

Review

Self-inflicted tragedies: an assessment of the impact of language use by the political parties in post-independence Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This research is an examination of the effects of language use by political parties in post-independence Zimbabwe. It proceeds from the realization that the language used in slogans, songs, speeches and on banners by the political parties has contributed to the political crisis obtaining in the country as it basically constitutes hate speech which helps to fuel hostility among the people belonging to rival political parties. The political parties being analyzed are the Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) [ZANU (PF)] and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) which have dominated the political scene in the period under discussion and to a lesser extent Mavambo-Kusile-Dawn (MKD). Some of the negative results emanating from language use by the two political parties include lack of tolerance between the political parties which leads to violence and loss of life, fanning ethnic divisions and racial disharmony, entrenching dictatorship within the structures of the political parties and distortion of the history of the country. The paper argues that change in language use will go a long way in resolving the political crisis obtaining in the country as language has influence in the manner people behave and relate to each other. It comes to this conclusion after noting that language that is supposed to be a bridge that helps people to communicate and build relations, has in actual fact become a stumbling block to harmonious social, economic and political relations.

Keywords: Language use, MDC, ZANU (PF), violence, ZAPU, Gukurahundi, Mugabe, Nkomo, Tsvangirai.

INTRODUCTION

This research proceeds from the realization that language has an impact in the way people behave. As noted by Sapir and Whorf quoted by in Afolayan, (2002:3):

Language embodies ways of experiencing the world, of defining what we are. That is, we not only communicate in particular languages, but more fundamentally become a person we become because of the particular language community in which we grew up – language above all else, shapes our distinctive ways of seeing the world. Language is then a carrier of a people's identity, the vehicle of a certain way of seeing things, experiencing and feeling, determinant of particular outlook on life.

From the above the point of view, members belonging to certain political parties have their own language use which is peculiar to them and this influences the way they

behave. The paper begins by looking at the situation obtaining in the few years following the gaining of independence in 1980 and then at the subsequent periods particularly after the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in September 1999. The party later became MDC-T and MDC-M after the split of 2005. MDC-T is led by Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC-M was until recently led by Arthur Mutambara. In this paper the term MDC will be used with reference to the party before the split as well as to the Tsvangirai formation after the split.

The role of language in communities

Language is an important communication tool that communities use in their every day interactions. It can be used to build or to destroy. It is a very powerful tool in manipulative hands. Those who have negative oratory skills can cause havoc through their use of language.

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There are also other who have the capacity to use language to build bridges and mend fences that have been broken. In short, the researchers are stating that language is like fire. When used responsibly, fire can bring warmth into the home, but when used by an arsonist, its consequences are tragic because they can be life threatening. This analogue of fire is similar to the language situation in Zimbabwe when it is used for political reasons by MDC-T and ZANU (PF) politicians and their supporters. They both do not use it responsibly.

The ZANU/ZAPU Conflict and *Gukurahundi* – 1982 - 1987

The two main African nationalist parties ZANU and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) which had fought for the liberation of the country contested the 1980 elections separately. In those elections, ZANU won more seats than ZAPU. Although ZAPU had been given some cabinet posts in the new government, the rivalry remained extremely tense and degenerated into civil war in 1982 after the ruling party claimed that it had discovered a scheme to dethrone it from power which worsened the already strained relations between the two parties which date as far back as 1963 when ZANU split from ZAPU (Sithole 1988). Sithole notes that ZANU was mainly composed of Shona speaking members whilst ZAPU had more Ndebele speaking members making the two parties polarized along ethnic lines which became a recipe for the post-independence civil war. Joshua Nkomo notes the split between the two parties was motivated along ethnic considerations and there was consensus among the Shona members that they should get rid of *zimundevere*, a derogatory term meaning an old and useless Ndebele man. Nkomo (2001: 111) cites Joseph Msika snatched a document from Washington Malianga written to urge ZAPU to bring the "majority tribes" to the leadership of the party and get rid of *zimundevere*, the old Ndebele man. The ZANU government, through the North Korean trained Five Brigade that reported directly to the then Prime Minister and Minister of Defence (now President) Robert Mugabe carried out an operation dubbed *gukurahundi* (*cleansing of the chuff*) which started in January 1982 against the alleged dissidents from ZAPU who were assumed to be causing civil unrest. It is interesting to note that the term *gukurahundi*, which means the first rains that cleanse off the chuff that would be on thrashing floors was first used by ZANU and its armed wing Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) in 1979. In that year, ZANU declared that this was the year they were going to drive out the chuff, that is, the remnants of the settler regime in occupied Zimbabwe. The use of the term with reference to the Matabeleland incidences therefore is curious and raises more questions than answers. The operation resulted in the loss of lives of innocent civilians and an

