<sup>145</sup> See *U Mhlahlo we Sizwe sika Mthwakazi*, “Restoration of Ndebele sovereignty”, See also “Statement by Mthwakazi Liberation Front”. See also <http://mthwakaziblogspot.com>, for more details.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* See also the map attached on page 3 illustrating the areas that MLF claim to fall under Mthwakazi, which literally divides Zimbabwe into two almost equal halves.

<sup>147</sup> CCJP AND LRF, *Breaking the silence*.

<sup>148</sup> See CCSF, “National Healing and Reconciliation Position Paper”, July 2009, p 27.

found expression through calls to secede, which has put to serious question the idea of the nation-state of Zimbabwe.<sup>149</sup> Potentially, this has larger ramifications, including large-scale bloodshed.

Evidently therefore, the government's top-down blanket amnesty for the perpetrators of the violence, both dissidents and state agencies, did not come any closer to the victims' needs. Instead, there is need to do away with mentality of the elite, in the passive revolution style, determining the way forward for the majority. Instead, as Dumiso Dabengwa has rightly stated, there is need for victims' concerns to be heard and prioritised. In his words: "We were the victims. We are the victims. We are the survivors. Only we can tell our story. Only we know how we want to be healed. Obviously, we need the rest of the people to assist us to put behind this horrible episode in our lives."<sup>150</sup>

Being heard is important enables some catharsis for the victims. Notwithstanding its shortcomings and widespread contestations, the TRC of South Africa, for example, was important in helping the victims to reach closure by merely being afforded the space to relay their horrific experiences under apartheid South Africa.<sup>151</sup> This, however, went alongside the perpetrators acknowledging guilt. In Zimbabwe the CCJP/LRF report also highlighted the importance of such an opportunity to the victims, which was found to lead to "psychological healing."<sup>152</sup> Secondly, it affords the victims the opportunity to choose how they would want to be healed. For Shurugwi, as discussed at the Makusha meeting, and from the cases highlighted in Chapter Five, it is through the paying of restitution by the individual perpetrators to their victims which will constitute

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<sup>149</sup> See James Muzondidya and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Echoing silences: Ethnicity in post-colonial Zimbabwe, 1980-2007", *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol 7, Number 2, 2007, p 287.

<sup>150</sup> See Dumiso Dabengwa, President of the revived Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), in "ZAPU against secession of Matebeleland" in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&Id=9203:zapu-against-secession-of-matebeleland&catid=39:opinion&Itemid](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&Id=9203:zapu-against-secession-of-matebeleland&catid=39:opinion&Itemid), Accessed 5 May 2011.

<sup>151</sup> See Terence M Mashingaidze, "Zimbabwe's illusive national healing and reconciliation processes, p 21.

<sup>152</sup> See CCJP/LRF, *Breaking the silence: Building true peace. A report on the disturbances in Matebeleland and the Midlands*, p 5.

“survivors’ justice” in Mamdani’s terminology to bring closure, in Dabengwa’s words, to the “horrible episode.”

### THE CASE FOR A “TRADITIONAL” JUSTICE METHOD IN SHURUGWI

The possibility of adopting a traditional or cultural-based TJ for local communities was highlighted in the ONHRI’s *Concept paper*, the Organ’s Green Paper. To this extent, and based on Zimbabwean and regional experiences, it posited that “long-lasting healing may not take root without national and local ceremonies by the people and their leaders, consistent with cultural timetables, practices and community participation.”<sup>153</sup>

Somewhat similar approaches have been employed elsewhere in Zimbabwe and on the African continent in recent times. In Zimbabwe the exhumation and reburials in rural Matebeleland following the Second *Chimurenga* and the *gukurahundi* killings under the Amani Trust-sponsored project in the early 2000s provides a classic case. Despite using Latin American forensic expertise, the reburials relied heavily on African spirit-appeasing practices.<sup>154</sup> David Maxwell, working among the Hwesa people of Katerere area of North East Manicaland, also established that the veneration of and the need to appease avenging spirits and other spirits by the Shona people was at the core of the people’s metaphysics.<sup>155</sup>

Elsewhere on the continent, notable examples come from the *magamba* spirits following the Mozambican civil war in the 1990s, the *Mato oput* method by the Acholi of Northern Uganda, and also the *gacaca* in Rwanda.<sup>156</sup> Arguably, there are limitations and criticisms in the methods highlighted from Uganda, Mozambique and Rwanda.

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<sup>153</sup> ONHRI, *Concept paper*, p 23.

<sup>154</sup> See Shari Eppel, “Healing the dead”.

<sup>155</sup> See David Maxwell, “Witches, prophets and avenging spirits: The Second Christian movement in North East Zimbabwe” in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol 25, Fasc 3, August 1995, in <http://www.jstor.org/Stable/1581363>, Accessed 2 March 2011, for a detailed discussion of *ngozi* and other spirits that are feared by the Hwesa people, and how they dealt with them, both using the traditional methods and the Christian ways, which recast them as demons.

<sup>156</sup> See Chandra Lekka Sriram and Suren Pillay, eds, *Peace vs Justice: The dilemma of transitional justice in Africa*.

However, they are useful *dispositifs*<sup>157</sup> for this research. As a result of this realisation, I concur with the ONHRI's call that "traditional means and cultural mechanisms of settling disputes or conflicts must be recognised and reinforced."<sup>158</sup> In furtherance to this, the Organ also mentioned the traditional practice of *kuripa ngozi*, as a basis for justice and long term peace for the surviving victims, as well as establishing peace with the spirits of the land.<sup>159</sup>

Based on my field research in Shurugwi, people still live for others, and for the good of their communities. Thus the violence that was committed on the individuals is seen as violation against the community at large.<sup>160</sup> In interviews in Shurugwi many informants kept referring to the need to cleanse the district, *kugeza ropa*<sup>161</sup> in Shona. This also fits the contentions by Muwati et al, Bhebe, and Ranger, cited already that have called for the nation to cleanse itself of the ghosts of previous violence. In this regard, *kuripa ngozi* stands out as probably a profound method that would heal both the individuals and the community of Shurugwi that also places significance on strong social bonds. Like Gwanda, Shurugwi is also a rural area where the people have little knowledge of, and little regard for, Western concepts of post traumatic counselling.<sup>162</sup> As already stated, the appeasing of spirits is one of the metaphysical foundations for a universal and long historical practice in Shurugwi with a long genealogy that links the living with the living-dead. In this African metaphysics or "ontology of invisible beings",<sup>163</sup> the living-dead are venerated for their influence on the lives of the living. Its adoption will therefore not

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<sup>157</sup> See Louis Althusser, cited in Adam David Morton, *Unravelling Gramsci*, p 42 who says that a *dispositif* is "a series of general theses on history which are literally contradictory, yet organised in such a way as to generate concepts not deducible from them, for the purpose of theorising an 'object' which in fact is a determinative object."

<sup>158</sup> ONHRI, *Concept paper*, p 22.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, p 24.

<sup>160</sup> See Shari Eppel, "Healing the dead to transform the living: Exhumation and reburial in Zimbabwe", Amani Trust, Paper presented at the *Regional and Human Rights' Contexts and DNA*, University of California, Berkeley, 26-27 April 2001, p 2, for a detailed discussion of this concept.

<sup>161</sup> *Kugeza ropa* has a much deeper meaning in Shona traditions than just cleansing. It also refers to appeasing district spirits that would have been angered by senseless spilling of blood as in the just ended violence.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, the Amani Trust established that communities did not have the knowledge of modern psychological terms, and that they still valued their age old traditions of appeasing the spirits.

<sup>163</sup> See Ramose cited in Dani W Nabudere, "*Ubuntu* Philosophy: Memory and Reconciliation", p 3.

only render restorative justice to the victims, it will also connect the present with their historically bequeathed tradition.

This method will not lessen the call for the top hierarchy, including senior army officers, MPs, senior government officials and the JOC, to be made accountable.<sup>164</sup> The conditions, however, as already argued, do not allow for this at the present moment. In the future with a change in circumstances, and possibly a change in government, this might be possible. Still, however, the scale and pace of trials as recorded elsewhere on the continent is worryingly low. To exemplify, Sriram has established that ICC trials for Rwanda and Sierra Leone had yielded only 40 and 10 convictions for perpetrators, respectively, by 2009<sup>165</sup>

Regarding TRCs, as Eppel and Raftopoulos have ably posited, there have been about twenty five truth commissions of inquiry into disappearance of people globally since 1974, with disappointing degrees of failure.<sup>166</sup> More relevant to Zimbabwe is the fact that there have been two government-sponsored violence fact-finding commissions in the post- independence period. These were the Dumbutshena (1981) and the Chihambakwe (1984) Commissions, into the Entumbane disturbances and the *gukurahundi* atrocities, respectively. Strikingly, none of the findings were made public, with the government, for example, claiming that the Chihambakwe Commission Report had been lost.<sup>167</sup>

By 2011, as seen earlier, the calls by NGOs and to some extent the MDC-T for a TRC had not succeeded. This rendered the call for a TRC a project based on a “combination of strong moral fervor and weak political analysis.”<sup>168</sup> At the time of writing this chapter,

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<sup>164</sup> See for example *Solidarity Peace Trust*, *Desperately seeking Sanity*, p 25.

<sup>165</sup> See Chandra Lekker Sriram, “Introduction: Transitional Justice and peace building”, p 17.

<sup>166</sup> See Shari Eppel and Brian Raftopoulos, “Political crisis, mediation”, p 14.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid*, p 16. See also Obert Gutu, *National Healing impossible without truth commission*, 27 July 2009, in <http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/gutu-national-healing-impossible-without-truth-commission.htm>, Accessed 18 April 2011.

<sup>168</sup> In a critique of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Mahmood Mamdani, “Reconciliation without justice”, *Southern African Review of Books*, November/December 1996, warned against high sounding processes that do not produce the intended results.

Mamdani's analysis seemed cogent as there were also allegations in the country about the military going into the districts fanning the message of violence against the electorate, ahead of impending elections.<sup>169</sup> Several reports were also made of violence, threats to violence or counter violence throughout the country in 2011.<sup>170</sup> As a result, while such calls for a commission of inquiry may be relevant, they may not be practical under the current political dispensation where ZANU-PF wants to hang on to power by all means.

As highlighted in Chapter 5, there is an asymmetrical distribution of power in the GNU with ZANU-PF controlling all the security-related ministries, despite sharing the Home Affairs ministry with the MDC-T. In addition, despite the division of executive powers between the President and the Prime Minister (Tsvangirai), the President (Mugabe) directly controls the Cabinet that has executive powers compared to the Prime Minister who heads the Council of Ministers, which does not have executive powers and which meets erratically compared to the cabinet that meets weekly.<sup>171</sup> Tsvangirai has also been derogatorily referred to as a mere senior minister in ZANU-PF circles.<sup>172</sup> In addition, as already discussed, ZANU-PF also has the unfair advantage of the state media, the security arms, a favourable judiciary (not least of which was the admission by the Attorney General Johannes Tomana that he supported ZANU-PF), and general immunity for its supporters.<sup>173</sup>

This power balance is crucial to any transitional justice mechanism because of the role that ZANU-PF allegedly played in the violence, firstly as a party and as a government.

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<sup>169</sup> See *The Deccan Herald*, Bangalore, India, 29 January 2011, story titled: "Mugabe's iron grip not about to loosen", <http://www.deccanherald.com>, accessed 29 January 2011, which wrote that threats of violence were swirling in the countryside with senior military personnel and traditional leaders at the forefront in Mashonaland province.

<sup>170</sup> See Chapter Five, for an in-depth discussion of the recurrence of violence in the country post-2009.

<sup>171</sup> See Eldred Masunungure, "Zimbabwe's agonising but irreversible political transition", a paper presented at the *European on African Studies 2009*, Institute of African Studies, University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany, 4-7 June 2009.

<sup>172</sup> See *Newsday*, 23 June 2011, "Plot to arrest Tsvangirai" in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-06-22-plot-to-arrest-tsvangirai>, Accessed 23 June 2011.

<sup>173</sup> CCSF, "National Healing and Reconciliation Position Paper", July 2009, pp 32 & 45.



Many reports point to the involvement of ZANU-PF in the violence. For example, it is accused of command responsibility where “the state, its officials, and members took no steps to prevent the violence ... to react to the violence, and has subsequently made very poor efforts to investigate ...reports and prosecute offenders.”<sup>174</sup> In addition, government vehicles and buildings were also used in the violence.<sup>175</sup> There are also reports that it abused public officials in rural areas such as chiefs.<sup>176</sup> Also, some statements by senior ZANU-PF party officials seem to be aimed at condoning violence. In this regard, President Mugabe, for example, warned white farmers of “very, very, very severe violence” if they tried to force farm invaders off the farms in 2000.<sup>177</sup>

More importantly still, as discussed in Chapter Five, by 2011, the JOC continued to operate a “deep state” and continued to side-line the inclusive National Security Council (NSC) where both Mugabe and Tsvangirai were members.<sup>178</sup> Because the JOC had not been disbanded the security sectors remained aligned to ZANU-PF, thus most institutions remained militarised and cases of impunity against human rights abusers continued.<sup>179</sup> According to Deputy Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, Obert Gutu, the MDC-T was powerless to stop the violence and bring the perpetrators to book because of the close links between the perpetrators and ZANU-PF and the securocrats.<sup>180</sup> This serves to affirm the recidivist tendencies by ZANU-PF and the cosmetic changes that were brought by the passive revolution of the GNU. It was therefore not surprising that

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<sup>174</sup> “Subliminal terror?” p 34.

<sup>175</sup> “Subliminal violence?” p 34.

<sup>176</sup> See *Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN)*, “Pre-election update No3, 22 January-6 February 2008”, cited in <http://www.zesn.org>, Accessed 20 February 2011.

