

**AFRICAN HISTORIES AND MODERNITIES**

# **MUGABEISM?**

**History, Politics, and Power in Zimbabwe**

Edited by  
**Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni**



# MUGABEISM?

# AFRICAN HISTORIES AND MODERNITIES

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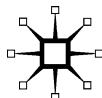
# MUGABEISM?

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History, Politics, and Power in Zimbabwe

Edited by  
*Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatseni*

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MUGABEISM?

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AAG	Affirmative Action Group
AASU	All African Students Union
ANC	African National Congress
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	African Union
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CAF	Central Africa Federation
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
IBDC	Indigenous Business Development Centre
IBWO	Indigenous Women's Organization
ICC	International Criminal Court
LAA	Land Apportionment Act
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NAM	Non-aligned Movement
NAPWU	Namibia Public Works Union
NDP	National Democratic Party
NEEEF	New Equitable Economic Empowerment Framework
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NIEEB	National Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Board
NIEO	New International Economic Order
NUS	National Union of Students
OAU	Organization of African Unity
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SADCC	Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference
SPYL	SWAPO Youth League
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
UANC	United African National Council
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
YDC	Youth Development Fund
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army

ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZIPA	Zimbabwe People Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

## Introduction: Mugabeism and Entanglements of History, Politics, and Power in the Making of Zimbabwe

*Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni*

President Robert Gabriel Mugabe of Zimbabwe belongs to the first generation of African nationalists who led Africa into independence. He is 91 years old. He has been in power since 1980. For over 30 years, Zimbabweans have known only one president (Mugabe). One distinguishing feature of the first generation of African nationalists is that they initially fought for inclusion into the colonial power structures. They used personal acquisition of modern education as a justification for demanding inclusion. It was only when colonialism proved to be too inflexible to accommodate the black elite that they engaged in politics of anti-colonialism. They mobilized peasants and workers to constitute foot soldiers of anti-colonial struggles. African nationalism became a noble badge that indicated how the educated African elites loved the imagined postcolonial nation.

Mugabe is one of those black elites that embraced African nationalism in the 1960s. He became actively involved in the anti-colonial struggles. Anti-colonialism gestured towards taking over power by black elites from white colonialists. Anti-colonialism enabled black elites to inherit the colonial state. Once the black elites inherited the colonial state, they never bothered to radically transform it. Deracialization became conflated with decolonization of colonial state institutions. Africanization degenerated into nativism, xenophobia, retribalization, chauvinism and racism. Therefore, anti-colonialism must not be confused with decoloniality. Decoloniality is an encapsulation of a more profound African quest for radical transformation of colonial structures of domination and repression, colonial economic logic of exploitation, and gestures towards a rebirth of new post-racial humanity.

Mugabe's politics have always been anti-colonial rather than decolonial. This is why his postcolonial practice of governance is not very different from that of colonialists at many levels. Mugabeism has embraced violence as a pillar of governance. Racism has continued despite Mugabe's earlier pronouncement of a policy of reconciliation at independence in 1980. Tribalism became normalized and exacerbated to the extent that Mugabe's regime unleashed ethnic violence on the minority

Ndebele-speaking people of Matebeleland and the Midlands regions in the period 1982 to 1987 (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and Legal Resources Foundation Report 1997). Sexism and patriarchy has continued unabated. State institutions have been heavily militarized. Those in power have been allowed to engage in primitive accumulation at the expense of poor ordinary people. Therefore, Mugabeism might be anti-colonial but falls short of being a genuine decolonial project aimed at ending colonial logics of governance to inaugurate a new postcolonial dispensation.

Within his ruling party known as the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) Mugabe is a demi-god. He is feared. He is rarely challenged. This is why despite his advanced age, ZANU-PF, at its December 2014 Sixth People's Congress, elected Mugabe unopposed as its presidential candidate for the 2018 elections. By 2018, Mugabe will be 94 years old. Since coming to power in 1980, Mugabe's pictures have adorned all public buildings making him omnipresent in Zimbabwe. His biography and hagiography is, therefore, inextricably intertwined with the political rise and economic collapse of Zimbabwe. It is however doubtful whether Mugabe will preside over the rise of Zimbabwe from its unprecedented crisis that commenced at the beginning of 2000. What is beyond doubt is that Mugabe is an important African political figure who has gained both admiration and criticism partly because of his anticolonial and pan-Africanist rhetoric/posture, and partly due to his ability to cast himself as a victim of neoimperialism and neocolonialism. Western bashing of Mugabe and imposition of sanctions has enabled him to heighten his self-representation as a victim of neoimperialism and neocolonialism.

At 91 years of age, Mugabe has been elected to chair the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). While these positions are rotational and largely ceremonial, they also indicate that Mugabe is trusted as a pan-Africanist. As the new chair of the AU, Mugabe has already taken the lead in telling the world that "Africa is for Africans" and that the natural resources of Africa must benefit Africans, and in stating categorically that Africa must pull out from the International Criminal Court (ICC) by April 2015.<sup>1</sup>

Mugabe gained fame first as a committed nationalist revolutionary and uncompromising guerrilla leader based in Mozambique in the late 1970s who gallantly fought for the independence of Zimbabwe, and second as a champion of compulsory land redistribution at the beginning of 2000. The Fast Track Land Reform Programme that commenced in 2000 won Mugabe support of some black elites desperate for quick embourgeoisement, war veterans, and landless peasants. At the same time, it provoked severe criticism from Western powers that condemned the violence that accompanied the Fast Track Land Reform Programme and emphasized the importance of respect for property rights of white commercial farmers.

But Western powers are also not helping matters in Zimbabwe. While they collectively rail against Mugabe's authoritarianism and violation of human rights, they tend to ignore that there was an unattainable situation that Mogobe Ramose (2002) termed "constitutionalised injustice" in which a minority of white Zimbabweans who were privileged by white settler colonialism continued to own vast tracts of land at the expense of the majority of black people who were dispossessed by colonialism. Such insensitivity on the part of Western powers gave Mugabe ammunition to speak the language of restitution and redress of colonial wrongs. In short the unresolved land question in Zimbabwe as is the case in South Africa and Namibia

could not be simply interpreted from the discourse of protection of property rights because of the historical background of white settler dispossession and primitive accumulation that left indigenous people without enough land. Mugabe effectively used land question to gain popularity among landless peoples of Zimbabwe. Consequently, the resolution of the land question became one of the central motifs of Mugabeism (Mugabe 2001).

With the above background in mind it is not surprising that Mugabe is also seen as a cunning and ruthless politician who spearheaded a massacre of over 20,000 Ndebele-speaking Zimbabweans in the period between 1980 and 1987. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and Legal Resources Foundation Report of 1997 provides details on how the Mugabe regime deployed the Fifth Brigade that committed what became known as Gukurahundi atrocities in the Midlands and Matebeleland regions of Zimbabwe. The Ndebele-speaking people who were targets of Operation Gukurahundi were openly ‘Othered’ ethnically by the Mugabe regime as threats to the nation who deserved ethnic cleansing for Zimbabwe to survive. These atrocities constitute a major negative chapter in Mugabe’s political trajectory. Mugabe’s depiction of the atrocities as having taken place during a “moment of madness,” has not resolved the matter. Rather it indicated to an admission by Mugabe that there were no objective security concerns that warranted Operation Gukurahundi. This episode and many others such as Operation Murambatsvina (Urban Clean-Up) of 2005 and Operation Mavhoterapapi (who did you vote for) of 2008 among many forms of governance by military operations makes Mugabe a very difficult political figure to understand. This is mainly because as his popular political and social support base was fast declining, he not only resorted to populist policies that tapped into long-standing economic grievances but also retched the process of militarization of state institutions and gradually built a securocratic state. What emerged was indeed a schizophrenic and chameleonic political character in Mugabe that blamed external forces for Zimbabwe’s problems while at the same time dealing ruthlessly with internal opponents (that were defined as enemies of the state). While his political rhetoric is steeped in popular decolonial redemptive politics that appeals to a broad section of all those people who emerged from exploitative and repressive settler colonial domination, his political practice is far from democratic, tolerant, and peaceful. Mugabe is, therefore, both popular and unpopular.

Use of violence to achieve political ends has been part of Mugabe’s political practice and ZANU-PF’s DNA since its break up from ZAPU in 1963. But at the same time, his commitment to land redistribution speaks to his concern with socio-economic justice. How do we understand and make sense of such a political figure, who has now allowed his wife (Grace Mugabe) to imbricate herself in the toxic succession politics, resulting in the fall of some long-standing allies of Mugabe, including a serving vice president? In a surprising and fast turn of events taking place within the context of old age immobilizing him and influence in ZANU-PF declining, the young Grace Mugabe was positioned as Mugabe’s storm trooper dealing with imagined and perceived opponents. For 90 days prior to the Sixth ZANU-PF People’s Congress of December 2014, Grace Mugabe unceremoniously jumped into party and national politics and consistently savaged a sitting and serving Vice President Joice Mujuru who was elected at the 2004 ZANU-PF People’s Congress (Mandaza 2014).<sup>2</sup> Mujuru’s political sin was to wish to succeed Mugabe as a leader of Zimbabwe. This process of purging of the so-called Mujuru faction

within ZANU-PF “was completed at the Congress itself, with husband and wife—imperious and therefore in total control of the appointments in a would-be ‘elective’ Congress—managing and concluding the slate that purports to be ZANU-PF’s ruling elite for the next five years” (Mandaza 2014: 2). It would seem the post-Sixth ZANU-PF People’s Congress witnessed the rise of Mugabe-Grace as “First Family Oligarchy” that is brutal to any force that purports to be opposed to it. How do we make sense of this latest version of Mugabeism where the first family is happily ensconced within a triumphant securocratic state? Are we witnessing the rise of a Mugabe dynasty?

*Mugabeism? History, Politics, and Power in Zimbabwe* delves deeper into what could be gained from unsententious and diverse analyses of such an ill-defined, incoherent, and difficult signifier as Mugabeism from various disciplinary vantage points. While Mugabeism as a political practice might be punctuated by negative passion and articulated in high emotion, it cannot be totally dismissed or merely reduced to an unfounded inveighing by an archetypal African populist dictator against colonialism, imperialism, and Euro-North American-centric hegemony. With the dismantling of direct colonial administrations after 1945, Africa did not progressively move into a postcolonial dispensation. Colonialism gave way to ‘global coloniality’ with its invisible colonial matrices of power that continue to sustain an asymmetrical global power structure in place since the time of colonial conquest. But Mugabe’s correct critique of neoimperialism and neocolonialism constitutive of global coloniality is, however, rendered ineffective by his authoritarianism, dictatorship, and violence at the domestic front.<sup>3</sup> His legitimate and decolonial push for redistributive socioeconomic justice in a former white settler colony of Rhodesia is compromised by patrimonialism, clientelism, kleptocracy, and corruption. Perhaps, Mugabe, like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, will go down in history as a great African leader due to his courageous stand against coloniality but remain as a questionable Zimbabwean leader because of his antidemocratic political practices at the home front.<sup>4</sup>

The contributors to this book make concerted efforts in their individual chapters and collectively to offer a variety of well-thought-out intellectual ways of understanding Mugabe, a complex political actor that was made and produced by specific but complicated histories as well as a man who has been and continues to be actively engaged in making complex histories. In this book, Mugabe is not only characterized as being a product of colonialism as he has played an active role in the making of Zimbabwean nationalism but also as a construction and political production of African anticolonial nationalism and the exigencies of leading an armed liberation struggle. The book is therefore about a political actor who is simultaneously a colonial, nationalist, and postcolonial subject.

How Mugabe as an individual was produced historically and politically might be the ideal entry point in understanding Mugabeism. Mugabe is a product of colonial and nationalist histories. But he is also more than that as he has played an active role in the making of postcolonial African history for the past three decades and has in the process been shaped by that postcolonial history in which the past, the present, and the future are entangled paradoxically (Mbembe 2001). Colonialism was a terrain of conquest, violence, dispossession, displacement, coercion, police rule, militarism, racism, authoritarianism, and antiblack racism. It was never a school of democracy and human rights. Radical difference was introduced by colonialism into Zimbabwe in particular and Africa in general. Mugabe was born in 1924 under conditions of the dominance of white colonialism. He was educated in colonial

mission schools and trained as a teacher within a colonial environment. In other words, Mugabe was born as colonial subject.

*Mugabeism? History, Politics, and Power in Zimbabwe* is not an attempt at producing a biography of Mugabe. To write an academically meaningful biography of Mugabe, one needs to have been close to him and his political party (ZANU-PF) to the extent of being able to conduct deep interviews with him as a subject of study. This has not been possible for me as well as for the contributors to this book. Because of this reality, the idea was never to produce a biography of Mugabe but a book about the complex entanglements of history, politics, and power within which Mugabe and Mugabeism emerged. Because the book privileges history, politics, and power, it is also about the idea of Zimbabwe and how this idea emerged, traveled, and traversed the political trajectory of the violent shifts from a colony to a sovereign state as well as the degeneration of a postcolonial state into an unprecedented multilayered crisis under the leadership of Mugabe.

## OF COLONIAL AND NATIONALIST SUBJECTS AND THEIR CONSCIOUSNESS

African colonial and nationalist subjects like Mugabe have a complex consciousness. The weakness of consciousness of colonial and postcolonial subjects is well treated in Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks* (1967) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1968), Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1974), and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986). For the black colonial subject, acquiring education was considered as one possible avenue to gain some ontological density as a black professional under colonialism. Colonialism denied sovereign subjectivity to black people. But education was advertised by colonialists as a gateway to civilization and personhood. As put by the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano (2007: 169):

The colonisers also imposed a mystified image of their own patterns of producing knowledge and meaning. At first, they placed these patterns far out of reach of the dominated. Later, they taught them in partial and selective way, in order to co-opt some of the dominated into their own power institutions. Then European culture was made seductive: it gave access to power. After all, beyond repression, the main instrument of all power is its seduction.

But colonialism had a racial ceiling for the social mobility of black colonial professionals. They were denied the right to vote. Only a few and particular professions such as teaching and nursing were available for black professionals. This colonial ceiling frustrated the black elite that were thirsty for embourgeoisement within a colonial environment. To sustain the ceiling and to ensure that only a few black people acquired modern colonial education, colonial authorities, according to Jean-Paul Sartre, became strictly selective of those Africans they wanted to produce as part of manufacturing "native elite." Mugabe fortuitously was part of those who were selected. Missionaries also played a key role in this colonial selection. This is why Sartre (Sartre quoted in Fanon 1968: 7) argued that

the European elite undertook to manufacture native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with red-hot iron, with the principles of



Western culture; they stuffed their mouth full with high-sounding phrases, grand gluttonous words that stuck to teeth. After a short stay in the mother country they were sent home whitewashed. These walking lies had nothing left to say to their brother.

As noted by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986: 9) the classroom and "the chalk and the blackboard" were used effectively by colonialism to commit "psychological violence" known as epistemicide. But it was mainly colonial racial ceiling and colonial restrictions faced by those black people who had deeply imbibed colonial knowledge and education that forced members of the emerging black elite to embrace nationalism and anticolonialism as means of fighting against the colonial white bourgeoisie and its political leadership that was in charge of the colonial state. This is why some scholars have expressed an idea of a weak social base of African nationalism as liberatory force. Mahmood Mamdani (2000: 45) has this to say about the social base of African nationalism:

I argue that the social base of nationalism who was the native who had crossed the boundary between the rural which incorporated the subject ethnically and the urban that excluded the subject racially. Though beyond the lash of customary law, this native was denied access to civic rights on racial grounds. It is this native... who formed the social basis of nationalism. For a mass-based militant nationalism to be created, though, it was necessary for the boundary between the customary and the civic to be breached. Having crossed that boundary from the rural to the urban, it was once again necessary for cadres of militant nationalism to return to the countryside to link up with peasant struggles against Native Authorities. Nationalism was successful in gaining a mass base only where it succeeded in breaching the double divide that power tried to impose on society: the urban-rural, and the inter-ethnic.

It is this nationalist school (the nationalist movement) that Mugabe entered into in 1960. It was already dominated by other nationalists like Joshua Nkomo, Ndabaningi Sithole, James Chikerema, George Nyandoro, Paul Mushonga, Joseph Msika, George Silundika, Jason Moyo, and Josiah Chinamano, among many others. The nationalist school was deeply interpellated by the colonial school despite its claims to produce cadres that would destroy colonialism. Stefan Mair and Masipula Sithole (2002: 22) captured this interpellation well: "The authoritarianism of the colonial era reproduced itself within the nationalist political movements. The war of liberation, too, reinforced rather than undermined this authoritarian culture." This point was reinforced by the Asian cultural decolonial scholar Kuan-Hsing Chen (1998: 14), who also noted that because of interpellation of third world nationalism by the immanent logic of colonialism, it "could not escape from reproducing racial and ethnic discrimination; a price to be paid by the coloniser as well as the colonised selves." But it was only after civil disobedience to colonial rule proved ineffective that some African nationalists concluded that colonial violence simply needed to be countered by nationalist violence. When this happened, the interpellation was complete. Colonial violence was being reproduced by the African nationalists. Colonial paradigm of war was reproduced as nationalist paradigm of war. This is why some decolonial theorists strongly condemn nationalism

of reproducing Eurocentrism. The leading decolonial theorist Ramon Grosfoguel (2011: 18) has no kind words for nationalism:

Nationalism provides Eurocentric solutions to a Eurocentric global problem. It reproduces an internal coloniality of power within each nation-state and reifies the nation-state as the privileged location of social change. Struggles above and below the nation-state are not considered in nationalist political strategies. Moreover, nationalist responses to global capitalism reinforce the nation-state as the political institutional form par excellence of the modern/colonial/capitalist/patriarchal world-system. In this sense, nationalism is complicit with Eurocentric thinking and political structures.

This sustained critique of both colonialism and nationalism assists us in understanding the behavior of people like Mugabe who were born as colonial subjects but who then embraced African nationalism and anticolonial struggles as part of their fight to take over the colonial state. While there is no doubt about Mugabe's consistent anticolonial rhetoric, he is yet to escalate that to a genuine decolonial agenda that transforms colonial structures of power, deviates from Eurocentric colonial epistemology and radically shifts from hierarchization of being according to "tribe" as a reproduction of racial hierarchization of being under colonialism. Decoloniality is superior to mere anticolonialism because it envisages new political forms of power that do not reproduce coloniality; is very critical of how anticolonial struggles ended up as reformist movements seeking inclusion in the very Euro-North American-centric powers structure that are underpinned by coloniality; and is acutely focused on epistemological paradigm shift as an essential prerequisite for genuine decolonial transformation. At another level, the crisis in which political figures like Mugabe are entrapped manifests itself in the practice of deploying leftist political language, while remaining steeped in right-wing Eurocentric epistemology that reproduces all the negatives of coloniality such as reverse racism, tribalism, patriarchy, sexism, nativism, and xenophobia (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013).

Such an analysis also help us to understand the ambiguities, contradictions, and ambivalences displayed by Mugabe as a political actor, particularly his railing against Euro-North American hegemony while at the same time maintaining an authoritarian, repressive, and violent state in Zimbabwe that is intolerant of any dissent. These ambiguities, contradictions, and ambivalences were well-captured by the leading African philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah (1992: 56–60):

Railing against the cultural hegemony of the West, the nativists are of its party without knowing it. Indeed the very arguments, the rhetoric of defiance, that our nationalist muster are . . . canonical, time-tested . . . In their ideological inscription, the cultural nationalists remain in a position of counteridentification . . . which is to continue to participate in an institutional configuration—to be subjected to cultural identities they ostensibly decry . . . Time and again, cultural nationalism has followed the route of alternate genealogizing. We end up always in the same place; the achievement is to have invented a different past for it.

A nationalist paradigm of "conquest of conquest" entrenched and consolidated earlier colonial cultures of conquest and violence as forms of political practice. However

well-meaning and rational the adoption of violence as a tool of liberation was, this meant that the nationalist school became a terrain of violence too. Mugabe, for instance, became a graduate of both colonial and nationalist schools of violence. It is therefore not surprising that he can boast of having degrees in violence and take pride in the fact that his political party (ZANU-PF) has a long and successful history of use of violence to achieve political ends (Blair 2002). Even his approach to elections spoke of the inseparability of votes and guns: “Our votes must go together with our guns. After all, any vote shall have, shall have been the product of the gun. The gun which produces the vote should remain its security officer—its guarantor. The people’s votes and the people’s guns are always inseparable twins” (Mugabe, 1976, quoted in Meredith 2002a). While it is true that Mugabe spoke this way within a context of intensifying armed struggle where the gun was indeed the weapon that would make it possible for black people to achieve the right to vote, the realities of use of violence in every election since 1980 confirm that he actually meant that people had to be coerced to vote for him and his party even after the end of the liberation struggle. At another level, the success of African nationalism depended on unity that was often enforced violently.

In reality, adoption of the armed struggle transformed mass nationalist movements (ZANU and ZAPU) into semi-military formations with armed wings. Military exigencies brought in not only regimental but also commandist tendencies. Violence was now officially accepted as a legitimate tool of liberation just like it was officially accepted by the colonialists as a legitimate tool of colonial conquest and maintenance of white settler colonial power. Mugabe emerged from this milieu. This is why it is important to understand and highlight the complex history, entangled politics, and complicated power dynamics as part of the intellectual agenda to understand Mugabe as a political actor.

Fanon (1968) is a pioneer in seeking to unmask the African nationalist leader and the black middle-class that dominated postcolonial governments as suffering from pitfalls of consciousness. He highlighted the fact that black elites in charge of postcolonial African states were basically intellectually lazy, parasitical, and corrupt. When the nationalists came to power they steered anti-colonial trajectory into a narrow path of Africanization. At the centre of this Africanization agenda was the call for nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy. This nationalization was itself interpreted in very narrow terms of transferring wealth from white to black elites in charge of the postcolonial state and their clients. Decolonization became bastardized and ideologised into a vehicle to justify primitive accumulation and looting. Zimbabwe under Mugabe has not escaped this tendency. This is why it is important to seek to understand Mugabe as a nationalist leader.

## MUGABE AS A NATIONALIST LEADER

Being a nationalist leader became a terrain of contests because it was linked with power. The role Mugabe played in the epic nationalist struggle that delivered an independent Zimbabwe in 1980 is itself contested by such political figures as Joshua Nkomo (1984) and Edgar Tekere (2007), who also claimed prominence in the anti-colonial nationalist liberation struggle. A close reading of their autobiographies reveals a continuation of contestations over who made history in Zimbabwe as well as over power, political positions, memory, and political legacy. While Tekere seems to contest Mugabe’s heroism and tries to elevate himself above him, Nkomo is keen

to maintain his status as the “Father of Zimbabwe” through claims to history and appeals to memory, despite having lost political power in 1980. The message that comes through is that of a senior politician that felt cheated by history and political practice and who strongly thought Mugabe was envious of the role he played in the foundation of Zimbabwean nationalism (Nkomo 1984).

This argument is used to make sense of why Mugabe used the notorious Fifth Brigade in his attempt to physically eliminate Nkomo in 1983. Despite these contestations, Mugabe has been at the helm of Zimbabwean politics first as prime minister (1980–1987) and then as executive president (1987–present). As such, Mugabe’s political life is part of the broader story of the decolonization of Rhodesia into Zimbabwe as well as the tale of political trajectory of postcolonial Zimbabwe from 1980 up to the present. Mugabe’s biographies and hagiographies have increasingly been made to be inextricably intertwined with the very idea of Zimbabwe albeit in a very problematic manner in which he becomes simultaneously the “liberator” and the “destroyer” of Zimbabwe.

This narrative of a “liberator” and “hero,” who degenerated into a “dictator” and a “tyrant,” dominates the existing biographies of Mugabe. Inevitably, numerous attempts on writing Mugabe’s biography became hostage to this binary understanding. Many of the biographies are not only largely journalistic but are also very thin on revealing the complexities of the structural terrain within which Mugabe had to make history and practice politics. For example, those biographies of Mugabe that were produced during the pick of the Zimbabwe crisis became locked in what Mahmood Mamdani (2008: 7) termed the “regime-opposition polemic.”

What also emerges is the idea that there was a sudden, enigmatic, and puzzling shift in Mugabe’s political trajectory taking the form of a biblical fall from grace to evil. This is a simplistic understanding as it is not based on a nuanced understanding of Mugabe as a political actor whose actions were largely shaped by complex histories of colonialism and nationalism, global coloniality and its machinations, as well as complicated power dynamics that involved politics of survival and competition.

Consequently, existing biographies do not fully capture complex entanglements of the “postcolony” within which a “colonial subject” like Mugabe, who was born during the colonial period and who was forced to join the nationalist struggle by settler brutalities and colonial disdain for African subjectivity. With the achievement of political independence, “colonial subjects” had to graduate into “postcolonial” subjects. The challenge facing Mugabe as a “postcolonial” subject and a leader of a new “postcolony,” was how to avoid reproducing coloniality together with its primitive accumulation and corrupting tendencies, patriarchal and sexist traditions, racist, ethnic, and xenophobic cultures, as well as repressive, violent, and authoritarian political inventories as forms of postcolonial governance. These realities are well-captured by the leading African postcolonial theorist Achille Mbembe in his celebrated book *On the Postcolony* (2001: 14), in which he wrote: “As an age, the postcolony encloses multiple *durees* made up of discontinuities, reversals, inertias, and swings that overlay one another, interpenetrate one another, and envelope one another: *an entanglement*.” As a colonial subject, by the late 1950s and early 1960s, Mugabe was a typical part of the emerging African elite known as petit-bourgeois class. That class, according to Frantz Fanon (1968), emerged suffering terribly from pitfalls of consciousness. First of all, it attempted to imbibe as much as possible Euro-North American cultures, mannerisms, and mission-education in

the mistaken belief that this would enable it to be accommodated into colonial structures. This accommodation was not forthcoming.

It was only when the African petit-bourgeoisie realized that despite having accumulated mission-education and even university degrees the colonial state of Rhodesia was too racially inflexible to accommodate black people that they then decided to rejoin the bulk of the black population with a view to mobilize it to fight against racism and denial of the right to vote mainly. The mobilization of the black masses by the leading African nationalists must not be misread as part of the revolutionary Cabralian (1979) “class suicide” process and action. Far from it, mobilization of popular support was the essential prerequisite for the success of the bourgeois anticolonial struggle aimed at replacing white colonial bourgeoisie with black African bourgeoisie.