impartial report by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) estimates that over 20 000 people lost their lives in Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands Provinces who were mainly Ndebele and Kalanga-speaking. This chapter has remained one of the most talked and controversial in Zimbabwean history and this very act has since been declared genocide according to Genocide Watch that was quoted on SW Radio (www.swradioafrica.com/news160910/guku160910.htm). Peace only returned to the Matabeleland and Midlands Provinces after the signing of the Unity Accord between ZANU (PF) and PF-ZAPU on 22 December 1987. Slogans such as *Pasi naNkomo* (Down with Nkomo), *Pasi nemaNdevere* (Down with the Ndebeles), *Pasi neZAPU* (Down with ZAPU) were common with ZANU during the period of *gukurahundi*. There was an outcry by ZAPU during *gukurahundi* that ZANU was using party slogans, songs and political speeches that portrayed it as the authentic liberator while disparaging ZAPU and its supporters as villains. A speech made by the then Prime Minister of the newly independent state of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe had these words:

ZAPU and its leaders, Dr. Joshua Nkomo are like a cobra in a house. The only way to deal effectively with a snake is to strike and destroy its head (www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/mafuyana4.11985.html).

There were also terms like *chedumbu* or *dumbuguru* (one with a big stomach) which castigated the personality of Joshua Nkomo and ultimately had the impact of downgrading his importance or rather contributions to the liberation struggle. Indeed, the significance of the role played by Nkomo only became clear to most of the young Zimbabweans after his death as the government glorified him and labeled him Father Zimbabwe in recognition of the pioneering role he played in the launching of the second *chimurenga*.

Theories of violence

In this paper the ideas of the theory of violence is based on Fanonian thoughts on politics and violence. In addition to this theory, the other theories of violence that will be relied on in this paper are those of Machiavelli, Hobbes and Weber. More light on the use of violence in different spheres of life would also be shed by the inequality theories and general systems theory. According to Fanon, there are three kinds of 'politics'. In the first instance he refers to politics as domination. To him this refers to the capacity to dominate which is anchored on the mechanisms of capitalist and colonial exploitation, their associated modes of oppression, and the imbrications of violence in these. At the second stage there is the emergence of the corrupt party politics of the emerging elites. As Fanon sees it these try to ignore the reality of colonial violence and the necessity of revolutionary violence alike in a vain hope for peaceful

settlement. The reason he gives for this complicity and non-commitment is that he perceives its practitioners as espousing peace for the profit maker. With regards to the third type, he notes that there is the virtuous politics of the people. "In this an ethical use of violence is possible. Further, it models and presages a new form of polity without violence, a new world for humanity" (Frazer and Hutchings

www.palgrave-journals.com/cpt/journal/v7/n1/full/9300328a.html)<http://www.palgrave-journals.com/cpt/journal/v7/n1/full/9300328a.html> - aff2.

It is further observed that violence for Fanon is physical violence. It manifests itself in the infliction or threat of infliction of painful injury, by instruments like whips, bayonets, guns and fists. He however contradicts this physical violence pervades every aspect of the colonial world, with that of the colonized which he terms a reactive violence. To him this type of violence is not solely fed by resentment and anger. It is a violence that is viewed as the source of a new world order. Violence can be embodied in a creative way. It is this embodied violence, the politics of leaders and organizers living inside history who lead with their brains and their muscle in the fight for freedom that makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths (cited on pp. 117–118 in Frazer and Hutchings www.palgrave-journals.com/cpt/journal/v7/n1/full/9300328a.html)