<sup>177</sup> President Robert Mugabe quoted in an article titled “Mugabe threatens violence”, in *The Daily News*, 29 March 2000. Of significance is that this statement came a few days after other senior ZANU-PF officials, notably Dumiso Dabengwa, Edison Zvobgo and Vice President Joseph Msika had castigated these farm invaders and calling for their removal from the farms. See also *The Daily News*: 3 March 2000, 24 March 2000, for example.

<sup>178</sup> See CCSF, “National Healing and reconciliation position paper”, p 33.

<sup>179</sup> See *Newsday*, 17 January 2011, cited in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-01-16-security-sector-still-partisan>, Accessed 17 January 2011, for the larger piece of the article.

<sup>180</sup> See “MDC-T powerless over political violence” in *Newsday*, 28 February 2011, cited in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-02-28-mdc-powerless-over-political-violence>, accessed 01 March 2011. Senior military figures also continued to ridicule the MDC-T and Tsvangirai in 2011, see for example comments by Brigadier-General Douglas Nyikayaramba, *The Herald*, 23 June 2011.

despite being in the GNU, the MDC structures, including ministers, continued to be subjected to systematic violence, harassment, arrests and intimidation.

In addition to the above, ZANU-PF has also continued to ignore local and international court rulings that called on it to pay compensation to victims of state-led violence. Two examples from the international arena come from the now defunct SADC Tribunal. These two are, firstly, the ruling in the Mike Campbell (Pvt) Ltd vs the Republic of Zimbabwe case number 2 of 2007.<sup>181</sup> The second case is the January 2011 determination in the Barry Gondo and others vs the Government of Zimbabwe.<sup>182</sup> In both cases the SADC Tribunal ruled that the government had to compensate these victims of violence. However, the government through the Minister of Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Patrick Chinamasa, claimed that it did not recognise the legality of the tribunal.<sup>183</sup> The ZANU-PF structures continued to work against the SADC Tribunal until it was dissolved in May 2011.<sup>184</sup>

Traditional mediation is also cheaper compared to Western-style courts. This makes it more accessible as it does not normally demand a lot of resources and expertise. In Shurugwi one needs only ten dollars (US \$10) to have their case fully resolved by the headman and fifteen dollars at the chief's.<sup>185</sup> This is much more favourable when looked at against the court system where the process is not only more expensive, but is also complicated by the need for police reports, technical-legal jargon and the need for lawyers. Besides, such courts are mostly found in towns and cities. In Shurugwi the magistrates' court is in Shurugwi town and the High Court is permanently situated in Harare and Bulawayo, and sessional one at Gweru, which are almost 400, 300 and 33 kilometres away, respectively. The Western-style justice system in Zimbabwe is also

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<sup>181</sup> See Paidamoyo Muzulu, "Zimbabwe government should compensate violence victims-Tribunal", in *ZIMDIASPORA*, cited in <http://www.zimdiaspora.com/index.php?>, accessed 30 January 2011, for more on these cases.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> See "Summit dissolves Tribunal", in *The Herald*, 20 May 2011, cited in <http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?>, accessed 21 May 2011.

<sup>185</sup> Figures based on information I gathered during my fieldwork especially between December 2009 and July 2010. People can also pay in kind using chickens if they do not have the required cash.

fraught with delays and postponements which not only lead to delayed justice but to increased costs as well because the parties involved have to visit the courts on several occasions.<sup>186</sup> Because of the limited reach of the Western justice system, then traditional authorities have a big stake to play in the justice system of the people in the district at this crucial juncture of the transition from violence to a more democratic dispensation. However, the absence of legal representation may work to the disadvantage of the less eloquent or those who cannot properly argue their case.<sup>187</sup>

The infrastructure also makes it worse. Between 2009 and 2010 I observed that the roads are badly damaged by neglect. There were again serious transport problems that made it very difficult to reach Western-style courts situated in towns. I have also established that the two police stations in the rural areas at Tongogara and Chachacha have a single vehicle, which makes their access to other parts very difficult. Besides their allocated bicycles, they do not have other means to get to other areas, except by the good will of the public.<sup>188</sup> I was also informed that police officers were not expected to pay any fare in public transport. However, in time they have extended this to private vehicles, whether by agreement or by force.

The “traditional” method of *kuripa ngozi* would also work for the rural area of Shurugwi because, like the other rural areas of Zimbabwe, it contains more people than the urban

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<sup>186</sup> Besides delays that have resulted in a serious backlog of cases, the justice system in the country has also been tainted with allegations of corruption. See for example, *Newsday* 17 January 2011, “Magistrate, prosecutor breathe fire” in <http://www.newsday.co.zw>, Accessed 18 January 2011, which contains an article in which Provincial Magistrate for Harare, Mishrod Guvamombe and area Public Prosecutor, Andrew Kumire, lamented the vices that have gripped the magistrates courts in Zimbabwe. The same article goes on to cite the Deputy Chief Justice Luke Malaba, who lambasted the prosecution in the country for “abusing the court process by delaying setting down of criminal appeals before the High Court.” What the two situations highlighted in this article show are the weaknesses of the justice system. The question to ask is: What would possibly happen to this judiciary system that seems already overwhelmed if the several several thousands of politically connected cases are all brought to it?

<sup>187</sup> See Monica Matavire, “Interrogating the Zimbabwean traditional jurisprudence and the position of women in conflict resolution, A case for Shona tribes in Muzarabani district”, in *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, February 2012, <http://www.ijhssnet.com/update/index.php/archives/16-journalabstract/journal-abstract/810-vol-1-no-21-si-december-2011abstract29.html>, Accessed 16 June 2012. p 222.

<sup>188</sup> I observed that these police officers do not pay transport fares be it in a public vehicle or private vehicle, which to some extent compromises their work and on the positive side, makes their task bearable.

area.<sup>189</sup> As highlighted in the General Introduction, Shurugwi rural district has a population of 69 954 people compared to 16 866 for the urban area.<sup>190</sup> Besides, rural areas have generally seen more violence compared to urban areas.<sup>191</sup> The above accords with Gayatri Spivak's who argues that the most silent victims of "pervasive rather than singular and spectacular" human rights violations are the poor villagers.<sup>192</sup>

## **UNHU AND SURVIVOR JUSTICE**

The rural members of Shurugwi live under the Shona generic of *unhu*, a varied form of *ubuntu* where members have a duty to the community and where problems between members have to be solved through dialogue. In the Zulu formulation, it is defined as *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* meaning "a person is a person through other persons."<sup>193</sup> For Zimbabwe, *unhu* has been defined as "I am because you are, and without you there can be no me"<sup>194</sup> that encapsulates the African collective identification and communalist identity and destiny. Tutu succinctly captures it by stating that "my humanity is caught up, bound up and inextricable in yours. When I dehumanise you I inexorably dehumanise myself."<sup>195</sup>

Under *unhu* among the Shona, one's worth is thus relational, and measured against collective societal values. According to this philosophy therefore a person only exists as a part of a corporeal whole, the larger community. In this way, the violence that was committed on the individuals has to be seen as violation on the community at large or

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<sup>189</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, Central Statistical Office, 2002 Population Census Results.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> I have in Chapter Three explained the association between ZANU-PF and the rural areas dating back to the days of the Second Chimurenga, and in the post 2000 period these rural areas have seen more violence compared to urban areas. The war veterans, Green bombers, and ZANU-PF youths first operated in rural areas before they were seen in the urban areas. Also bases were also established in rural areas earlier than in urban areas. See Tony Reeler, *Subliminal terror*, and Solidarity peace Trust, *Desperately seeking Sanity*, for more details.

<sup>192</sup> See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Righting wrongs", p 528.

<sup>193</sup> Dani Wadada Nabudere, "Ubuntu philosophy: Memory and reconciliation", p 3.

<sup>194</sup> ONHRI Concept paper, p 8.

<sup>195</sup> Desmond Tutu cited in Dani Wadada Nabudere, "Ubuntu philosophy", p 5.

as violation against humanity or against “*unhu hwedu*” in Shona. When taken in the context of Shurugwi where the community represents a larger family the importance increases. This is the equivalent of the communalist adage: “an injury to one is an injury to all.”

Related to this, under this *unhu* worldview, the search for a resolution to the violence is rooted in community means like *kuripa ngozi*, which, while placing greater emphasis on the victim also recognises the wrongdoer’s and community needs in an effort to foster continued mutual existence. As such, “once committed, violence and its consequences cannot be ignored for political expediency. It needs to be addressed in order for individuals, communities and the nation to realise peace and meaningful development.”<sup>196</sup> What we also have to note is that the principle of the traditional African justice method lies more in the “arbitration and mutual concessions”<sup>197</sup> rather than in the final acquisition of one’s rights, with the ultimate aim being the attainment or the restoration of peace. In this regard, “conflicts are brought before courts but are resolved through reconciliation. If there is a trial each party has to make reciprocal concessions, so that it can, eventually, be terminated amicably.”<sup>198</sup> Muwati, et al, sum it succinctly and observe that the African conflict resolution mechanisms put “emphasis on harmony, balance, peace, inclusion, restoration and participation.”<sup>199</sup> Under *kuripa ngozi*, in the Shurugwi case, this will be after some form of dialogue and mutually agreed compensation. The underlining theme will be the give and take to both parties, which accords with the legal culture of most African societies as differentiated from, say, civil law, common law or Islamic traditions.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, “Echoing silences”, p 10.

<sup>197</sup> Hoecke and Warrington, *Ibid*, p 508.

<sup>198</sup> Mark van Hoecke and Mark Warrington, “Legal cultures, Legal Paradigms and Legal Doctrine: Towards a new model for comparative law”, in *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, vol 47, July 1998, The British institute of International and Comparative Law and Cambridge University Press, cited in <http://www.jstor.org>, p 506.

<sup>199</sup> Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, “Echoing Silences”, p 5.

<sup>200</sup> Mark van Hoecke and Mark Warrington, “Legal cultures, Legal Paradigms and Legal Doctrine, p 508.

By articulating survivor justice, *kuripa ngozi* transcends mere justice. It also opens up the opportunity for healing the communities affected by violence. In this case I am using the definition of healing given by David Maxwell, which is the “totality of activities and ideas which help both individuals and wider community to come to terms with the experience of violence and bereavement caused by war, in a manner which allows them to continue their daily existence.”<sup>201</sup> What is particularly important about *kuripa ngozi* is its articulation of justice at both the physical and the metaphysical domains. In this cosmogony, while material compensation is paid at the physical level, the *ngozi* spirit “fights from the metaphysical front for truth, restoration and justice.”<sup>202</sup> As Nabudere notes, the twinning of the metaphysical and the real-life forces should be understood in terms of *ubuntu* philosophy where there is an “inextricable bond between *Umntu* [living person], the Ancestors [Living dead] and the Supreme Being [God].”<sup>203</sup>

It is assumed that by paying restitution, the spirit of the dead or the wounded spirit is appeased because the restitution enables the continuation of the victim’s social and economic lines. Simultaneously, the living re-establish peace and also re-establish the important communal relations that are so vital in the rural communities such as Shurugwi. What we have to note is that these should not be taken as simply useless traditions or superstition, but rather as important common sense notions that inform the communities’ good sense that in turn regulate people’s experiences in the complex cosmogony of the indigenous Zimbabweans.

Traditional authorities are still powerful in the district. As already pointed out earlier, despite undergoing some metamorphosis from their pre-colonial status under the colonial and post-colonial times, they continue to adjudicate over most civil cases.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> David Maxwell, “Witches, prophets and avenging spirits”, p 327.

<sup>202</sup> Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, “Echoing silences”, p 11.

<sup>203</sup> Dani Wadada Nabudere, “*Ubuntu* philosophy”, p 5.

<sup>204</sup> In the NAZ, *Delineation Reports General: Selukwe District S2929/7/6, 1968*, is found duties and functions of chiefs and headmen in Selukwe now Shurugwi. These were to mediate in “adultery, lobola disputes, quarrels between husband and wife, trespass, disputes as to property and fights.” The most common of the cases from the list are ‘disputes’ and ‘fights’ of various kinds, which makes them ready for ‘disputes’ with a political root.

Regarding this, they have been adjudicating over marital disputes, land disputes, child maintenance cases and minor quarrels.<sup>205</sup> As such, the addition of political cases might not necessarily be a complete disjuncture with their other everyday roles. In fact it might be a welcome development that might add to their status as leaders of their communities. It was on the basis of their long held authority in rural areas, as leaders of their communities and as the link between their communities and the spiritual world that chiefs and other traditional structures were chosen as heads of “Ward Centres” in the hierarchical structure of the ONHRI at the lower levels.<sup>206</sup> Significantly, this derived in part to their re-invented role in the late post-colonial Zimbabwe.

I also found that these community courts have a huge potential to aid the process of the re-establishment of peace and justice in the district, which can be a model for other rural districts of the country. During my field work I established that most of these “traditional” courts sit on Thursdays, which are *chisi* or rest days, and some occasionally sit on Sundays, another day most people take off from their fieldwork to attend church services. After attending up to ten such courts, I was left convinced that given the chance and space to help resolve petty political crimes and violence that occurred between neighbours and extended family during the violence of 2000 to 2008, these courts have the potential to be spaces for just conflict resolution. What might be needed is some form of standardisation with regard to the forms of compensation for the different levels of violations.