How Mugabe ended up a leading figure in the anticolonial nationalist struggle is subject to contestations. One narrative is that of a reluctant teacher-trainer from Ghana who while on leave was invited to join the liberation movement. This narrative was given by Jonathan Moyo (quoted in Holland 2008 175–176) during an interview with the journalist Heidi Holland, and it shows Mugabe as a reluctant nationalist who was invited to the nationalist movement because he was from Ghana, a country that was led by a respected pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah, had high qualifications from the University of Fort Hare, and was articulate: “So he is approached, persuaded to join the liberation movement, and he agrees to give it a try. Nowhere in his record prior to becoming the leader of ZANU do you see Robert Mugabe driven by political passion or a vision of a better future for Zimbabweans.” However, there is another narrative that emphasizes that Mugabe was actively involved in sharpening his ideology while in Ghana. The narrative indicates that while based in Ghana between 1958 and 1960, Mugabe underwent ideological training at the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute at Winneba. During this time, he was teaching at Apowa Secondary School in Takoradi. It was at the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute that Mugabe imbibed both Nkrumahism and the principles of Marxism (Norman 2008: 18; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009a: 1142). This second narrative differs from Jonathan Moyo’s reading of Mugabe as a mere teacher-trainer that had no clear passion for liberation but was persuaded into the nationalist movement. If the second narrative is taken into account, then Mugabe came to Rhodesia in the 1960s already ideologically trained in the principles of Nkrumahism and Marxism (Norman 2008; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009a, b).

Once he joined the nationalist movement in 1960, Mugabe gradually climbed the ladder of leadership, not through open initiative but again by being invited to lead when Reverend Sithole, the founder president of ZANU, was found to be wavering while in detention in 1975. The year 1975 also witnessed the assassination of national chairman Herbert Wiltshire Chitepo (White 2003). These developments opened the way for Mugabe to rise to the helm of ZANU in exile. By 1977, he was comfortably in charge of ZANU.

## ON BIOGRAPHIES AND HAGIOGRAPHIES OF MUGABE

A biography is a document detailing the life of a person by highlighting his or her positives and negatives, strengths and weaknesses, failures and successes as well as trials and tribulations. A hagiography is a particular type of biography that is designed to idealize, admire, celebrate, revere, and eventually elevate the person

to sainthood. While there are numerous biographies of Mugabe, they rarely celebrate him. Mugabe's life history lacks hagiographies. Most of the biographies were produced during and after the unprecedented crisis that engulfed Zimbabwe from 2000 and apportion blame on him for the collapse of the economy and descent of Zimbabwe into lawlessness and authoritarianism.

The earliest attempt at a biography of Mugabe was made by David Smith, Colin Simpson, and Ian Davies in *Mugabe* (1981). This early biography was written at the time of Mugabe and ZANU's triumphalism. Inevitably, it is different from those that were produced after 2000. There is an element of celebrating Mugabe. The focus of this early biography is on Mugabe's childhood, his detention in Rhodesian prisons, and his leadership of ZANU and ZANLA in exile right up to his election as the first black prime minister of independent Zimbabwe.

By the time of its publication (1981), the policy of reconciliation though unwritten was still resonant in Zimbabwe. The coalition government was still working and Zimbabwean economy was functioning very well. But even at this early period, the authors picked a disturbing idea of Zimbabwe that Mugabe presented to Lord Soames. Mugabe spoke of a Joshua Nkomo country (Matabeleland) and a Mugabe country (Mashonaland and Manicaland). Mugabe's "two-nation" speech is said to have arisen during a meeting between him and the British governor Lord Soames at the heat of the political campaigns for the independence elections. Nkomo had complained to Soames that his party was being prevented from campaigning in Manicaland by ZANU-PF and ZANLA. Mugabe is quoted as having said:

Look Lord Soames, I am not new to this game, you know. That's my part of the country, Manicaland, that's mine. The fact that Nkomo can't campaign there is down to the fact that I control it, I've a cell there for five years. Is it surprising that people don't turn out there for Nkomo? Would I go to Nkomo's country (Matebeleland) and expect to raise a crowd there? Of course, I wouldn't. (Smith et al. 1981: 187)

What emerges poignantly from this is how an ethnically bifurcated nationalism that emerged in 1963 with the birth of ZANU as a splinter formation from ZAPU was producing such ideas of Zimbabwe in which Mashonaland, Masvingo, and Manicaland became Mugabe's country and Matabeleland became Nkomo's country. This bifurcated idea of Zimbabwe was also compounded by the way in which the armed liberation struggle was fought. Nkomo's ZIPRA operated mainly in Matabeleland and the Midlands regions. Mugabe's ZANLA operated in the Mashonaland regions, including Manicaland. But this "two-nation" thinking did not augur well with the idea of a Zimbabwe that was expected to be born as a unitary state underpinned by monolithic unity.

In 1981, David Martin and Phyllis Johnson published *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War*, which was very supportive of ZANU-PF's narrative of the liberation struggle. The armed struggle was traced genealogically to the Sinoia/Chihnyoi Battle of 1966, where ZANLA forces engaged the Rhodesia forces though they all perished in the encounter. The book had some hagiographical orientation and was most welcomed by ZANU-PF and Mugabe to the extent of being freely distributed to all secondary schools and teachers' colleges. In this book, Mugabe emerged as a hero of the liberation struggle, who played a crucial role in delivering an independent Zimbabwe.

## THE RISE OF MUGABE IN ZANU

Mugabe's speeches were published as *Our War of Liberation: Speeches, Articles, Interviews 1976–1979* (1983). This was important in positioning Mugabe as a central figure in the struggle for decolonization. The period 1976–1979 is crucial for Mugabe as it was in 1977 that he formally took over the overall leadership of both ZANU and ZANLA after cracking down on the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA).<sup>5</sup> Zvakanyorwa Wilbert Sadomba (2011), a sociologist and veteran of Zimbabwe's liberation war, divided the liberation history of Zimbabwe into three crucial phases: the Chitepo Phase (1964–1975), the ZIPA/Vashandi Phase (1976–1977), and the Mugabe Phase (1977–1979). He elaborated that:

There is no doubt that Mugabe's leadership, spanning more than a generation now (1977 to present), is not only the longest in the history of the liberation movement but also had the greatest influence on that movement. In terms of internal ideological and power struggles, the phase was the most turbulent, commencing with the violent purgation of the Vashandi/ZIPA group in 1976/7 and within a year repeating the process by removing the Hamadziripi/Gumbo/Maparuri group in 1978. This phase also saw the most dramatic developments, including the formation of the Patriotic Front—a union between ZANU and ZAPU, even as their two anti-colonial guerrilla armies were violently splitting. It is also significant that the final peace negotiations took place during this period starting in August 1979. The Mugabe era therefore clearly has a very shallow guerrilla war foundation of two years and nine months, i.e., March 1977 to December 1979, when the peace negotiations began... By comparison, Chitepo played a far greater role and for a longer period (nine years—1966–75) than Mugabe's two years nine months and ZIPA's two years of leadership... This is important to bear in mind in view of the fact that the ruling oligarchy of ZANU-PF has mainly used the history of the liberation struggle to legitimate its political hegemony. (40)

Sadomba, like Tekere, is very critical of Mugabe's leadership even prior to independence. He documents that when Mugabe took over leadership of ZANU and the post of commander in chief of ZANLA in 1977, he declared that year to be "The Year of the Party." This involved surrounding himself with admirers like Simon Muzenda, "who did not want Mugabe to be opposed and who would close discussion at any opinion presented by Mugabe, as final decision" (43). Muzenda was one of those politicians in Zimbabwe who was considered not to be ambitious beyond being a perpetual deputy to Mugabe. Sadomba concluded that Mugabe effectively used "divide-and-rule tactics and clinical personnel management" as well as "creating and controlling structures through careful deployment of loyal individuals over whom remote control is possible" (42–43).

Consequently, the centrality of Mugabe in the liberation struggle was depicted by the imposition of the slogan "*Pamberi na Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe*" (Forward with Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe) on the ZANLA High Command. This meant that the old slogan of "*Pamberi ne Chimurenga*" (Forward with Chimurenga/Nationalist Armed Revolution) was now subordinated to a slogan that privileged the name of Mugabe as an individual. The Mugabe era is depicted by Sadomba (2011: 43–45) as the genesis of ZANU becoming an authoritarian and despotic organization where adherence to the "party line" included avoiding contesting leadership positions in the party.

The liberal British historian Terence Ranger, who was involved in African nationalist politics in the 1960s, also agonized over the question of why a Zimbabwean nationalism that emerged promising liberation and freedom ended up delivering repression, violence, and authoritarianism. Ranger had also published such books as *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896–7: A Study of African Resistance* (1967), which positively evaluated the primary resistance of 1896–7 and even made some connections between primary resistance and the period of nationalism. But by the late 1990s, Ranger like many other intellectuals was hard pressed to explain what went wrong with Zimbabwean nationalism. He proffered two related possible causes and reasons:

Perhaps post-independence authoritarianism was the result of liberation wars themselves, when disagreement could mean death. It was difficult to escape the legacy of such a war. Maybe it sprang from the adoption by so many nationalists and especially liberation movements, of Marxist-Leninist ideologies. These implied “democratic centralism,” the domination of civil society by the state and top-down modernizing “development.” (Ranger 2003: 1–2)

Ranger went further to argue that

but perhaps there was something inherent in nationalism itself, even before the wars and the adoption of socialism, 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 nationalism’s glorification of the leader gave rise to a post-colonial cult of personality. Maybe nationalism’s commitment to modernization, whether socialist or not, inevitably implied a “commandist” state. (1–2)

Indeed trappings of a personality cult started to emerge during the course of the anticolonial liberation struggle and were further consolidated after 1980. Even as recent as 2000, attempts were still made to produce a hagiography of Mugabe as a revolutionary leader who was now dedicated to delivering land to the black people. Therefore, the Ministry of Information and Publicity under Jonathan Moyo, who has been depicted by many as the spin doctor of Mugabe, published a hagiography entitled *Inside the Third Chimurenga* (2001).

The publication consisted of well-selected speeches of Mugabe that depicted him as a consistent revolutionary that was perpetually anticolonial and anti-imperialist. The land question features prominently in these speeches as well as the issue of national sovereignty and territorial integrity and condemnation of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as a Trojan horse of imperialism aimed at delivering recolonization of Zimbabwe. In this hagiography, Mugabe emerges as progressive pan-Africanist and an indefatigable fighter for the economic empowerment of black Zimbabweans through delivery of the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme.

The land reform became the central leitmotif of the Third Chimurenga, which was christened as the war for land restoration. Pushing forward the overdue program of land reform was indeed a progressive part of the incomplete liberation struggle. Landless peasants, landless war veterans, and aspiring black bourgeoisie, including progressive intellectuals and academics, supported the land reform.



But Sadomba (2011) depicted the land reform as championed not by Mugabe but by the war veterans in alliance with the landless peasants. To Sadomba, what took place was a revolution that challenged the state, ruling ZANU-PF, the MDC, Mugabe, settler and international capital—all at once. Again, the authority and role of Mugabe in the Third Chimurenga is contested. Sadomba presents Mugabe and ZANU-PF as an oligarchy that was no longer with the people but that had to hijack the war veterans and peasants' land revolution for purposes of political survival and regime security. Norma J. Kriger in her *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe: Symbolic and Violent Politics, 1980–1987* (2003) articulated how Mugabe and ZANU-PF have tendentiously used veterans as storm troopers in political games aimed at retaining political power.

### MUGABEISM OF THE POST-2000 PERIOD

The post-2000 period witnessed the publication of a particular breed of biographies of Mugabe that blamed him for presiding over the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy. The land reform program was depicted as a disaster brought about by Mugabe as a leader. These condemnatory biographies informed by neoliberal global politics and ideologies included Martin Meredith's *Robert Mugabe: Power, Plunder and Tyranny in Zimbabwe* (2002) and *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe* (2002); David Blair's *Degrees in Violence: Robert Mugabe and the Struggle for Power in Zimbabwe* (2002); Stephen Chan's *Robert Mugabe: A Life of Power and Violence* (2003); Andrew Norman's *Robert Mugabe and the Betrayal of Zimbabwe* (2004); Heidi Holland's *Dinner with Mugabe: The Untold Story of a Freedom Fighter Who Became a Tyrant* (2008); Daniel Compagnon's *A Predictable Tragedy: Robert Mugabe and the Collapse of Zimbabwe* (2011) and many others. Compagnon (2011: 1) introduced his book thus:

When the Zimbabwean flag was raised officially in the early hours of 18 April 1980, symbolizing the dawn of a new era and the end of a bitter liberation war, who could have imagined then that the crowds cheering their hero—Robert Mugabe—would come to hate him some thirty years later after he led them to starvation, ruin, and anarchy? Who would have expected Zimbabwe to become the “sick man” of southern Africa, a security concern for its neighbours, and an irritant in the mind of progressive opinion leaders such as former anti-apartheid lead activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who would, in 2008, call for Mugabe's forced removal from power? As we shall see, this disaster should not come as a complete surprise since there were, from the beginning, many worrying signs of Mugabe's thirst for power, his recklessness, and his lack of concern for the well-being of fellow countrymen and women, as well as the greed and brutality of his lieutenants in his party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF).

The post-2000 titles on Mugabe reveal a Mugabe-centric approach to the understanding of causes of Zimbabwe's descent to crisis. This Mugabe-centric literature largely communicates and delivers a message of an African leader who played a central role in the anticolonial struggle, who ascended to power on the shoulders of the liberation struggle, who was once admired as a statesman and a voice of reason, but

who eventually degenerated into a dictator, a tyrant, and a monster. It would seem from a close reading of some literature existing on Mugabe since the late 1970s that he was never a good leader. The dictatorial tendencies were there from the beginning. This is why Compagnon projected Mugabeism as an inevitably tragic part of Zimbabwe. But the post-2000 period also witnessed the emergence of an array of memoirs, autobiographies, biographies, and hagiographies of other political actors that disputed the heroic image of Mugabe. Works like *Dzino: Memories of a Freedom Fighter* (2011) openly depict Mugabe as the villain who hijacked the nationalist revolution for his own ends. But others, such as Fay Chung in *Re-living the Second Chimurenga: Memories from Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle* (2006), continued to present Mugabe as a respected pragmatic leader, an uncompromising revolutionary, and a far-sighted visionary.

This literature emerged at a time when scholars were raising serious concerns about violence, dictatorship, repression, ideological bankruptcy, patriarchy, executive lawlessness, rigging of elections, and militarism as the major constituent elements of Mugabeism of the post-2000. It was during this period that scholars increasingly became active in explaining what was happening in Zimbabwe with Horace Campbell publishing *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of the Patriarchal Model of Liberation* (2003), which emphasized the issues of masculinity, machismo, patriarchy, and militarism as major markers of the Zimbabwean model of liberation as well as the major leitmotif of postcolonial governance and political practice. At the same time, Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos, and Stig Jensen published a groundbreaking work entitled *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis* (2003), which demonstrated theoretically, conceptually, and empirically the complex intersections of contested histories and memories, complicated political trajectories, and well as multifaceted political dynamics that produced a Mugabeism that was ambiguous, militant, and violent while promising to deliver redistributive social and economic justice.

During this same time, the opposition desk was also producing biographies of the opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai that countered the positive narrative of Mugabeism. These included Sarah Huddleston's *Face of Courage: A Biography of Morgan Tsvangirai* (2005); Stephen Chan's *Citizen of Zimbabwe: Conversations with Morgan Tsvangirai* (2005); and William Bango's *Morgan Tsvangirai: At the Deep End* (2012). In these works, a concerted effort was made to create a hero and extol Tsvangirai's political virtues in such a way that Mugabe would emerge as lacking political qualities needed to rescue Zimbabwe from crisis. Chapter 9 by Robert Muponde in this book provides a deep literary analysis of Mugabe and Tsvangirai as symbols of the postcolonial nation. The current book picks the topical issue of the meaning and essence of Mugabeism and tries to further unpack it from different disciplinary vantage points. The key questions that continue to cry out for a response include: Is there Mugabeism? If yes, what does it stand for or mean to warrant all these writings? Can one speak of a Mugabe phenomenon?

## MUGABEISM

It is clear that Mugabeism is used in this book to encapsulate a critical scholarly search for understanding and making sense of the ubiquitous Mugabe phenomenon

that is itself inextricably intertwined with the equally complicated idea of Zimbabwe. Its ubiquity in local, regional, continental, and global politics was well captured by Mamdani (2008: 1) when he wrote:

It is hard to think of a figure more reviled in the West than Robert Mugabe. Liberal and conservative commentators alike portray him as a brutal dictator, and blame him for Zimbabwe's descent into hyper inflation and poverty. The seizure of white-owned farms by his black supporters has been depicted as a form of thuggery, and as a cause of the country's declining production, as if these lands were doomed by black ownership. Sanctions have been imposed, and opposition groups funded with the explicit aim to unseat him.

Mugabeism as unpacked in the various chapters of this book assumes a form of a highly contested political phenomenon albeit one that has no coherent ideological content. It does not exist as a coherent ideology. It is inherently eclectic. This is why it is not reducible to a biography of Mugabe. Mugabeism has assumed a form of populist reason. It is a multifaceted phenomenon. It masquerades as a revolutionary phenomenon linked to pan-African anticolonial and anti-imperialist decolonial project. Its rhetoric has a radical left-nationalist, pan-Africanist and anti-imperialist as well as nativist orientation. On the nativist element featuring as radical nationalism, as the Marxist postcolonial theorist Benita Parry (2004: 40) noted and argued:

When we consider the narratives of decolonization, we encounter rhetorics in which “nativism” in one form or another is evident. Instead of disciplining these, theoretical whip in hand, as a catalogue of epistemological errors, of essentialist mystifications, as masculinist appropriation of dissent, as no more than anti-racist racism, etc., I want to consider what is to be gained by an unsententious interrogation of such articulations, which often driven by negative passion, cannot be reduced to mere inveighing against iniquities or repetition of canonical terms of imperialism's conceptual framework.

Indeed there is an element of nativism in Mugabeism informed by autochthonous discourses that emerged poignantly when Zimbabwean nationalism demonstrated its antiliberatory and redemptive ethos (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). Read from this perspective, Mugabeism depicts a degenerated nationalism in which a single individual and his political party try to symbolize the nation and as put by Issa G. Shivji (2003: 80), “Nation-building turns into state-building. Nation is substituted by party and party leader, the father of the nation. The National Question is reduced to a race question or ethnic question or cultural question.”

Practically, Mugabeism is compromised by such inimical processes as primitive accumulation and corruption, crisis of ideology, chaos, and tyranny. It is ensnared in a nest of contradictions that often make it appear as nothing but part of politics of survival and opportunism. Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos (2003) captured very well the discursive terrain within which Mugabeism became prominent and the complex issues it is grappling with, trying to discipline some, accommodate

others, and yet delegitimize those that appear to threaten Mugabe's power and ZANU-PF's hegemony. They wrote of

a historicised and racialized assertion of land restitution and justice, versus an ahistorical, technocratic insistence on liberal notions of private property, "development" and "good governance"; a new form of "indigenous," authoritarian nationalism (based around claims of loyalty and national sovereignty), versus a non-ethnicized, "civic" nationalism (grounded in liberal democratic notions of rights and the rule of law); a radical, Pan-Africanist anti-colonial, anti-imperialist critique of "the West," versus a "universalist" embrace of certain aspects of neoliberalism and globalization; and a monopoly claim over the commitment to radical redistribution, versus a monopoly claim over the defence of human rights. In large part, these polarities and their persistence are founded on competing narratives of Zimbabwe's national liberation history which are critical both to the ruling party's ongoing attempts to sustain its hegemony, and to the counter-hegemonic moves of various opposition actors. (17)

The post-2000 period witnessed a Mugabeism that was consistently working to delegitimize all those political formations and civil society forces that threatened Mugabe's power. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) became the face of all those political formations and forces that were identified not only as constituted by enemies of the nation and the state but as inauthentic parties that "give a perverted and false expression of the national will" (Luxemburg 1976: 141). It is within this context that Mugabe (2001: 88) made it an important and personal task to discursively unpack and delegitimize the MDC in these piercing and poetic words:

The MDC should never be judged or characterized by its black trade union 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 return to white settler rule. MDC is as old and as strong as the forces that control it; that drives and direct; indeed that support, 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.

The MDC failed to defend itself effectively against this penetrating delegitimization by Mugabe. This failure to come out clean boosted Mugabeism's post-2000 posturing as a defender of the hard-won independence, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity. As part of defending national sovereignty, a particular version of history that Ranger (2004) termed "patriotic history" was propagated and it played on real national grievances such as the historic land question, indigenization of the national economy, and empowerment of black people (Tendi 2010).

In their various vantage points and multiple disciplinary perspectives, the contributors to this book offer refreshing, scholarly, and critically reflective interventions on the complicated and contested Mugabe phenomenon. They relate Mugabeism to the pertinent issues of economic nationalism and pan-Africanism;

diplomacy and regional solidarity; masculinity, patriarchy, gender, and corruption as well as challenges of global coloniality, racism, and militarism. Consequently, a complicated albeit nuanced picture of Mugabeism is established, which is far superior intellectually and academically speaking to the existing numerous biographies of Mugabe.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The essays in this book—grouped broadly under part I, “Mugabeism, Economic Nationalism, and Pan-Africanism”; part II, “Diplomacy, Solidarity, and Power”; part III, “Masculinity, Gender, and Corruption”; part IV, “Coloniality, Racism, and Militarism”—capture and interrogate various aspects of Mugabeism while at the same time shedding light on complex and contested historical milieu, complicated power dynamics, and difficult political practices as well as the equally complex and contested idea of Zimbabwe from different vantage points.

David B. Moore’s chapter, which opens the first section, deploys a nuanced historical political analysis as it tries to penetrate and access the meaning of Mugabe and make sense of his political formation. The important concepts of individual agency and sociohistorical determinations (structure) are carefully used in an effort to understand Mugabe as the “man” who makes history and the “man” made by history. Moore’s analysis transcends the narratives of Mugabe as the personification of evil or virtue used by those vilifying him from “imperialist” quarters and those celebrating him as victor for all things “Africanist.” His chapter delves deeper into the historical formation of Mugabe’s political skills in the context of his struggles within Zimbabwean liberation movements and global diplomatic spaces, then throughout the first decade of Zimbabwe’s era of liberation and on into its crisis phase. The chapter draws its data from archival and oral interview material gathered over the past decade.

The following chapter, by the leading Zimbabwean economic historian Alois Mlambo, deals with the interrelated issues of land, indigenization, and development in Zimbabwe as ingredients of Mugabe’s economic nationalism. Just like Moore, Mlambo is also concerned with unpacking the meaning of Mugabeism but from the perspective of economic history. One of his central propositions is that perhaps “the difficulty in defining Mugabeism could be the result of scholars looking for a non-existent ideological coherence in what may, in fact, be historically shaped and emotionally driven actions of nationalists that lived through a traumatic colonial period whose pain and scars they seek to assuage by hitting back at everything they regard as the source of their previous suffering.” To Mlambo “Mugabeism is not, in reality, a uniquely Zimbabwean innovative approach to address postcolonial challenges, but merely a continuation of the African nationalism of the 1950s and 1960s and the economic nationalist ideology that accompanied it, which saw many African countries nationalizing and indigenizing their economies as an assertion of independence and as part of the struggle against neo-colonialism.”

Consequently, Mlambo’s chapter situates Zimbabwe’s current controversial policies of land reform, indigenization, and empowerment within the historical nationalist strategies of the early independent Africa and denies that these policies are uniquely Mugabeian. Mlambo concludes that what might be Mugabeian “is the violent, authoritarian, and arbitrary implementation style and a particularly virulent

type of nativism that defines ‘indigenes’ in a very narrow way, to the exclusion of other groups that have equal claim to Zimbabwe.”

Chapter 4 is by Gordon Moyo, an opposition politician and scholar who served in the inclusive government as a cabinet minister from 2009 to 2013. The chapter deconstructs the “patriotic history” that sought to reproduce and portray Mugabeism as a form of progressive pan-Africanism par excellence. This “patriotic history” has been carefully manufactured by a pantheon of public intellectuals, ruling party officials, and state media to present Mugabe’s liberation war credentials; his populist redistributive policies on land, empowerment, and indigenization; and his anti-Western antics as the befitting descriptors and signifiers of his pan-Africanist pedigree. Mugabe’s election victory in July 2013, which is viewed as pyrrhic in this chapter, appears to have further bolstered the pan-African claims of these “patriotic historians.” Admittedly, the pan-African portrayal of Mugabe has earned him some respect among a legion of people in mainland Africa and in the Diaspora who are genuinely searching for champions of African Renaissance and bulwarks against the Euro-American hegemony and its global imperial designs.

Moyo’s chapter tries to penetrate beyond and behind the veil of Zimbabwe’s “patriotic historical” narratives to reveal the deeply embedded neo-sultanist Mugabeism (personalistic rule) that hardly qualify him as a true pan-Africanist in the same league with Marcus Garvey, William E.B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, Julius Nyerere, and Nelson Mandela, among others. Moyo elaborates that more practically, the generality of the people of Zimbabwe have endured Mugabe’s versions of praetorian democracy, elective authoritarianism, and human security breaches throughout the era of the postcolonial state. Invariably, Mugabe’s neo-sultanism is entrenched and perpetuated by the nationalist-military oligarchy whose loyalty is based on a clientelist system. Moyo concludes that Mugabe’s neo-sultanism not only undermines the normative values of pan-Africanism but also the authentic decolonial project that is imminent in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

Part II opens with the historian Timothy Scarnecchia’s nuanced historical examination of Mugabe’s long career as a diplomat, going back to the months after the formation of ZANU in 1963, as well as his return to international diplomacy following his release from prison and detention in 1974. Particular attention is given to the years 1976–1980, the period in which Mugabe successfully negotiated not only for the end of minority rule in Rhodesia but for international recognition of his electoral victory in the 1980 elections leading to Zimbabwe’s independence and his role as Zimbabwe’s first black prime minister.