Fanon is of the opinion that if violence leads to liberation and self-determination then it is justifiable violence. It is to be embraced if it is the only way to pursue the project of decolonization. Even though he refers to the liberation role that violence can play, he also notes that there is another side to violence. Frazer and Hutchings clearly note this when they observe:

In Fanon's analysis therefore, violence is conceptualized in two predominant ways. Firstly, it is an instrument for achieving and sustaining political power — that is, the power to rule. This rule can, of course, be colonial, exploitative and oppressive; or it could be self-determining, co-operative, and liberationist, based on genuine people and genuine leaders (pp. 117, 198–199). Secondly, violence is a *sui generis* force or energy. At the level of the individual it is 'cleansing' (p. 74). As an instrument, violence has the capacity to make the world. As an energy it operates analogously with physical laws, in which the imposition of force provokes a reaction. This may either be directed inwardly and self-destructively by the oppressed, or productively directed against the oppressor (www.palgrave-journals.com/cpt/journal/v7/n1/full/9300328a.html).

From these words, it is clear that violence can be used for both negative and positive reasons. The problem with this Fanonian theory is that its main focus is decolonization. It does not focus on a post-independent state. This theory does not for example explain why a political party that contributed immensely in efforts to

liberate the masses and give them the vote would now turn against the same people that it sought to liberate and deny them a political voice. In the light of this, it becomes necessary to seek for possible explanations from other theorists.

According to Frazer and Hutchings Machiavelli, Hobbes and Weber (and others) perceive politics, more or less, from the point of view of the political dominator which in this case is the state organization. These two go on to observe that a theoretical and political reflex of this position scrutinizes politics from the position of the dominated and the oppressed (www.palgrave-journals.com/cpt/journal/v7/n1/full/9300328a.html). This therefore means that the position of these three is not in any way very different from that of Fanon who perceives oppressive violence as begetting liberative violence.

In light of the realization that these theorists that have been discussed so do not adequately why there is violence in a post-independent state, it may be insightful to turn to the two other theories that have been identified above. While these theories may not necessarily be political in orientation, the writers are of the opinion that they insights that they will bring forth may be illuminating enough in informing why the Zimbabwean state has been so much blighted by the scourge of political violence.

There are the inequality theories that are advanced by almost all of the disciplines of the behavioural and social sciences. These theories explain aggression and violence as related to the different ways in which inequalities, privileges, hierarchies, discriminations, and oppressions, on the one hand, *externally motivate* some people to abuse, exploit, and generally take advantage of those labelled as socially inferior. They as well on the other hand, *internally motivate* those people subject to the labels of lowliness to resist and resultantly, they may rebel violently against their statuses. These explanations of violence are grounded in the political economies of private property and capitalist development (Iadicola and Shupe 1998 in De Keseredy and Perry www.greggbarak.com/custom3_2.html).

Finally as in the case of the inequality theories, the general systems theories are also advanced and propounded by several of the social and behavioural sciences. These explanations of these theories hinge on the argument that aggression and violence focus on positive feedback loops that involve the interactions of individuals, families, and societal spheres (Straus 1978 in De Keseredy and Perry www.greggbarak.com/custom3_2.html). These same theories further assume that optimal levels of violence are necessary or needed to maintain and reproduce the system. With the exception of internally constrained mechanisms of violence, these explanatory models take into account various sets of behavioural factors, and these include: high levels of conflict inherent in the family; the integration of violence into personality and behavioral scripts; cultural norms that legitimate violence; and the

sexist organization of families and society (Viano 1992 in De Keseredy and Perry www.greggbarak.com/custom3_2.html).

A look at the last two sets of theories that have been discussed is quite revealing in that they show violence as emanating from the issue of privileges and power as well as a situation where those in power may perceive those who are seeking political office as people who want to upset the status quo. In the case of Zimbabwe while there is really no one who has been labeled as socially inferior, the label that the leader of MDC has no liberation war credentials as well as the general belief among ZANU (PF) supporters that he is not as educated as Mugabe is can be viewed as causing some people in ZANU (PF) to ferment violence. The general systems theories are also relevant in that they help to explain why Zimbabwean elections especially after independence are marred by violence. The use of violence by the ruling party is seen as creating an enabling environment that is needed to maintain and reproduce the same system that has been running the affairs of the country since 1980. For MDC, even though the country is politically independent, the violence that they engage in can best be described by the Fanonian theory and backed up by the observations of Machiavelli, Hobbes and Weber.