At these courts, I found that people are given the platform to put forward their case, to respond and even to call upon their witnesses. The key aspect of this process is that the

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<sup>205</sup> The relationship between traditional chiefs and governments in both the colonial and post-colonial periods has been ambiguous, and has been characterised by a love-hate relationship, which relationship shifted with the demands that the respective governments wanted chiefs to play. See A.K.H Weinrich, *Chiefs and Councils in Rhodesia*, Heinemann, London, 1971, see also G.C. Passmore, *Hidden Conflict: A Documentary record of Administrative Policy in colonial Zimbabwe, 1950-1980*, Praeger Publishers, Westport, 2002, and also J.F.Holleman, *Chief, Council and Commissioner*, London, Oxford University Press, 1969, for developments between chiefs and the colonial administration. See Amanda Hammar, “The Making and Unma(s)king of Local Government,” in Zimbabwe, in A. Hammar, et al, (eds), *Zimbabwe’s Unfinished Business*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2003, for the post-colonial relationships.

<sup>206</sup> ONHRI, “Concept paper”, p 14.



accused has to acknowledge culpability and show contrition. After this, the chief's or headman's ruling council would consult to determine the amount of restitution to compensate the victim. Again, before a final recommendation is made, both the aggrieved and the perpetrator are called to make submissions to the verdict of the village or community before the final verdict is announced to the villagers. As such, the process that is based on such a wide participation of the villagers and one that has been in place in the district helping to solve civil cases, would be a potential space for the establishment of peace, justice and reconciliation in an area paralysed by political violence.

However, the close association of the chiefs and headmen with ZANU-PF might be their main weakness. They were a vital cog in the machinery that was responsible for spreading violence. Because of this they cannot play two roles: that of accused and adjudicator. Indeed from my research I established that in Shurugwi some chiefs' cars were reportedly used to transport ZANU-PF thugs involved in violence against opposition supporters. This means that chiefs might also have a direct conflict of interest in the cases they are supposed to superintend and mediate. The danger might be situations of crony judgements, where relatives of traditional authorities could receive favourable outcomes. A similar line of argument comes from Wilfred Scharf who established that in Botswana outcomes of cases adjudicated by chiefs more often mirrored ties with the chiefs.<sup>207</sup> Potentially, this might add to increased cases of extortion by the chiefs. In this regard alleged perpetrators and or the aggrieved might be made to pay huge sums by these leaders to get favourable outcomes for their cases. This notwithstanding, dissatisfied disputants can take leave to appeal in the magistrates courts. This shows that traditional courts are not completely divorced from the formal national Western justice system. Besides, the traditional courts are only allowed by law

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<sup>207</sup> See Wilfred Scharf, "Non state justice systems in Southern Africa: How should governments respond"? p 66.

to levy fines that are not so huge. Headmen courts are allowed a maximum of US\$ 100-00, and the chiefs US\$ 500-00.<sup>208</sup>

Also all chiefs in Zimbabwe belong to the largely partisan Council of Chiefs, whose president Chief Fortune Charumbira does not hide his support for ZANU-PF. While this might be true, we ought to realise that virtually no structure was left unaffected or untainted by the political violence and political association including the judiciary.<sup>209</sup> Also, chiefs and headmen have traditionally had the important role of acting as intercessors between the dead and the living, hence in crisis situations and in good times they have led their communities in communication with the spirits. As such chiefs can be called upon to play this important role to help solve the cases of political violence between neighbours and families.

In addition, most of the cases on political violence brought before the judiciary since 2000 have not been finalised to date. Some of these include the thirty-eight MDC petitions to the High Court in 2000, and the one by Morgan Tsvangirai on the 2002 disputed presidential election. All of these cases ran into 2005 and 2008, respectively, rendering them academic.<sup>210</sup> Thus the case against the chiefs and headmen is not extraordinary. Thus given the chance they can still help mediate between many more cases, which will also be an opportunity to rescue their battered image. It will also be interesting to note that chiefs have had this sort of relationship with the colonial government, especially in the late 1960s and the 1970s,<sup>211</sup> but managed to transform into close allies of ZANU-PF from the second decade of independence.

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<sup>208</sup> See Monica Matavire, "Interrogating Zimbabwean traditional jurisprudence", pp 20-21.

<sup>209</sup> Among the cases that have been levelled against the judiciary have been allegations that senior appointments have been influenced by political patronage, also that judges have received rewards from ZANU-PF violence including farms, which makes them complicit as well. See *The Herald*, 07 July 2008, "Zimbabwe: Magistrates, law officers get cars". The Attorney General, Johannes Tomana in 2008 also came out in the open about his ZANU-PF credentials- See CCSF, "National healing and reconciliation position paper", July 2009, p 32.

<sup>210</sup> For a nuanced discussion see "Subliminal terror?", pp 6-7.

<sup>211</sup> See Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and guerrilla war*, see also David Lan *Guns and Rain*,

As evidenced by calls for the acknowledgement of the violations and calls for compensation discussed in Chapter Five for long-lasting peace to exist people should be allowed to coexist and compensate each other for the political violations against each other. On the whole, however, the parameters of these indigenous courts have to be clearly spelt out to avoid abuse of the privilege and to avoid street justice or vigilantism, such as that which rocked South Africa in Gugulethu in 1998 and Khayelitsha in 2000.<sup>212</sup> Regarding this, Advocate George Bizos's words are instructive. Commenting on the debate on transitional justice in Zimbabwe, Bizos said: "I have heard that communities will start talking to one another. Yes, people within a divided community must start talking but they require, I think, some sort of structure in order to control the dialogue between them and offer some sort of apology, some sort of compensation for loss in order for the process to work."<sup>213</sup> These parameters that Bizos mentions should be able to deal decisively with cases of multiple and false accusations that may inadvertently crop up and complicate or even negate these attempts.

In addition, the traditional authorities dealing with these cases need to be empowered by law so that their judgements can carry authority, so that their mediations are enforceable. As Derrida, commenting on the relationship between force and justice, says, justice ought to resort to some form of force. He says, justice is not justice "if it does not have the force to be 'enforced'; a powerless justice is also not justice in the sense of *droit*."<sup>214</sup> He further contends that "force without justice is tyrannical. Justice without force is contradictory, as there are always the wicked; force without justice is

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<sup>212</sup> See Wilfred Scharf, "Non justice systems in Southern Africa: How should governments respond?" p28. See also, *News24*, 20 June 2011, "Vigilante Justice: 2 PE men necklaced", in *News24*, 20 June 2011, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Vigilante-justice-2-PE-men-necklaced-20110620>, Accessed 25 June 2011.

<sup>213</sup> See "Hot seat interview with George Bizos, Sekai Holland, Glen Mpani and Mary Ndlovu: Reconciliation, justice and national healing", cited in SW Radio Africa, 10 April 2009, in [http://kubatana.net/html/archive/demgg090410swradio.asp?sector=DEMGG&year2009&range\\_start=751](http://kubatana.net/html/archive/demgg090410swradio.asp?sector=DEMGG&year2009&range_start=751), Accessed 21 May 2011.

<sup>214</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Force of law: The mystical foundation of authority", in Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld and David Grey Carlson, eds, *Deconstruction and the Possibility of justice*, Routledge, New York and London, 1992, p 11.

accused of wrong. And so it is necessary to put justice and force together; and, for this, to make sure that what is justice is strong, or what is strong be just.”<sup>215</sup>

The centrality of *unhu* in *kuripa ngozi* as administered by traditional Shona courts and the “traditional” justice they superintend has for long fostered the articulation of “survivor’s justice” over “victor’s justice” in Mamdani’s terms. For Mamdani, the Nuremburg trials, the post-holocaust Israel treatment of the Palestinians as well the Tutsi version of post-genocide justice, resemble “victor’s justice” which was based on vindictiveness, vengeance, characterised by wanton trials and rooted on the attainment of victory over the adversary.<sup>216</sup> To him, this kind of justice has the potential of absorbing the state to the extent that it focuses on preserving that victory and neglecting other important issues, and more importantly, it has the danger of inciting the vanquished to want to seek revenge.<sup>217</sup>

Survivor’s justice, on the other hand, is hinged on looking at the surviving victim and surviving perpetrator as survivors, thus “transcending the opposition between the two” who have the common blessing of a life after a violent epoch and who have to seek a shared future.<sup>218</sup> The indigenous justice system of *kuripa ngozi* and other community courts in the district in their mediation of cases look into the future relations of the two parties living in shared spaces as they also try to consider mutual interests in seeking restoration. The indigenous justice system of *kuripa ngozi* fits the survivor justice billing because its mediation looks into the future relations of mutual interdependence for the two parties bound by a shared humanity. This is through the various processes undertaken: mutually inclusive dialogue, cleansing and reparations,<sup>219</sup> which help the restoration of social and economic relations between the two parties involved and their families. Similarly, by bringing the offended and perpetrator to the same meeting at the village assemblies in an attempt to find a mutually acceptable solution, the traditional

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid, p 11.

<sup>216</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *When victims become killers*, p 271.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, p 272.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid, p 272.

<sup>219</sup> Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, “Echoing silences”, pp 4 and 14.

version of justice in the district often leads to not only the two parties living there after in harmony, but their families as well.

There could also be other ways of looking at the indigenous or traditional transitional justice methods other than *kuripa ngozi*. However, I believe that these traditional methods will not be paradigmatically different from the one I am proposing in their quest for peaceful resolutions to conflicts, and the desire for the restoration of justice and also the restoration of previously normal everyday relations.

### **THREE LIGHTNING STROKES, AND OTHERS; AND THE CASE FOR *KURIPA NGOZI* IN SHURUGWI**

In this section I turn to discuss the cases that confronted me during the course of my research in the field that made me to think about *kuripa ngozi* as a means to transformative justice. Among others, I met victims of violence who were clamouring for compensation. There were also others that sought to pay compensation to those they had violated during the 2000 to 2008 violence period.

The first set of cases that I would want to discuss as highlighted in Chapter Five, bordered on occult beliefs. These were the case in which the family's three assets were struck by lightning; the cases where several perpetrators were affected by *ngozi* of their victims, including mysterious deaths in perpetrators' families; unexplained illnesses; as well as cases of some alleged perpetrators who had gone mad. On the positive side is the fact that the recently amended Witchcraft Suppression Act (2006) now recognises witchcraft (and other occult practices). Under the amendments, with the right "evidence" there may be grounds for prosecution at the law courts.<sup>220</sup> Important from the above is the state's recognition of non-scientific belief systems, which may mean that the cases highlighted above can be freely deliberated upon at the village and

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<sup>220</sup> See extract of the amendment in the *The Herald*, 10 May 2006.

headmen's courts. Potentially this may result in greater dialogue, restoration of relations and restitution.

Traditional leaders themselves are also keen to see some form of closure to the political violence. In an interview with one headman I was made aware of this. He said that "the district and country has seen senseless violence. Much of it was not at all necessary. People strained their relations, forgetting that after political differences they would need each other. That violence should not be repeated." When I asked him what he saw as the way forward, he categorically told me that "people needed to compensate each other for the wrongs committed." He went to state that "leaders at various levels of power (traditional, political or religious) need[ed] to come together and cleanse the district of the blood that was shed, and to ask for forgiveness from district spirits for the violence. We need to return to *tsika dzedu* (our indigenous/traditional ways)."<sup>221</sup> Throughout our discussion, he constantly made reference to the need for cleansing the district, *kugeza ropa* or *kuchenura dunhu*. What is clear from this interview is that traditional authorities who have largely been turned into key agents of violence in rural areas see its negative impact. A reference to a "return to traditions" should be taken to mean among other things the adoption of *kuripa ngozi* strategies to defuse tensions and to heal the community of Shurugwi.

Appeasing of spirits is not a new phenomenon in Shurugwi and Zimbabwe at large in the new millennium. Following a spate of vehicular accidents at Boterekwa pass, the Shurugwi traditional authorities, together with the District and Provincial government authorities organised a cleansing and ancestral appeasing ceremony at the pass site in August 2008. They meant to "cleanse" the blood that had been lost as a result of the accidents, and also to appease the district spirits whose anger was thought to be responsible for these accidents. Accounts obtained revealed that the Provincial Administrator, the Provincial Governor, the District Administrator, traditional chiefs and headmen were in attendance. As part of the rituals there were calabashes of traditional

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<sup>221</sup> Interview with a headman, 6 June 2010.

beer brew and food. Of interest is the fact that the beer was brewed using sorghum and maize donated by villagers, to show communality and as an affirmation of the age old practice where all have to contribute towards such ceremonies.<sup>222</sup>

A similar ceremony was also held at the National Sports Stadium in the capital Harare in 2003. This followed the death of about thirteen soccer fans following the Zimbabwe-South Africa soccer match. In this incident the soccer fans died in a stampede after the police fired teargas to quell violence from the stands. In the aftermath of this tragedy, the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) and the ministry of Education Sports and Culture organised a national cleansing and appeasing ceremony. This was meant to appease the spirits of the dead soccer fans, and to cleanse the national stadium of bad spirits. The occasion was attended by senior government officials, traditional leaders, traditional healers, soccer fans and soccer administrators in the country. This is notwithstanding the fact that the ZANU-PF government might have tried to win the support of urbanites by engaging in such a ceremony meant to appease the spirits of the dead. Also in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the government embarked on the reconstructions of important guerrilla sites outside Zimbabwe, such as Chimoio in Mozambique, in a bid to appease their spirits. This followed earlier similar ceremonies including reburials at former major refugee/guerrilla camps in Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania in the late 1990s in which senior government officials, traditional healers and chiefs attended.

There have also been cases where village heads and chiefs have invited traditional healers popularly called *tsikamutandas* to cleanse villages of witches and witchcraft omen.<sup>223</sup> These have been seen in many areas including Gokwe, Chivi and Zvishavane in the Midlands province. The above reinforces the belief in occult witchcraft in Zimbabwe.

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<sup>222</sup> The same method of collecting contributions to common causes is clearly illustrated by the system of collecting mealie meal from all villagers in situations of funerals. Other occasions where this communalism is witnessed include the mukwerera ceremony, where the whole district contributes towards food and beer for a rain making party, and *magadziro*.