Scarnecchia highlights the similarities of Mugabe’s strategies within ZANU (and later ZANU-PF) to maintain control of the party’s leadership, with his strategies in negotiating with Western powers in the early 1960s, the mid-1970s, and in the 1980s. After consolidating ZANU-PF’s power by 1987, this strategy continued into the 1990s and 2000s, especially in terms of President Mugabe’s responses to Western criticisms and Western support for the opposition MDC party. Based on archival sources up to the mid-1980s, and press coverage for the more recent period, Scarnecchia emphasizes Mugabe’s consistent combination of diplomatic intransigency with often close and collegial personal diplomacy in his dealings with Western diplomats over the years.

In “Sheriff of the Club of Dictators?: Robert Mugabe’s Role in the Politics of SADC, 1980–2013,” emerging historians Munyaradzi Nyakudya and Joseph Jakarasi examine the role of Mugabe in the politics of the Southern African region

through a case study of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). They argue that from its inception as the old Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) and its transformation to the SADC, the body has been instrumental in shaping the region's political, social, and economic dynamics, particularly with reference to issues pertaining to security, self-determination, and democratization, among others.

Nyakudya and Jakarasi proceed to evaluate how Mugabe has used his eloquence and rhetoric to influence the regional body's policies, protocols, and general decisions regarding such topical issues as regional security, the conduct of elections, the region's relations with the "outside" world, and positions in various global fora like the African Union and the United Nations, among many others. While Mugabe was not specifically instrumental in the origination of the Front Line States, he became actively involved in the transformation of the regional body from SADCC to SADC, always making sure that his own motivations and reading of the global/regional politics drove SADC. In the post-2000 period, Mugabe made all the efforts to make sure that SADC played a supportive role in his new war against the West. This chapter provides an important background that is useful in explaining why SADC in the past decade could not take a clear, tough, and divergent position to that of Mugabe even if it was given a mandate by the African Union to make sure Zimbabwe returned to normalcy.

Also writing on the theme of regional politics and solidarity, Henning Melber discusses the dynamics of how Mugabeism impinged on Namibia with a particular focus on the politics of solidarity and anti-imperialist posturing and rhetoric. He reveals the popularity of Mugabe and his policies among the "hard core" Namibian nationalists. The closeness of Mugabe and Sam Nujoma has a long history though it was after independence that ZANU-PF and SWAPO knitted and consolidated their solidarity. The solidarity deepened in the mid-1990s "due to the regional shifts and subsequent strategic alliances." Mugabe and Nujoma share common perspectives on three issues: anti-imperialism, homophobic-antigay sentiment, and the topical land question. But Melber ignores how the Mugabe regime soon after coming to power had given material and diplomatic support to SWAPO through the New York/Lisbon Accords struck with Angola and the Front Line States giving birth to Resolution South West Africa.

Building on these commonalities, Melber argues that the leaders of Namibia seem to be following in the footsteps of Mugabe, imbibing populism and increasingly becoming vocal against what they consider to be reincarnation of imperialism. To Henning though, the anti-imperialist position is bogus. It is underpinned by a reverse-racist and homophobic sentiments. The anti-imperialist posture is also increasingly focused on land question, which according to Henning is meant to divert people's attention from lack of delivery of services by the state. This conclusion, however, does not mean that the question of land reform in a former settler colony like Namibia can be simply ignored but is a warning against instrumental use of genuine grievances of the people by the political elite for purposes of maintaining regime security.

The last chapter in this section, by Busani Mpfu and Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, deals with the pertinent issues of power and the paradigm of war and violence that also define Mugabeism. Mpfu and Ndlovu-Gatsheni focuses specifically on the will to power as the central leitmotif of Mugabeism's proclivity toward the paradigm war as a solution to political questions and as a guarantor of regime security.

They counterpoise the Mugabean paradigm of war with the paradigm of peace that has been lacking in Zimbabwe for some time.

Deploying what they have termed “a critical decolonial ethics of liberation that privileges paradigm of peace, humanism, and racial harmony as opposed to the imperial/colonial/apartheid paradigm of war and racial hatred,” Mpofu and Ndlovu-Gatsheni argue for socialization of power, demilitarization of institutions, deracialization and de-ethnicization of politics as well as depatriarchalization of thought, if Zimbabwe is to return to normalcy. They also provide a detailed exposition of Mugabe and ZANU-PF’s understanding of politics and power as driven by the paradigm of war that is celebrated as Chimurenga and Gukurahundi and then reveal its negative political consequences.

Part III of this book opens with the literary scholar Robert Muponde’s chapter, which focuses on the topical issues of manhood, masculinity, and patriarchy as constitutive aspects of Mugabeism. This chapter looks specifically at the ways in which the powerful try to symbolize the nation, how they try to be the nation using the contrasting examples of Mugabe as the incumbent and Morgan Tsvangirai as the main opposition leader. Election campaigns provide the raw materials for Muponde’s interesting and penetrating analysis.

The chapter also innovatively draws its sources and ideas from novels, poems, songs, viral e-mail, web-based newspapers, gossip, and text messages surrounding post-2000 elections as it traces the movement of images and social energies in these two broadly limned figures of seemingly diverse manhood and politics. Muponde argues that far from being just a struggle about democratic space and culture, current renovations of the man-nation (by which he means both the persona of Mugabe and the ideas about a single version of masculinity that he perpetuates as the ideal of the nation) are bedeviled by their inability to imagine a more troubled binary of masculinity beyond the austere vision represented by Mugabe, and the softer, malleable, seemingly empathetic, “tea-boy” version represented by Morgan Tsvangirai.

In “Grappling with Robert Mugabe’s Masculinist Politics in Zimbabwe: A Gendered Perspective,” the Zimbabwean sociologist and feminist scholar Rudo B. Gaidzanwa conceptualizes masculinities and articulates how they have been deployed in politics through a careful analysis of the political career of Mugabe. Her chapter delves deeper into the historical, cultural, social, economic, and gender contexts in which Mugabe has used specific types and tropes of masculine behavior, norms, and values in his political practice and political engagements. This important chapter offers a rewarding gendered analysis of the idea of Zimbabwe from the time of the liberation struggle up to the present, without losing its focus on Mugabe’s patriarchal tendencies and how they impinge on politics.

Wesley Mwatwara and Joseph Mujere’s chapter shifts the focus from masculinity, gender, and patriarchy to another cancerous aspects of Zimbabwe—that of corruption and how Mugabe has consistently failed to successfully fight against it. They juxtapose this failure to the state media narrative that often present Mugabe as a protector of the so-called African values and a no-nonsense leader who has taken a clear stance toward issues such as homosexuality and lesbianism. Mwatwara and Mujere posit that at present, Zimbabwe stands among countries most affected by graft. Their chapter utilizes various case studies from the 1980s to the present in its examination of how and why the all-powerful leader seems to freeze in the face of corrupt activities involving some of his lieutenants and the impact this has had



on the generality of Zimbabweans. Mwatwara and Mujere also discuss popular conceptions of corruption and how Mugabe has managed to coexist with obscene wealth and naked corruption since independence despite an earlier commitment of ZANU-PF and Mugabe to a leadership code.

The fourth and last part of this book commences with Kenneth Tafira's chapter, which links three intricately connected phenomena that have characterized the Zimbabwean situation in the recent past: Mugabe, land reform, and the global white antiblack racism. It deepens our understanding of why and how Mugabe moved from liberation era "communist terrorist," to postindependence celebrated statesman and back to dangerous dictator. Tafira delves deeper into the often neglected global matrices of power together with its global media complex, which, like an octopus's arms and tentacles, are quick and fast, are well-resourced, and have a devastating capacity to drown all other discourses on Mugabeism.

Unlike in previous chapters, Tafira focuses not on Mugabe but on his media representation while at the same time unpacking the anti-Mugabe Western imperialist discourse on Zimbabwe. He posits that the binary representation of Mugabe as a liberator/oppressor, saint/demon is subject to both internal and external factors, whereby he has always reacted to actions borne out of political expediencies and opportunities. Tafira's take is that Mugabe has consistently been in an unenviable position. As a colonial product, just like all African liberation leaders, he was caught up, as Du Bois explains, in a "double consciousness"; on one hand, there is commitment to liberation, including traveling a journey of harsh personal experiences and sacrifice, and on the other is confronting a desperate ambition to be accommodated by the very system they were fighting.

In an interesting and revealing way, Tafira produces a complex picture of Mugabeism in which Mugabe is beholden in a conflictual desire to be accepted by the West, while at the same time unleashing anti-West, anti-imperialist and anticolonial rhetoric that endears him to all those seeking redemption from depredations of colonialism, thus earning himself the wrath of imperial assaults. The significance of Tafira's chapter is that it explains the ambivalences of Mugabe's policy positions: while seemingly oppositional to the West, his regime has also been eager to be recognized by the same Western governments and financial institutions. This complicates Mugabe's decolonization project: it is difficult to discern whether Mugabeism's project is an honest and radical anticolonial and anti-imperialist stance or it is something born out of bitterness of a colonial subject, who always seeks accommodation and attention.

In "A Fanonian Reading of Robert Gabriel Mugabe as Colonial Subject," Tendayi Sithole systematically deploys the Fanonian perspective in an endeavor to understand Mugabe's subject position, subjection, and subjectivity. He admits from the outset that Mugabe is a difficult subject to define and understand. This is largely because he is a colonial subject that played a pivotal part in the decolonization struggles but continues to manifest multiple contradictions as a postcolonial actor. Sithole argues that since the dawn of the twenty-first century, Mugabe's signification became locked in the form of two registers—of liberal and the nationalist signification. The liberal signification holds that Mugabe is a villain, despot, tyrant, human rights violator, and the figure of evil. This liberal signification, with its hegemonic form and content, creates a liberal consensus where a world without Mugabe will be a just world. This even goes to the extent of having a one-dimensional narrative of who Mugabe is, and this is the signification that has even

assumed the level of common sense. Mugabe is all things gone badly—a leader who degenerated from a liberation hero to the typical postcolonial tyrant—and thus, the cause of the Zimbabwean crisis.

Sithole further argues that the nationalist signification, on the other hand, creates its consensus of Mugabe as a revolutionary, the father of the nation, the liberation hero, and the outstanding African statesman alive. This signification also assumes the counternarrative to the liberal consensus, and Mugabe is also seen as the victim of the colonial and imperialist vile, and advocates the cementing of the gains of liberation struggle. The nationalist signification also advocates a nationalist monolithic history, patriotism, and memory. The liberal and nationalist significations are complex registers on their own as they are fraught with ambiguities and contradictions. However, what they seek to do is to assume the point of common sense in understanding Mugabe, thus claiming to be definitive truths themselves.

Sithole's chapter complicates and critiques both liberal and nationalist positions as mere political registers. He posits that truth is not absolute and that there are various positionalities of truth in relation to Mugabe. The political idea of Mugabe can be convincing or not depending on positionality of the truth from which he is being looked at. He concludes that Mugabe cannot be enclosed in one explanatory framework simply because he is a complex subject who is a product of colonialism and that he continues to be influenced by its subjectivity as he is the president of the neocolonial state. Sithole underlines the fact that Mugabe must not be misunderstood to be a sovereign subject because he is a colonial subject that is caught up in the colonial logic and its infrastructure, which is the inherited colonial state. Consequently, for Sithole, Mugabe cannot be unproblematically praised or simplistically dismissed.

Morgan Ndlovu extends some of the arguments raised by both Tafira and Sithole in his reflection on the trials and tribulations of Mugabe as an African leader within a discursive context of Euro-North American-centric modernity and neoliberal dispensation. His starting point is why, in spite of the advent of an age dubbed “post-colonial” in Africa, African people are still languishing in abject poverty, violence, and disease; this makes the present spatiohistorical temporality resemble many of the features of the colonial past—a development that cast some doubts over the idea of the advent of postcolonial order. Ndlovu's chapter is therefore a retrospective decolonial epistemic analysis of the leadership of Mugabe highlighting how it is entangled in structures that constrain and complicate agency. He posits that in spite of the challenge of exercising leadership within the constraining structural order of the postcolonial neocolonial period in Africa, those constituting the leadership of Africa can be apportioned a fair share of blame for failing to outmaneuver the snares of the colonial matrices of power. The question of Mugabe's leadership is an important aspect of understanding Mugabeism.

This book closes with a chapter by Kudzai Materike and Niveen El Moghazy, which is a critical navigation of complex civil-military relation as another lens through which they try to unravel Mugabeism, the person of Mugabe, and his rule as state president of Zimbabwe as well as president of a political party (ZANU-PF). A comparative reflection of Mugabe and Mubarak of Egypt who was another long-serving president helps Materike and Moghazy to open up the debate of civil-military relations wider. By casting the debate to another African postcolonial context, they highlight how Zimbabwe's civil-military relations, despite some historical dissimilarities, are not *sui generis*.

Matereke and Moghazy's chapter grapples with some of the most difficult questions that inform the debate on political-military alliances in postcolonial Africa: How should we understand the history of Zimbabwe's military? How is the person of Mugabe implicated in this history? What insights can we draw from Egypt and Mubarak that can shed more light on Zimbabwe's context? What are the structures, ethos, and styles of operation, and how have the two leaders been able to use these elements in their rule? What public image does the military deploy, and how does it define the postcolonial political terrain? The authors pursue these questions by tracing the unfolding trajectory of the military from the establishment of colonial rule by the British South Africa Company (BSAC) through the phase of anticolonial nationalism to the independence period. By advancing the contention that the Zimbabwean military is both an inheritance of colonial modernity and also of an anticolonial establishment, the authors open up space to argue how the Zimbabwean military, like that of Egypt, albeit under different conditions, has been amenable to political control. There is no doubt that Zimbabwe's blocked democratic transition has been heavily premised on the question of how to transform the complex nature of civil-military relations so that the military evolves into a "professional body" that stands outside politics and civil society.

## CONCLUSION

What emerges poignantly in this book is that seeking to understand a complex and controversial political actor like Mugabe, whose political career spans over half a century, is not an easy task partly because his story is inextricably intertwined with the very development of the idea of Zimbabwe and the political trajectory of Zimbabwe from a colony to a neocolony and to crisis and partly due to the fact that his political behavior and policies have produced polarities domestically and globally. Mugabeism does not easily lend itself to easy dismissal or glorification. What is also clear is that the run-up to the Sixth ZANU-PF Congress that took place in December 2014 revealed some more disturbing aspects of Mugabeism in their most detestable forms. Mugabe and his wife Grace actively worked together in defense of the First Family and in the process purged all those who were perceived to be opposed to it. The casualties included 9 out of 10 elected provincial chairperson, 100 out of 160 legislators, and 10 out of 20 politburo members (Mandaza 2014). Joice Mujuru, who has deputized Mugabe since the 2004 ZANU-PF People's Congress, became the face of those who had to be purged. Her liberation war credentials were taken. She became reduced to the face of corruption in Zimbabwe. It would seem that all these Machiavellian strategies and tactics were unleashed for the sole reason of safeguarding the power and wealth of the First Family in a post-Mugabe era. The question that remains and cries out for a response is posed by Ibbo Mandaza: "If all this is designed to safe guard the interests and future of the First Family in the first instance, will the new 'custodial' leadership live up to both the political and economic challenges at hand, and when Mugabe finally departs in the not too distant future?" (Mandaza 2014: 2). Of course, only time will tell as no academic can scientifically predict the mysterious future of Zimbabwe precisely. The strength of this book is not that it captures the complexities of the subject under study better than existing works, but it courageously grapples with the murky present with a view to shed light on the mysterious future of a country where even discussing succession has been made a political crime under Mugabeism.

## NOTES

I wish to thank Dr. Martin Rupiah for comments on this introductory chapter.

1. From Mugabe's speech during his acceptance of chairmanship of the AU in 2015. At home in Zimbabwe, Mugabe had popularized the slogan of "Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans" as he justified compulsory land acquisition from white commercial farmers that were depicted as foreign settlers.
2. I. Mandaza, "Analysis: ZANU-PF and Triumph of Securocracy," 2014, New Zimbabwe.Com, <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news/printVersion.aspx?newsID=194> (accessed December 15, 2014).
3. Global coloniality is a concept that refers to continuation of colonial-like relations long after the demise of direct juridical colonial administration.
4. It was Ali A. Mazrui that characterized Kwame Nkrumah as a Leninist-Tsar: a Leninist on the continent (i.e., a revolutionary pan-Africanist) and a Tsar in Ghana (i.e., a monarchical dictator).
5. ZIPA was a unique military formation that included ZIPRA and ZANLA in unity for the liberation of the country amid disunity at the political level.

PART I

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Mugabeism, Economic Nationalism, and  
Pan-Africanism

## Robert Mugabe: An Intellectual Manqué and His Moments of Meaning

*David B. Moore*

### INTRODUCTION

Mugabeism that is invoked in this book is about what Mugabe and the context that in many ways he has created “mean” for Zimbabwean and perhaps African society at large: what do his persona and his actions “say” about Africa and its world; what do they evoke; how do they symbolize; how do they resonate with; how do they illustrate some of the uniquely configured cultural, social and political attributes of this very complex world? Do we (those of us obsessed with Zimbabwe’s history and contemporaneity) see “Africa”—and closer to home, Zimbabwe—through his actions any differently than we did before he entered our space? If so, how? And if not, how has he reinforced positive notions of “radical” negation of the colonial negation, less enticing notions of “the dark continent” as it crawls its way through the violent transitions of primitive accumulation (Moore 2003a, 2004a, 2011a)—or simply buttressed a postcolonial fatigue with grand narratives in the face of multifaceted networks of power. In any case we ask, with this book’s editor: is there ideology that could be called “Mugabeism”? Is it perhaps a political-philosophical system applicable to the consciousness of the whole continent and even beyond (Bell and Metz 2011)?

It is, and it is not. “Mugabeism” is little more than a schizophrenic form of hybridity born of a simultaneous quest for understanding and power (that being born of the classic Gramscian blend of violent coercion and legitimating consent as ruling classes move in and out of political and ideological hegemony—Moore 2014a) in the context of a very unevenly developed social formation structured by the dominance of a settler-capitalist mode of production and a new ruling class’s attempts to replace it or work within it. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009b) displays this in the abstract grandly, distilling the authority of theorists and social scientists ranging from Mbembe to Laclau, from Gellner to Benedict Anderson (but not Homi Bhaba: perhaps the idea of “mimicry” is too crude), and closer to Zimbabwe, from Chitando to Mandaza, Muponde, Mahoso, Muzondidya, Jonathan Moyo, Sam Moyo (with Paris Yeros), Blessing-Miles Tendi, and even Thabo Mbeki<sup>1</sup>—not

to forget the always-present historian and ever-optimistic philosopher of “liberal” nationalism Terence Ranger (2013). Terry Ranger died on January 2, 2015. His role in the making of Zimbabwean historiography—and history itself—was huge and will be permanent. Yet, aside from the settler-capitalism, the death-knell only apparently rang with “fast-track” land reform and indigenization policies, and the late historical positioning of Zimbabwe’s postcolonial moment that made what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009c: 302) calls the “young state” (and the party-state makers, to dereify that very human entity) “dream in both socialist and liberal terms” as it “stood astride uneasily and tendentiously the fading socialist world that had not yet entirely faded, and the emerging neo-liberal world that had not yet become triumphant,” the ideologies wrapped up in “Mugabeism” hold much in common with its African counterparts. A strong component of precapitalist interpellations permeates these dreams.

Whether or not they are dismissed with the ultramodernist Marx as the nightmarish muck of ages or celebrated as the utopian basis of a new communitarian ethos (Metz 2014), they contribute to what Gramsci (1971) would have called “new, unique, and historically concrete combinations” of discourses and interpellations, the study of which must “take into account the fact that international relations intertwine with those internal relations of nation-states.” This intertextuality can be seen when “a particular ideology . . . born in a highly developed country, is disseminated in less developed countries, impinging upon the local interplay of combinations” (182). Notably, Gramsci did not choose between liberal or socialist ideologies in this passage but later demanded that “one must . . . distinguish historically organic ideologies . . . which are necessary to a given structure” in contrast to “ideologies that are arbitrary, rationalistic, or ‘willed’” by intellectuals trying to be “organic” as their modern prince grapples for power. Unless these politicians work within and articulate “ideologies [that] are historically necessary” and “have a validity which is psychological,” they will be whistling in the wind, because it is these ideologies that are able to “organise” human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc” (367–368).

Gramsci is grappling here with structure and agency (Golding 1992), and although his “culturalism” is often appropriated by those prioritizing the latter, even if one decides to be a structural determinist one does not have to assert that “tradition” and patronage politics (Chabal and Daloz 1999 and the “politics of the belly” (Bayart 1989) are all that remain on the ideological terrain. One does not have to, with ZANU-PF ideologue George Charamba (2013) claiming that the Movement for Democratic Change lost its decade-and-a-half struggle because it had become imbued with the philosophy of the (Western) oppressor as opposed to that of the “Third Chimurenga”: Zimbabwe *has* lots of liberals and social democrats because they have been produced by its structures of production and reproduction: value-creating (as opposed to rent-seeking) capitalists as well as a working class are (or have been) part of Zimbabwe’s globally integrated political economy just as much as are crony capitalists, peasants, and lumpen social forces. But their complex concatenations produce politicians with a huge array of ideological choices: those who want to be a man for all seasons—and political seasons are produced by decisions made within moments—may easily make choices due to political contingencies in a context of conjunctures born of uncertainty but also promise. These particular moments of great fluidity and flux can gel neatly into structures (Cliffe 1981).

## MUGABE'S MOMENTS OF MEANING

Thus in order to gain access to Mugabe's meaning, one must approach his ideological formation as he encountered momentous instances of decision-making, or even impromptu outbursts at particular times when he has been caught off guard. In a Bonapartist social formation, wherein stalemated class formation and struggle produces the terrain on which a dictator's psychology (and political tactics and strategy) bears on a whole society's identity, it is not out of the ordinary for the "psychological" to impinge on the historical and ideological: this is the one of the twists on the tale of primitive accumulation (Moore 2003b) that may produce a nearly permanent, organic scar that will take decades to heal. Thus, asking questions that seem more prosaic than grand can be illustrative of a wider, collective consciousness in Zimbabwe and Africa that may or may not be "Mugabeism."

What does, or did, Mugabe *really mean* when he said x, y, or z—when he condemned gays as worse than dogs and pigs and proclaimed that British prime minister Tony Blair's cabinet was made up of "gay gangsters" (yet knew for years that his once president Canaan Banana was gay and indeed used force to satisfy his desires) who should just run their own country and let Mugabe mind his: this (mutual) "demonization" means that diplomacy as usual becomes a nonstarter (Tendi 2014: 15), but does it resonate with a wider ideological consciousness in which prurient social values mix with a macho defense of sovereignty? Is Mugabeism partly composed of feudal religious sentiments finding it hard to become (post)modern? When Mugabe said, visibly shaken when Dali Tambo asked him in front of the television camera about Gukurahundi, that there are some things "we don't talk about" (Tambo 2013), was he speaking for a "nation" formed in the blood of ethnic cleansing? What did it mean for Zimbabweans at large when he said that Gukurahundi was a "moment of madness"? For many of ZANU-PF's ruling group, it meant a means of evading history by closing some of its chapters (Ngwenya 2011), but for many more it meant these moments could be easily repeated by a military machine angering quickly when the consensual side of its party's hegemony was unraveling, to evince the beastly side of politics' centaur—as evidenced in 2005's postelection Operation Murambatsvina (Vambe 2008) and Operation Mavhoterapapi three years later (see Willems [2013] for evidence that when coercion comes to the fore, the consensus side of the Gramscian equation does not disappear but *alters*).

What did it mean when in July 1976 Mugabe told a visiting Stephen Solarz, a young Democrat American congressman—soon to be head of the House's subcommittee on African affairs—visiting him while he was under house arrest in Quelimane, that he foresaw his country to be a "democratic state (like Tanzania) with a mixed economy (like Zambia)," not at all like Mozambique's "military state" (National Security Archives 1976; Moore 2014e)? A few months later, at the international conference in Geneva that was the beginning of the end for Ian Smith and at which Mugabe consolidated the internal and external political wings of ZANU while convincing "the west" he had the guerrillas under his control, he told a BBC reporter: "We are fighting for democracy. We would like to see a democratic state established in Zimbabwe and this means a state based on the wishes of the majority of the people. The best way that people can demonstrate their participation is by voting and elections are quite a necessity" (Bright 2012, from BBC 1976). Nearly 40 years later, after Operation Mavhoterapapi demonstrated to the rest of the world and most Zimbabweans that Mugabe's party would not countenance



losing an election, he said at the ceremony marking the government of “national unity” foisted on Zimbabwe by its neighbors (Raftopoulos 2013): “Democracy in Africa: it’s a difficult proposition because always the opposition will want much more than what it deserves” (Bright 2012). Laughter followed.

This is “Mugabeism-lite.” It is a malleable philosophy for and of the moment, as part of a pragmatism (or opportunism) in which the primary objective is the pursuit of power—and when that power is gained or regained it becomes a laughing matter. For the late Wilfred Mhanda (Bright 2012; Moore 2014d)—perhaps Mugabe’s nemesis, as will be illustrated further in this chapter—Mugabe’s main political “preoccupation is consolidating his grip on power.” By the beginning of 2000, “his grip on power was under threat. He was getting unpopular, so he had to take the gloves off.” Democracy was an ideal easily jettisoned—as simply as his equally lightly held ideals of “Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought,” which were, ironically, held at the same time as his discourses about “democracy” expounded to the likes of Solarz (about which more later).

Is it possible that such lightly held philosophies of power—ideologies grabbed hastily on the road to the state and the opportunities for accumulation it holds (for that is, in the end, what the pursuit of power leads to)—add up to something larger than the sum of their parts? Discourses that sometimes hold intrinsic meaning while at others are just meant to please whoever in power is closest by and might be able to deliver some of it, or to justify excessive use of its coercive side, may have real consequences for the continent and the world, because the actions taken upon their supposedly intellectual grounding are far reaching, especially when they have state power behind—or in front of—them. Is it then possible that this man of all political and ideological seasons (from the ostensibly reconciliatory and slightly social democratic-blended-with-ethnic-cleansing discursive practices of the 1980s, to the neoliberal Economic Structural Adjustment of the 1990s through the land-grabbing and election stealing 2000s—see Sachikonye [2012] and Southall [2013] for political economy analyses) could have created an ideology and philosophy that matches what philosopher of *Ubuntu* Thaddeus Metz considers to be a communitarian ethos of love and harmony (Metz 2007, 2014; Bell and Metz 2011)?