The Emergence of the MDC and the Political Conflict – 1999 Up to the Present

The coming of the MDC made the political terrain to be tense once again as ZANU (PF) attempted to shake off the formidable challenge from the new opposition party which threatened to remove it from power. It accused the MDC of trying to make Zimbabwe a colony again as it was presented to the people as championing the interests of the Western countries, especially the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States of America and the white commercial farmers who were being evicted from the farms they were occupying as part of the fast track land reform programme. It is not uncommon to hear ZANU (PF) leaders and their supporters saying *Zimbabwe will never be a colony again* or displaying banners to that effect. This has made the MDC appear to be a retrogressive force aiming to reverse the gains of independence. As such, the party and its supporters have been labeled sell-outs who should never be allowed to rule the country. The MDC party leaders have been labeled *zvimbwasungata* (a term derived from the phrase *zvimbwa zvevasunga uta* [dogs that would follow anyone whom they see carrying a bow and arrows]), a Shona term mainly used since the liberation struggle to refer to sell-outs. They are in short being referred to as hunting dogs of the new form of imperialism that is affecting Zimbabwe. This is a provocative word. The liberation war for Zimbabwe was a bloody and protracted one to an extent that those who participated in it will never want to

re-live the experiences. Such expressions are meant to coerce the people especially those in the rural areas to vote for ZANU (PF) and to exclude the MDC supporters from programmes that are intended to benefit the citizens of this country. This includes government programmes like those of giving out food aid and agricultural inputs. The MDC supporters are often told *Uchadya mbama* (You Shall Eat Your Palm). This is in reference to the party's symbol of an open palm.

Another result is that those loyal to ZANU (PF) unleash violence on the opposition supporters as a way of 'safeguarding' the gains of the liberation struggle and more so as fear of experiencing the hardships they endured during the war as they are constantly reminded that victory for the opposition is tantamount to waging another war to liberate the country from neo-colonial forces.

ZANU (PF) leaders are on record of making vows that have undermined the principle of holding multi-party elections and the practicing of democracy. These include vows such as *Nyika ino haifi yakaenda nebhilo* (This country will not be surrendered through the vote) and *Ndinopika naMbuya NeHanda naSekuru Kaguvi...* (I swear by Nehanda and Kaguvi...). Muzondidya (2008: 177) notes that ZANU (PF)'s "culture of intolerance" has badly affected the practice of democratic ideas it has espoused as it has approached elections as "battles" and sees its political opponents as enemies that need to be destroyed rather than as political competitors. In fact, in ZANU (PF) parlance, the term *muveni* (enemy) is used to refer to political opponents. They are never referred to as *vakwikwidzani* (competitors). The vow that elections will not bring change in the political leadership of the country makes the paradox of holding them in the first place. It turns the whole exercise into a political farce that borders on the tragic because it leads to unnecessary loss of life as well as physical harm to those who would be lucky enough to survive. The holding of elections has been used to enhance the grip of power of ZANU (PF) rather as a process to respect the wishes of the people. Also by making vows using Mbuya Nehanda and Sekuru Kaguvi who are legendary figures of the first war of liberation (1896-97), the party is making a statement that it is the only party which is the liberator of the country and therefore voting for other political parties is the same as betraying what the heroes of this country fought for. In other words, ZANU (PF) is making a statement that it is standing for the ideas of those who fought the liberation struggle and yet it has betrayed the people by going against the goals of independence like holding free and fair elections.