<sup>223</sup> See "Arrest *tsikamutandas*, police urged" in *The Herald*, 25 June 2011, in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=13579:arrest-tsikamutandas-police-urged&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13579:arrest-tsikamutandas-police-urged&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131), Accessed 25 June 2011.



Residents of Shurugwi also recalled the operations of *tsikamutandas* in the 1980s and 1990s in the district that targeted the weeding out of witches.

Related to the violence in the period 2000 to 2008 in Shurugwi, *The Standard* newspaper in May 2010 reported that a prominent war veteran from Buhera had been terrorised by *ngozi* of the people he had allegedly killed in this period. As the story goes, the war veteran is said to have been going round the district offering sandals to the families of his victims as a form of appeasement.<sup>224</sup> The African Crisis also mentioned Sosana Mhongoyo also of Buhera, who reportedly uncovered the killers of her son, Tedi Chokuda, through his avenging spirit after he was slain in the moment of the political violence.<sup>225</sup> According to the story, Walter Marwizi, Caiphas Chimhete, and Patrick Basopo were discovered to have killed headmaster Tedi Chokuda just after the 2002 Presidential elections when Basopo's sister was possessed by Chokuda's spirit. Eventually Chokuda's family referred the matter to headman Mushumba for arbitration, whereupon Basopo's sister was again possessed by Chokuda's spirit that demanded compensation in asbestos sheets and a herd of cattle. A closer look at this case points to a strong resemblance to the cases that the *magamba* spirits revealed in Mozambique. Inside their courageous report, the CCJP/LRF, also discuss how some Fifth Brigade soldiers and other state operatives went back to parts of Matebeleland and the Midlands where they operated during the infamous *gukurahundi* period to seek forgiveness.<sup>226</sup>

I have also established from my field research that the practice of appeasing spirits is still widely done in Shurugwi. Firstly, when a person dies the locals conduct a spiritual autopsy.<sup>227</sup> They visit a traditional healer (*n'anga*) or prophet (diviners from African

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<sup>224</sup> See "Ngozi: Primitive superstition or reality?", in *The Standard*, 23 May 2010, cited in <http://www.thestandard.co.zw>, Accessed 21 June 2011.

<sup>225</sup> Walter Marwizi and Caiphas Chimhete, "Zimbabwe: Avenging spirits torment ZANU-PF terror militia" cited in <http://www.african-crisis.co.za/Article.php?ID=76100&>, accessed 30 January 2011.

<sup>226</sup> CCJP/LRF Breaking the silence, p 9.

<sup>227</sup> See Jens A Andersson, "Sorcery in the era of 'Henry IV': Kinship, mobility and mortality in Buhera District, Zimbabwe", in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol 8, No 3, September 2002, p 431, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3134534>, Accessed 14 March 2011, who qualifies the need for this

Christian churches) to confirm the cause of death, a process called *kurova gata or kuvhunzira*. It is usually after this that the dead can be buried. In other cases this is done immediately after burial. Should it be found that the deceased had been bewitched or aggrieved his or her spirit is invoked to avenge his death. A year after burial follows another process called *kurova guva or magadziro*, to bring the dead person's spirit home, is conducted.<sup>228</sup>

Again before *magadziro*, another process of *kubvunzira* is done to ascertain whether or not someone tampered with the spirit of the deceased. In Shurugwi, the Heroes' and Defence Forces holidays in early August have become popular days for the practice of *kurova guva*. Taking advantage of the long weekend around these August holidays, urbanites stream to the rural area, where they maintain a rural home, to specifically

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'autopsy' as rooted in the belief among the Shona (and Ndebele) that death is not natural, but is viewed as caused by "someone or something". As such in addition to the modern bio-medical autopsy, they also conduct an occult based one, which tries more to find who was responsible than what the cause of death was. In this case, although an illness may be noted as a cause of the death, still people want to know who was behind the illness. See also Peter Geschiere and Francis Nyamnjoh, "Witchcraft as an issue in the 'Politics of Belonging': Democratisation and urban Migrants' involvement with the Home village", in *African Studies Review*, Vol 41, No 3, December 1998, Published by the *African Studies Association*, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/525354>, Accessed 14 March 2011, p 78, have also established that the Bum of Cameroon share a similar perspective about death. They say that in cases of illnesses, misfortune, repeated setbacks and death, the Bum will visit a diviner to try to establish whether witchcraft was not behind these occurrences. See also Stephen Ellis, "Mystical weapons: Some evidence from the Liberian War", in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol 31, No 2, Religion and War in the 1990s, May 2001, p 226, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1581517>, Accessed 14 March 2011, who also says that to everything that happens: death, birth, misfortune or fortune, there had to be an explanation, that is, a cause for every effect. And, to all these witchcraft is a potential influence.

<sup>228</sup> This is similar to the Ndebele practice of *umbuyiso*, that is described by Shari Eppel, in "Healing the dead", p 7. The spirit of the dead person will be thought of as in the wilderness, and by holding this ceremony it is hoped that it comes home and to start to look after the living. The basic aim is to link the living with the living dead who are supposed to keep watching over the living. In this way by bringing the spirit 'home' mean two things: welcoming the spirit that was thought to be wondering to the living, and also to join it with the other family spirits. I have also participated in these ceremonies, and what I have also established is that both have been adulterated. People no longer visit *n'angas* only, but others visit Christian prophets for *kurova gata* and before *magadziro*. This may be related to charges demanded by traditional *nangas*, compared to Christian based seers/prophets who normally do not demand payment (but they accept 'gifts'/tokens of appreciation) as well as the spread of the Christian faith. The *magadziro* ceremony has also been infused with the Western concept of the unveiling of the tombstone, which means that people might have both a Christian ceremony and a traditional one in quick succession or on the same day.

participate in these rituals.<sup>229</sup> This renders the appeasement of spirits and fear of *ngozi* universal in the district. People still believe strongly that if they do not perform these rituals they risk the wrath of such spirits, which are assumed to cause bad luck. The importance of these rituals is to show that even though people of the district are largely Christian and subscribe to “modern” or Western values; they are still linked to the practice of respecting their ancestral spirits in the “traditional” discourse.

The above recalls the words of Nabudere who asserts that “through these invisible forces Africans seek explanations to certain happenings which cannot be explained by ‘normal’ or rational means.”<sup>230</sup> The case of the spiritual autopsy from Shurugwi certainly shows that although death is a common everyday occurrence it is still an “extra ordinary” event that cannot be “ordinarily” explained. Related to this, as Nabudere avers, conflicts are also a part of the “uncertainties of existence” that demand supernatural forces in the reconciliation process.<sup>231</sup> On the whole, one can say that the veneration of spirits and the fear of *ngozi* are not alien but are the rock upon which social and other relations in Shurugwi are ballasted.

Amani Trust, a now defunct NGO, conducted reburials of the victims of *gukurahundi* from about 1998 to the early years of the 2000s in selected villages of Gwanda in Matebeleland. These reburials surfaced key worldviews of these communities. Among these included the little regard the communities held for post-violence counselling.

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<sup>229</sup> The close association between the urbanites from Shurugwi cannot be overemphasised. Besides simply visiting the district for funerals or funeral rites of deceased relatives, the urbanites maintain close ties with the district for various political and economic reasons. To this extent, for example, Minister Francis Nhema partly used his ties as a close relative of paramount chief Nhema to launch his political career. In the same vein a lot others have used their rural ties to establish or strengthen their businesses, for example the late businessman and politician Marongwe, who maintained a fleet of buses in the district. There are numerous other examples. See Peter Geschiere and Nyamnjoh, “Witchcraft as an issue in the ‘Politics of Belonging’”, pp 76-77, and also Jens A Andersson, “Sorcery in the era of ‘Henry IV’, for more details. Andersson, p 426, for example captures the central ethos of these ties, and says “Typically, an urban career ends with a return to the land and, if possible, with the occupation of a position in the lineage-based leadership structure. The sick and dying also seek to return to their rural home areas whenever possible. Kinship solidarity is perceived as automatic and natural in this social universe of circulatory migration and identification with ancestral land.”

<sup>230</sup> Dani W Nabudere, “*Ubuntu* philosophy: Memory and Reconciliation”, p 4.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

According to Eppel, while there could have been cases of Post Traumatic Disorder or mixed anxiety or depression, the rural people did not readily identify with the above mentioned standard psychological methods and terminologies.<sup>232</sup> Secondly, the survivors and their families also perceived themselves as “primarily” members of their communities, rather than individuals. To them the violence of the *gukurahundi* and improper burials in mass or shallow graves and other such places, harmed first the community values, and later themselves.<sup>233</sup> They alluded to the harming of the unity in the areas as well as community spirits, whose children were lying in “wrong places”.<sup>234</sup> These aggrieved spirits were and are still believed to be responsible for the natural disasters in Matebeleland (famine and droughts).<sup>235</sup> Thus, any individualised healing had to take cognisance of the need to heal the larger communities as well. Overall, the reburials in marked graves, not only appeased and brought closure to the victims’ families, and “brought home” the spirits of the dead; but it also appeased the community at large. This is notwithstanding the fact that the forensic expertise relied on advanced technology that had been utilised in Latin America.

Besides the occult-based cases, I also came across various cases of petty crimes that were committed between neighbours and between family members.<sup>236</sup> These are cases that can be easily solved at the village or community level. Examples include a woman who claims that she was victimised because of her brother-in-law’s jealousy at her success as a cross border trader, cases where people grazed in each other’s fields as political punishment, as well as cases where people demanded payment for their chickens or goats that were stolen in the name of politics. These are cases that are “small”, and which might clog the justice system unnecessarily. They are also, if not checked, likely to keep the district paralysed.

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<sup>232</sup> Shari Eppel, “Healing the dead”, p 2.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, p 7.

<sup>236</sup> See Chapter Three for more details on the cases summarised below.

Similar petty issues and contretemps have been reported elsewhere in the country. Shari Eppel, for example, discusses the issue of three dinner plates that have contributed to political paralysis in Matebeleland.<sup>237</sup> For me, resolving these cases, through restoration, may lead to the restoration of the victims' self-worth among their peers. This will also go a long way in the restoration of their production and reproduction capacities that will profoundly assist in rebuilding social relations and the diffusion of tensions.

My discussion of *kuripa ngozi* is again informed by cases where perpetrators came out, to claim political party victimhood, and or to seek forgiveness from their victims. From Shurugwi, a case that I can highlight comes from one war veteran who told me that he participated in the violation of others because of his association with ZANU-PF. He thus claimed to be a victim through this association with ZANU-PF. He also claimed that he did what he did for the benefit of ZANU-PF so that he would not be labelled a sell-out.<sup>238</sup> He went on to also say that he was now bitter because after his role in the elections of 2008 he had not been adequately paid for his services in ensuring that the MP, Senator and the President had won. The fact that other people other than him had received farming equipment like scotch carts, harrows and ploughs made him feel rejected, used and abused. What is worse is that in the aftermath of the violence he had been left to face the neighbours and or families that he violated, on his own.

I also met other perpetrators who also claimed to have been coerced by their political parties to engage in this violence. Like the war veteran above, they also alleged that in the GNU era they had been abandoned by their respective political parties and were left to rebuild their social relations with their neighbours.<sup>239</sup> According to Chipso, whose story was also highlighted in Chapter Three, she started off as an MDC supporter. She

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<sup>237</sup> See Shari Eppel, "A tale of three dinner plates".

<sup>238</sup> See Chapter Three for the details of the interview that I had with him.

<sup>239</sup> See also Shari Eppel's discussion on a similar issue for Gomoza village of Lupane in her thought provoking article titled "A tale of Three Dinner Plates", p 13. She writes that "ZANU-PF...used people at the village level to attack their neighbours, and has now retreated and left local structures to face ostracism and retribution."

was forced to switch allegiance to ZANU-PF because of the death of the MDC structures in her area, and the associational benefits for ZANU-PF supporters. She also told me that because of her previous association with the MDC she was forced to participate actively in the processes that led to the violation of MDC supporters so that she could be more “acceptable”. These processes include the keeping of registers of attendance at meetings, active singing and identification of those that had to be beaten or disciplined at the rallies.

Another case involves Betty who also claimed that she was a victim of her associational membership of ZANU-PF. She claimed to have been in the team led by Jerry.<sup>240</sup> She had been promised a job after the elections. However, she has since been overlooked. To make matters worse, she fell sick and had not received visits from her party supporters. She thus felt used and abandoned.

These cases are similar to what war veteran Misheck Gora of Masvingo said “I am now alone and angry because these people abused us and they have now left us to face the people that we tortured in the name of Mugabe.”<sup>241</sup> A notorious war veteran from neighbouring Mberengwa district, Biggie Chitoro, also claimed being used and dumped by ZANU-PF. He also sought the forgiveness of his victims.<sup>242</sup>

There were also some cases where perpetrators initiated the paying of compensation to their victims. An example came from Bindura where the MDC chairperson for Bindura North, Tongai Jack, received a written apology and was also paid US\$1 500 by four jailed ZANU PF supporters, Wellington Chitehwe, Anywhere Mavhangira, Phillip Magaso and

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<sup>240</sup> See Chapter Three for a nuanced discussion of Jerry.

<sup>241</sup> See Solidarity Peace Trust, *Desperately seeking sanity*, See also, cases cited in *The Daily Nation*, also cited in the Solidarity Peace Trust, *Desperately seeking Sanity*, in an article headlined “Mugabe’s party deserts supporters”, p 24.

<sup>242</sup> See “I need forgiveness-Chitoro”, in *The Zimbabwean*, 6 May 2009, <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/news/20976/ai-need-forgiveness-a-biggie-chitoro.html>, Accessed 23 June 2011.