One thinks mostly no, when remembering Mugabe—around a year after his *tete á tete* with Solarz—telling his newly reconstituted Central Committee in the aftermath of his quelling the young *vashandi* Turks in 1977 that his sort of harmony would be strictly reinforced by ZANU’s axe falling on the necks of those bold enough to break its rhythm with a bit of questioning (Moore 2011b, 2014a). Much if not most of Mugabe’s political philosophy—values born very much of the moments in which he made decisions about gaining and maintaining power within the context of a political economy combining the local and the global in complex and quickly moving concatenations of ideology and praxis—is about the purity and simplicity of power and how to build the alliances that will paste it together. However, stranger philosophical circles have been squared in the ideational realms of metaphysical speculation.

To the extent that this collection of evaluations and choice adds up to a systemic whole, it is a creed amounting to *l’état c’est moi* and (more interestingly when considering the emergence of a party capable of real opposition, combined with faction struggles within ZANU-PF) *après moi la deluge*. If that amounts to an “ism,” it is a shallow one, summed up well with Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s list including victimhood, conspiracies, autochthony, sacrifice, sovereignty, denialism, essentialism, nativism,

religiosity (appropriating Christianity in all its colors, including evangelical ones especially created for the ruling party, and “tradition”), Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism-Maoism-Kim-II-Sungism (the February 21 Movement—including all children born on the same date as Mugabe—is particularly North Korean in style, not to mention 5 Brigade with its instructors from “communism’s” last earthly refuge), and the all-encompassing beacon of “the land is the economy and the economy is land,” beyond which first-generation notions of human rights wither into insignificance (Moore 2004b). Given the most obvious signifier of dominance in a racially structured society (Hall 1980; Hart 2013) perhaps it is not surprising that as the philosophical-king enters his final years, the aforementioned interpellations of contradiction all boil down to race (and/or land, which in “Mugabeism” is placed under the racial signifier in most respects): at the time of writing, Mugabe’s ideology seems to have been concentrated on that point. At a meeting of a “cheering crowd of land-grab beneficiaries in Mashonaland West,” the line he uttered before he reportedly collapsed—and the news item on this incident noted that reporting on the president’s health would soon be criminalized—was “that the remaining white farmers must go” (Mathuthu 2014). The last gasps of such ideological complexes—when the horizontal conflicts of class are hidden by the vertical ones of race and ethnicity—are often distilled in such a manner (Mann 2005: 429).

Yet in the unevenly articulated social formations constituting African political economy (think of feudalism plus colonial hangovers plus Cold War-isms plus predatory capitalism with rent-seeking and resource-cursed tendencies, times post-Cold War political liberalism-lite with heavy economic neoliberalism, unformed civil society, and a security environment over which Al-Quedas, Boko Harams, and Al Shabaabs hover, condemning imperialists’ notions of “democracy” once again to second place—Stephens 2014) Mugabeism-lite makes somewhat more sense than ideologies dressing up power with profound ethical and moral certainties, as is the case with most justificatory philosophies as opposed to those attempting to map out a utopian future or even fantasy (Hamilton 2014). Thus, to arrive at a sense of Mugabeism-lite, one must delve into the historical excavation of moments when Mugabe made an impression on the world.

### MUGABEISM AND THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS OF THE GLOBAL INTELLIGENTSIA: AN INTELLECTUAL MANQUÉ ON THE ROAD TO POWER

As caveat to this investigation, however, it might bear reflecting that when one makes claims for a *name* approaching an *ideology*, that name must have intellectual weight. In this respect, although during the early days of Zimbabwean nationalism Mugabe was considered to be one of the “eggheads” who took their sweet time about joining the more down-to-earth activists (Shamuyarira 1960), a number of people who have encountered him have not been impressed with the qualities of his intellect: in the words of one of them, the notion of “intellectual manqué”—someone whose philosophical propensities remain in the realm of his or her imagination and thus unfulfilled in reality—might be appropriate. Some of their analyses of Robert Gabriel Mugabe’s much-lauded metaphysical prowess could bear repeating here. So too would it be to note that the two analyses and analysts cited here in relative detail are much more positive about Mugabe than many others. In 1962,

British first secretary in Salisbury R. A. R. Barltrop (who gained more fame as high commissioner and then ambassador during Fiji's coup 25 years later—*Daily Telegraph* 2010) thought that Mugabe was “a sinister figure with a Ghanaian wife,” the latter of which, given Nkrumah's recent politics, was ominous enough (National Archives, 1962).

Barltrop based this perception not on personal acquaintance but a September dining occasion with “one of the leaders of the Asian community in Salisbury who is also a member of the local ZAPU hierarchy,” just 36 hours before ZAPU was banned. The dinner conversation revealed that Mugabe's menacing nature was manifested in his leadership of the “‘Zimbabwean Liberation Army’ (referred to in our latest Fortnightly Summary) [which] was nothing more than a cover for the more extreme wing of ZAPU.” This—along with “the party's youth wing” leaders, including “educated men of considerable intelligence,” being responsible for “much of the recent . . . often quite indiscriminate . . . violence and arson” had ZAPU moderates concerned “lest this recent wave of lawlessness should set up a reaction amongst liberal-minded people and so lose ZAPU and the African nationalist cause such sympathy as it at present enjoyed.” ZAPU's “official line that they had nothing to do with the wave of lawlessness in the Colony” was at threat, and its leaders were finding it “increasingly difficult to keep the Youth Wing under control.”

Mugabe would find out later that he too would have to negotiate the line between youthful extremism and liberals or other power holders versus their enemies in power. When *he* had power, he called young ones protesting against him a “bunch of rapists, drunkards and drug addicts who could not be allowed into the city because they were given to violence . . . They are our children. We will discipline them our way” (*Moto* in Moore 2008a). When he was on his way to power, he also disciplined his “children” with a heavy hand, albeit with slightly more ideological subtlety, as this chapter will illustrate later. As he was thus learning the ropes about dealing with recalcitrant youths in the 1970s, a diplomat weightier than Barltrop weighed in on Mugabe's qualities: in January 1977, as he was handing the American secretary of state's baton to Cy Vance, Henry Kissinger opined that Mugabe was “out of control . . . absolutely untrustworthy.” He would have preferred Nkomo “from the beginning” if he could have chosen someone with whom to deal on the Zimbabwe question: “Nkomo is the best. What I don't understand is, is he just a figurehead for Mugabe or does he have power of his own?” (Kissinger 1977, in Moore 2014d).

To return to those interlocutors of intelligence and power who had more respect for the current Zimbabwean president, reflections on a late 1985 interview may assist. This researcher, following the route to a doctoral thesis, interviewed a man who could be considered part of a corps of global intellectuals (including Kissinger, who joked at the aforementioned meeting that Zimbabwean nationalists argued more than Harvard faculty members) who had decided to serve the interests of international order (and who knows, perhaps justice) rather than scholarly enterprise. Dr. T. H. R. “Dick” Cashmore (whose 1965 doctoral thesis on colonial administration in Kenya has been immortalized online, with an admirable introduction by John Lonsdale [2012]) had just retired from the service of his country's empire as a foreign and Commonwealth officer. Cashmore had been deeply involved in Zimbabwean affairs since his membership of the 1972 Pearce Commission. Cashmore, who had just revealed that Mugabe had postponed Zimbabwe's 1985 election by a few weeks so he could write his MA exams at a London University

for his umpteenth degree, was on his knees on the carpet of his Twickenham flat in supplication to whoever up in the heavens might have been listening along with this green PhD researcher.

“It all hinges,” he declared, “on Mugabe, that one man, that intellectual *manqué*.” It wasn’t a good thing, he continued, to have such men in power. They are insecure of their intellectual status and thus excessively suspicious of their superiors in that category. Moreover, Cashmore continued, the long intra-Shona tradition of rivalry among linguistic and regional sub-groups was also detrimental to stability (*Gukurahundi* was not mentioned—the British foreign office was not keen to delve there).

“And,” inquired the earthly interlocutor, eager to slip in a question that would satisfy his left-wing supervisor with no sympathy whatsoever about Mugabe’s philosophical pretences “what about his ideology?”

“Ahhh,” replied the Phd’d civil servant, “that’s another thing about the Shona: they pride themselves on having the best intellectual theories and ideologies about politics. They argue and argue and argue about these things. They don’t mean that much. Besides, Terry Ranger’s piece assured us that Mugabe was really alright in that category.”

Cashmore was referring spontaneously to Ranger’s (1980) famous “Changing of the Old Guard” article, in which he claimed that a Castro-like Mugabe had out-ZIPAd the ZIPA challenge to Mugabe of the late 1970s that John Saul (said PhD researcher’s supervisor, and who had experienced some spars with Ranger during the time they shared at the University of Dar es Salaam, where Ranger took up a post after his expulsion from Rhodesia) had claimed would have been a good alternative to the wasting petty bourgeois infighting—Mugabe included—bedeviling the struggle (Ranger 1980; Saul 1979—recounted in Moore 2011c, 2014c; more about ZIPA and Mugabe’s response later in this chapter). It seemed strange that an article claiming Mugabe had transmogrified into a Marxist could be reassuring to the jaded and now junior guardians of imperialism, but this colonial subject was clearly not in tune with the cues of a British ruling class appearing more eccentric every day. As for this “intellectual *manqué*” who postponed elections so he could write his master’s exams, as someone else asked much later: “if he was so smart why did he have a handful of MAs but no doctorate?”

Another British civil servant, interviewed more than 20 years later and who knew Mugabe personally, was also not very enamored with the Zimbabwean leader’s lauded cerebral capacity. Dennis Grennan (2007, 2008), in his retirement flat in the small city of Hextable north of Newcastle, agreed that Mugabe was *very* intelligent—“but not nearly as intelligent as he thought he was.” His ideology? “He had no ideology. He was a pragmatist. Or put it this way: he was an opportunist.”

Perhaps Grennan could be called a British working-class organic intellectual. He was raised in the poorer parts of Warrington, west of Manchester, by a father who earned his living bare-knuckle boxing and a mother of Irish descent who was secretary to the local Labour party. He could not accept a Grammar School scholarship because his family could not afford to buy him lunch there or transport him home and back in the middle of the day. His knee-caps had been removed in his early teens: due to malnutrition, the cartilage surrounding them did not develop properly so he had the choice of removing them or wearing braces. He chose the

former and walked well for the rest of his life: he did not jog, however. He grew up hating communists because “they trashed our offices, not the Tories.”

During World War II, Grennan worked in a chemical factory—“the war saved us from poverty”—but his mother objected to his inhaling dangerous fumes and arranged a clerk’s post with the National Health Insurance. In 1945, he helped organize Harold Wilson’s first election, forming a lasting relationship. When he gained a scholarship to the trade unions’ Ruskin College at Oxford, he met a number of African nationalists and Joan Wicken, who would eventually become Julius Nyerere’s personal assistant—“she was deeply in love with him, platonically”—and a constant source of information to the British state on southern and eastern Africa’s politics.

Grennan’s postgraduate diploma from Ruskin was not enough for him, so he reversed track and studied for a Politics BA at Southampton University, from where he led the National Union of Students: he was fond of recalling the *Daily Telegraph*’s headline reading “Father of 35 Heads NUS” (he had two children). In that position, he assiduously routed out communists, utilized CIA funds to organize summertime student conferences around Europe in competition with the USSR’s, joined a commission including powerful industrialists and politicians that established the well-known Labour government’s local grant system for funding university studies, and made headlines again when he announced that the Chinese did not invite him to a World Students’ Congress because, the embassy told him when he asked why not, they did not want the paper tigers of imperialism to darken their shores.

When Grennan graduated from Southampton, he and a triumvirate of politicians from the United Kingdom’s main political parties set up the Ariel Foundation, funded partially by the Ditchley Foundation and some of the industrialists he had met on the university students’ funding commission. A major part of this foundation’s intention was to introduce African nationalists to leading members of the British establishment, to counter the efforts of such reactionaries as those in the right-wing Conservative Monday Club, who in their efforts to stave off decolonization were great supporters of Ian Smith and his ilk. In this respect, he shared many tasks with the African-American Institute in the United States, which did similar work: funding from such corporations as Corning Glass crossed the Atlantic. Was the Ariel Foundation funded by the CIA, as one of the British spy exposés claimed (Dorril 2000: 475, 722)? Grennan laughed: “We didn’t need their peanuts: we had some of the biggest corporations here and in the US supporting us.” Around this time, he was recruited into Her Majesty’s Service, quite casually, at a cocktail party in Westminster (he remained a special emissary to southern Africa until the 1980 transition to majority rule, during which he claims to have advised the British team, led by Anthony Duff and Christopher Soames, *not* to cancel the upcoming elections on account of ZANU-PF’s violence: the consequence, he advised, would simply be more war—and regardless of coercion and problems with PF-ZAPU’s access to some provinces, ZANU-PF was the most popular party—Moore 2014c).

Upon Zambia’s independence, Grennan became one of Kenneth Kaunda’s many special assistants. It was at Lusaka’s State House around 1964, he recalled, that he met Robert Mugabe. When Mugabe was imprisoned by the Smith régime, Grennan went to visit him and asked if there was any way he could help. Mugabe wondered if Grennan might be able to assist Sarah, his wife (often called Sally), live in the

United Kingdom rather than in Tanzania or at her home in Ghana. Grennan agreed, arranging through the Ariel Foundation and the Home Office for Mrs. Mugabe to come to London to study secretarial science, hosting her in his house for three years (“my children thought of her as their sister”), arranging work for her at the Africa Centre in Covent Gardens, and helping her win a battle against the Home Office when in 1969 it decided her visa was no longer valid—the last move in his strategy was to get a petition signed in parliament in her favor; the second last tactic was to have Mugabe write a letter and send a telegram to Harold Wilson personally. How did they keep in touch to coordinate all of this? “The usual channels.”

Mugabe’s telegram of June 8, 1970, and letter of a few days later combine legalese and human rights discourse in classic Amnesty International style, add a touch of nascent “executive privilege,” and end with a note of self-deprecating humor. Wilson is asked in the telegram to “recognise [Sarah Mugabe’s] status and grant residence permit till my release from political detention”: Mugabe had no doubt that the scores of letters between London’s government and lobbying organisations’ offices debating the legal status of a woman from Ghana married to a man from a state unrecognized by Whitehall and the *political* import of a prominent African nationalist in a non-Soviet bloc party would eventually work for his wife (although Mervyn Rees, then home secretary, seemed unrelenting in his desire to rid the British Isles of this illegal immigrant). Furthermore, he was certain he would eventually be free to join the global political élite. In the letter, Mugabe documents the case’s history in legal terms, but ends with “more than that”: that is, the British state’s “moral responsibilities towards . . . persons in my circumstances [and] their wives.” This is very close to the human rights discourse he would claim to despise so many years later. He closes with a request for the exercise of executive privilege, thus foreshadowing his own disregard of the letter of the law when matters of an apparently higher order needed to be enacted: he asked, “Sir, that you personally exercise your mind on the case . . . so that justice is done to my wife and myself.” The postscript follows: “I regret that the consequences of my writing this letter will inevitably be a surcharge on you, Sir” given that letters posted from prisons do not have stamps so the recipient must pay (Moore 2005, 2008b). Wilson did not intervene personally, but the petition worked and Mrs. Mugabe was allowed back into Great Britain (Moore 2008a) after a visit to Swedish journalist and human rights activist Per Wästberg—who had been expelled from Rhodesia in 1959, and whose June 1975 article “Where is Robert Mugabe?” in Sweden’s main newspaper was crucial in getting Mugabe on the “western” agenda when he was climbing to the top of ZANU in the aftermath of the Chitepo assassination, but cooling his heels under Mozambican house arrest in Quelimane (Moore 1995b; Sellström 2002a: 205).

Grennan must have been a thorn in the side of his colleagues from the other side of the tracks: his interviews displayed a deeply felt antagonism toward the aristocrats with whom he shared his southern African missions, in contrast to his deep—but far from naïve—appreciation for Kenneth Kaunda and Julius Nyerere, the fights between whom over southern African politics he moderated often. When at a July 2005 “Witness to History” oral history panel (organized by Dr. Sue Onslow at the National Archives in London) about the passing of Rhodesia this researcher asked a diplomat of the former hue about Grennan, he was taken to the side and told that “Grennan was an obnoxious radical pest: on one of our missions to Zambia we made sure he was sent off to Angola, a much more congenial place for him.”

Grennan's vitriol was even more intense when he remembered the Rhodesian and South African "fascists, who were worse than Hitler."

But in spite of supporting Mugabe—far better, he thought at the time, than Nkomo, who in a single weekend spent the £1,000 Grennan rustled up for him, from various FCO and secretary of state officers for a working visit to London, unabashedly on women, food, and drink, and unashamedly asked for more—he felt that his cool and rational style was missing something. Perhaps the way Mugabe treated Sarah—with whom Grennan was clearly smitten, remembering her as "the best ambassador the Zimbabwean liberation movement ever had"—did not add to his respect. Mugabe, he rued, treated her "like a dog: not cruelly, but just like a pet, not an intelligent human being." No matter, when in January 1976 Mugabe—under house arrest in Quelemane because Frelimo was not certain he was a legitimate leader—managed to persuade Machel that his wife was sick in London and needed his company, Grennan hosted him to visits with all the relevant personalities (Smith and Simpson 1981: 94). It was there that Mugabe informed the BBC that he was at one with the guerrillas (Martin and Johnson 1981: 209), and tried to convince various radical solidarity groups that his ideology was along their lines too (Ranger 1980: 78–85). Thus, the tale must twist into the convoluted politics of ZANU in the post-Chitepo moment, contextualized by the Cold War conjuncture.

### MUGABEISM, THE COLD WAR, AND ZANU'S INTERNAL BATTLES

The story of the Zimbabwe People's Army, when in the aftermath of the Chitepo assassination a group of young ZANLA commanders took the idea of unity with ZIPRA forward and restarted the liberation war on the ashes of détente, has been told many times since its first and official version in Martin and Johnson's celebration of ZANU-PF's victory (1981). Its unofficial version, from the vantage point of the vashandis' ("working people"—the most ideologically committed ZIPA leaders) de facto leader is in Wilfred Mhanda's *Dzino: Memories of a Freedom Fighter* (2011), although variations chipping away at the detail from all angles continue to be produced (see Mazaire's [2011] excellent account in the context of ZANU-PF's disciplinarian tendencies; Sadomba 2011: 47–52; also Moore 2014b).

To abbreviate and put in ideological context a long story about a very short, but pivotal, period of time, when Solarz was advised of Mugabe's democratic proclivities, the junior congressman was also told that the guerrilla soldiers were under the house-arrested man's control. Mugabe claimed, recorded the Maputo American embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission Johnnie Carson (in the mid-1990s to become ambassador to Zimbabwe), that "today the Third Force High Command was composed entirely of Zanu military leaders who were loyal to him. Although he was not living in the military camps or directing the day to day military operations, he met with the High Command leaders to discuss overall strategy" (State Department 1976). This may have been the case with Rex Nhongo, the overall ZIPA commander (not very close to the more ideologically oriented vashandi), but it was not so with most of the officers below him. It took until January 1977 and the elimination of the vashandi leaders in ZIPA to start consolidating his control over the soldiers, and indeed the party. Josiah Tongogara and his compatriots were released from Lusaka's prison, where they had been held since March 1975 on suspicion

of assassinating Herbert Chitepo (White 2003), in order to support Mugabe's presence at the Kissinger-brokered Geneva Conference in October 1976. With Machel's help, Tongogara forced the recalcitrant ZIPA/vashandi radicals to attend so Mugabe could be seen by the world as their leader—they had seen no point in doing so, given they felt they should represent *all* the political leaders rather than choose one, and Nyerere had advised them not to go so as to leave the politics to the politicians. Furthermore, their anti-imperialist stance was on record in a widely circulated Mozambique Information Agency interview, wherein the “system of exploitation and the capitalist enterprises and armed personnel which serve to perpetuate it” were declared the ultimate “target of the freedom fighters' bullets” (in Mhanda 2011). They did not think the conference would do much to hasten that end: only more war would. The Geneva episode ended before Christmas, a failure in terms of its ostensible aim of getting a deal to usher the nirvana of majority rule in to Zimbabwe.

Mugabe himself gained success. He managed to stitch together various externally based ZANU leaders with those based in southern and eastern Africa, and impressed on the world that the guerrillas were on his side. Geneva was a victory for him. He also captivated people such as Frank Wisner Jr., Kissinger's man at the Swiss conference. Wisner (2013), who at least in hindsight thought more of Mugabe and less of Nkomo than did his boss, summed him up as “diffident, stand-offish, smart, intellectually acute and by far the most impressive of the four” nationalist leaders, the others being Nkomo

the easiest to relate to...the most worldly of the lot, he had that big bluff character and he knew how to engage in a dialogue...and [in response to a query wondering if he was seen to be too close to the Soviets] very much in his own bed. The only thing that was obvious to us and pretty obvious to anyone was that he had the weaker hand. He came from the wrong ethnic group and he had the smaller force, even though it pretended to have a big name and lots of officers and fancy uniforms and guns, but didn't have the same punch as ZANLA; [Sithole,] almost touching in his need for reassurance, affection, and palpable bonhomie but he wasn't a serious player, [and Muzorewa,] bumbling and befuddled. Not impressive at all, with no clear vision for the conference.

“Mugabe,” Wisner thought, “had the coldest, clearest eyed approach.”

However, the reserved and cerebrally sharp leader had misled Solarz in July about his control over the guerrillas. Just after his disquisition on democracy affirming his fealty to elections in the BBC interview cited earlier, Mugabe's answer to a question about the relationship with the soldiers indicated his discomfort.

Q: ... you are someone who has not had direct military experience, who is not a fighter. Can you be in a strong position to lead, to direct, a victorious guerrilla movement?

A: Why, why not? Our guerrilla movement is not divorced from the generality of the people. I have mentioned already that the guerrillas are part of the body of our population of Zimbabwe. The people who are fighting the war are on the one part trained people and on the other untrained people. They all constitute the Zimbabwean army in a broad sense of the word. Some are feeding the guerrillas, some are showing them the way, some are raising foodstuffs and clothing



for them, all of these people are engaged in the struggle—they all matter to us.  
(BBC 1976)

This is dissimulation, not an answer. Perhaps it indicates the birth of Mugabeism.

A few months earlier, during the trip he had made to the United Kingdom and Europe with Grennan's help, Mugabe concealed his uncertain status from a group of interlocutors rather different than those from Broadcasting House or the House of Congress. Terry Ranger's "The Changing of the Old Guard"—the article that Dick Cashmore perhaps jokingly said convinced his colleagues that Mugabe was a good bet—quotes a January 1976 Mugabe interview with an apparently radical left-wing group called the Zimbabwe Solidarity Front, published in a journal called *Revolutionary Zimbabwe*. A member of the Zimbabwe Information Group, another consortium of activists charting the revolution's progress, later stated that the Zimbabwe Solidarity Front was "a small group . . . very close to ZANU in the UK . . . we in ZIG often referred to the ZSF as a group of 2 Mad Maoists and a running lap-dog!" (Sanders 2014).<sup>2</sup> Whatever the internecine politics of the London left-wing community, Ranger thought it opportune in 1980 to quote Mugabe telling his UK supporters in early 1976 that it was time "politicians" like him showed their control over the military leaders of the struggle. Yes, he admitted, an earlier group of politicians had gone astray so that currently a "military committee" had taken over, and the war did need "intensification." Indeed "all of us who lack military knowledge" must "undergo military training immediately." His questioners thought that sentiment meant Mugabe was a militarist. On the contrary, said the soon-to-be great helmsman struggling to keep up with the ideologically correct. Pulling Lenin to his rescue, he said that the struggle needed better political orientation:

people like Lenin may not have had military training but they had the ideology, they put across the Marxist theory and translated it in terms of the Russian situation. Well, our situation is that we have people without any ideology at all pretending they can lead the revolution. Now, in my opinion, they as well as the cadres need not just the military training but an ideological orientation as well.  
(in Ranger 1980: 83)

Mugabe may not have known about the vashandis' efforts to establish Wampoa College, following Chiang kai Shek's and Mao's model in the late 1920s in China and thus hardly indicative of "people without any ideology of all," but he certainly knew how to say what his audience wanted to hear—and how to dismiss, in headmaster's tones, anyone daring an intellectual challenge. Almost a year later, he knew enough about how to ally with the relatively uneducated militarists he seemed to condemn, to get rid of the vashandi challenging his directives (Moore 1995a, b). He relied more on the axe than the word to "train" his cadres, while ridiculing "intellectuals" who would use concepts like "negation of the negation": "we will negate them in turn." Mazaire (2011) and Sadomba (2011) explain well how an ideology and practice of "discipline" subsumed ZANU-PF in the ensuing years, kicked off by the "pacification" campaign following the vashandis' displacement. A little over a year later, Mugabe and his military allies did the same to another group perceived to have challenged him: its members later joined the ZIPA/vashandi leaders in a

prison camp in Cabo Delgado—after a few weeks in large open pits, dug just deep enough so no one could climb out.

Mugabe did not recognize vashandi leader Mhanda's intellectual and ideological sophistication. One of Mugabe's slightly critical fans, on his "left," did: Fay Chung's (2006, 149, 161, 174) memoirs refer to Mhanda as a "brilliant analyst [with] formidable intellect . . . bristling with intelligence and ideological righteousness" although "intransigent" and "puritanical" (the latter only in comparison with the inmates released to Geneva from Lusaka's prison). Journalist Geoffrey Nyarota (2006: 109) remembered him while they were both high school students as the "mathematical wizard of Goromonzi" (the first state high school in Rhodesia, which recruited the cream of students across the country from the late 1940s through the 1990s): when he saw him at a press conference just before independence in 1980, he had become a "legend twice over, as a modern-day Albert Einstein and as a Che Guevara." Nyarota later recalled the only time in Zimbabwe that Mugabe met his intellectual nemesis. In 1994, they both happened to be at an agricultural economists' conference. When Mhanda was encouraged to greet Mugabe, a cabinet minister asked the latter if he remembered Mhanda: he shook his head and said "not at all" but later said he remembered his face vaguely. Mugabe asked Mhanda a few banal questions. Mhanda left "after about three minutes" (116). Other vashandi members with relatives working in Mugabe's vicinity report that when asked to discuss the ZIPA story, Mugabe refuses (Interviews 1986, 1992). Perhaps he would like to dismiss that history as a moment of madness, as with Gukurahundi. When an intellectual *manqué* runs into a problem he cannot win by force of argument alone, and brutal force becomes the alternative. That force, of course, can run amuck if not used intelligently.