Another slogan frequently used by ZANU (PF) since the liberation struggle is *Pasi nevatengesesi* (Down with sell-outs) referring to those who belong to other political parties. The statement is a metaphor meaning that the opposition supporters should be eliminated by death. Sithole (1998) notes that culture began during the internal

wrangles within ZANU's military wing the Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA) when some junior leaders such as Thomas Nhari and Dakarai Badza protested against the commandist nature of the liberation struggle and the corrupt and sexist practices of the top commanders. This legacy has continued in the post-independence era and it has resulted in the deaths of thousands of opposition party supporters. Sithole (1998b: 245) notes that:

The liberation struggle also left a significant mark on Zimbabwe's political culture. The commandist nature of mobilization and politicization under clandestine circumstances gave rise to the politics of intimidation and fear. Opponents are viewed in warlike terms, as enemies and therefore illegitimate. The culture from the liberation struggle was intolerant and violent.

Indeed most of the victims of the political violence in Zimbabwe were members of other political parties other than ZANU (PF).

Through songs such as *Mbiri yechigandanga* (The famousness of the liberation war fighter) that was sung by the late ZANU (PF) political commissar, Elliott Manyika, the party has continued to celebrate the use of violence against political opponents. During the war of liberation, ZANU (later ZANU [PF]) through its armed wing ZANLA did not tolerate any person who held a political view that was different from theirs. Most people therefore supported them because they feared death. This song that received a lot of airplay play on all Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation's (ZBC) four radio stations, as well as on Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) helped to instill fear in most people and acted as a reminder that if they were not going to follow the ZANU (PF) line they were likely to be beaten or at worst get killed. Another song that was used to instill fear and promote violence is *Shera mabhuzu mana* (Shell with four mortar bombs). At a time when Zimbabwe is no longer at war, one wonders who the enemy who needs to be shelled is. It is therefore clear that the enemy who needs to be shelled is the MDC whose rise saw ZANU (PF) members recording songs that promoted political violence.

The researchers have found it quite interesting and ironic that while the MDC has been complaining about ZANU (PF)'s use of violence on its supporters, it has itself been guilty of the same crime. When they came onto the national political radar, they said that they were using the open palm symbol as a sign of openness and transparency. They also used the slogan *Chinja maitiro, maitiro chinja – Guqula izenzo, izenzo guqula*, (Change your ways, your ways have to be changed). Through this slogan they were making the claim that they were going to change the way politics was done in the country. One of the ways of doing this was through shunning political violence. However, in a sudden change, the MDC has also been found to be using inflammatory language against its opponents. They use slogans that are almost

the same slogan with those that ZANU (PF) uses. This comes out clearly when they use for example slogans such as when it says *Rovera Pasi, Hezvoko Bwaa!* This is done when they raise the palm which is their party symbol and then violently drop it down to signal the downfall of the members of ZANU (PF). They can even mention the members they wish to send into political oblivion and naturally this attracts fierce resistance hence heightening the tensions which already exists. The very act of *kurovera pasi* (throwing down onto the ground) and the sound "Bwaa!" is the sound of crushing and cracking. While the slogan on the surface does not appear to be promoting the violent death of MDC's political opponents the *bwaa* sound is enough of an indicator of the violent death that MDC wishes to be visited upon its opponents. This unfortunately runs contrary to its founding slogan *Chinja maitiro*.

The ZANU (PF) party also uses language that ridicules the persons of leaders and members of other political parties. For instance, the MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai has been referred to as *Chamatama* (One with fat cheeks). An analysis of the morphological composition of the noun *Chamatama* shows that it has the secondary prefix /*cha-*/ which shows disrespect to the person. In fact, the possessive prefix *cha-* which is a variant of *chi-* which belongs to class 7. To have Tsvangirai described by a prefix that is used to describe short, stout things (Fortune 1985) is really degrading since according to the Shona noun classification criteria all normal human beings belong to noun class 1 whose prefix is *mu-*. There was also public outcry when the late vice president of Zimbabwe and the ruling ZANU (PF) Joseph Msika referred to Tsvangirai as *umgodoyi*, an Ndebele word which means a stray dog. This often draws the wrath of his supporters and will find other words and terms to ridicule the leaders of ZANU (PF). While the MDC's opponents cherish the use of such words the MDC supporters do not take kindly to such descriptions and the result is that they may degenerate into fist fights or even the torching of homes and in some instances possibly murder.