Jonah Nyakudya as compensation for his house in Chipadze that they had damaged. The compensation was not withstanding the jail sentence of 44 months.<sup>243</sup>

Related to this and in reference to the Moses Chokuda's *ngozi* from Gokwe, the avenging spirit was "laid to rest", after three years, through the Machayas' compensating the Chokudas. In this high profile case that involved the family of the Midlands Provincial Governor Machaya, and that of Isaac Gana, a ZANU-PF District Coordinating Committee Chairman, it was reported that the Machayas compensated the Chokudas an astounding US\$15 000-00 and 35 herd of cattle.<sup>244</sup>

Despite the rather outlandish restitution, the Chokuda case provides a strong case for *kuripa ngozi* in several important ways. Firstly, it involved a high ranking ZANU-PF official's family accepting liability, dialoguing with, and compensating the family of a slain ordinary MDC member. This was notwithstanding the determined efforts by the ZANU-PF and state structures to coerce the Chokudas to bury their son, and the serious but failing efforts by the state to conduct a pauper burial for the victim. As highlighted earlier, the efforts at pauper burial were thwarted by the victim who at times "disappeared" from the morgue. Thirdly, the case highlights an important aspect of *kuripa ngozi*, that the only way to stop a ravaging spirit is by paying restitution. Of significance again is the fact that only cash and cattle were used, and no woman (or human) was involved in the transaction, which is within the constitutional framework. Fourthly, it also ran alongside the prosecution in Western-style courts that sentenced the three murderers to eighteen years in prison.<sup>245</sup> The case too reveals the important

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<sup>243</sup> See [http://changezimbabwe.com/index2.php?option=com\\_content&do\\_pdf=1&id=2917](http://changezimbabwe.com/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=2917), Accessed 27 June 2011.

<sup>244</sup> See *The Herald*, 19 October 2011, "Governor pays US\$15 000, 35 cattle compensation to deceased family" in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=24181:governor-pays-us15-000-35-cattle-compensation-to-deceaseds-family&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=24181:governor-pays-us15-000-35-cattle-compensation-to-deceaseds-family&catid=38:local-news&Itemid=131), Accessed 19 October 2011.

<sup>245</sup> See *Newsday*, 26 September 2011, available on line at: <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-09-26-zanu-pf-youth-gets-18-years-for-murder>, accessed on 28 September 2012. See also *The Herald*, 28 September 2011, in [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=22313:governor-accepts-sons-jailing-for-murder&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=22313:governor-accepts-sons-jailing-for-murder&catid=37:top-stories&Itemid=130), Accessed on 28 September 2012.



role traditional chiefs play in mediation. In this case it was through the mediation efforts of chief Njelele that the case was resolved.<sup>246</sup>

Linked to the above, the *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum* cited in *Zimonline* 10 September 2011, reported that 76 percent of the 2000-2008 victims were still bitter or failing to cope. They also called for a “broad-based truth, recovery and reparation programme as the lasting solution to the national problem”, and importantly forty-nine percent of the victims wanted compensation.<sup>247</sup>

A related call for the compensation of victims of past violence came from some members of parliament. For example, MP Felix Magagela Sibanda stated that reparations and damages should be paid to victims of past eras of violence, both at the local level through improving infrastructure, and at the individual level where surviving spouses or children received financial compensation.<sup>248</sup>



#### **NGOZI, THE LAW AND JUSTICE**

In arguing for *kuripa ngozi* I am not calling for an extra-legal transitional justice method for Shurugwi. Firstly, I am using *kuripa ngozi* in the widest sense, that of the payment of restitution to all those victimised by the perpetrators of the violence, and not the traditional use of the young women and young girls for appeasement. In this regard, the aggrieved spirits are symbolised by aggrieved victims who are seeking justice. Also, whilst the Zimbabwean constitution is silent on the use of women and girls in *kuripa ngozi*, the practice is technically illegal if we were to consider other laws contained in the constitution. The Sexual Offences Act, 9, 21, for example, states that:

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<sup>246</sup> See *Newsday*, 27 February 2012, “Machaya still to pay murder compensation balance”, in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2012-02-27-machaya-still-to-pay-murder-compensation-balance/>, Accessed 27 February 2012.

<sup>247</sup> See *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum* cited in *Zimonline* 10 September 2011, “Violence victims still bitter” in <http://www.zimonline.co.za/Article.aspx?ArticleId=6809>, Accessed 10 September 2011.

<sup>248</sup> See *Newsday*, 08 August 2011, “Put Transitional justice mechanisms in place” in <http://www.newsday.co.zw/article/2011-08-08-put-transitional-justice-mechanisms-in-place>, Accessed 09 August 2011.

Any person who, whether or not married to the other person, without the consent of that person- (a) with the male organ, penetrates any part of the other person's body; or, (b) with any object other than the male organ, penetrates the other person's genitalia or anus; or (c) engages in fellatio or cunnilingus with the other person; shall be guilty of an offence and liable, subject to Section Sixteen.....to penalties provided by law for rape. Penetration to any degree shall be sufficient for the purposes of paragraphs (a) and (b).<sup>249</sup>

In addition Section 14 of the constitution states that "No person shall be held in slavery or servitude or required to perform forced labour."<sup>250</sup>

Again, the Domestic Violence Act (2007), also strongly argues against such violence against spouses in the home.<sup>251</sup> Added to this, such a practice would not succeed in the face of strong lobby by women and gender equality groups in the country. Some of the powerful of these groups include Musasa project, Girl Child Network, Women and Law in Southern Africa.<sup>252</sup> Indeed the Girl Child Network and the police at one time stopped the transference of five young girls who had been pledged by their families to appease Gibson Kupemba's *ngozi*.<sup>253</sup>

It should also be highlighted that even in the traditional or archetypal form of *ngozi*, its abuse was limited mainly because of the interventions of the spirits. As Maxwell says

*ngozi* cults memorialise the dead through the agency of the living, providing their families the opportunity to grieve and mourn their loss. Often in a war the families of 'sellouts' were unable publicly to attend to their dead for fear that they would be cast as sellouts. Moreover, the *ngozi* host, along with the

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<sup>249</sup> *The Constitution of Zimbabwe.*

<sup>250</sup> *The Constitution of Zimbabwe.*

<sup>251</sup> *The Constitution of Zimbabwe.*

<sup>252</sup> See Nyarai Kachere, "Virgins forced into marriage to "appease" evil spirits" in <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=48630>, Accessed 16 May 2011, who cites the pressure that the Girl Child Network provided in the kuripa ngozi case of the murdered Gibson Kupemba of Honde Valley in Manicaland in 2009. There has also been strong lobbying by some of these organisations at the International level, see for example, United Nations Human Rights Committee, "Equality Now: Submissions to the UN Human Rights Committee", 62<sup>nd</sup> Session, March 1998, cited in [http://www.equalitynow.org/english/campaigns/un/unhrc\\_reports/unhrc\\_zimbabwe\\_en.pdf](http://www.equalitynow.org/english/campaigns/un/unhrc_reports/unhrc_zimbabwe_en.pdf), accessed 31 January 2011.

<sup>253</sup> See *The Sunday Mail*, 12-18 February 2012, "Kupemba's lone battle"

traditional healer, is in a prime position to mediate between the two families involved, and thus bring about reconciliation and restitution.<sup>254</sup>

Although this would apply to a few of the cases recorded for Shurugwi, it brings out the checks and balances that affected the operation and use of the system of *kuripa ngozi*.

## **ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL AMBIVALENCES OF COMMON SENSE BELIEFS**

The ontologies and epistemologies of the occult concepts of *uroyi* (witchcraft and sorcery) and *ngozi* intimated above are not to be taken as given. Rather, they are problematic, dynamic, unstable and controversial. This is largely due to their being rooted in metaphysics. However, such occult beliefs and practices serve an important purpose of opening up the philosophy of the *ubuntu* cosmos. As Nabudere explains, in this cosmos the living are combined with spirits who have an “existence and beingness” as “unknown” or as “invisible beings”,<sup>255</sup> who, in a large measure, govern the social conduct of-, as well as defining the lived experiences of indigenous Africans. “Through these invisible forces” “Africans seek explanations to certain happenings, which cannot otherwise be explained by “normal” or “rational” means.”<sup>256</sup>

Many studies on occult practices on the African continent have revealed that times of transition and potentially challenging moments have resulted in increased reference to witchcraft, sorcery and avenging spirits. Andersson, for example, has shown that in Buhera there was a serious correlation between reported cases of witchcraft and a rise in the incidences of HIV/AIDS in the 1990s.<sup>257</sup> To Andersson, therefore the discourse of witchcraft, in the Buhera case, and in the Second Chimurenga, was symbolic of

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<sup>254</sup> See David Maxwell, “Witches, prophets and avenging spirits”, p 328.

<sup>255</sup> Dani W Nabudere, “*Ubuntu* Philosophy: Memory and Reconciliation” p 4.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> See Jens A Andersson, “Sorcery in the era of ‘Henry IV’, pp 425, and 446.

insecurities people faced in times of huge threats and difficult moments that cause a rise in tensions and social insecurity.<sup>258</sup>

Terence Ranger argues similarly and posits that many rural areas of Zimbabwe witnessed a flurry of tensions in the early 1980s following the mass killings of so-called witches by guerrillas during the Second Chimurenga, which necessitated a lot of witch-finding and witch-cleansing activities.<sup>259</sup> This sort of thought also recalls the works by Peter Geschiere and Francis Nyamnjoh; and also Geschiere and Cyprian Fisiy, who posit for the centrality of jealousy in witchcraft accusations in situations of differential economic progress between kin, most notably between relatives living in rural areas.<sup>260</sup>

In such situations elaborated above, the occult cases are useful in the understanding of the larger societal threats people are confronted with, and how their common sense interprets them. Also as Max Gluckman, cited in Geschiere and Fisiy, points out, the belief in these occult practices “emphasise the threat to the wider social order, which is contained in immoral sentiments” and these beliefs render the possibility of maintaining social order among communities by making people observe social virtues.<sup>261</sup>

In Shurugwi, the threat has to be seen as political violence of the period 2000 to 2008 that ruptured the social fabric in Shurugwi and the constellations it triggered. Ashforth, from his study of witchcraft in post-apartheid South Africa, also posits similarly. To him, increased reference to occult practices was rooted in “spiritual insecurity” that was closely linked to other insecurities: poverty, violence, political oppression and the scourge of HIV and AIDS. These insecurities resulted in the subversion of the *ubuntu* concept to “a person is a person through other people”, and added that, because

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid, pp 425 and 445-446.

<sup>259</sup> See Terence Ranger, “Review: Healers and Hierarchies”, in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 13, No 2, Special Issue on the political and Economy of health in Southern Africa, January 1987, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2636862>, Accessed 15 March 2011, for a nuanced explanation.

<sup>260</sup> See Peter Geschiere and Francis Nyamnjoh, “Witchcraft as an issue in the ‘Politics of Belonging’”; and Peter Geschiere and Cyprian Fisiy, “Domesticating Personal violence: Witchcraft, courts and confessions in Cameroon”, in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol 64, No 3, 1994, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1160784>, Accessed 14 March 2011.

<sup>261</sup> Max Gluckman, cited in Peter Geschiere and Cyprian Fisiy, “Domesticating Personal Violence”, p 325.

potentially “they can destroy you.”<sup>262</sup> However, as Geertz shows, the rise in incidences of occult cases in crises is

... in this respect at least, a kind of dummy variable in the system of commonsense thought. Rather than transcending that thought, it reinforces it by adding to it an all-purpose idea which acts to reassure the (locals) that their fund of commonplaces is, momentary appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, dependable and adequate.<sup>263</sup>

Importantly too, Ashforth’s compelling attempt at thinking justice for such people living under the shadow of witchcraft is illuminating to this study of *ngozi* in Shurugwi. He says his work was primarily “an attempt ... to think about connections between living in a world without justice and living in a world with witches and how these two features of life might affect the cause of democracy”<sup>264</sup>, and also what “justice means in a spiritually insecure world.”<sup>265</sup> Taken together with the other threats to the existence of people in Soweto, that is HIV and AIDS, poverty, violence and political repression, that Ashforth also discusses, the issue of witchcraft as a factor affecting social relations in Soweto therefore plays a crucial mediating role in terms of how people conceive of justice.

Further to this, I am of the view that justice should be based on what the people on the ground want and conceive in their everyday experiences as justicable. Thus the everyday practice and philosophy should form a backdrop upon which justice and or transitional justice is rooted. In the case of *kuripa ngozi*, it conforms to the normative standards of the view of justice in the district that have restoration at the heart of future engagements, as evidenced by demands of victims during field work and also in the meeting at Makusha hall, cited earlier. It also conforms to the traditional or cultural means that the ONHRI in its *National healing and reconciliation position paper* intimated. What, however, may be needed, as Advocate George Bizos quoted earlier, is the setting of parameters to regularise the procedures for this mechanism in dealing with post-conflict Shurugwi.

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<sup>262</sup> See Adam Ashforth, *Witchcraft, violence and democracy*.

<sup>263</sup> Clifford Geertz, “Culture as common sense practice”, p 11.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid*, p xiv.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid* p 86.