### MUGABEISM: THE END OF AN IDEOLOGY (IN THE DIRECTION OF A CONCLUSION)

A final episode may indicate how Mugabe's "ideology" of pragmatic opportunism was manifested as the liberation struggle reached its apogee. Josiah Tongogara's death as he drove to inform the guerrilla soldiers in Mozambique's camps of the news from Lancaster House has attained mythological status equal to that of Herbert Chitepo's (Kilgore 2011). But this is not a myth of heroism, moral fortitude, military strength, or indeed any positive virtue, but an apologue of doubt, mystery, suspicion, conspiracy, and double-dealing; hardly the best of stepping stones for the "liberal nationalism" (Ranger 2013) that turned into something rather more worrisome than "patriotic history" (Ranger 2004)—"grotesque" has been the opposite adjective used by young Zimbabwean social scientists lately (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya 2011).

In September 2004, Edgar Tekere (2007)—an epic figure in his own right—told the story of the night Tongogara, Mugabe, and Tekere met with Samora Machel to discuss the road beyond Lancaster House.

Machel said: "Ok, will you continue in the Patriotic Front and go into the elections with Joshua Nkomo or will you go your own way separate way?" [Just before the Geneva Conference ZAPU and ZANU formed the Patriotic Front, a form of unity that had stayed more or less intact for diplomatic purposes, but

which was far from the sort of unity envisaged by the vashandi and certainly did not reach the military.]

I could often anticipate what Mugabe was going to say, and because I was seen as the outspoken loudmouth he did not mind that I spoke my mind—I could almost speak for him. So I said: “Not a chance: Nkomo is a sell-out! We’ve been trying to get away from him ever since ZANU was born. He was negotiating with Smith after the Victoria Falls meetings. This is not possible. We have to go to the elections on our own.” Mugabe was quiet, as he usually was in such circumstances. He waited until all had had their say.

Machel looked at Magama [Tongogara] and asked him: “If you went into the elections as a single party, who would be leader?”

Tongogara did not answer for a long time. It was quiet for a long time. Finally he said: “The senior would have to be the leader, of course.”

Mugabe did not agree. We were to go into the elections as two separate parties. Tongogara went off to inform the guerrilla leaders. He died in that road accident soon after. (Tekere 2004)

Tekere left unsaid his thoughts about Tongogara’s death, although three years later he claimed Tongogara had ignored Machel’s warnings about the dangers of driving on rural roads at night, and so his death was accidental (Chimhashu 2007).

“Mugabeism,” it seems, is about alliances made in times of crisis, annulled without regrets when no longer needed. Alliances with the United Kingdom for Hunters for the air-force while Thatcher’s United Kingdom was glad to have pressure placed on the South African Communist Party/African National Congress/ZAPU bond, made Gukurahundi relatively painless for its prosecutors. Fifteen years or so later, Tony “Bliar” could be demonized for demonizing Mugabe (Tendi 2014). Their ideological content is born of contingency, their democratic content nil. It is even hard to say that “Mugabeism” is a close ally to nationalism: in a Bulawayo speech in the 2002 presidential election campaign, Mugabe mentioned that both the World Bank and the IMF had agreed to assist Zimbabwe recently, but “London and Washington” disagreed (Moore’s field-notes, February 2002); this is anticolonialism, perhaps an attempt to link with pan-Africanism (Phimister and Raftopoulos 2004), and as Mugabe’s United Nations General Assembly speeches illustrate, is a hard version of “sovereignty” discourse, but it is not informed by a critique of transnational capital—although it is possible that indigenization discourse is “organic” to some elements of a newly forming capitalist class.

This form of discourse does, however, have longevity. The run-up to the December 2014 ZANU-PF crisis, which became an open contest for the position of the party’s vice presidency, was manipulated very effectively by the eventual winner as he convinced the president’s wife to join his side. Reveling in the limelight, Grace Mugabe articulated a distilled version of her husband’s ideology. At her first public meeting (soon after she received a doctorate from the University of Zimbabwe that took her three months to complete, thus also expressing an element of the intellectualism manqué that is part of Mugabeism), she expressed the racial content of that philosophy along with a nascent critique of one of global capitalism’s hegemonic efforts: “Whites have never liked us. They will not even offer you tea with sugar if you visit their homes so let’s not be fooled when they come here with aid. It’s meant to hoodwink us. Personally I think Western aid stinks” (Sapa-AP 2014). Of course,

such discourse ignores the fact that some of the wealthiest white Zimbabweans support ZANU-PF unapologetically.

It was not long, however, before the content of Mugabeism as expressed through Dr. Mugabe reached its apogee—or perhaps its base—when its object was attached most directly. Joice Mujuru, the incumbent vice president in the process of being ousted by Emmerson Mnangagwa, was referred to in the following way: “the youths have alerted me about someone who is spearheading factionalism... & I told Baba [President Mugabe] to ‘baby-dump’ that person... if he does not dump the person, we will do it ourselves” (Mushava 2014). About a month later—after telling another crowd that she had cast a spell on the author of *Dinner with Mugabe* (Holland 2008 who therefore committed suicide—Dr. Mugabe prophesized what Joice Mujuru, by then accused of planning to assassinate the president, would do to him if she retained power: once Robert Mugabe dies Mujuru “will... drag me in the streets, with people laughing while my flesh sticks on the tarmac” (Thornycroft 2014).

These few words are the distilled essence of Mugabeism as it approaches fascism (Scarnecchia 2006): a racially inflected and paranoid form of anti-imperialism; mobilizing youth to a mission while simultaneously invoking respect for a father-figure (Baba); condemnation of political competition as conspiratorial “factionalism,” which narrows down the paranoia to the personal—although in Zimbabwe the person condemned is inevitably a puppet of the imperialists so embodies the fear of the global and the cosmopolitan; and a touch of the supernatural. Whether Grace Mugabe was a puppet of the Mnangagwa faction or was able to pull their strings is an open question but not important to this essay’s task: his discourse has moved across generations (the president’s second wife is over 40 years his junior).

This discourse has intensified since Thabo Mbeki, then president of South Africa, noted as it was peering over the precipice in 2001 that the Zimbabwean “revolutionary party” had been moving further and further away from its democratic pretences ever since 1980. As Mbeki put it, by 1997, ZANU-PF had “abandoned the construction of a genuine popular democracy.” As democracy diminished (Moore and Raftopoulos 2012), the war veterans with their “lumpen proletariat... declassed” elements prone to the use of force to come to the fore. The party was then turned into an “opponent of the democratic institutions of governance” that it had once (ostensibly) promoted (Mbeki 2001: 384–385; Moore 2010, 2012).

The alliance with the “war vets”—and it must be added, an even more voracious class of crony capitalists—has turned “Mugabeism” and its cypher far, far away from the form they took when its progenitor was talking to Solarz and the BBC or even to the Zimbabwe Solidarity Front. It will take a force stronger than either of these, at a moment that is yet to occur (the Movement for Democratic Change has proved not up to the task yet, and with a working class decimated in the past 15 years, the force behind the MDC has weakened—Moore 2014a, b; Chagonda 2012), to move Mugabeism to another level or to eliminate it altogether.

#### NOTES

Thanks to Peter Alexander and Ian Phimister for helpful comments and to Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni for his patience.

1. In Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2009: 304–317) discussion of the National Democratic Revolution in Zimbabwe, he makes extensive use of Mbeki's 2001 fascinating "discussion document," in which he created a Marxian mode of neoliberalism as he attempted to advise Zimbabwe's "revolutionary party" out of its crisis, but the reference does not appear in the bibliography. For more details, see Moore (2010, 2012).
2. According to the ever-informative Wikipedia (2013) Harpal Brar, the leader of the Zimbabwe Solidarity Front in 1976, is now the eternal president of the Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

## Mugabe on Land, Indigenization, and Development

*Alois S. Mlambo*

### INTRODUCTION

President Robert Gabriel Mugabe's over three-decade tenure as president of Zimbabwe has been characterized by controversy, more recently over his government's growing economic nationalism, or what some commentators have called its "nativism," that resulted in contentious policies such as the fast-track land reform and the black empowerment or indigenization campaign. Not surprisingly, his policies have stimulated animated debate between his supporters who hail the measures as long overdue in order to correct the inequities of the past and to consolidate Zimbabwe's political independence and some commentators, particularly in the West, who dismiss these policies as irrational and motivated merely by political expediency and the racist and nativist tendencies of one man, namely, Robert Mugabe.

More nuanced analyses have located the land reform and indigenization programs within the intellectual tradition of radical African nationalism whose roots go all the way back to Marcus Garvey and his "Africa for the Africans" philosophy. Challenging the view of indigenization in Zimbabwe and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) in South Africa as evidence of a "new nationalism," Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009a: 61–78) has located the postapartheid and postcolonial nativist economic tendencies in "deep-rooted antinomies of black liberation thought and partly current ideological conundrums linked to the limits of both the African national project and global liberal democracy."

James Muzondidya has shown how the Zimbabwean government's recent policies on land and resource ownership have been both violent and divisive and accompanied by a virulent nationalism based on a very narrow definition of indigeniety in which only those identified as the children of the soil (*vana vevhu*) are regarded as the true Zimbabweans. Whites, coloreds, and descendants of immigrant workers from Malawi and other neighboring countries are regarded as nonindigenes and, therefore, not entitled to enjoy the country's land and other resources (Muzondidya 2007).

In his turn, Raftopoulos (1996a) has linked the land and indigenization programs to the legacy of colonialism of unequal access to economic opportunities and the postcolonial state's reluctance, indeed inability, to fully address the race question and its continued influence in the postcolonial political economy. None of the existing studies, however, have examined the extent to which Mugabe's policies are, in fact, consistent with postcolonial African economic nationalism since the 1960s and not a new initiative heralding a new type of nationalism.

Part of the challenge facing scholars of Mugabe's policies is how to locate the ethos that informs them in the world of ideas and practice in recent history. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009b: 1139–1158) characterizes Mugabeism as “a multifaceted phenomenon requiring a multi-pronged approach to decipher its various meanings.” Thus, Mugabeism seems to be everything and nothing in particular; it does not have its own distinct character but seems to be an amalgam of various ideas and practices.

This chapter suggests that the difficulty in defining Mugabeism could be the result of scholars looking for a nonexistent ideological coherence in what may, in fact, be historically shaped and emotionally driven actions of a generation of nationalists that lived through a traumatic colonial period whose pain and scars they seek to assuage by hitting back at everything they regard as the source of their previous suffering. They are also individuals who grew up at a particular stage of anticolonial struggle that was crafted in a nativist framework in which the goal was to drive the white foreign intruders out of the continent in order for the *indigenous*<sup>1</sup> people to rule themselves. Thus, Mugabeism is, indeed, “a creature of colonialism,” which is reproducing the “ethnic and racial features . . . of its progenitor” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009b: 1139–1158).

In addition, Mugabeism can also be traced back to the dominant intellectual/ideological climate that shaped early African policy debates in the early postcolonial period during which Mugabe's generation first became active in nationalist politics. They grew up on a diet of Kwame Nkrumah's neocolonialism theory, pan-Africanism, and Third World radicalism, and of dependency or underdevelopment theory. Mugabe, of course, was exposed to “Nkrumahism during his time in Ghana, apart from his exposure to the Marxist-Leninist teaching later in his career” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009b: 1139–1158). They also participated in debates surrounding the developing world's demand for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the 1970s. Equally, Zimbabwean nationalists of that generation would have been avid supporters of pan-Africanism, especially given the central role that the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) played in their liberation struggle. These various intellectual strands helped shape the thinking of Zimbabwe's postcolonial leadership and account for the eclectic nature of Mugabeism.

Consequently, it can be argued that what is being labeled as Mugabeism is not, in reality, a uniquely Zimbabwean innovative approach to address postcolonial challenges, but merely a continuation of the African nationalism of the 1950s and 1960s and the economic nationalist ideology that accompanied it, which saw many African countries nationalizing and indigenizing their economies as an assertion of independence and as part of the struggle against neocolonialism. Mugabe's nativism is also consistent with early African nationalism, which defined Africans, exclusively, on the basis of their color or their nonwhiteness of being. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009a: 61–78) has argued, “Nativism was embedded deeply in African

nationalism and decolonization discourses to the extent that it cannot be understood outside of an interrogation of the African national project.”

Given this, the present study seeks to situate recent controversial policies in Zimbabwe in the historical nationalist strategies of early independent Africa, which focused on nationalization, indigenization, and Africanization and took measures to economically disempower “foreigners,” in favor of the “indigenes,” however defined. It will argue that indigenization and land reform, two key pillars of Mugabeism, are not uniquely Mugabean and that what is distinct is how the country’s historical specificities have informed the country’s policies, given where its leaders came from as members of the nationalist struggle. It will also suggest that both policies have hurt Zimbabwe’s prospects for development.

## NATIVIST ECONOMIC NATIONALISM AND ZIMBABWE’S LAND AND INDIGENIZATION POLICY

Zimbabwe’s policies have, sometimes, been dismissed as senseless and motivated by little more than one man’s racism and megalomania, on one hand, or hailed as a truly patriotic and Africanist stance that is blazing a new trail in what one Mugabe admirer referred to as a new African Democratic Socialism, on the other (Chengu 2014). Both views seem to ignore several precedents of postcolonial nativist economic nationalism in countries that obtained their independence in the 1960s and the fact that economic nationalism has been an integral factor of postcolonial African economic policy. Nationalization, indigenization, and Africanization policies then reflected African leaders’ desire to take control of their countries’ economies in order to consolidate their political freedom. The following section discusses some relevant precedents to Zimbabwe’s recent manifestations of nativist economic nationalism.

### ECONOMIC NATIONALISM: SOME RECENT PRECEDENTS

Contrary to the view that economic nationalism is outmoded in the now globalized world, evidence shows that there is, in fact, a strong resurgence of economic nationalism in the world today. In its most recent manifestation, economic nationalism has taken the form of resource nationalism in which governments demand greater participation in the exploitation of their mineral wealth. Governments have used different strategies, “including nationalization, higher mining-specific taxes, compulsory local ownership, export control on unrefined ores and, more recently, mandatory local beneficiation requirements” (Will et al. 2013). While African resource-rich countries are leading the way in increasing royalty and tax demands on foreign-owned extractive industries (Nkwazi and Philip 2013), resource nationalism is not exclusive to Africa, as resource-rich developed countries, notably the United States, Australia, and Canada, “have increasingly adopted resource nationalist policies that include the blocking of Chinese investments and the tightening of fiscal regimes in the extractive sectors (Will 9 May 2013).

It is being argued here that underpinning the land seizures and the indigenization drive in Zimbabwe is a form of resource economic nationalism that seeks the restoration of the ownership and control of the economy to the “indigenous” people after colonial rule, which, it is argued, had robbed them of their resources.



Therefore, Mugabe's nativist economic nationalism is not unique to Zimbabwe; nor is it a new phenomenon. As early as 1976, Rood (427–447) was observing that

in the last decade the states of black Africa have taken over a score of large industries owned by multi-national corporations and thousands of small enterprises owned by non-African residents. The methods of takeover, the targets, and the stated justifications vary from country to country, and yet there is a pattern throughout it all. *Africans want control of their own house.* (Italics added)

As noted, African economic nationalism in the early postcolonial period manifested itself in three different forms, namely, nationalization, indigenization, and Africanization. While each of the three forms was distinct in its application, they were all part of the same drive to ensure local or indigenous control of the economy. Nationalization involved the state taking over foreign-owned business enterprises on behalf of the people, while under indigenization, the state merely facilitated a citizens' takeover by limiting participation in particular industries or economic activities to citizens in order to force foreign owners to sell, or by insisting that a given percentage of the company shares should be held by citizens. Meanwhile, Africanization sought to transfer jobs from foreigners to citizens by, for instance, requiring industries or institutions to "limit the employment of foreigners to a designated number" (Rood 1976: 429–430). Examples of Africanization are "Nigerianization" in Nigeria, "Zambianization" in the 1960s (Daniel 1979) and Zimbabwe's own Africanization drive in the early 1980s, following a presidential directive instructing public institutions to Africanize.

According to a 1974 United Nations report on nationalizations in the world to that date, out of the 875 cases of nationalization in 62 countries between 1960 and 1974, the majority were in black Africa and affected businesses in "mining, agriculture, manufacturing, trade, public utilities, banking and insurance" sectors (Rood 1976: 431). Some countries used both nationalization and indigenization approaches, while others focused only on nationalization. Nationalization was also employed in Bolivia and Mexico in 1937 and 1938, respectively, when the two countries nationalized the oil industry. Some of the largest expropriations were those of "most Cuban economic sectors after the 1959 revolution, the properties of Standard Oil Company (New Jersey) in Peru in 1968, and the copper mines in Chile in 1972 (Bucheli and Decker n.d.).

Two countries that employed the indigenization strategy extensively were Nigeria and Uganda. Soon after independence, the Nigerian government passed the first legislation leading toward an indigenization policy. With its 1962 Immigration Law, Nigeria excluded foreign immigrants who would participate "in a trade or calling, which is already adequately served by Nigerians." In 1968, the government established the Expatriate Quota Allocation Board to ensure "greater indigenous participation in the control, development and management of certain resources of the society." The most explicit indigenization legislation was the 1972 Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree, which sought, among other things, to "create an economically independent country with increased opportunities for indigenous Nigerian businessmen," in the words of Nigerian leader Yakubu Gowon, as a way of "consolidating our political independence" (Ogbuagu 1983: 250).

The 1972 decree created two categories of business activities known as Schedule 1 and 2. The first category, containing 22 selected enterprises, included businesses

that were “exclusively reserved for Nigerians,” while the second contained businesses “from which foreigners were barred under certain conditions, such as their sizes of operation and the levels of indigenous share participation.” Schedule 2 listed 33 businesses and industrial sectors in which foreigners could not be owners or part owners. Enterprises in this schedule that were exempted were still required to ensure that 40 percent of their total shares were held by Nigerians. Under the 1977 Indigenization Decree, Nigerian ownership in Schedule 2 category was raised to 60 percent. The main objective was to promote “greater participation by Nigerian nationals in the ownership, management, and control of the productive enterprises in the country” (Ogbuagu 1983: 241–266).

The policy targeted European, mainly British, businessmen and also Lebanese, Indian, and Greek middlemen in the distributive and export trade because Nigerian political leaders regarded the continued domination of the economy, particularly by Europeans, over a decade into independence as clear evidence of neocolonialism, and they were determined to correct the situation. Thus, Nigerianization of the economy was an urgent priority as a prerequisite to “economic decolonization and emancipation” (Ogbuagu 1983: 246).

A more dramatic and ruthless version of indigenization occurred in Uganda where, in August 1972, the Ugandan president Idi Amin expelled Indians and Pakistanis from the country and allocated their businesses to locals (Rood 1976: 437–438). Fueling this Indophobic decision was the belief that the Asians were hoarding wealth and goods and profiteering at the expense of the African majority. There was, of course, more to it than this, as resentment against this group had a long history in Uganda. Some of the Asians who had been brought in by the British to work on the construction of the Uganda Railway during the colonial period had stayed on after the completion of their contracts and had successfully carved an economic niche for themselves in the country’s commercial and financial sectors. Their success was partly the result of the colonial government’s favorable policies, which allowed Asians to venture into economic activities that were closed to the Africans. They also had easier access to bank finance than Africans and were better treated than the latter according to an unwritten social order in the colonial administration that placed Europeans as first-class, Asians as second-class, and Africans as third-class citizens (*New African* September 25, 2012). Consequently, Asians “dominated the commercial sector and reaped the resentment of Africans,” leading to the expulsion, which, for Amin, was the first phase of “the war of economic liberation” (Jamal 1976: 602–616).

Justifying his decision, Amin said: “We are determined to make the ordinary Ugandan master of his own destiny, and above all to see that he enjoys the wealth of his country. Our deliberate policy is to transfer the economic control of Uganda into the hands of Ugandans, for the first time in our country’s history” (Jørgensen 1981: 288–290). Amin’s expulsion order also targeted other Africans then living in Uganda, including Kenyans, Tanzanians, Rwandans, Burundians, Zaireois, and Sudanese (Gould 1995: 185).

Other less-extreme examples of countries that introduced policies to indigenize their economies are Zaire (the Democratic Republic of the Congo), where a 1973 indigenization law targeted Portuguese, Greek, and Belgian retailers and wholesalers, and Kenya, where denying operating licenses to aliens effectively indigenized the country’s commerce and certain industries. A more recent example of indigenization is the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy of postapartheid

South Africa, where the government has implemented policies that are designed to correct the economic imbalances of the apartheid past (Andreasson 2010; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009a: 61–78). Similar nativist economic nationalism debates are also taking place in Tanzania, where demands to empower the *wazawa* (“Indigenous nationals” in Swahili) have increased since the 1990s. Targeted by these demands are Asian Tanzanians who are seen as unfairly economically privileged ([www.tzafairs.org/2003/09indigenisation-uzawa](http://www.tzafairs.org/2003/09indigenisation-uzawa)).

Other recent examples include the use of state companies in several Francophone African countries that are members of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA)<sup>2</sup> to increase local participation in their mining sectors by securing shareholding of up to 35 percent in foreign-owned mining companies operating in their territories. Meanwhile, through its Citizen Entrepreneurship Development Agency and other initiatives, the government of Botswana has vigorously sought to promote “citizen businesses and entrepreneurial skills.” Finally, in Namibia, certain manufacturing activities are restricted to “citizens and citizen-owned companies” under the New Equitable Economic Empowerment Framework (NEEEF), which is strongly supported by the government (Thouvenot 2013).

As shown, Mugabe’s economic nationalism has several precedents and contemporary examples on the African continent. In all cases, the justification for dispossessing particular racial groups was always the need to ensure that the indigenous people recovered full control of their economy, which had been taken away from them by foreigners during colonialism, with the government leaders projecting themselves “as champions of mass justice” (Mamdani 2008). As shown here, equally in Zimbabwe’s case, colonial racial inequalities contributed to the peculiarities of Mugabeism in the postcolonial period as evidenced in the recent land reform.

### THE THIRD CHIMURENGA (*JAMBANJA*)

From the year 2000, Zimbabwe witnessed a sustained violent and chaotic government-supported land invasion campaign, known locally as *Jambanja* (mayhem), that saw most white farmers in Zimbabwe driven off the land by some liberation war veterans and other government supporters in the name of recovering the land that had been “stolen” by the colonial settlers. Known officially as the “Third Chimurenga,” the land invasion campaign totally transformed the pattern of land ownership in the country, as the hitherto dominant commercial white farmers were driven from the countryside. Hailed as the third stage of the anticolonial revolution, coming in the wake of the First Chimurenga war of resistance in the 1890s and the Second Chimurenga (the armed struggle of the 1960s and 1970s), which culminated in the country’s independence, the land invasions were hailed as, presumably, the final stage of the independence struggle, now focusing on economic emancipation. The rationale was very consistent with Nkrumahism and the doctrine of neocolonialism, which argued that political freedom without economic freedom was meaningless.

In tandem with the farm invasions, the government introduced the fast-track land reform program in July 2000, declaring its intention to acquire no less than 3,000 white-owned commercial farms for redistribution. The number of listed farms grew until 6,481 farms had been listed for acquisition by January 2002,

while up to 2,000 farms had been invaded. As the white farmers fled the countryside, thousands of farm workers lost both their jobs and their homes, as they were also driven off the land and accused of supporting white farmers and the recently established Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) political opposition party. By 2013, it was estimated that 276,620 households had been resettled on former white-owned farms.

Not surprisingly, the violent land reform program came under intense criticism, especially from Western powers, the country's opposition parties, and some scholars, as unlawful land grabbing characterized by gross human rights violations and wanton disregard for private property rights (Blair 2002; Norman 2004; Meredith 2002). Government supporters hailed the land takeover as a long overdue corrective measure to redress past inequities, especially with regard to the land question. This is because what came to be known as Zimbabwe's land question dates from the years of colonial occupation in 1890s, when the incoming white settlers dispossessed the indigenous Africans of their land without compensation (Alexander 2006; Mlambo 2005; Moyana 1984; Moyo 1995; Palmer 1977). Thereafter, successive colonial governments expropriated more African land, while confining the majority African population in overcrowded and unproductive areas designated as African reserves. In 1930, the colonial government passed the Land Apportionment Act (LAA), which divided the country's land area along racial lines. This act entrenched racial segregation in the country and severely damaged the country's race relations and stirred African resentment of whites.

Underlining the centrality of the land question in the African nationalists' anti-colonial struggle, Herbert Chitepo, chairman of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) liberation movement, stated:

I could go into the whole theories of discrimination in legislation, in residency, in economic opportunities, in education. I could go into that, but I will restrict myself to the question of land because I think this is very basic. To us the essence of exploitation, the essence of white domination, is domination over land. That is the real issue. (Cited in [www.zimembassy.se/documents/Land.pdf](http://www.zimembassy.se/documents/Land.pdf))

The Africans were particularly incensed at the fact that, while they struggled to survive in crowded reserves, most of the white-owned land was unused and held merely for speculative purposes.

The expropriation of African land continued after World War II when an influx of white immigrants, mostly from Britain, entered the country and were allocated land in what had, hitherto, remained as pockets of African settlement in the fertile Highveld in the center of the country. These communities were unceremoniously dumped in the malaria and tse-tse-fly-infested territory of Gokwe and the Zambezi Valley in the north of the country (Nyambara 2001). Meanwhile, the passage of yet other discriminatory laws, such as the African Land Husbandry Act in 1951 and the Land Tenure Act of 1969, further infuriated the African population and gave potent ammunition to African nationalists in their campaigns to mobilize the population in the anticolonial struggle. Clearly, unequal land ownership was a major African grievance against European colonial rule. Not surprisingly, therefore, the redress of colonial inequities, particularly in land ownership, was at the top of the list of the African people's expectations at independence in 1980.