The MDC itself has not remained neutral in this mudslinging political madness. It has responded in like manner. For example, the late war veterans leader Chenjerai Hunzvi was referred to as *Chenjerai Nhunzi* (Chenjerai Housefly, literary meaning beware of house flies) whilst the late minister Border Gezi was referred to as *Border Asingagezi* (Border who does not bath himself). These two ZANU (PF) functionaries were notorious for perpetrating violence against the opposition supporters and the names given to them signify their dirty activities and the opposition's great dislike of the two. Apart from these two, the president Robert Mugabe is sometimes referred to as *chidhara*, implying an old person who is no longer useful. Again, the noun *chidhara* has the secondary prefix /*chi-*/ as already pointed out above which has pejorative consequences. Alternatively,

the MDC uses the metaphor *jongwe rachembera* (an old cock) to refer to Mugabe. The roost was the symbol of ZANU (PF) before the signing of the Unity Accord with ZAPU on 22 December 1987. This attack is not restricted to the persons alone but also to the institutions belonging to the political parties. Before the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in February 2009, the MDC would refer to the government of ZANU (PF) as *chihurumende chaRobert* or *chihurumende cheZANU*. Whilst this is intended to show the inefficiency of the government, it has the implication that the ZANU (PF) government was a total failure much to the chagrin of the members of both the party and government. One can therefore observe that whilst the MDC's use of hate speech can be said to be defensive, it also helps to intensify the tension that exists and does not help create a peaceful environment.

The MDC's main slogan *chinja maitiro/guqula izenzo*/change your ways, accompanied by the party symbol of an open palm, which is the opposite of ZANU (PF)'s clinched fist, has been subject of attack by the latter's party members. Raftopoulos (2001) notes that the slogan encapsulated the politics of possibility and change. Above all, it also gave notice to the ruling party that it faced a real threat to electoral defeat and loss of state power in the forthcoming elections of 2000 and 2002. This unsettled the ruling party which reacted violently against its political opponents. Another observation is that the MDC uses language which threatens vengeance to the leaders once they get into power. One of the common statements in their slogans is *kwaZvimba neshoka* (Zvimba by foot). Zvimba is the rural home area of President Mugabe and the fact that he will go on foot implies that he will be an ordinary person without dignity and this is not treated lightly by him and his supporters who would use any means necessary to protect both their estates and dignity. Such use of language implies that he will not be accorded the respect that is due to him as a former head of state if he was to suffer electoral defeat. The language used by the MDC has overtones of violence. The party president Morgan Tsvangirai when addressing an anniversary gathering said:

What we would like to tell Mugabe today is that please go peacefully. If you don't want to go peacefully, we will remove you violently. The country cannot afford Mugabe a day longer than necessary (www.zimbabwesituation.com/oct3pm.html).

These words are not a good omen coming from a political party that professes political tolerance. In fact, in these words Tsvangirai is underscoring the fact that the MDC is also a violent political party just like ZANU (PF) that it is seeking to unseat. The party has also a song entitled *Sadam waenda kwasara Bhobho* (Sadam is Gone and Bob should Follow Suit). The implication is that the party's wish is to have President Mugabe face the same fate as happened to Saddam Hussein whose

country Iraq was invaded by American forces and he was executed. This result in ZANU (PF) hitting back at the MDC being the stooges of the West and also the West being the master minders of regime change agenda in the country. This song has also caused ZANU (PF) supporters to react violently to MDC supporters whom they accuse of pursuing the regime change agenda violently.

The ZANU (PF) party also uses language that helps to enhance their stance of refusing regime change and also change of the leadership of President Mugabe. The use of the phrase *VaMugabe chete chete* (Mugabe only and only) in their slogans is used to remind their supporters that he is only the legitimate leader who should lead both the party and the country. In other words, the supporters should not allow any other person both from within the party and outside to be the leader. This prevents the people from their democratic right to renew leadership and forces them to continue with the status quo. In fact, this slogan is a veiled threat that anyone who chooses to vote any other person into power has to be stopped by any possible means. These means include violence that may lead to physical elimination or torching of a perceived MDC's supporter's home. Another form of punishment includes the confiscation of that person's goods and livestock. In some instances, traditional chiefs have been used to kick such people out their areas of jurisdiction.