There is also a need to transcend the binary introduced by colonialist and Marxist discourses about rational and non-rational practices especially as they are applied in relation to Third World countries and Third World cultures. This binary can be set broadly as “reason and humanism”, on the one hand, and “emotion and faith”, on the other,<sup>266</sup> which brings the attendant binaries: “tradition/modernity, rational/non-rational, intellect/emotion”.<sup>267</sup> In this regard, these dominant discourses dismiss, and re-inscript third world traditional or indigenous laws and social practices as largely superstitious.<sup>268</sup> These discourses have their roots in the 18<sup>th</sup> century European enlightenment, which conceptualised anything that has reference to religion as non-rational.<sup>269</sup> At another level Christianity also spread this hegemonic discourse and perceived and othered local beliefs as “stupendous”,<sup>270</sup> which meant the inscription of illegality and their outlawing.<sup>271</sup>

From the discussion above, one discerns a two-pronged approach that firstly deployed Christianity and education as hegemonic apparatuses; and secondly colonial legal enactments and coercion to exterminate indigenous belief systems, in a kind of a re-enactment of the Gramscian hegemony and domination.<sup>272</sup> Significantly these discourses persist in the postcolonies. In South Africa, for example the Witchcraft Suppression Act still survives as a carryover from the colonial period. For Zimbabwe, the same act thrived for twenty-six years after independence, to 2006 when it was amended. This continued existence of such legislation also makes the binary of

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<sup>266</sup> Dipesh Charkrabarty, “Subaltern histories and post enlightenment rationalism”, in Vinayak Chaturvedi, ed, *Mapping subaltern studies and the postcolonial*, Routledge, London, 2000, p 24.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid, p 26.

<sup>268</sup> See Joseph Pugliese, “Rationalised violence and legal colonialism: Nietzsche contra Nietzsche” in *CARDOZO Studies in law and literature*, Fall/Winter, 1996, p3, see also Tejaswini Niranjana, *Readers of current Indian thought*, West Heavens, 2010, p 193, who discusses how religious practices of the Hindu and Moslems in India were denigrated for “their” “insecurity, mendacity, perfidy, and venality”, see also Dipesh Charkrabarty, “Subaltern histories”, pp 22-26.

<sup>269</sup> See also Dipesh Charkrabarty, “Subaltern histories”, pp 22-26.

<sup>270</sup> This is especially captured by the words of the Scottish Missionary Alexander Duff, cited in Dipesh Charkrabarty, “Subaltern histories”, p 24, who, arguing against Hinduism in 1839, posited that it was “a stupendous system of error.”

<sup>271</sup> See Joseph Pugliese, “Rationalised violence”, p 3.

<sup>272</sup> See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, Orient Longman, Chennai, 1998, p 12.

modernity/scientism versus religion/custom/ignorance persist. There is need therefore to move beyond this binary, and avoid engaging, in what Preserved Smith calls “propaganda of reason”.<sup>273</sup>

In the context of the difficulties in Shurugwi, following the violence that has paralysed social relations, there could be some need to strategically make use of this not so modern or scientific mode of *kuripa ngozi*, but one that is culturally rooted and widely accepted in the district, to solve the problems.<sup>274</sup> As the American Anthropological Association observed, there is need to value and equate cultures, not least because all cultures are supposed to be equal, but also because there is no scientific way of contesting the different “acceptable standards” in these cultures. Treating the common sense fear of *ngozi* as a cultural system with a “value and validity” in the Geertzian sense helps us too to understand this as a mode by which Shurugwi people engage with - and interpret - their worldview, penetrate modernity and, use it as a means of “coping with everyday problems in an everyday way with some effectiveness.”<sup>275</sup>

We have to also emphasise that while this could be controversial and non-scientific, in the rural areas of Zimbabwe and the world over, belief systems are not based on secularism. Rather, they are based on religiosity, mythologies and lived experiences, the facets of common sense. This therefore enables one to imagine the communities of Shurugwi as people who are not “abstracted, autonomous, ahistorical actors” but are “embedded in a political landscape with a distinctive history”<sup>276</sup> from which they derive meaning for their worldview. As such it might thus be useful to consider the link between the “spontaneous philosophy” around *ngozi* and mysterious deaths and the

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<sup>273</sup> Preserved Smith, cited in Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Subaltern histories”, p 25.

<sup>274</sup> See “Statement on Human Rights” Submitted to the Commission on Human Rights, United Nations, by The Executive Board, American Anthropological Association, in *American Anthropologist*, Vol 49, No 4, Part 1, Oct-Dec 1947, cited in <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-7294%28194710%2F12%292%3A49%3A4%3C539%3ASOHR%3E2%3E2.0.CO%3B2-0>, Accessed 21 January 2011.

<sup>275</sup> Clifford Geertz, “Common sense as cultural practice”, p 8.

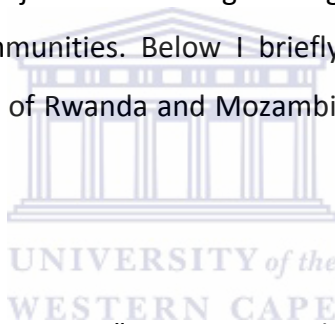
<sup>276</sup> Sheila Meintjes, quoted in “Gender and truth and reconciliation commissions: Comparative reflections”, in Chandra Lekha Sriram and Suren Pillay, (eds), *Peace versus Justice: The dilemma of transitional justice in Africa*, p 98.



various other misfortunes befalling those that were at the forefront of the violence at the grassroots level as a foundation for conceptualising transitional justice in Shurugwi.

### **CONTINENT-WIDE MODELS OF “TRADITIONAL” JUSTICE: *GACACA* AND *MAGAMBA***

The traditional courts in Shurugwi, and possibly in the whole of rural Zimbabwe, could draw important lessons from Rwanda’s *gacaca*, Mozambique’s *magamba* spirits and from the *acholi* of Uganda. While these were to a large extent expedient, they helped, among other things to expedite peace projects, reduce the work load of the Western-style courts, and above all to prove that indeed traditional African methods can be integrated with the Western justice to bring lasting reconciliation and peace to previously conflict-ridden communities. Below I briefly discuss how the *gacaca* and *magamba* were vital in the TJs of Rwanda and Mozambique, as well as the lessons that Zimbabwe can draw.



#### ***Gacaca***

*Gacaca* in Kinyarwanda is “lawn justice” or justice on the grass, which is based on pre-colonial, community-based courts where respectable male elders known as *Inyangamuguyo* (men of honourable or exemplary conduct) acted as judges.<sup>277</sup> These *gacaca* courts were re-established with the following objectives: to enable truth telling about the genocide; to promote reconciliation among the Rwandans; to eradicate a culture of impunity; to speed up the trial of genocide suspects; and, to demonstrate Rwanda’s own problem solving capacity.<sup>278</sup> A very clear mandate was spelt out to these courts: they had to find justice for the genocide through stressing confession, forgiveness and reparations for the victims.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> See Helen Scanlon and Nompumelelo Motlafi, “Indigenous justice or political instrument?: The modern *gacaca* courts of Rwanda”, in Chandra Lekka Sriram and Suren Pillay, eds, *Peace vs Justice: The dilemma of transitional justice in Africa*, UKZN Press, 2009, p 301.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid*, p 302.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid*, p 302.

These courts were very vital in speeding up the justice process for the victims in a country whose courts had been destroyed in the conflict. In this regard by 2007, there were established 12 000 such *gacaca* courts, which had resolved about 71 405 cases.<sup>280</sup> This was crucial because it would have taken the Rwandan judiciary above 150 years to solve these cases, because of the impact of the genocide.<sup>281</sup> We should also not lose sight of the fact that the *gacaca* courts ran alongside the conventional Western-style courts and the broad judiciary system. In this scenario we have to understand the weaknesses of that judiciary system. As Scanlon and Motlafi posit, the judiciary was failing to cope and the prisons held in excess of 120 000 prisoners eight times their 15 000 carrying capacity.<sup>282</sup> In other words there was a lot of backlog in the justice system, and also the justice infrastructure lacked in capacity. An even relevant part of the post-genocide *gacaca* courts was the active participation of women. These *gacaca* courts were open to the participation of all Rwandans from the age of 21, and by 2007, there was a 29 percent women representation and also a woman who held the position of executive secretary in the national *gacaca* system.<sup>283</sup>

### ***Magamba* spirits in Mozambique**

The Mozambique civil war was officially ended by the signing of the Rome Accord between the warring parties, FRELIMO and RENAMO in 1992. In many accounts this has been viewed as “negative peace”.<sup>284</sup> It is also widely regarded as having reconciled the top leaderships without necessarily solving the local problems the communities had

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid, p 302.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid, p 303, in this regard they say that about 95 percent of the personnel had been killed or exiled, the judiciary had perennially been hamstrung by shortages of resources and had also been traditionally driven by the executive.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid, p 303.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid, p 307.

<sup>284</sup> Negative peace is defined by Yasmin Louise Sooka, “The politics of transitional justice” in Chandra Lekka Sriram and Suren Pillay, eds, *Peace vs Justice*, p 24, as aimed at ending violence without addressing the root cause of the conflict, as such does not promote lasting peace and it does not also promote lasting unity as the reasons for earlier conflict are not addressed. In Mozambique, by drawing the line between the past and the new era demarcated by the peace treaty in 1992 left victims unreconciled through the policy of amnesty adopted. This might have been adopted because of the equilibrium in military power both sides had. See also Victor Igreja, “The politics of peace, justice and healing in post-war Mozambique”, in Chandra Lekka Sriram and Suren Pillay, eds, *Peace vs justice*, p 278.

emanating from the conflict. Because of the paucity in the Rome accord, *Magamba* spirits were used by the local people of the Gorongosa district to achieve healing following harrowing years of conflict.

*Magamba* spirits were spirits of victims which possessed especially female survivors of the war, who were themselves or their families responsible for killing them or using their body parts for protection from the war.<sup>285</sup> *Magamba* spirits, in a way that reinforces the importance of *ngozi* and [re]production caused infertility among these females, which caused the females to consult traditional healers over their predicament.<sup>286</sup> To resolve the misfortunes traditional healers would go into trance, invoked the *magamba* spirits to come out and speak out on who they were, what happened and what they wanted as compensation.<sup>287</sup> In this way not only was the truth exposed, but the perpetrators and victims' families came together and compensated each other thereby restoring social harmony. In addition to this, child soldiers were also reintegrated into their communities after some traditional rituals supervised by traditional healers and traditional authorities.

Of importance and relevance to Shurugwi, is the fact that this method was adopted at a local scale, performed in front of all villagers, in the Gorongosa region to complement the General Peace Agreement (AGP), signed in Rome, which had ordered a general amnesty.<sup>288</sup> Although the effectiveness of this method has not yet been properly evaluated, it no doubt helped to heal the district.

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<sup>285</sup> According to Igreja, besides killing victims people also mixed body parts of the victims in muti/herbs so that they could themselves not fall victim to the war, see Victor Igreja, "The politics of peace, justice and healing in post-war Mozambique", in Chandra Lekka Sriram and Suren Pillay, eds, *Peace vs justice*, p278. See also John L Hirsh, "Peace and Justice: Mozambique and Sierra Leone compared", in Chandra Lekka Sriram and Suren Pillay, eds, *Peace vs justice*, p 208.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid, pp 288-9.

<sup>288</sup> See Victor Igreja and John L Hirsch, "Peace and Justice", for more details.

## **ROLE OF WOMEN IN KURIPA NGOZI**

Under the ritual of *kuripa ngozi*, women have always played an indispensable role. Earlier, I highlighted how women and marriageable girls were used as part of the reparation transactions in situations of *kuripa ngozi* in the pre-colonial period. These marriages, which symbolised the patriarchal transfer of women's reproductive capacities between the two families and some form of "blood pact" not only established peace, but also led to the establishment of new relations between the families. The essence of this can be captured in the old Somali saying that "Where blood is shed, it must be soaked with birth fluids."<sup>289</sup> This meant that the women so given would bear sons for the deceased family and it also served to re-establish the bond between the families hence serve to avoid future conflict. At another level, however, this amply illustrates the passive role that women played in conflict resolution in pre-colonial Africa. The same practice, as already stated, also existed in many pre-colonial Zimbabwe Shona states, and it still exists, albeit in a discreet manner in Shurugwi district.<sup>290</sup> However, I am not envisaging this unmediated importation of the use of women in the transactions. Rather, other forms of compensation are envisaged.

Other than this, women also played other active roles in peace building, conflict resolution, management and sustenance. In terms of conflict management women passively participated through their roles in child care, through the inculcation in the young children of values of "patience, tolerance, honesty, respect for elders, communality and mutuality, compassion, regard for due discretion, gentleness, modesty, self-control, moderation, flexibility and open mindedness."<sup>291</sup> Thus from an

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<sup>289</sup> See Mohamed Abdi Mohamed, "The role of Somali Women in search of Peace", in *UNESCO: Women and Peace in Africa*, UNESCO Workshops, Paris, 2003, p 103. Positing similarly is Chinua Achebe, in his highly celebrated literary work, *Things Fall Apart*, Heinemann Educational Publishers, London, 1958, who wrote to say that it was uncommon for women to be given away for marriage following conflicts.

<sup>290</sup> See section where I have described how this practice of giving out women and girls is technically outlawed by other laws in the constitution, although it is not outlawed.

<sup>291</sup> Miriam Agatha Chinwe Nwoye, "Role of African women in peace building and conflict resolution in African traditional societies: A selected review" cited in <http://www.afrikawold.net/afrel/chinwenoye.htm>, accessed 26 January 2011. Her work is based on the

early age young children were introduced to desired values in the community by their mothers. In a similar passive way, it is the duty of women in the district of Shurugwi to impart these values to their children especially since the introduction of capitalism that left the women in the rural area as the males sought work in the towns, mines or on the farms. Again in the current depopulation of men as a result of the violence and subsequent economic meltdown, women have been left to socially raise children almost by themselves. More than this, I envisage for the women to go beyond this and actively participate in the process of seeking justice for the victims and in the fashioning of the outcomes of the mediation process.

Elderly women have also been found to have played a key role in ending conflicts in the Central African Republic. These women, as Mathey et al, posit, in cases of war, they would be sent to the rival clan to negotiate peace or they would go between the fighters where they would demand the cessation of that war, if they were not listened to they would drop their clothes and expose their nakedness, which was a social taboo.<sup>292</sup> In Burundi, women played a behind the scene influencing role on their husbands, where among other things, they would advise their husbands during intimate bed times.<sup>293</sup> In other societies, like in Bakossi of Cameroon and the Igbo of Nigeria, women actively participated in the settlement of conflicts.<sup>294</sup> Yet in other societies, like the Ovambo of Namibia,<sup>295</sup> and the Mungo of Cameroon,<sup>296</sup> women played a vital role in the spiritual solving of conflicts.