## FROM LANCASTER HOUSE TO JAMBANJA

To the disappointment of the African majority, there was no radical land reform following independence in 1980. The new government could not dispossess whites of land because its hands were tied by the Lancaster House Agreement, which ushered in the country's independence. In order to protect the country's white minority from land expropriation, the British government had built into the agreement a number of so-called Sunset Clauses, one of which related to the land question. The document provided that the Zimbabwean government could only acquire land on the basis of "willing seller, willing buyer" and on payment of compensation in hard currency. This severely limited the government's room for maneuver, as most white farmers were not willing to sell the fertile land that the government wanted to buy or at prices that the government could afford (Mlambo 2010: 39–69). Such land as the government was able to acquire was often in marginal areas and in scattered lots, making it difficult to resettle large numbers of people. As a result, government was able to settle only 52,000 households on 2.7 million hectares of land by 1989 (Palmer 1990: 163–181). The continued resistance of commercial farmers to land reform, evident in the numerous court challenges of government land designations, meant that, in spite of new legislation like the 1992 Land Acquisition Act and other efforts, the government had succeeded in resettling a mere 71,000 families altogether by 1996 (163–181).

Other factors also contributed to the slow progress of land reform after independence. One key factor was the fact that, despite promises by Britain and the United States at the Lancaster House Conference that they would provide the independence government with generous funding to enable it to acquire land from white farmers for redistribution to the land-hungry African majority, funds made available fell far short of what the liberation movements had been led to expect. Moreover, the government itself was not very committed to a rapid and radical land reform program, at least in the first decade of independence. This was partly because of the policy of reconciliation that it had adopted in 1980, which it could not be seen to violate by economically dispossessing the white population. Government was also careful not to kill the proverbial goose that laid golden eggs, given the centrality of agriculture to the country's economic well-being at the time.

Evidence of the government's reluctance to disturb the farmers was its swiftness in driving peasants, "squatters" in the terminology of the time, off white farms where they had invaded out of impatience at the government's inability to redistribute land meaningfully. Because of these considerations, Mugabe often made noises about the need to redress the land ownership inequalities of the past in the run-up to the country's periodic general elections, only to do little about the issue once the elections were over. By the end of the second independence decade, therefore, the century-old land problem remained unresolved. A handful of white farmers held on to the majority of fertile and productive land, while the African majority remained crowded in the communal lands. As in the colonial period, much of the land in white hands remained uncultivated, but was increasingly used for game tourism.

The glaring contradiction at the turn of the twenty-first century, therefore, was that the African majority remained crowded in the increasingly barren communal areas (former African reserves), two decades after a bitter liberation war that had been fought over colonial land alienation, among other issues, while those who had held land before independence continued to do so, the liberation war

notwithstanding. This provided potential ammunition for ZANU-PF to use to mobilize the population to rally behind it should the need ever arise in the face of a strong opposition political movement, as was the case in 2000.

### TOWARD ZIMBABWE'S INDIGENIZATION DRIVE

The second arm of Mugabe's economic nationalism is indigenization policy, which became prominent after 2000 but whose roots also lie in the colonial period and which had slowly gained momentum since the 1990s. As with land ownership, the colonial economy had been highly and unfairly skewed in favor of the white settler community and at the expense of the African majority. Many impediments were put in the path of African entrepreneurs, which prevented them from becoming major economic players in the country. First, the exclusion of Africans from land ownership in the so-called white areas, which included the hubs of business activities, namely, towns and cities, meant that Africans could not become owners of serious manufacturing businesses or large-scale retail businesses or even become owners of mines. They could only participate in these sectors as workers.

Second, banks and other finance institutions were reluctant to lend money to African entrepreneurs because they were considered a high risk, especially because they did not have any collateral. For these and other reasons, Africans were either confined to small-scale retail businesses such as shops, grinding mills, tuck shops, bars, eating houses in the African townships and in the Reserves or they became transport operators, mostly as bus owners. For these reasons, at independence in 1980, the economy was largely in the hands of international companies and local white entrepreneurs, often working together or in close cooperation. Africans were completely marginalized in the economy.

Interestingly, while Lancaster House negotiations tackled the land issue, it said nothing about other areas of economic disparity between the races and allowed the whites to remain economically privileged (Raftopoulos 2000: 713–745). Little changed in the first independence decade, although a few blacks, especially those with political contacts with the new ruling elite, were co-opted by white-owned international and local companies as middlemen, while more found employment in the growing and Africanized Civil Service. Thus, many years into independence, “the economic structures that produced and sustained a white elite...[were], in their essentials, still prevalent” (713–745). As with the land issue, in the first independence decade, the Mugabe government did not push the white population too hard to open spaces for black entrepreneurs. Explaining this seemingly contradictory approach for a government emerging out of a liberation war that was designed to end colonial inequalities, Raftopoulos identifies three key factors. First was the inhibiting role of the policy of reconciliation that the government adopted in 1980, which essentially protected the white-dominated private sector, since confronting it would have been seen as undermining its own official policy. Second, the government was wary of allowing the development of a strong and independent African business class over which it would have little or no control. Last, the ruling elite was preoccupied with its own accumulation to worry too much about the rest (713–745).

Growing increasingly frustrated by the continuation of the precolonial economic patterns of white domination, black business people, who aspired to be major players in the country's economy but could not get their foot in the door

because of inherited structural constraints from the colonial era, began to mobilize and to demand that government take measures to empower the indigenous business people. Thus, in December 1990, the Indigenous Business Development Centre (IBDC) was born. Its national membership of some 4,000 comprised members of the black middle class. In 1994 came two other black business pressure groups, namely, the Affirmative Action Group (AAG) and the Indigenous Business Women's Organisation (IBWO).

In the light of the Zimbabwean government's later land reform and indigenization policies, it is telling that members of the IBDC were, already in the 1990s, demanding affirmative action with respect to the "allocation of state resources," revision of laws to empower African business people, as well as "directives to financial institutions to finance black businesses; access to finance at well below market interest rates; preferential allocation of government contracts and markets to blacks; land redistribution designed to build a strong black commercial class in the agrarian sector; and anti-trust legislation to control the monopoly position of white capital" (Raftopoulos 1996b: 12). This affirmative action campaign was the prelude to the call for indigenization that came at the turn of the new millennium. Then, in September 1996, CNN recorded a rather ominous threat by Philip Chiyangwa, leader of the AAG, decrying the fact that repeated pleas to the white population for fairness in economic participation had fallen on deaf ears and warning that "someday, somehow, Zimbabweans must confront their yawning disparities. If you cannot have an answer when you go knocking on the door, you smash it down and look what's [*sic*] inside. And that's what's [*sic*] going to happen" (CNN September 8, 1996). In response to mounting pressure, government established "the National Investment Trust (NIT) in 1996 in order to warehouse shares for indigenous Zimbabweans when parastatals [public enterprises] were privatized" in line with the economic orthodoxy of the Washington consensus. It also created the Small Enterprise Development Corporation (SEDCO), the Agriculture and Rural Development Authority (ARDA), and the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation (ZMDC) as agencies whose task was to promote small- and medium-scale business, farmers and miners, respectively (Chowa and Mukuvere n.d.). While these and other measures placated the black business lobby to a certain extent, they did not stem the growing demand for greater African involvement in the country's economy. Meanwhile, growing political opposition in the country at the turn of the new century was to produce a backlash against whites and to radicalize black business people's demands to the point of demanding the full indigenization of economy.

### POLITICAL CONTESTATION AS CATALYST

The timing of both the land reform program and indigenization has to be understood in the context of the political contestation that took place between the newly formed Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and the ruling ZANU-PF party in early 2000. The two measures seem to have been ad hoc reactions by a beleaguered government desperate to salvage its legitimacy and to regain popularity at a time when the political carpet was being pulled from under its feet, as the MDC appeared to gain increasing popularity. Land invasions were retribution against the whites for their support of the MDC, while indigenization was a populist measure introduced in the run-up to the 2008 general elections and designed to win votes

for ZANU-PF. In both cases, the question of feasibility and economic viability do not seem to have been considered or factored in the government decision to dispossess whites of land or requiring them to hand over 51 percent share control to indigenous Zimbabweans.

This reading is in line with Bucheli and Decker's (n.d.) argument that there is a close relationship between economic conditions and political survival in the manifestation of economic nationalism in developing countries. They write: "The theory of political survival posits that the rationale behind economic policies rulers or ruling elites develop is to ensure the loyalty of those groups that guarantee said ruler or ruling party's political survival. This means, a ruler might support an economic policy that does not favour the economy, but ensures his/her political survival." Similarly, Zimbabwe's economic nationalist policies of radical land reform and indigenization were clearly driven by the need for ZANU-PF's political survival, which it sought to safeguard through radical and populist measures. The political context is discussed briefly here.

Because of rapidly deteriorating economic conditions in the country and growing political intolerance, civic organizations, led by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), came together to establish the MDC in 1999. The country's economy had progressively deteriorated in the 1990s due to a number of factors, including the deleterious effects of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), an IMF-World Bank backed austerity program that Zimbabwe had implemented from 1990 to 1995, the unilateral decisions by Mugabe to award Zimbabwe's war veterans large financial compensation packages for their role in the liberation struggle and to send the army into the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 1997 and 1998, respectively. Because these actions had not been budgeted for, the impact on the national fiscus was disastrous. By the end of the second independence decade, therefore, the ruling ZANU-PF government was facing its most serious political opposition since independence in 1980.

The first clash between the MDC and the government occurred in February 2000 over a referendum on a government-sponsored constitution proposal. At its formation, the opposition movement had called for a people-driven constitution revision process to replace the Lancaster House Constitution of 1979, which had been amended numerous times by the ruling party. Faced with mounting demands for a new constitution, the government hijacked the idea and proposed a new constitution that included provisions to increase the powers of the president and to allow government to confiscate white-owned land without compensation. The country overwhelmingly rejected the proposed constitution. Then, in the general elections of the same year, the new party surprised government by winning 57 of the 120 contested seats, taking most urban centers.

Shocked and angry at this development, government resolved to punish not only the MDC and its supporters but also the white farmers who it regarded as the real brains behind the MDC. In a bid to claw back some of the lost political ground and in a desperate effort to remain political dominant in the country, ZANU used the race card to exploit the long-standing, unresolved, and highly emotive land question. With the slogan "Land is the economy and the economy is the land" and a campaign that linked the MDC's opposition politics to the historical economic dominance of the whites as exploiters, ZANU-PF engineered an assault on both the MDC party and its adherents and the white farmers. Government-sanctioned farm invasions began soon after the referendum. White farmers and farm workers,



both regarded as MDC supporters, were subjected to violence by ZANU-PF youth gangs.

Hand in hand with the farm invasions was government's accelerated Land Reform and Resettlement Implementation Plan, otherwise known as the Fast Track land reform program. This hastily drawn and implemented plan sought to get as many black people resettled on land taken from white farmers as quickly as possible both as a populist measure to win back political support and as a demonstration of the extent of the African people's land hunger as a justification for the land reform under way. There was, thus, little government planning, rudimentary pegging, and little or no presettlement infrastructure development. Settlers were often dumped in areas without schools, clinics, clean drinking water, or roads and left to fend for themselves without any agricultural inputs or agriculture extension support. By the end of the decade, government had largely succeeded in indigenizing land, as only a handful of white farmers were still farming by 2010.

### INDIGENIZING THE REST OF THE ECONOMY

In a bid to consolidate its popularity and to win votes in the forthcoming 2008 presidential and general elections, the government took up the decade-old cry for indigenizing the economy raised by the IBDC, IBWO, and AAG since the 1990s and embarked on an indigenization campaign of its own. It passed the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act 14, of 2007, which was gazetted on March 7, 2008, and signed into law on April 17, 2008 (Government of Zimbabwe 2007). Little happened thereafter until 2010 when the government passed the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment (General) Regulations and the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment (General) Amendment, creating measures "for the further indigenization of the economy; [and]... the economic empowerment of indigenous Zimbabweans." The legislation provided for a 51 percent indigenous shareholding in all businesses with a net asset value of US\$500,000 and above in the long term and ruled that all such companies should have an approved implementation plan. Furthermore, the law enjoined all government departments, statutory bodies, and local authorities to procure, at least, 51 per cent of all goods and services from companies controlled by indigenous Zimbabweans (Government of Zimbabwe 2010).

The legislation also established a National Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Board (NIEEB) to advise the minister in charge of the indigenization process and to manage the National Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Fund, which was also created. The fund was to finance indigenization and empowerment transactions. A Youth Development Fund (YDF) was created to promote the participation of the youth in the economy (Government of Zimbabwe 2010). Last, echoing the indigenization legislation of Nigeria in the 1970s and the exclusion of Asians through licensing restrictions in Kenya in the 1960s, the law reserved certain business lines for indigenous-owned business only. These included: "primary production of food and cash crops, retail and wholesale trade, barber shops, hairdressing and beauty salons, employment agencies, estate agencies, grain milling, bakeries, tobacco grading, packaging and processing, advertising agencies, milk processing, provision of local arts and craft, marketing and distribution" (Chowa and Mukuvere n.d.). Under this law, foreigners, including black Africans from other African countries and the Chinese and other foreigners, were ordered

to shut down their businesses by January 1, 2014. In May 2013, the Zimbabwean Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment published statutory instrument SI 66 ordering all businesses operating in the country to apply for indigenization compliance certificates within six months. More significantly, the law virtually excluded whites from agriculture and, thus, reinforced the recent land reform program.

## CONCLUSION: AN EVALUATION

As argued in the chapter, the economic nationalism that underpins Mugabe's land reform and indigenization is not new; neither is it particularly "Mugabeian." Numerous examples exist of earlier nativist economic nationalism that targeted particular racial or nonindigenous groups on the African continent. What is peculiarly "Mugabeian" is the violent, authoritarian, and arbitrary implementation style and a particularly virulent type of nativism that defines "indigenes" in a very narrow way, to the exclusion of other groups that have equal claim to Zimbabwe. Also peculiar to Mugabeism is the relentless anti-Western, more precisely, anti-British, rhetoric that accuses the West of plotting to recolonize Zimbabwe, hence, Mugabe's constant slogan, "Zimbabwe shall never be a colony again." Racism is clearly a central part of his version of economic nationalism, as the land reform exercise clearly targeted white farmers who were reclassified as foreigners and enemies of Zimbabwe. In Mugabe's words, "The white man is not indigenous to Africa. Africa is for Africans. Zimbabwe is for Zimbabweans."<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, whites are excluded from those who can benefit from indigenization. The indigenization enabling act, the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act (Chapter 14:33), defines an indigenous Zimbabwean as "any person who, before 18th April, 1980 was disadvantaged by unfair discrimination on the grounds of his or her race, and any descendant of such person, and includes any company, association, syndicate or partnership of which indigenous Zimbabweans form the majority of members or hold the controlling interest." As Derek Matyszak (n.d.) points out, given the racist policies of the colonial system until independence, "this definition would exclude almost every white person and include every non-white person."

Matyszak is right about the exclusion of Zimbabwean whites from the definition of "indigenous," but he is wrong about the inclusion of every nonwhite person, for as Muzondidya (2007) has clearly documented, the colored and ethnic minorities are also marginalized in the indigenization narrative, despite the fact that they were also disadvantaged under colonial rule.

The marginalization of groups other than the majority Shona-speaking people in Zimbabwe's indigenization program is very much part of the ongoing trend by ZANU-PF to redefine indigeneity in self-serving ways that define certain groups of Zimbabweans as not being true Zimbabweans. This parochial approach to indigeneity is very problematic, given the fact that Zimbabwe, like all African countries created out of colonialism, are essentially creations of the Western colonial imagination. Moreover, claims of Shona parochialists notwithstanding, Zimbabwe is actually a nation of immigrants, including the Shona-speaking groups themselves, as well as people of Nguni stock: whites, and migrant laborers from neighboring countries who arrived in the early twentieth century (Mlambo 2013). Attempts by postcolonial African elites to define who is truly indigenous and who is not are, thus, bound to run into complex problems, especially given the fluidity of

movement in the precolonial period when populations moved about in a series of migrations, as they looked for new opportunities (Aminzade 2014: 237).

Like other previous attempts to nationalize and/or indigenize the economy in postcolonial Africa, despite the rhetoric of empowerment of the majority, Zimbabwean policies have benefited only a small segment of the population, with members of the ruling elite getting a huge share of the redistributed land and only the already powerful and wealthy standing any chance of raising the required investment funds to acquire a 51 percent share ownership in existing businesses. Indeed, some poor Zimbabweans who were used as shock troops to dislodge whites from their farms found themselves evicted from the lands they had occupied in order to make way for senior government officials who wanted the occupied land for themselves.

As for the economic impact of the land reform exercise and indigenization, the jury is still out on what the long-term impact of the two policies will be. While some scholars have argued that the land reform program has had positive effects on the people who received redistributed land (Scoones et al. 2010), it is more than evident that the land reform exercise ruined the country's thriving agricultural industry and turned what was, until then, the breadbasket of southern Africa into a country unable to feed its own population and dependent on food aid. The Zimbabwean experience is consistent with previous negative experiences of African countries that implemented hasty economic nationalization policies, but were later forced by deteriorating economic circumstances to reverse their earlier policies. A good example is Zambia and its nationalization of copper mines soon after independence and the reversal of its forced turn toward privations policies in the 1980s (Limpitlaw 2011; Cunningham 1985).

Among other factors, nationalization and indigenization policies have proved to be problematic, partly because they have often been hastily implemented without prior careful planning and thorough analysis of the policy implications and have tended to scare off foreign investment, without necessarily empowering the poor majority of the implementing nations. If anything, they have left the majority of the population worse off, while widening the gap between the rich and the poor inherited from colonialism (Chawawa 2014).

Indeed, in Zimbabwe, since the announcement of the indigenization program, foreign investment has dried up, factories have been shutting down and relocating to neighboring countries and hundreds of jobs have vanished overnight. The damage to investor confidence that the two policies have inflicted have been made worse by the apparent confusion within government over what indigenization really means and how to implement it. For instance, following his recent appointment as vice president of Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa sought to allay the concerns of foreign investors by announcing that the Zimbabwean government would announce new policies in 2015 meant to relax the terms of the Indigenisation Act, which appeared to have scared off foreign investment. Yet, exactly three days later, Christopher Mushowe the new minister of youth, indigenization and economic empowerment, was belligerently stating that "the investors should not look at us as beggars, they should not expect us to give in to their demands." He continued:

In fact, they (foreigners) are very lucky that they got 49%; in fact 49% is the maximum and 51% is the minimum so it's not cast in stone, it can be 1% to foreigners and the 51% for locals can be 99% because it's a minimum... If we decide

as a country that we must give foreigners 60% and we take 40%, it's our decision and if we decide the foreigner must take 20% and we take 80%, it's our decision... (*NewZimbabwe*, December 12, 2014; *Zimbabwe Independent*, December 24, 2014)

Given such policy confusion and uncertainties about investment guidelines and the security of private property and investments, it is highly unlikely that Zimbabwe will secure the foreign investment it needs to repair its severely damaged economy. Undoubtedly, the negative economic impact of Mugabeism on national welfare and development will be felt in the country for a long time to come. In this respect, Mugabeism has been a disaster for Zimbabwe.

#### NOTES

1. The term "indigenous" was never defined and was used loosely to denote black people of African descent. In the Zimbabwean case, the definition has been further narrowed down to distinguish which black people belong and which do not.
2. The West African Economic and Monetary Union (Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine, UEMOA) is a regional organization of eight West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo).
3. Mugabe in a speech to ZANU-PF Congress, Harare, December 14, 2000.

## Mugabe's Neo-sultanist Rule: Beyond the Veil of Pan-Africanism

*Gorden Moyo*

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out to deconstruct the Afro-radical rhetoric so constructed to portray the president of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe as a pan-Africanist par excellence. This Afro-radical rhetoric was carefully manufactured by a pantheon of “palace intellectuals,” ZANU-PF officials, and state media to present Mugabe’s liberation war credentials; his neopopulist redistributive policies; and his anti-Western antics as the befitting descriptors and signifiers of his pan-Africanist pedigree. Admittedly, the pan-Africanist portrayal of Mugabe has earned him some respect among a legion of admirers in mainland Africa and not least the Diaspora who are genuinely searching for champions and bulwarks against the global epistemic designs. To this group, Mugabe stands out as an exemplar and a veritable paragon of pan-African struggles.

However, this chapter argues that beyond the veil of pan-Africanism lurks the ugly gremlins of Mugabe’s neo-sultanistic rule, which can hardly qualify him as a true pan-Africanist in the same league as W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Frantz Fanon, Aime Cesaire, Walter Rodney, Cheikh Anta Diop, Leopold Senghor, Julius Nyerere, and Nelson Mandela, among others. Notably, the majority of Zimbabweans have endured Mugabe’s versions of neo-sultanism and authoritarian populism for the past three and a half decades. This chapter concludes on the basis of evidence adduced from extant literature that Mugabe’s neo-Sultanism and authoritarian populism not only undermine the normative values of twenty-first-century pan-Africanism but also impinge on the efforts toward a true “decolonial turn” in Zimbabwe.

This chapter begins with a disclaimer. It is not a biographical study of the president of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe, nor is it about the historiography of pan-Africanist intellectual and political movements. Yet, pan-Africanism is its textual and contextual frame and Robert Mugabe is its key trope and problematique. Essentially, this chapter is about the specters of Mugabe’s Afro-radical rhetoric and nativist practices. His presidency over the past three and a half decades was

shrouded in considerable controversy, ambivalence, as well as ambience. As will become clearer in the rest of this chapter, Mugabe and ZANU-PF-led government have deployed Afro-radical rhetoric disguised as pan-Africanism purely for the purposes of regime continuity and juridical sovereignty rather than as a profound decolonial epistemic device. This Afro-radical rhetoric whose publicists are Mugabe himself, ZANU-PF officials, state media, and “palace intellectuals” is viewed in this chapter as a ruse populist rhetoric coughed to perpetuate and sustain Mugabe’s neo-sultanistic (personalistic rule) regime; immortalize and canonize his liberation war credentials in the collective memory of Zimbabweans; and elevate him as the leading champion of pan-Africanism against the Euro-North American “epistemicides” and global imperial designs of power, being, and knowledge. This chapter therefore provides a more nuanced critique of Mugabe’s hagiography and iconoclasm from the perspective of critical decolonial ethics.

Some decolonial intellectuals such as Anibal Quijano, Walter D. Mignolo, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Ramon Grosfoguel, and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni sagaciously observed that decolonial ethics is premised on a humanistic phenomenology of liberation aimed at rescuing the subalterns and those people reduced by the global imperial designs into what Frantz Fanon termed “zones of non-being.” More profoundly, critical decolonial ethics is a paradigm of freedom, love, and peace as contrasted to paradigms of hate and war. Yet, it will be demonstrated in this chapter that Mugabe articulated his radical nationalist and redistributive policies in neopopulist, racist, nativist, xenophobic, and heteronormative terms predicated on the Nietzschean paradigm of hate and war. Put differently, Mugabe’s radical nationalist and redistributive policies were rationalized into a national discourse of Othering and binaries, that is, patriots versus sell-outs, ZANU-PF versus opposition, blacks versus whites, Harare versus London, and so forth (see Raftopoulos 2005; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2006; Muzondidya 2007). Given this sociopolitical context, Mugabe’s endurance as the sole ruler of Zimbabwe for almost 34 years delineates him as an interesting study for critical discourse analysis from the prisms of critical decolonial ethics.

At one level, Mugabe is a survivor of economic dislocations and disarticulations; targeted measures and sanctions; explicit exogenous challenges from the Global North as well as endogenous pressures from the civil society; and electoral defeats by the opposition MDC. This chapter contends that Mugabe deployed a constellation of Gramscian and Foucauldian power strategies of coercion and persuasion; control of state media and propaganda; electoral fraud; and a meta-narrative of the liberation struggle to hold on to state power, influence, wealth, and control of Zimbabwe. With 90 years of age on his sleeves, Mugabe is currently the oldest African president, and with 34 years in power, he is among the longest-serving African rulers. Unsurprisingly, Mugabe is routinely admired, explained, and invoked by his supporters but vilified, ridiculed, cartooned, trivialized, and condemned by his critics. To ZANU-PF, security establishment, and the ruling elite who are the benefactors of Mugabe’s clientique, he is a nationalist doyen, but to the millions of jobless, poor, and homeless Zimbabweans Mugabe is a dictator, a villain, and a liability. Yet to diehard African political activists and pan-Africanists, Mugabe is an Afro-radical whose statue should be erected in all African capitals and etched in the collective memory and psyche of all pan-Africans.

However, to human rights defenders and democracy campaigners, Mugabe is a criminal who is a qualified candidate for the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Ironically, Mugabe was a darling of the West in the first decade of Zimbabwe's independence. Specifically, he was showered with accolades for his postindependence National Reconciliation Policy in 1980 (Kademo 2008: 10) and Zimbabwe was touted as a shining example of an emerging democracy in Africa. In fact, Mugabe's relationship with the Global North was cozy in the 1980s and early 1990s when he was a frequent guest of the global capitalists and was a recipient of no less than a dozen honorary degrees from the Western universities even as his party and army were being accused of genocide in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces back home (Mashingaidze 2006; Hwami 2012). Moreover, in 1994, Queen Elizabeth II invited Mugabe to Buckingham Palace and knighted him with the Order of Bath when his hands were still dripping with the blood of approximately 20,000 innocent civilians slaughtered in the Gukurahundi massacres (Mashingaidze 2006).