The Zimbabwe government introduced the policy of reconciliation in 1980 which was meant to bring to peace all the warring parties as a way of ensuring development in the war torn country. Apart from the Rhodesian forces, the African nationalist parties themselves had their own struggles taking both intra and inter party dimensions. Therefore, it was imperative that a policy of reconciliation be introduced. However, the ZANU (PF) party had to abandon this otherwise noble policy first by fanning ethnic polarization through the *gukurahundi* atrocities and now promoting racial hostilities by accusing the former colonizers of trying to re-colonize the country by sponsoring the opposition parties mainly the MDC. This has resulted in the death of white commercial farmers and the closure of some business ventures owned by the white investors. ZANU (PF) is also known for political posturing and xenophobic name-calling against the white nationals whom they label as agents of regime change. The president Robert Mugabe was quoted in the *Daily News* whilst addressing his party supporters to have said:

We must continue to strike fear into the heart of the white man. The white man must tremble. The white man is not indigenous to Africa. Africa for the Africans! (Gumpo 2012: 12).

After facing the formidable challenge by the MDC, ZANU (PF) has resorted to the use of the arts particularly the song as a tool for propaganda. The party hires some artists whose songs are not different from the slogans and speeches which promote hate speech. One such

artist is Tambaoga (alias Last Chiyangwa) who has a song which ridicules Tony Blair the former British premier, who is accused by ZANU (PF) of being the chief architect of regime change in Zimbabwe. One of the lines of the song reads: *The Blair that I know is a toilet*. This is in reference to the Blair toilets that were developed by the Ministry of Health in the early 1980s in conjunction with Blair Research Institute (Hitchcock and Morgan <http://vhata.net/blog/2005/08/30/the-blair-toilet> and http://www2.susana.org/docs_ccbk/susana_download/2-1178-paperzimbabwesruralsanitationprogram.pdf). Instead of celebrating an invention that has improved Zimbabweans' hygiene, the name Blair has become associated with treachery and chicanery. This obviously has a negative impact on race relations as the white citizens of this country are viewed as being treasonous and therefore should be eliminated just like what was done to the former colonial masters. ZANU (PF) is also on record as vowing that *Zimbabwe Will Never Be a Colony Again* which has been used at the rallies and campaign material of different kinds. The artist also goes on to glorify the party leader as the one ordained to rule the country forever. He declares: *Mutungamiri weZimbabwe ndiBhobho* (The Leader of Zimbabwe is Bob). This creates a situation in which the issue of succession has been made rather taboo and has seen some members being booted out of the party or given less glorious posts. A good example is that of Eddison Zvobgo who was nominated Minister Without Portfolio after coming out in the open that he had presidential ambitions. This is despite the fact that he is the one who helped amend the constitution so that it would have the position of an executive president. Apart from this, this also has the impact of excluding other candidates from opposition political parties as not being eligible to rule the country. This attempt to exclude other political is also shown in the jingles played on the state controlled television and radio stations. For example, there are those done by the Mbare Chimurenga Choir. There is one entitled *Timu Timu* (Team Team) in which they use an allegory of setting up a football team to resemble those eligible to rule the country. Those who are mentioned in the line-up are members of the ZANU (PF) Presidium only and yet there is the Government of National Unity which included leaders of the MDC and yet they are excluded in the line-up. This attitude is prevalent among the party's members who have shown disrespect to the leaders of the opposition like Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai by doing things like jeering at him on national events. The ZANU (PF) cabinet ministers are also on record of ignoring directives from the premier

thus making the government not achieve much.

CONCLUSION

This discussion has shown that the language used by Zimbabwe's two major political parties helps to fuel the hostility between them. The results are negative as the nation has not only been polarized along party lines but also on ethnic and racial lines. In the end, this has seen the talk on the existence of democracy by both parties appear hypocritical as in reality they do not tolerate each other. There is need to improve on language use to ensure that there is behavior change among the parties' supporters as language has been proven to have power in influencing its users' emotions, attitudes and actions.

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