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findings in six African countries: Tanzania, Somalia, Burundi, Namibia, Cameroon, and Central African Republic. See also RAU, *When the going gets tough*, p 14.

<sup>292</sup> M.J. Mathey, T.Dejan, M. Deballe, A. Koulaninga, and J. Moga, "The role played by the women of the Central African Republic in the prevention and resolution of conflicts", in *UNESCO: Women and Peace in Africa*, UNESCO Workshops, Paris, 2003, p 14.

<sup>293</sup> J Ntahobari and B Ndayiziga, "The role of Burundian women in peaceful settlement of conflicts" in *UNESCO: Women and Peace in Africa*, UNESCO Workshops, Paris, 2003, p 16.

<sup>294</sup> See Miriam Agatha Chinwe Nwoye, "Role of Women".

<sup>295</sup> See Becker, "Women, Politics and Peace in Northern Namibia", in *UNESCO: Women and Peace in Africa*, UNESCO Workshops, Paris, 2003, p 16.

<sup>296</sup> See Miriam Agatha Chinwe Nwoye, "Role of Women".

Under *kuripa ngozi* in Zimbabwe, women can play a significant role in the mediation processes. As highlighted in the revelation of *ngozi* by Mahoso and Tirivangana for Zimbabwe, and in the *magamba* of Mozambique, women in the archetypal *ngozi* have always performed a *ngozi* host role. Regarding this, the women relatives of murderers have been found to have been possessed by the ravaging spirit of the deceased, re-enact the murder scene. This came out clearly in the Chokuda case from Buhera, and in Kanengoni's *Echoing Silence*, highlighted earlier. In the process they reveal the identity of the victim, if unknown, and help mediate the compensation.

The above role in the spiritual revelation of crimes can be taken forward and juxtaposed with the role that women can perform in revealing the perpetrators of the 2000-2008 violence. In this regard it is necessary to return to the situation raised in Chapter Three that the majority of the victims of the violence were women. This was primarily because in the increased depopulation of men as a result of emigration to the cities or to South Africa and Botswana, women assumed the "manly" political roles. This led to their upliftment in terms of local political participation and the roles they played. This also relates to their roles in the victimisation of other women through, for example, drawing and keeping lists, singing at rallies, the beating up, and the other violations of, women.

Paradoxically the same space also led to the increased victimisation of women for their role in opposition politics or for the roles their sons or husbands played in the MDC. As such, by encouraging *kuripa ngozi*, women could also play a significant direct role in the mediation process as complainants, where they identify their violators, and also as defendants. Thus women may be afforded the opportunity to take a leading role in the establishment of peace in the district. Importantly, it will enable both the women victims and the perpetrators to receive counselling from the village elders who also play a leading role at these courts.

The above dynamic resonates with the peace efforts of the Liberian Women Peacemakers (LWP). According to Tyrell, the LWP directly confronted President Charles

Taylor and rebels to lay down arms and end conflict. For example they sent the following message to the Pro Tem of the Liberian senate to forward to Taylor:

... that the women of Liberia, including the IDPs [internally displaced persons], we are tired of war. We are tired of running. We are tired of begging for bulgur wheat. We are tired of our children being raped. We are now taking this stand to secure the future of our children because we believe as custodians of society, tomorrow our children will ask us, 'Mama, what was your role during the crisis?'<sup>297</sup>

This direct confrontation to implore peace by the women groups seriously undercut the “boomerang pattern” of international advocacy, which according to Keck and Sikkink, cited in Tyrrell, refers to a situation where “domestic NGOs bypass their state and directly search out international allies to try to bring pressure on their states from outside” because “international contacts can amplify the demands of domestic groups, pry open space for new issues, and then echo back these demands into the domestic arena.”<sup>298</sup> On the whole, the actions by the LWP underscore the strength of the “grassroots ... movements to enact change without heavily relying on external allies.”<sup>299</sup> Whilst the pressure that was exerted on the conflicting sides to the civil war was by local Liberians both inside and outside Liberia, some financing and organisation skills were, however, offered by international organisations.<sup>300</sup>

It also positively reflects on the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 of 2000 that advocates for the “increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional, and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict.”<sup>301</sup> By and large, the resolution reiterated the vulnerability of women in conflict and post- conflict situations and the

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<sup>297</sup> See Katie Tyrrell, “In Support of their Sisters in Conflict: Understanding the Transnational Impact of the Liberian Women Peacemakers” in <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic853697.files/Tyrrell2011.pdf>, Accessed 23 March 2012, p 13.

<sup>298</sup> Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink *Activists beyond borders: Advocacy networks in international politics*, cited in Katie Tyrrell, *Ibid*, p 14.

<sup>299</sup> Katie Tyrrell, *Ibid*, p 2.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid*, p 16.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid*, p 2.



need to avail channels for them to convey their situations.<sup>302</sup> The critical point here is about the possible high levels that direct action by the local women can attain if they put their efforts at attaining peace, and that there is a need at some point for outside help.

Reflecting on this, and using the Mavedzenge headmanship in Shurugwi, I would like to posit that women can indeed play an active role in the mediation of cases under the *kuripa ngozi* system. Between 2007 and 2011 the council or *dare* for the Mavedzenge headmanship has been composed of seven members. These comprised the headman, and six councillors who were made up of three males and three females drawn from the various houses that constitute the Mavedzenge family tree. Thus in terms of gender representation there is a fifty percent female representation. This is crucial because the council advises the headmen in the mediation of cases that are brought before the court. From informal discussions with people close to the *dare*, I was informed that these women hold a powerful sway in the cases that the court administers. Here they engage in the deliberations, dialogue and exchanges on an equal footing with their male village counterparts. Theoretically it therefore means that the interests of women are going to be adequately represented. Related, in the Mudzengi headmanship, the head is a woman.

Referring to the role women played in post-genocide Rwanda, *gacaca* is instrumental in pointing to the potentially similar role in the post violence Zimbabwe set up. As I have imagined for the *kuripa ngozi*, women in post genocide Rwanda acted in different capacities as complainants, the accused or as witnesses.<sup>303</sup> In addition, and in a watershed moment, women also became judges at these courts.<sup>304</sup> This was

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid, pp 2-3.

<sup>303</sup> See Adin Thayer, "Women in post-genocide Rwanda: Facing the past to build a future" in [http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1413:women-in-post-genocide-rwandafacing-the-past-to-build-a-future-&catid=169:multiple-intolerance-mounting-resistance](http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1413:women-in-post-genocide-rwandafacing-the-past-to-build-a-future-&catid=169:multiple-intolerance-mounting-resistance) , Accessed 24 March 2012.

<sup>304</sup> See "Strengthening the Role of Women in the Gacaca Tribunals –International Alert and Profemmes/Twese Hamwe", in <http://www.badgerdesigns.com/alert/v1/pdfs/Rwanda%20-%20Gacaca%20meeting.pdf>, Accessed 24 March 2012.

notwithstanding the threats and dangers, including social and security, when these positions opened up.<sup>305</sup> On the whole, however, they helped to publicise the guilty and further justice.<sup>306</sup> Crucially also, women constituted 26 percent of all provincial executives,<sup>307</sup> 29 percent of the *gacaca* courts,<sup>308</sup> and the national Executive Secretary of the *gacaca* courts was also a woman.<sup>309</sup>

Overall, this points to the increased role that women play in the administration of “traditional” justice. Significantly, it helps to subvert the passiveness of women in the search for justice for political victims. This increased role of women has to be taken together with the fact, as seen in the General Introduction, that there is a significant female political representation in Shurugwi district at both the Council and parliamentary level. This is also to be considered together with the fact that ordinary women are allowed to freely contribute at these *dares*. As such by encouraging the individual reparations superintended by village or headmen and chiefs in Shurugwi where women actively participate will help to significantly disrupt the passive revolution that the ONHRI is trying to impose regarding a TJ. It is also vital to highlight here that besides looking at the ONHRI as entrenching a passive revolution, it is also instructive to see the passive revolution that ZANU-PF is enforcing in ONHRI’s search for a TJ. This is through attempts to impose amnesia by encouraging the adoption of peace on the basis of “let bygones be bygones.” Hence, one can argue that the ONHRI is not well structured to represent the village women’s perceptions.

As also discussed earlier, NGOs are also finding it difficult to engage communities to discuss the possible TJs in the face of suspicion and the circumscription of their activities by the ZANU-PF and by ZANU-PF aligned state security organs. The dissonance between the GNU partners for the control of state levers, itself a product of the passive

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<sup>305</sup> Adin Thayer, *Ibid*

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>307</sup> See Jeanne Izabiliza, “The role of women in reconstruction : Experience of Rwanda”, in <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SHS/pdf/Role-Women-Rwanda.pdf>, Accessed 24 March 2012, p 4.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid*, p 7.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid*, p 4.

revolution, as described in Chapter Five, also seriously hampered the operations of ONHRI. This also undermines the potential of ONHRI to deliver a credible TJ for Zimbabwe. *Kuripa ngozi* has the potential to promote the good sense that caters for the demands at the local level of the subalterns to contest the hegemony from Harare.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, by articulating the importance of common sense, I have argued for the adoption of *kuripa ngozi* as a TJ mechanism for Shurugwi in the absence of strong political will for a people-centred TJ mechanism following the violence of 2000-2008. The ONHRI, tasked with coordinating the efforts to heal the nation, among a battery of other healing mechanisms, also calls for the adoption of indigenous and community-based healing mechanisms. Events on the ground also help buttress such a call. People are being affected by *ngozi* in various forms. More importantly, victims are calling for restorative justice for lost or damaged property. The possibility of the success of this method will be helped by the fact that it is a well-known and revered pre-existing common sense notion in the district where the ultimate goal in the mediation process is the acknowledgement of culpability, offering apologies to their victims and the payment of restitution. By involving the communities in the search for lasting justice-based peace, *kuripa ngozi* will also help to subvert the passivity of the locals enforced under the ONHRI initiative, and one that has a long genealogy in post-colonial Zimbabwe with a history of numerous top-down amnesties. On the whole, for Shurugwi, by encouraging people to own up to their violations and compensating their victims or through seeking restoring the previous balance, *kuripa ngozi* will greatly help to end the culture of impunity for political violations, especially at the local level where most of the violence has occurred and potentially will recur.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The violence that plagued Shurugwi district in the period 2000 to 2008 and that targeted the opposition MDC structures was both spectacular and general. It was remarkable in the sense that it also affected most parts of the country. It thus assumed a national rather than the regional or ethnic dimensions of earlier conflicts like the *gukurahundi*<sup>1</sup> or other aggressions which targeted supporters of the opposition in urban settings.<sup>2</sup> For Shurugwi, it was for the first time in the post-independence era that the district failed to escape the horror as it had managed in other early post-independence moments that engulfed other parts of the Midlands province.

I have treated it in terms of its general nature. This universalization is to connect the Shurugwi violence to the national “pogrom” between 2000 and 2008. The “pogrom” was particularly organised around the seven elections the nation underwent.<sup>3</sup> The state was also militarised which foregrounded the pre-eminence of the security forces and semi-military bodies. In addition, civilian programmes were increasingly coordinated under serving or retired security services personnel and were organised under various “quick-fix” military-style operations.<sup>4</sup> At another level, the purpose has also been to situate it in a long genealogy of intolerant attacks that runs from the Second Chimurenga through to the other post-colonial moments. In the mode of a genealogy, I

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<sup>1</sup> See Jocelyn Alexander and Joanne McGregor and Terence Ranger *Violence and Memory: One hundred years in the dark forests of Matebeleland*, James Currey and Baobab Books, Oxford and Harare respectively, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> See John Makumbe and Daniel Compagnon, *Behind the smokescreen: The politics behind the 1995 General elections*, University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 2000, for a detailed discussion of this argument.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Norma Kriger, *Guerilla Veterans in Post war Zimbabwe: Symbolic and violent Politics, 1980-1987*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p 196, See also Tony Reeler, “Subliminal terror?: Human rights violence and torture in Zimbabwe during 2008”, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Cape Town, pp 6-7. See also a discussion by Brian Raftopoulos, “Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics”, in Brian Raftopoulos and Tyron Savage, eds, *Zimbabwe: Injustice and political Reconciliation*, Institute for Justice, and Reconciliation, Cape Town, 2004, p 164.

<sup>4</sup> See Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros, “Zimbabwe ten years on”, and Zeff Sithole, “Is the military taking over?” in [www.afrika.no/Detailed/12358.html](http://www.afrika.no/Detailed/12358.html) for a detailed discussion of the different military style operations between 2003 and 2008.

argued that it was more than part of a coercive mobilisation. Instead, its deployment by ZANU-PF should be seen as a part of the transfiguring of politics as continuation of war by other means directed against the opposition movements.

In this modality, the struggles with ZAPU and ZIPRA both during and after the Second Chimurenga, where both sought to be the “sole” nationalist representative,<sup>5</sup> was carried forward by ZANU-PF against other opposition political movements in the 1980s, such as ZANU-Ndonga, ZUM and FORUM party. As such the browbeating of the MDC structures in the first decade of the millennium was a carry-over strategy of treating opposition groups as “enemies to be annihilated rather than as political competitors”<sup>6</sup> to be tolerated. This overall worked to create conditions that only allowed for the existence of a legitimising opposition. Simultaneously, the same process was useful to attain the passivity of the population due to the fear it created.