At subregional and continental levels, Mugabe is reified as one of the icons of pan-Africanism and as a bulwark against neoliberalism, neocolonialism, neoimperialism, and globalism. Invariably, Mugabe played a leading role in both SADC and the Front Line States; for instance, in November 1982, Zimbabwe was chosen by the OAU to hold one of the nonpermanent seats in the UN Security Council for two years, and in 1986, Mugabe chaired the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit meeting held in Harare which came up with the now famous Harare Declaration (Mashingaidze 2006). In 1988, he received prestigious awards, including the Africa Prize for Leadership for Sustainable End of Hunger (1988) and the Jawaharlal Nehru Peace Award (1989). More recently, All African Students Union (AASU) awarded Mugabe the pan-Africanist President of the Decade Honour (2013). The AASU's membership is drawn from Uganda, Togo, Liberia, Ghana, and Rwanda. Currently, Mugabe is the vice chairman of both SADC and AU and is set to assume the chairmanship of both African institutions in August 2014 and 2015, respectively.

The quintessential question posed by this chapter therefore is whether or not Mugabe's pan-Africanist posturing is a social "reality" or an "appearance." Philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Bertrand Russell have long grappled with the question of "appearance versus reality." Given Mugabe and ZANU-PF's radical nationalist rhetoric characterized by demands for social justice, economic equality, and juridical sovereignty on one hand, and the contending narrative of human rights abuses and state-sponsored violence on the other, we inevitably find ourselves faced with pertinent epistemological questions of appearance and reality. More generally, the nationalist rhetoric in Zimbabwe has portrayed Robert Mugabe as a patriotic, nationalist, and pan-Africanist (Hwami 2010: 66).

Yet the postnationalist narrative portends that the ever-rising dictatorial tactics of governance in Zimbabwe, mainly the ceaseless and grotesque violation of human rights and threats and violence against the opposition and the perceived enemies of the state, present Mugabe's regime as anchored on neo-sultanism and authoritarian populism. This contribution will therefore argue that Mugabe's aggressive foreign policy makes him "appear" a genuine pan-Africanist hero yet the "reality" of his repressive domestic policy make him a villain and a personal ruler. Thus, beyond the veil of radical rhetoric variously presented in literature as "adversarial exclusivist nationalism," "patriotic history," or "Chimurenga monologue" lies deeply embedded Mugabe's neo-sultanism and authoritarian populism, which hardly qualify him to be a true pan-Africanist in the same league with luminaries such as Marcus

Garvey, W. E. B. Du Bois, Amílcar Cabral, Amie Cesaire, Walter Rodney, Frantz Fanon, Cheikh Anta Diop, Julius Nyerere, and Nelson Mandela among others.

### PAN-AFRICANISM IDEALS REVISITED

Mugabe's radical nationalist rhetoric, which is often presented as a pan-Africanist ideology, has almost become a trite in Zimbabwe's public sphere. Some ideologues and leading regime intellectuals such as Paris Yeros, Tafataona Mahoso, Kenneth Manungo, Jonathan Moyo, Claude Mararike, Godfrey Chikowore, Vimbai Chivaura, and Sheunesu Mpepereki have tried to popularize Mugabe's pan-Africanist credentials and hagiographies. Their analyses were based on Mugabe's liberation war credentials, neopopulist articulations of the land reform, antineoliberal rhetoric as well as indigenization and empowerment policies. Moreover, Mugabe's party ZANU-PF has publicly portrayed itself as patriotic, nationalistic, and pan-African and has always turned to neopopulist rhetoric to arouse people's feelings in order to obtain political capital from the genuine grievances of the people (Hwami 2010: 66). Admittedly, this radical nationalist rhetoric has earned Mugabe an iconic leadership status among some unsuspecting audiences in Africa and the Diaspora. One of the most avowed and eloquent apologist of Mugabe and ZANU-PF's brand of Afro-radicalism and hagiographer Tafataona Mahoso wrote that 'Mugabe represented pan-African memory; he was a reclaimer of African space and was the African power of remembering the African legacy and African heritage which slavery, apartheid and imperialism thought they had dismembered for good' (*The Sunday Mail*, March 16, 2003, in Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008: 23). It is in this context that pan-Africanism is revisited in this section.

The intellectual history of pan-African ideology is retraceable to the early pan-African thinkers such as Henry Sylvester Williams, W. E. B du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Walter Rodney, and George Padmore. Rather than doing a full survey of the contributions of each of these thinkers, I will limit myself to brief comments on the major epistemological contributions and thematic developments that have helped to shape the methodological and conceptual framework of contemporary pan-Africanism. To be sure, these African Americans and Caribbean scholars proposed pan-Africanism as a profound antithesis of slavery, racial discrimination, and oppression of the peoples of African extraction domiciled in the Euro-American World and mainland Africa.

Viewed from this perspective, early pan-Africanism was prominent in articulating alternatives to slavery, colonialism, and neocolonialism pillage. Moreover, our readings of the pan-African literature indicate that the early pan-Africanists and those who followed thereafter were not so naive as to think solely in terms of anti-slavery, civil liberties, and freedom from colonial rule for their own sake (Boafo-Arthur 2002). The belief was that political freedom would facilitate rapid economic development that would enhance the living standards of the people. In this regard, the demands for freedom and racial identity were equally demands for emancipation from economic servitude, degradation, and despicable living conditions whether these vices were perpetrated by whites or blacks (Boafo-Arthur 2002).

Pan-Africanism has not been a static concept. Like all social concepts, it is dynamic and has mutated over time maintaining some of its original tenets, shedding others, and gaining new ones. Notably, at the end of World War II pan-Africanism



transmogrified to become a rallying call for the liberation of Africa from colonialism and imperialism. Horace G. Campbell (2005) has succinctly summarized the iterations of pan-Africanism over time. He wrote that:

At the time of enslavement, pan-Africanism meant freedom from slavery, freedom from bondage. And at the time of colonialism and partitioning of Africa and the Pan-African Congress, pan-Africanism meant independence, the struggle against Jim Crow discrimination. At the time of apartheid, pan-Africanism was the struggle for the dignity of the African people. And at the moment, the leaders of Africa articulated a vision of pan-Africanism leading to the unification of the continent of Africa. But, that vision of the leaders of Africa was different from the vision of the people. So, within pan-Africanism today, we have accomplished one major task of the 20th Century, that is, the task of ending apartheid, the task of having African Unity. But, that was pan-Africanism from above, the pan-Africanism of the states. (9)

Campbell's argument indicates that pan-Africanism was essentially about a universal expression of black pride and achievement; a return to Africa by the people of African descent living in the Diaspora; a harbinger of liberation; and the political unification of the continent (Tondi in Maimela 2013: 35). The most fierce and fervent champions of liberation pan-Africanist ideology included among others Nkwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Amílcar Cabral, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Leopold Senghor, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Cheikh Anta Diop. At the turn of the third millennium, pan-Africanism experienced resurgence through the articulations of Muammar Gaddafi, Thabo Mbeki, Olusegun Obasanjo, Konare Matthews, and Abdoulaye Wade. The rubric of this neo-pan-Africanist call was predicated on neo-Garveyism and Nkrumahist continental unity. New emphasis was on democratic governance, socioeconomic development, peace, and stability as well as African Renaissance as the new fundamental tenets of the twenty-first-century pan-Africanism (Maimela 2013). Unsurprisingly, Mugabe was not in the forefront of this resurgence of pan-Africanism, which reconfigured the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into African Union (AU), a new architecture that should be responsive to the contemporary challenges. If anything, Mugabe was critical of the AU's development policy framework—the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) of 2002. Thus, to date, Zimbabwe has not acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) a democratic governance promoting organ of NEPAD.

Mugabe's negative attitude to these formal pan-African institutions raises questions about his authenticity as a pan-Africanist. Clearly, the creation of the AU marked the beginning of a new chapter in Africa's history. Decolonially speaking, the transformation of OAU into AU was the start of a more coordinated effort by African people to realize their dreams of achieving economic, political, and social integration including the progression toward the government of the United States of Africa (Matthews 2008: 25). This twenty-first-century pan-Africanist movement advocates alternatives to structural adjustment programs, the debt burden, global superpower, unilateralism, and military adventurism.

By reinventing pan-Africanism for twenty-first-century Africa, the AU at this moment in time has moved to a new era of service delivery and sustainable democracy. To this end, pan-African solidarity, poverty eradication, and constitutionalism

constitute the frontiers of pan-African progress (Maru 2013: 1). However, Mugabe and ZANU-PF-led government have been found wanting on the “balance sheet” of these expectations. Ironically, the latest crisis in Zimbabwe, which has been characterized by economic recession, breakdown of rule of law, gross violation of human rights, state-sanctioned violence, praetorianism, and electoral authoritarianism, coincided with the formation of AU, NEPAD, and APRM at the turn of the century. To all intents and purposes, Mugabe is a bane in the new pan-African project. In fact, human security, which is at the core of the twenty-first-century pan-African ideology, is a cause for concern in Zimbabwe.

Essentially, the twenty-first-century pan-Africanism prioritizes human security, which is conceptualized as the security people should have in their daily lives, not only from the threat of war but also from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards (Boafo-Arthur 2002: 1). This is well summarized by Landsberg and Mckay (n.d.) as follows:

The new pan-Africanism is concerned with human security, that is, reducing poverty, social development, including addressing HIV/AIDS, unemployment and illiteracy; ending wars and conflicts; promoting peace building; a new trade regime that is both free and just; promoting human rights and democratic governance; fostering regional integration and cooperation; and seeking a “new” partnership with the outside world.

This new thrust of progressive pan-Africanism is relevant and responsive to Zimbabwe’s contemporary challenges. In fact, the opportunity provided by the renewed sense of pan-Africanism can be used by Zimbabweans to hold government and public institutions, including the chief executive officers (CEOs) of parastatals and state enterprises, accountable for their actions and inactions. The key attribute of contemporary pan-Africanism is the leader’s compliance to the norms and values of human security, human rights, and democracy with a social content. As noted earlier, issues of human rights violations and political violence are some of the defining features of the Mugabe administration. On the basis of the lived experiences of Zimbabweans, some critical intellectuals such as Brian Raftopoulos, Ian Phimister, Masipula Sithole, John Makumbe, David Moore, Alois Mlambo, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Lloyd Sachikonye, James Muzondidya, and others have vehemently contested the received wisdom about Mugabe’s pan-African credentials churned out by “patriotic historians.” For a number of reasons Mugabe’s radical nationalist ideology is viewed from the perspective of critical scholarship as authoritarian populism and exclusivist nativism as well as neo-sultanism.

### MUGABE’S PAN-AFRICANIST POSTURING

As part of Mugabe’s strategy to entrench his power and secure his legacy, radical articulation of pan-African ideals and selective nationalist history have been deployed over the years. This is part of what some critical intellectuals have called Mugabeism. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009b: 1141) observes that “Mugabeism has articulated issues of liberation and oppression; victimhood and heroism; social justice and injustice; social harmony and violence.” These principles of Mugabeism are

systematically promoted through television, radio, newspapers, and schools and tertiary institutions (Kastfelt 2007; Tendi 2010). Mugabeism as a neopopulist proclamation of the continuity of Zimbabwe's revolutionary tradition is spearheaded by ZANU-PF cadres as patriots and those not subscribing to it as dangerous traitors, puppets, sellouts, and agents of the Euro-North American neoimperialism. Viewed from the perspectives of the regime intellectuals, Mugabeism represents pan-African memory and patriotism as well as a radical left-nationalism dedicated to resolving intractable national and agrarian questions (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009b; Hwami 2010).

Arguably, Mugabeism and its articulations of nationalist populism was a reaction to the rising challenge to state power by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and Morgan Tsvangirai. The opposition challenged ZANU-PF and Mugabe's rule on the basis of poor economic policies, bankrupt nationalist ideology, human rights violations, state-sponsored violence, "corruptocracy," "lootocracy," and "kleptocracy" in high places. To ward off this challenge, Mugabe and ZANU-PF deployed various tactics including chaotic land reform programs, Gukurahundi "policy," and Chimurenga "war cry" as well as radicalized left nationalist populism. Empirical evidence indicates that since the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and Morgan Tsvangirai started mounting challenge to state power in 1999, Mugabe's regime has been broadening its appeal through the strategic deployment of an anti-imperialist ideology offensive, while carrying out a very specific, repressive class project domestically. This strategy has sought to capture pan-Africanists, anticolonialists, and anti-imperialists audiences (Raftopoulos 2004). However, the thesis of this present contribution argues that no matter how "progressive" one's rhetoric or record as anti-imperialist and pan-Africanist, it does not exempt a ruler from the criticism based on the failure to be accountable to the principles of progressive governance in the treatment of dissent (Daniels n.d.: 4).

As previously stated, the deployment of the Nietzschean Chimurenga paradigm of war and Gukurahundi policy of violence and subsequent torture of the opposition was justified by Mugabe in terms of the liberation logic. In particular, the emergence of the MDC was viewed as a manifestation of the Euro-North American expansion of hegemonism, toxic political, and economic grafting into postliberation Zimbabwe. This construction of the MDC thus placed it outside of a legitimate national narrative and thrust it into the territory of an alien, un-African, and treasonous force that justified the Gramscian use of coercive state power in order to contain and destroy such a force (Raftopoulos 2004: 163). Consequently, civic and political activists and the opposition in general have suffered arrest, torture, and murder under the logic of Mugabeism. In this context, issues of human rights, rule of law, governance, and democracy were dismissed as neoliberal ideologies of the emperor.

Arguably, Mugabe has been a neo-Machiavellian at appealing directly to various audiences across Africa, portraying himself as the victim of Western machinations designed to punish him for acquiring land from the Euro-North American neoimperialists. Thus, Brian Raftopoulos (2004) has sanguinely noted that "Mugabe's pan-African ideological appeal is not a mere case of peddling false consciousness, but carries a broader and often visceral resonance, even as it draws criticisms for the coercive forms of its mobilisation from civil society, opposition political parties, critical public intellectuals and from the West." His issues of social justice,

self-determination, and economic equality are genuine concerns not just in Zimbabwe but also in the whole of Africa and the entire developing world.

In the logic of Mugabeism, land has played a definitive role as social, political, and economic “glue” for the targeted audiences such as the rural masses, war veterans, party members, and the Diaspora. For his part, Mugabe has sought to portray the sociopolitical and economic crises in Zimbabwe as mainly a dispute about land between Harare and London (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008; Raftopoulos 2005). Thus, Mugabe’s aggressive nationalist rhetoric cast Zimbabwe’s economic, social, and political woes into a neoliberal and neoimperial frame. Subsequently, the beginning of 2000 saw state-sanctioned forceful seizures of white-owned commercial farms and eviction of thousands of farm workers and the emergence of Mugabe’s demagogic nationalist populism as the defining theme in the political discourse in Zimbabwe (Tendi 2009: 5). In this context, the land became the sole central signifier of national redress, constructed through a series of discursive exclusions, among which race became a central mobilizer and marker of outside status (Raftopoulos 2005: 10). Mugabe’s metanarrative cited the ruling party as the sole legitimate agency of liberation and therefore the sole arbiter of the national interest, patriotism, authenticity, and social justice in Zimbabwe (Raftopoulos 2005: 10). This resonated well with some rural communities, war veterans, African people, and the Diaspora because land is an emotive issue throughout history. However, Ruhanya (2012: 1) observed that:

The land reform programme, legitimate as it is, was another glaring example of Zanunising the whole exercise by parcelling the critical resource among its structures and political surrogates in a similar way the Rhodesian parcelled the land to the Pioneer Column and their friends and families. If one opposes or leaves ZANU PF, their land is invaded and occupied by their thugs.

Significantly, Mugabe has radicalized the land issue through pan-Africanist rhetoric as a curtain behind which to conceal gross abuses of human rights. These include torture and abductions of mostly black civic and political dissenters; banning and bombing of newspapers and independent radio stations; beatings by police of lawyers and civic and opposition leaders; eviction from their homes of 700,000 poor Zimbabweans, state violence against opposition; military incursion into domestic politics, including its involvement in the running of national elections (Mutasah 2007; Moyo 2013). As previously stated, it is instructive to note that any reference to the neoliberal concerns with human rights, rule of law, governance, and democratic space that once informed the demands of the nationalist movement was conveniently erased from the selective history of nationalism espoused by Mugabe and ZANU-PF-led government. Not surprisingly, emphasis was placed on commandism that had dominated liberation politics as well as the pan-African ideals such as juridical sovereignty, national integrity, anti-imperialism, and anticolonialism (Raftopoulos 2005: 5). This lexical device aided Mugabe’s pan-Africanist claim in politics, economics, and diplomacy.

Mugabe’s narrow radicalized nationalist monologue has also been laced with racial and xenophobic undertones. For instance, the mobilization of race as a legitimizing force has been used to justify the contest against historical inequalities and social injustices, while attempting to conceal the structures that increased such inequality in the current crisis in Zimbabwe (Raftopoulos 2005: 10). Ostensibly,

Mugabe resurrected ZANU-PF's most militant and often virulent strain of nationalist demagoguery so as to pass the buck for his own failings to the white commercial farmers, foreign countries, opposition parties, and imperialism in general and the IMF and World Bank in particular (Bond 2001: 59). Arguably, Mugabe and ZANU-PF view their mission as that of protecting Zimbabwe from its erstwhile white colonial oppressors. Like Id Amin of Uganda, Mugabe pushed the white out of the country, seized their farms, and justified their oppression on the basis of the struggle against white rule and the cause for restoring historical imbalances. While this earned Mugabe some pan-African credentials among some people in the SADC subregion and the Diaspora, the majority black Zimbabweans who were victims of Mugabe and ZANU-PF power policies have remained poorer while the political elite has replaced the white minority.

Moreover, Mugabe treated with disdain the hundreds of thousands of Malawians, Mozambicans, and other nationalities that have for generations resided in Zimbabwe and for generations contributed to the economic development of the country through their supply of cheap labor to the mining and agrarian sectors. Mugabe described them as totem-less people thereby denying them their citizenship. In fact, through his narrow exclusivist nationalism, Mugabe subalternized all immigrants in Zimbabwe to Fanonian "zones of non-being." Their only crime was that of being suspected MDC supporters. This was antithetical to the pan-African values. Both neo-Garveyists and neo-Nkrumahists have ably articulated the principles of unity of the African people, African personality, dignity, and self-worth. Mugabe's treatment (denial of citizenship) of some African nationals who now call Zimbabwe their home was atypical of pan-Africanist ideals. Arguably, the frenzied recreations of the liberation discourse in very narrow xenophobic, racist, and nativist terms ranged against whites and those belonging to the MDC as fronts for colonials confirmed Frantz Fanon's warning that postindependence ruling classes have the propensity to betray the pan-African struggles and behave like their erstwhile colonial predecessors (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008: 20).

In order to camouflage their exclusionary political model and present it as a pan-Africanist cliché, Mugabe and ZANU-PF have sought to expand the frontiers of their anti-imperial message through such groups as the December 12 Movement from the United States, the Black United Front from the United Kingdom, and the Aboriginal Nations and People of Australia. More importantly, the past decade has seen ZANU-PF spearheading the fostering of cooperative strategies between and among the liberation movements in Southern Africa such as the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, the Movement of the Liberation of the People of Angola (MPLA), FRELIMO of Mozambique, South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia, and Chama cha Mapinduzi of Tanzania, among others. From ZANU-PF's perspective, the *raison d'être* behind the liberation movement's solidarity basically include the following: to cushion ZANU-PF against censure from the Global North; cutting off of any possible cooperation between MDC and the ruling parties in the SADC subregion; and fostering a united front against sanctions in Zimbabwe as well as assisting ZANU-PF to ward off accusations of human rights abuses in the SADC, AU, and UN platforms. Almost invariably, by default, Mugabe became the spokesperson of anti-imperialism, social justice, and Third World Solidarity. Given the strong echo that the political and social issues raised by Mugabe found across Africa, a number of African leaders paid deference to him. In this regard, Mugabe gained political strength from their solidarity that

allowed him to guarantee regime continuity and juridical sovereignty even under the Euro-North American driven sanctions and restrictive measures.

Epistemically, Mugabe and his party ZANU-PF in cooperation with a band of regime intellectuals have used the teaching of history in schools and strategic studies at training institutions such as teacher training colleges, youth training centers and universities as a means to instruct Zimbabweans to accept Mugabe as the supreme leader of the republic and ZANU-PF as the sole arbiter of the things past, present, and future. This strategy saw indoctrination of the young minds as a successful approach to teach individuals ZANU-PF ideology of Mugabeism before they had the ability to be corrupted by Euro-centered values. These children and youths, in turn, were expected to grow up in complete loyalty and obedience to Mugabe and ZANU-PF. This pedagogical strategy was a rhetorical device to extend Mugabeism in the light of the mounting political challenge from Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC.

In short, Mugabe's pan-African posturing is sustained by a constellation of factors among which were: his ability to consistently create scapegoats while shielding his party ZANU-PF from the responsibility for violence and governance failures; his powerful oratorical skills; his radicalized articulation of the nationalist rhetoric and use of legitimate African grievances; and his ability to play victimhood card in the light of Western-imposed sanctions and generate South-South solidarity (Phimister and Raftopoulos 2004; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2011b; Onslow 2011). These strategies have in one way or the other lobotomized the political opposition in Zimbabwe, and, as a result, it has failed to couch a strong alternative narrative that is prodemocracy, anticolonialism, anti-imperialism, and genuinely pan-African. This kind of alternative would be key in the process of true decolonization of power, being, and knowledge in Zimbabwe. Its absence allows Mugabe to "appear" as a latter-day pan-Africanist who is on a decolonizing mission set to dismantle the global epistemic designs. Yet, beyond this veil of pan-Africanist "appearance" lies a different "reality."

## MUGABE'S NEO-SULTANIST TENDENCIES

Separating the truth from the myth-making in ZANU-PF's repertoire is important (Bond 2001: 59). Far from being a pan-Africanist, empiric evidence indicates that Mugabe is a neo-sultanist. For heuristic purposes, neo-sultanism is defined in this chapter as a distinctive type of political system in which the struggles of powerful and wilful men, rather than impersonal institutions, ideologies, public policies, or class interest, are fundamental in shaping the political life of the polity (Jackson and Rosberg in Ogbazghi 2011; Stephan in Tugsbilguun 2013). Political scientist Alfred C. Stephan (in Tugsbilguun 2013: 124) defines "sultanism" as:

a generic form of leadership where the private and public are fused, there is a strong tendency towards family power and dynastic succession, there is no distinction between a state career and personal services to the ruler, there is a lack of rationalised impersonal ideology, economic success depends on the ruler and, most of all, the ruler acts only according to his own unchecked discretion with no longer impersonal goals for the state.

Understood from this perspective, Mugabe's regime is not a full-blown sultanism, but rather a regime with sultanistic tendencies—a neo-sultanism. Conceptually and theoretically, the notion of neo-sultanism posits that the preservation of unchallenged and near-total control of the machinery of government by one individual entails necessarily the provision of favors to the hitherto specially designed coercive institutions of the state, such as the military, the police, and the secret services (Ogbazghi 2011: 3). As will be clear in the rest of this contribution, Mugabe's neo-sultanistic regime was characterized by absolute power, personality cult, personal loyalty, regime and state fusion, absence of rule of law, and widespread corruption, among other vices.

Literature demonstrates that neo-sultanists often combine coercion with other less formal and extralegal procedures, such as personal appeal, personal will power, connections and loyalties, social prestige, charisma, and oratorical skill, all together meticulously applied in varying degrees (Ogbazghi 2011: 3). Some studies indicate that as neo-sultanism becomes deeply embedded in the political system, neo-sultanists too could become captives of their own web of powerful vested interests, such as the party and security establishment that simply do not allow any institutional change calls for the abolishing of such networks to take place (4). Mugabe's aggressive nationalist rhetoric disguised as pan-Africanism is arguably a neo-sultanistic ideographic mechanism designed to strangle the opposition while he and his party ZANU-PF retain political legitimacy and pan-African credentials.

Put bluntly, the Mugabe school of politics is epitomized in ruthlessness in dealing with political enemies, arresting the leadership of opposition to weaken and lobotomize them, equating his party ZANU-PF to the state, and crafting neo-populist redistributive policies to keep people focused on mirages (Kademo 2008: 13). Like most other neo-sultanists such as Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Alexander Lukashenka of Belarus to mention just two among many others, Mugabe's primary preoccupation and obsession is security, his grip on power with everything else being incidental and subordinate to this overarching goal (Mhanda 2012). There is a lack of self-critical awareness and extremely limited willingness to accept divergent opinions, particularly those expressed in public. Thus, in the Mugabe school of politics, nonconformist thinking is interpreted as disloyalty, if not equated with treason (Melber 2010). As noted earlier, all those who have dared challenge Mugabe have been labeled traitors, sellouts, stooges, puppets, and agents of imperialists. The list includes Joshua Nkomo, Abel Muzorewa, Ndabaningi Sithole, Edgar Tekere, Morgan Tsvangirai, and Welshman Ncube.

Mugabe's neo-sultanism emerged as early as 1980. He embarked on the creation of legislated one-party state (Moyo 2007: 46). Mugabe disbanded the government of national unity formed at independence. Matabeleland and Midlands regions became theaters of postcolonial practice of the strategy of Chimurenga and the Gukurahundi policy and an estimated 20,000 civilians lost their lives as ZANU-PF pushed for a one-party state (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2011c: 10). In 1987, PF-ZAPU nationalists finally succumbed to a merger with ZANU-PF under a treacherous Unity Accord. Its key tenet was to prepare for a one-party state under an executive president (Moyo 2007: 46). All these were early signs of authoritarian populism and neo-sultanism and not strands of pan-Africanist agenda. Keeping in tune with his neo-sultanistic beliefs, Mugabe engineered the change of powers of head of state from ceremonial president to an executive president in 1987, which saw him amass

very wide, discretionary, arbitrary, and absolute powers as he abolished the post of prime minister. Thus, Mugabe was bestowed with unlimited powers to interfere with judiciary and electoral process in service of ZANU-PF. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013c: 209) observed that “the idea was to make sure that all restraints on absolute and supreme power were removed, and the intention was to create an ‘imperial presidency’ in Zimbabwe.” While the recently adopted National Constitution (2013) crafted during the tenure of the now defunct Inclusive Government stripped some of the presidential powers, it remains to be seen whether Mugabe will respect it after rigging his way back into the State House in the July 2013 plebiscite.