Throughout the thesis the broad question that I grappled with was whether women were invisible victims of the 2000-2008 violence in Shurugwi district. Broadly, this emanates from the dominant Western feminist discourse that has set *a priori* and universalised relations between sexes. In Western feminism, female-ness is equated with femininity while male-ness is taken as a pre-condition for masculinity.<sup>7</sup> Following in this trope, the people who inhabit the female body are universally regarded as socially and culturally inferior.<sup>8</sup> The assumption is even worse for rural women who because of their “invisibility”, and limited economic, social, academic and political standing, are lowly regarded and are thought of as weak, powerless, and as perpetual victims.<sup>9</sup> This is

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<sup>5</sup> Terence Ranger, cited in Brian Raftopoulos, “The State, NGO’s and Democratisation”, in Sam Moyo, John Makumbe and Brian Raftopoulos, eds, *NGO’s, the state and politics in Zimbabwe*, SAPES Books, Harare, 2000, p 25. See also Terence Ranger, “Introduction to Volume Two”, *The historical dimensions of democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe*, University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, p 5.

<sup>6</sup> See James Muzondidya, “From buoyancy to crisis, 1980-1997”, in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, eds, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p 177.

<sup>7</sup> See Jeanne Boydston, “Gender as a question of historical analysis”, in Alexandra Shepard and Garthine, eds, *Gender and History*, Vol 20, Issue 3, November 2008, p 559.

<sup>8</sup> See Ifi Amadiume, cited in Jeanne Boydston, “Gender as a question of historical analysis”, p 565.

<sup>9</sup> See Oyeronke Oyewumi, “Visualising the body: Western theories and African subjects”, in Oyeronke Oyewumi, ed, *African Gender Studies: A reader*, Pelgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, 2005, p 11.

the same sort of inclination one gets when reading through the bulk of the human rights literature produced on the “crisis” period in Zimbabwe. Women are presented as vulnerable, weak, economically dependent, and indeed as victims.

However, as I demonstrated in Chapter Four, the local conditions ensured that political agency transcended the sexed bodies of men and women. While socio-economic conditions were such that the rural women were vulnerable to abuse, especially in the home, they had by 2008 assumed important political duties. In these latter roles, which were helped by the depopulation of men and the ZANU-PF programme that promoted the participation of women in politics, women began to exert powerful influences on the extension of politically-related violence. Besides embedding the national party-politics with their local jealousies and contests for power and resources, many women also took up village, Ward and Council positions. To this extent, there were twelve female councillors out of the twenty-four members Tongogara Rural District Council in 2010. In addition, there was one female out of three representing Shurugwi in the two houses of representatives.

Many more too became involved in other duties that spurred the victimisation of their neighbours and fellow villagers and workers. These included informing and the keeping of lists. Many more were involved in singing, dancing, sloganeering, and ululating at rallies. These can be interpreted as being in service of violence because they sustained the morale and encouraged the violators. Crucially, there were some women who actively participated in the public humiliation and beating of opposition supporters. On the whole, this study of violence and conditions of women invites a contrapuntal analysis of the gendered relations in conflicts. It too troubles the general assumption of the atemporal victimhood of women in conflict situations. This dissertation also has to be read together with Foucault’s argument on the importance of spatio-temporalities<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Michel Foucault, *History of sexuality*, Vol1, pp 93-94.

in which agency is relational and is found in the doing and not in or at some authorising centre.<sup>11</sup>

It is crucial, nonetheless, to emphasise that the different roles that women assumed in intimidating and harassing the opposition was made possible by the enabling conditions created by the authorising narrative from Harare. To this degree, I argue that the overall ZANU-PF narrative of economic liberation and indigenisation used for sanitizing the farm invasions, the factory and firm takeovers, the threatening and the physical lynching of MDC supporters, was a crucial foundation upon which was mapped localised conditions. The successful articulation of acute land shortages, local politics, petty jealousies, as well as the targeting of identifiable MDC supporters thus provided the discourse and provided the catalyst that drove the violence in Shurugwi district.

The reverse is, however, also correct. The strength of the authorising narrative depended on the presence of land shortages that invited many in Shurugwi to invade white-owned farms. This in essence concretised the imperative. It also, among others, was buttressed by the marrying of local contests, local political relations and petty jealousies by the locals on to the larger party-politics, the existence of identifiable MDC supporters and locals who kept lists of those who supported the opposition.

Following from the above thread, it is imperative to reinforce the point that the violence was therefore one of both planning and participation. This recalls Mamdani's articulation of the Rwandan genocide. While he suggested that the Rwandan government simply planned and enabled the Hutu population to massacre the Tutsi,<sup>12</sup> I argue instead that in Zimbabwe the state did more than plan and create enabling conditions for massive participation. More than this, the state, through the security and quasi-security organs, and through ZANU-PF structures, actively participated in the pogrom. Evidence from the many national human rights reports and the testimonies from Shurugwi reinforce accounts of the active beatings, abductions and humiliations of

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<sup>11</sup> Allen Feldman, *Formations of violence*, p 3.

<sup>12</sup> See Mahmood Mamdani, *When victims become killers*, pp 5-6.



MDC supporters by these structures. Others have showed that the state security agents also gave tactical guidance and equipment that was used by war veterans in the violence.

However, as illuminated in Chapter Three, the depopulation of men and the increased space that was opened up for the agency of women to participate as political leaders and other duties in political parties brought with it increased violation of women, especially those who were engaged in MDC politics or those whose husbands and sons identified with the opposition. This process of victimisation happened following a set pattern. The stages involved identification, abduction, torture, and forced confessions. Identification was usually done by fellow workers, villagers or close family. They would secretly inform PISI (Police Internal Security Intelligence), ZANU-PF leadership and the Central Intelligence Organisation operatives of the names of MDC supporters. At other times, however, PISI officials attended MDC rallies and took note of all the key officials. They also took down names of known locals who attended these meetings. The vital point to note is that this “democratisation” of the surveillance and identification of opposition supporters besides signifying, in Foucault’s words, the devolvement of the sovereign’s “power of life and death” to large groups of people,<sup>13</sup> also greatly extended the dimensions of violence.

Once identified, victims would be abducted from their homes, townships, places of work, from social gatherings or from anywhere and were taken to the homesteads of village heads, bases or outskirts of villages where they would be subjected to different kinds of torture. These varied from beatings and assaults using logs, sticks, belts, and booted feet. At times the violations were undertaken at rallies in the presence of family and fellow villagers. Depending on the perpetrators involved, sometimes the violations were done in secret and the duration of abduction and “re-orientation” varied from a few hours to several days. As well, the effects of the punishments differed. More often

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<sup>13</sup> Michel Foucault, *Society must be defended: Lectures at the College de France 1975-1976*, Translated by David Macey, Picador, New York, 2003, p 259.

than not during the torture, the victims were made to confess, hence accept both their crime and the punishment, and to publicly recant from the political “sin” of being MDC supporters.

The fifth chapter has also demonstrated that the conditions for the passivity of people did not end with the official end of the violence that was marked by the 15 September 2008 agreement and the consummation of the GNU in February 2009. Rather, it showed that the GPA and the GNU symbolised other revolutions from above, which coerced the general citizenry to conform without taking into account their best interests.<sup>14</sup> The major political belligerents were coerced by external and internal political and economic imperatives to sign the GPA and to work as partners in the GNU. To this extent, as Raftopoulos says, ZANU-PF was largely pushed into accepting the GPA and the GNU due to the serious political and economic meltdown in the country and the pressure from SADC and the AU. Whilst for the MDCs, in addition to SADC and AU pressure, it was the result of a combination of state repression and violence, their failure to assume state power after the March 2008 election “victory”, the limits of Western diplomacy and sanctions against ZANU-PF, ZANU-PF’s role in the SADC and the resonance of its pan-African anti-colonial message in the AU, as well as the continued erosion of the MDC urban workers powerbase due to retrenchments.<sup>15</sup>

At another level, the GNU was fraught with tensions based on member-belligerent political parties which refused to surrender their interests for the common good of the country. To this extent, there were high levels of intransigence from across the inclusive government spectrum. For example, there was ZANU-PF intransigence regarding the transformation of the coercive, security and media sectors, as well as the sharing of provincial governors, ambassadors, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and Attorney General’s

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<sup>14</sup> See Brian Raftopoulos, “The Global political Agreement as a passive revolution”. See also a pithy discussion of “passive Revolution” by Antonio Gramsci, Selections from prison notebooks, pp 59, 83, & 119.

<sup>15</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, The Global Political Agreement as a ‘Passive Revolution’: Notes on Contemporary Politics in Zimbabwe”, in *The Round Table*, 2010, in <http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/909/the-global-political-agreement-as-a-passive-revolution/>, Accessed 02 June 2011.

positions. This was countered by the MDCs ambivalent stance on sanctions, refusal to attend some national events, their continued hold on to government posts against numerous frustrations, as well as their demands for the full implementation of the GPA provisions.<sup>16</sup> This resulted in the creation of an imperfect Zimbabwe state in place of a reformed one that promised a new beginning. The struggles between ZANU-PF and the MDCs, and at times between the MDCs, also represented the “class struggles” that characterise passive revolutions, which result in the Gramscian “revolution-restoration”, basically a “revolution without revolution.”<sup>17</sup>

But, how then do we undercut the continuation of these passive revolutions that have been imposed and that have imposed cycles of violence and impunity on the people of Zimbabwe? The dissertation has sought to propose the adoption of the indigenous method of *kuripa ngozi* to help resolve the cases of political violence between villagers. The thesis has argued that *kuripa ngozi*, together with the numerous occult cases that emerged out of the violence, constitutes part of the Shurugwi people’s “common sense.”<sup>18</sup> Basically, these cases inform us of how the residents of Shurugwi conceive of the world they inhabit, their fears, beliefs and myths, and what these tell about them.

Under *kuripa ngozi* method, perpetrators and victims gather under conditions similar to Family Group Conferencing where the aggrieved, the perpetrators and the larger community interface and dialogue.<sup>19</sup> In the process an account in which the perpetrator accepts culpability for the crime is given. In the classical murder-based *ngozi*, the “truth” comes out through an *ngozi* host, who is usually a relative of the perpetrator who is possessed by the spirit of the victim, who re-enacts the murder scene.<sup>20</sup> Following this re-enactment, the perpetrator acknowledges culpability and asks for forgiveness. In

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<sup>16</sup> See *The Sunday Mail*, 5-11 February 2012, “PM Tsvangirai’s letter to President Mugabe” for a nuanced discussion of the impediments and frustrations that ZANU-PF-aligned structures have offered in stalling the vision of the full implementation of the GPA. See also Brian Raftopoulos, “The GPA as a passive revolution”

<sup>17</sup> Adam David Morton, *Unravelling Gramsci*, p66

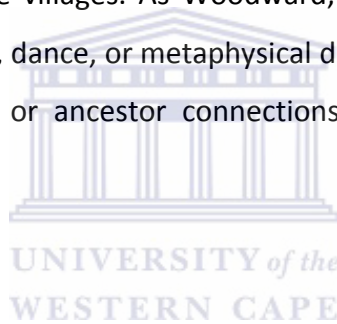
<sup>18</sup> See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from prison notebooks*, p 419.

<sup>19</sup> Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, “Echoing silences”, p 4.

<sup>20</sup> Tafataona Mahoso, “*Ngozi*: the philosophical foundation of African Living Law”, in *The Sunday Mail*, 5-11 February 2012.

addition, certain rituals are performed to help cleanse the perpetrator and, crucially, to bring the aggrieved spirit back home. In the end, these processes enable the restoration of relations between the concerned parties which lays the foundation for compensation and long lasting peace<sup>21</sup>, not only between the living families but also between the living and the “living dead”.<sup>22</sup>

At another level the active participation of communities in the search for lasting peace and justice renders them active, rather than as passive recipients of top-down government or NGO sponsored healing methods. This subverts the passive revolution introduced by the government-sponsored ONHRI, and the other methods, such as “Tree of Life” that some NGOs are trying to import and adapt for the country, through the bottom-up participation at the villages. As Woodward, Hayes and Minkley have said, “performative acts like playing, dance, or metaphysical discourses of the marginalised or othered- curses, spells, spirit or ancestor connections - also incorporate their own genealogies of voices.”<sup>23</sup>



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<sup>21</sup> See Itai Muwati, Zifikile Gambahaya and Fainos Mangena, “Echoing Silences”, p 14.

<sup>22</sup> See John S Mbiti, *African religion and philosophy*, Heinemann, London, 1969, p 83.

<sup>23</sup> See Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley, eds, “Introduction”, *Deep HiStories: Gender and colonialism in Southern Africa*, Rodopi, Amsterdam and New York, 2002, p xxiii.

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## Appendix

### Types of violations committed between 2001 and 2008

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Totals
Abductions	116	223	52	62	18	11	19	137	638
arrest & detention	670	274	627	389	1286	2611	2766	922	9545
Assault	0	86	388	401	530	486	865	1914	4670
attempted murder	0	2	10	10	1	3	0	8	34
death threats	0	12	80	35	9	7	7	51	201
disappearance	0	28	4	0	0	0	0	19	51
displacement	0	11	208	189	609	55	0	629	1701
Freedoms	12	39	809	760	1036	1866	3500	2532	10554
Murder	34	61	10	3	4	2	3	107	224
Political discrimination	194	388	450	514	476	288	980	2787	6077
property violation	356	807	153	132	61	55	16	396	1976
Rape	0	7	6	3	4	1	0	6	27
school closure	0	45	1	0	0	0	0	26	72
Torture	903	1172	497	389	136	366	603	723	4789
<b>Total</b>	2285	3155	3295	2887	4170	5751	8759	10257	40559
<b>Monthly average:</b>	380.8	262.9	274.6	240.6	347.5	479.3	729.9	854.8	

Source: Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, adapted from "Subliminal terror?" p 12.



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