While Zimbabweans have voted in large numbers in the past elections to rid themselves of ZANU-PF and Mugabe, it turns out that voting is irrelevant to the outcome of the elections as the Mugabe appointees announce what they are directed to announce and not what the people say (Kademo 2008: 3). In virtually all elections held under Mugabe’s rule, the *de facto* law has always been torture, murder, and denial of political space for the opposition irrespective of how popular the opposition was. However, the norms and values of pan-Africanism and the ideals of the liberation struggle posit that the right to choose a president of one’s own choice should not be considered as a mere exercise of a democratic right. It is the advancement of a historical mission of liberating Zimbabwe from the clutches of neocolonialism. In this regard, the members of the security establishment who call themselves Joint Operations Command (JOC) may have succeeded in retaining Mugabe as the president through their reign of terror in the past elections; they have, however, by default, exposed beyond doubt the regime’s undemocratic credentials, its violent streak, and its unbending determination to survive. And all these do not augur well with constructions of pan-Africanism.

Apart from violence wantonly perpetrated against the innocent civilians, some of Mugabe’s subtly neo-sultanistic tendencies included his insistence that his portraits hang in all government offices and departments, public institutions, schools, airports, border posts, public entities, parastatals, and state enterprises. Similarly, the major roads in all major cities and towns in Zimbabwe are named after him—Mugabe Way. Moreover, Mugabe insists on being addressed “His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe and the Commander in Chief of Zimbabwe Defence Forces,” to emphasize his power, influence, and control over the formal institutions of coercion. This places Mugabe on the same league with sultanists and neo-sultanists such as Gaddafi, Fidel Castro, Mubarak, and Saddam Hussein. Indeed, Mugabe’s pan-Africanism is fixated on power retention project, but such fixation cannot be cogent with norms and values of pan-Africanist ideals. In fact, Mugabe’s failure to settle the question of leadership succession within his own party, ZANU-PF, speaks volumes about a ruler who is prepared to die in power. In this regard, Mugabe is a Machiavellian strongman who would stop at nothing to attain, retain, and sustain his neo-sultanistic grip on state power.

The foregoing discussion indicates that there is no denying of Mugabe’s neo-sultanistic tendencies and authoritarian populism, or his willingness to tolerate and even encourage the violent behavior of his supporters, youth brigades, and the military. ZANU-PF, by virtue of having bloody and brutal liberation war credentials, regards itself as having the right to rule, by right of conquest, the same claim that was used by the British to exclude the majority black Africans from government during the close of a century-long period of colonial rule (Hwami 2010: 60). In this regard, Mugabe’s presidency was characterized by the shrinkage of democratic



spaces, executive lawlessness that developed into a lack of public accountability, tokenist public participation, lack of transparency, the questionable conduct of elections, complete intolerance of alternative political thought, criminalization of opposition politics, and invasion of every sphere of life by ZANU-PF and security agencies (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2006: 31). In this context, the demand for civil and political rights has been viewed and dismissed by Mugabe and ZANU-PF as minority and foreign concerns aimed at unsettling majority political will and reversing gains of national independence and sovereignty (Raftopoulos 2003, in Hwami 2010). Simply put, the human rights discourse lies outside of the domineering revolutionary meta-narrative of Mugabe and ZANU-PF. It is an inconvenience to their power retention project.

Quite paradoxically, according to the results of the July 2013 national elections, Mugabe has “recaptured the support” of the majority of the electorate in Zimbabwe. His party “won” with an overwhelming majority both the parliamentary and presidential plebiscites. It is quite instructive to note that the July 2013 elections in Zimbabwe were remarkably different from the previous ones. As observed by Ncube (2013: 107), a key feature of the 2013 elections was the absence of politically motivated violence, and, in particular, the willingness by Mugabe and ZANU-PF to restrain themselves from overly tilting the elections in their favor through intimidation and violation of human rights against the opposition and its supporters. However, Mugabe’s victory was considered pyrrhic by the main opposition party MDC-T and by countries such as Botswana.

Additionally, Western countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia also refused to accept the election results because of the electoral fraud characterized by denial of access to public media, disenfranchisement of citizens from electoral process through selective voter registration process, vote-buying in the form of donations of food and China-made utensils and agricultural implements, and inflation of votes in favor of Mugabe and ZANU-PF (Ncube 2013: 107). However, the absence of violence and gross human rights violations marked a beginning of a new chapter in Mugabe’s long political career (and this said with extreme caution). The issue of his legitimacy is no longer a strong case for the opposition parties and civil society. More importantly, human rights discourse has been weakened as a mobilization instrument for civil society and opposition political parties except in the context of the past. However, it is too early for this chapter to make a definitive statement about the meaning and implications of the July 2013 human rights discourse in Zimbabwe.

Be that as it may, this chapter argues that pan-Africanism that does not incorporate ideals of participatory democracy through the ballot; the ideals of socioeconomic democracy; human rights that are both social and economic; and if it cannot be clearly open and amenable to being developed into being an integral part of the progressive and decolonial epistemic toolkit, then such pan-Africanism is plastic, empty, and irrelevant and counterrevolutionary, lacking the essential tools for the true decolonization of power, being, and knowledge. Momoh (2003: 52) write that “an emancipative pan-African discourse must begin to focus on how the people produce and reproduce their lives, gender roles, the issue of child and youth rights, the urban poor and an inclusive political system. . . . It must address issues of marginality, victimhood, social and political exclusion and equity.” Even if it is in the context of history, the discourse of human rights, democratic governance, and rule of law cannot be divorced from political, social, economic, and cultural conditions

in Zimbabwe. In this regard, human rights, rule of law, and democratic governance principles that are peripherized in Mugabe's book of demagogic radical nationalist rhetoric are also as much about civil and political rights as they are about economic, social, and cultural rights so fondly articulated by nationalist public intellectuals. Thus, Mugabe's version of pan-Africanism needs to be rethought, reconstructed, and reconceptualized in line with the norms of human security paradigm, human rights, and democracy, not as Euro-North American neoliberal values but as epistemological and ontological human imperatives.

In the context of the ensuing discussion, Mugabe cannot be characterized as a paragon of progressive pan-African governance, or a hero to be hailed simply because he mouths anti-imperialistic rhetoric as the self-ordained voice of Africa. The reality is, for all his splendid rhetoric, Mugabe was essentially a neo-sultanist ruler who remained in power through electoral authoritarian strategies that included violence, repressing dissent, and oppressing sectors of the population. Don Daniels (n.d.: 2) succinctly captured the summary of my thesis when he remarked that, "having a 'correct' posture on anti-imperialism or pan-Africanism while suppressing, maiming, killing and otherwise constraining the aspirations of your own people is not acceptable. . . . While we must fight against imperialism and support pan-African projects and initiatives, we will not embrace tyrants, despots and autocrats. Leaders, governments should be judged by progressive principles of governance."

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that Mugabe used demagogic nationalist rhetoric to retain the reins of power in Zimbabwe in the face of mounting challenge from the MDC and Morgan Tsvangirai. Mugabe also deployed this Afro-radicalized rhetoric and anti-imperialist discourse as a strategy to justify human rights violations, injustice, megalomania, and corruption in Zimbabwe. The pan-Africanist discourse on stolen land, anti-imperialism, and nationalist populism were recycled each election season and each time Mugabe's power was threatened. Not only was this militant discourse a means to mobilize supporters and silence critics, but it also provided a convenient excuse to sideline embarrassing human security issues such as poverty, unemployment, hunger and starvation, and bad governance, which would otherwise make Mugabe's pan-African claim a mockery. It was also noted that despite metanarratives on pan-Africanism, antineoimperialism, and antineoliberalism, Zimbabwe appears to be now less sovereign and more vulnerable to the global imperial designs than it has ever been, hence the dire need for a true decolonial turn.

In this regard, SADC and AU must realize that overlooking the mistreatment of the poverty-stricken people by neo-sultanistic policies on the basis of pan-African pretensions and adversarial exclusive nationalist rhetoric is actually an anachronistic betrayal of pan-African ideals. From a critical decolonial ethical paradigm, what Zimbabwe and Africa need is pan-Africanism from below, that is, pan-Africanism of the people and not neopopulism, which is essentially a pan-Africanism of the state. Thus, Zimbabwe needs to embrace the new progressive pan-African project that is predicated on pluralism, participatory democracy, human security, tolerance, rule of law, consent of the governed, and respect for human rights (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2006).

PART II

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Diplomacy, Solidarity, and Power

## Intransigent Diplomat: Robert Mugabe and His Western Diplomacy, 1963–1983

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### INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to succinctly summarize the diplomatic style of a leader who began his career in the early 1960s and remains influential more than 50 years later. Robert Mugabe's career does point to a certain predictable pattern of diplomatic behavior that is evident throughout the changing contours of Zimbabwean history. In many ways, this predictability allowed him his successes as a diplomat while also becoming an inherent weakness, as he remained consistent while the diplomatic world transformed around him. Still, one aspect of his diplomacy—the ability to push intransigence with certain audiences and individuals while at the same time privately demonstrating his tacit support for, and vulnerability to, the interests of world powers—helped him overcome the more tragic implications of a leader unable to change with the times.

On the one hand, as other chapters in this volume will attest, Mugabe's greatest contribution to Zimbabwean history has been his ability to avoid the “sellout” label he himself so often used to characterize his Zimbabwean political competitors, as well as political leaders in SADC, the AU, and the UN over the years. Perhaps this was no more important than during the period 1976–1983, when Zimbabweans were forced to take sides in the competition between various African nationalists vis-à-vis their relationship with Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) government. The ability of Mugabe to maneuver beyond his rivals, whether it was Joshua Nkomo as his partner in the Patriotic Front or Bishop Muzorewa and the United African National Council (UANC) before, during, and after the 1980 elections, makes it clear that Mugabe was the more skilled politician in terms of portraying himself as the least compromised among the possible leaders of Zimbabwe. For the historian of Zimbabwean politics and social movements, Mugabe's and ZANU's popularity at the time of the 1980 transition to majority rule is beyond question, and a large part of that popularity arose from Mugabe's consistent employment of an intransigency in negotiations with his internal rivals, with the Smith regime, and with international brokers determined to see

a negotiated settlement of what was then called the “Rhodesian crisis.” The more difficult question to answer is the extent to which Mugabe’s image of a noncompromising diplomat fits with the historical evidence.

This chapter argues that this intransigence was not as solid as portrayed by ZANU’s propaganda and rhetoric of the time and that once in power in the early 1980s, Mugabe’s diplomatic relations with the West began to unravel as the realities of his hard-line treatment of internal rivals stood in stark contrast with the popularity and goodwill he had developed as a leader willing to reconcile with whites and those who had fought against him during the war of liberation.

### CONGO CRISIS: SETTING THE STAGE FOR COLD WAR RHODESIA

It was in the early 1960s that Cold War rivalries entered Central Africa during the Congo crisis. It was here that the Zimbabwean nationalists, themselves still in the early stages of forming a cohesive nationalist movement, and one that was only beginning to develop important international diplomatic linkages, first took their cues from the unfolding Congo crisis (Scarnecchia 2011a). The relatively inexperienced Zimbabwean nationalist leadership—at least in terms of diplomacy—learned a number of lessons from the Congo crisis. Most importantly, they were able to watch Katanga’s leader Moïse Tshombe gain the attention of the world powers through his secession from the Congo and then through the defense of the Katanga against the Congolese and the UN forces. The nationalists observed the extent to which the Central African Federation (CAF), made up of Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, and Southern Rhodesia, defended Tshombe against both the UN and the Congolese central government. They also observed how the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, which became public in February 1961, effectively helped to mobilize political support against the white Rhodesian state as well as assist in forging pan-African links through a common rhetoric that linked Lumumba’s assassination to the Cold War goals of the West.

The Congo crisis did not, however, hinder African nationalists in Zimbabwe from continued dealings with Americans for financial support, as all the major nationalists remained in close contact with the Americans, as well as with the AFL-CIO, for financial support during the period 1960–1964 (Scarnecchia 2008). In some ways, the rhetorical attacks on Western Cold War meddling in Africa seemed to increase with the amount of contact Zimbabwean nationalists had with the Americans. For example, the National Democratic Party’s (NDP) publication *Radarr* had promoted this anti-imperialist view in December of 1960, a month before Lumumba’s assassination:

When Africans invited the United Nations to come to the rescue of a Belgian-betrayed Congo, they never intended to introduce cold war politics into Africa. Africans have learnt now the folly of entrusting the freedom of a country to an organisation that is controlled by one big imperialistic country... Conflicting interests plus the unwillingness of the Western Block to follow out policies that will free the Congo have been responsible for the deadlock at the United Nations. In Africa all trouble comes from conspired and planned subversion of African States by one or other of the Western Alliance.

The Lumumba assassination helped to galvanize a nationalist identity in Central Africa based on an anti-imperialist message. For Mugabe, another important lesson was to remain close to the Americans in particular, as that had been Lumumba's major error (Scarnecchia 2011a). Mugabe was particularly close to American consul general Paul Geren in the early 1960s, and when ZANU was formed and Mugabe left for Dar es Salaam in August 1963, Geren quickly traveled there from Salisbury to assess what Mugabe and Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole might need in terms of assistance from the Americans (Scarnecchia 2008).

### MUGABE'S RETURN TO INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY IN THE 1970S

The next important period of Mugabe's diplomacy with the West came after the 1974 détente in Southern Africa and during the build up to the 1976 Geneva conference—called by the British with American support to try and negotiate a peace agreement. Having spent much of the previous ten years either in prison or in detention, the leaderships of the rival ZAPU and ZANU were suddenly able to travel internationally after their release from detention in 1974. US secretary of state Henry Kissinger became personally involved in the Rhodesian problem because of the embarrassing loss of Angola to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), which had been supported by the Russians with weapons and most importantly by the Cubans with soldiers. Coming as it did in the same year as the final American defeat in Vietnam, the Angolan defeat created fear that Rhodesia would become “another Angola” unless Kissinger could jump-start talks and get the Front Line State presidents to cooperate with the United States to unite the Zimbabwean nationalists (factionalism had been one key reason for the defeat of the pro-Western forces in Angola). In addition, Kissinger believed he could pressure South Africa, which would, in turn, pressure Rhodesia's Ian Smith to concede to majority rule in two years' time, leading to a compromised settlement that would avert “another Angola.” Kissinger came close to achieving his goals. Most importantly, he managed to convince the British to take a more interventionist role in negotiations, agreeing to host all party talks in Geneva at the end of 1976. He also succeeded in pressuring Ian Smith (with the help of the South Africans who threatened to pull all support from Rhodesia if Smith failed to agree to majority rule). The Geneva talks did not lead directly to a settlement, partly because both Smith and the South Africans thought they had been offered something better from their point of view than the Front Line State presidents were willing to concede, and partly because US president Gerald R. Ford lost the presidential election to Jimmy Carter in November 1976, and there was some hope that a new American administration would provide a different deal.

While Nkomo was the logical leader of the Zimbabwean liberation movement based on his long-standing role as “the father” of Zimbabwean nationalism, and while he was put forward as such by the British and the Zambians, the Americans were not on the Nkomo bandwagon completely for a number of reasons. First and foremost, Nkomo received funds from the Soviets and was therefore viewed as most likely to invite Cuban military support as in Angola. Second, Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere had convinced the Americans that the fighting forces were the ones

to decide on a new leadership, and none of the old guard leaders were in charge of the fighting forces sufficiently to claim sole leadership. The wildcard in this was Robert Mugabe who played his cards well by returning to Mozambique after escaping Rhodesia. Mugabe had spent ten years in prison because of the authoritarian laws passed in Southern Rhodesia that allowed continuous detention and imprisonment of African nationalists deemed to be dangerous to the Rhodesian state. While Nkomo set up base in Lusaka, Zambia, Mugabe made a strategic decision to go to Mozambique in 1975 to try and regain the trust of the liberation war forces there. It was not an easy task as the Front Line State presidents, particularly Julius Nyerere and Samora Machel, were trying to foster a new unified fighting force that could overcome the old factionalism of ZAPU and ZANU. Still Mugabe's presence in Mozambique would become advantageous.

A key step in the rise of Robert Mugabe to the leadership of ZANU and ZIPRA was the Mgagao Declaration (October 1975) that recognized him as the leader of ZANU after Herbert Chitepo's death because "ZANU's president Ndabaningi Sithole had discredited himself" by secretly negotiating with Ian Smith, leading to Mugabe replacing Sithole in a secret vote made while the ZANU leader was still in detention. This is a key example of how Mugabe's intransigence toward negotiating with Smith helped further his leadership role and helps explain why he remained intransigent all the way until Lancaster House in 1979.

While Mugabe was recognized as leader of ZANU, he was far from being accepted as leader of the Zimbabwe's Peoples' Army (ZIPA), the "third force" Nyerere and Machel were supporting in 1976 as an alternative to the infighting of ZIPRA and ZANLA. Mugabe was put under house arrest in Mozambique by Samora Machel to keep him from interfering with the ZIPA, as Nyerere and Machel were concerned it would be engulfed in the murderous factionalism characteristic of attempts at ZANLA and ZIPRA cooperation in the past. As Zimbabwean historian Z. W. Sadomba argues, this didn't stop Mugabe from using the text of the Mgagao Declaration as justification of his leadership role. To Sadomba and others, this was not what the document intended. The ZIPA "fighters expressed sympathy for Robert Mugabe 'for defying the rigours of guerrilla life' and chose him to be their 'middle man' (i.e. power broker)," but this respect did not mean that they recognized him as their leader (Sadomba 2011: 21). Mugabe would make the most of the opportunities offered by American and international attention in 1976 to better position himself as the key leader in the coalition of liberation forces.

Mugabe began to campaign for international recognition of himself as both the leader of ZANU and of ZIPA. In July 1976, when Mugabe met with American Congressional representative Stephen Solarz, he told Solarz that "today the Third Force high command was composed entirely of ZANU military leaders who were loyal to him" (Maputo 1976). The war continued to be waged without a direct link between the political nationalists and the military leaders. Wilf Mhanda (2011) has argued that he and other ZIPA military commanders were in the process of developing ZIPA into a political organization of its own after 1975 but that Nyerere and Machel were working to unify the existing ZANU and ZAPU leaders with ZIPA in order to move forward as a unified force at the Geneva conference.

Kissinger never met directly with Mugabe during his shuttle diplomacy, something that Mugabe would later criticize when discussing the issue with American diplomats. However, other senior-level American diplomats would meet with

Mugabe during the Geneva talks. These conversations would give Mugabe an opportunity to introduce himself to a new cadre of American diplomats and once again, as he had done in the early 1960s, he gained influence by his ability to present himself as willing to work with the United States. Perhaps the biggest achievement at the 1976 Geneva talks was the ability of Mugabe to make the most of the presence of ZIPA and ZANLA leaders, such as Wilf Mhanda and Josiah Tongogara, who were specifically sent to Geneva to show that they supported the new Patriotic Front established for the sake of Geneva. The strategy backfired for Joshua Nkomo, as most of the leaders supported Mugabe and ZANU.

Mugabe would become the most reputable Zimbabwean nationalist leader, from the American point of view, capable of unifying the guerrilla forces and avoiding Soviet and Cuban influence. Mugabe impressed William E. Schaufele, Jr., US assistant secretary of state for African affairs, at a November 2, 1976, meeting at Geneva. Schaufele's account of their encounter is reminiscent of the reports American diplomats would send back to Washington after meetings with Mugabe in the early 1960s. He described his impression of Mugabe: "In what proved to be my most interesting and useful meeting with the nationalists, I spent almost an hour on Nov 2 with Robert Mugabe. Mugabe was relaxed and thoughtful. His questions were incisive" (Schaufele 1976). Schaufele then told Mugabe about the US position at the conference, and made it clear to Mugabe "that if the conference failed we would not be able to continue in our role but if violence led to foreign intervention from outside Africa the U.S. could not accept it." Mugabe replied by telling Schaufele how "gratifying" it was to have the United States involved after years in which "Britain had failed to assume its responsibilities as a colonial power and move effectively to 'decolonize Rhodesia.'" Mugabe went on to assure Schaufele

that neither he nor his associated enjoyed military action. "We are not a warlike people" but nationalists were forced to take up arms because of Britain's failures and the inability of the West to do much more than pass "pious resolutions." Of course the nationalists had accepted arms from Russia and China but "we are not committed to their policies nor prepared to subject ourselves to them," he said.

Mugabe once again demonstrated that he was the most skilled diplomat among the Zimbabwean nationalists involved in talks with the Americans. Similar to his experiences in the early 1960s, he understood how important it was to establish good personal relations with Western diplomats, and to explain that while he and his party needed military support from the Chinese and the Socialist eastern bloc, he had no intention of turning Zimbabwe into a puppet state of the Soviets.

Summing up the Geneva conference in *Zimbabwe News*, ZANU's writers claimed that the calling of a conference by Britain "was a culmination of a series of behind-the-scenes imperialist maneuvers in their persistent bid to try and hijack the determined efforts and resolute prosecution of the armed struggle by the struggling masses of Zimbabwe", under, "the leadership of their legitimate political movements which have formed the Patriotic Front". The article claims that

the imperialists saw Geneva as an important place to try and rob the struggling people of Zimbabwe of their legitimate rights... Geneva was to be an internationally sponsored political fraud where the imperialists were to strip Smith and his



racist thugs of only political power and reinvest this power in the hands of “moderate and responsible” African puppets. (*Zimbabwe News* 1977:6–9)

The editorial went on to praise the Patriotic Front delegation as the only delegation at Geneva that “stood for the defence of the gains of the workers and peasants of Zimbabwe, and their determination to establish a truly free, democratic, socialist republic.” After lecturing on the correct Leninist position required in an anticolonial struggle, the writers conclude that “in fact, there would be no independence in Zimbabwe if the new black rulers inherited the police-security and armed forces that have killed, hanged, and brutalized thousands of Zimbabweans for a century.” It is striking to consider, retrospectively, the amount of time the Patriotic Front delegations spent both at Geneva talks and at the Lancaster House talks in 1979 negotiating this very takeover of the “police-security and armed forces” from the Rhodesian regime.

Such an intransigent rhetorical position, while not completely a true reflection of what ZANU-PF was willing to concede, nor of the negotiating tactics of Robert Mugabe at Geneva, was to become the hallmark of ZANU-PF’s rhetoric. It was always most advantageous to portray other African nationalists as compromisers and “sellouts,” while ZANU-PF would hold out for complete and total military victory.

When Ian Smith finally capitulated to the pressure from South Africa and Kissinger, he made a speech in Salisbury where he accepted majority rule, “provided that it is responsible rule.” As Peter Godwin and Ian Hancock (1993: 177) describe it, most whites were in shock at the news but the right wing “was uniformly pessimistic, angry rather than surprised. Roy Buckle of the United Conservative Party spoke of Smith’s ‘enormous impertinence and audacity’ in explaining—with obvious sincerity—how he had discharged his trust by ‘selling us out to black majority rule in, he hopes, less than two years.’” The “sellout” rhetoric of white conservatives in Rhodesia would return in Zimbabwe’s ZANU-PF rhetoric. In both cases, fascistic claims to an organic indigeneity gave the ruling party claims to a “pure” defense of sovereignty in which any form of compromise (in particular negotiations or diplomacy) was seen as a form of “selling out” the nation. Mugabe and ZANU-PF were ultimately able to defeat all opposition parties using this logic (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b).

It would be a mistake to characterize Mugabe’s and ZANU-PF’s successes primarily based on this intransigent position vis-à-vis negotiations, as this fails to recognize that Mugabe’s ascendancy did in fact require a great deal of compromise and negotiation with both Cold War powers and the Smith regime. Mugabe began to campaign for international recognition of himself as the leader of both ZANU and ZIPA by July 1976. He met with the British diplomats in Maputo for the first time on July 20, 1976. The account of the meeting related back to the Rhodesia Office at the FCO characterized Mugabe as a politician wanting to impress the British that he was not a radical in the FRELIMO mold. For example, he emphasized his Catholic background, and hence,

on human grounds, if no other, [he] does not wish for a protracted guerilla war. He pointed out that unlike FRELIMO, who have come to politics from guerilla war, he (and the other Zimbabwe leaders) were politicians and have only taken to

armed struggle in despair of a political settlement. He does not therefore share the outlook of the FRELIMO leaders.

British diplomat Charles de Chassiron (1976) was impressed with Mugabe, “This was the first time I had met him. I found him quite an impressive and likeable man, but rather mild and modest with nothing of the swagger or the ruthlessness of Machel.”

Moving forward a few years chronologically, following the failure of the Geneva talks and the ramping up of the war effort, it is possible to see a more radical persona of Robert Mugabe, as presented by ZANU-PF. The soft-spoken intellectual is now cast as the guerilla war leader and radical “Marxist-Leninist-Maoist.” In the March–April 1978 issue of ZANU’s *Zimbabwe News*, the lead story opens with the following criticisms of Andrew Young, the American ambassador to the UN:

Andrew Young U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, has universally become notorious for saying things other more practised diplomats have long learned to shun. Recently, he was at it again. Confiding to a friend, he said, “the trouble with Robert Mugabe is that he is thoroughly and completely incorruptible.” Now, that is a very naughty thing to say indeed. Ambassador Young will, sooner or later, have to learn that in imperialist societies certain truths, like children, are to be seen but not heard. His black free spirit must, with deliberate speed, be tamed so it can, in turn, tame his tongue. This is the sterner stuff of which statesmen are made.

The Robert Mugabe about whom he speaks is, fortunately, not a world statesman. He has not those ambitions. . . . Zimbabweans have no apologies to make for comrade President Robert Mugabe’s unashamed proclamation that ZANU is inspired by Marxist-Leninist-Mao-Tsetung Thought. (*Zimbabwe News* 1978:1)

One of the many speeches by Mugabe from this period, reprinted in the *Zimbabwe News*, ends with a familiar call to arms:

Let us take pride in our war and our countless gains but never become complacent for although the enemy is battered and dazed he has not yet been knocked out, and let us thus never forget that only a dead imperialist is a good one.

Let us thank and never forget our allies, especially, the Front-line States and the socialist countries and progressive organizations. (14)

Playing to their main military aid supporters in Eastern Europe and China, ZANU’s writers made sure to paint the conflict in anti-imperialist terms. Still, this did not preclude good relations between Mugabe and Western leaders and diplomats to help ensure that Mugabe and ZANU would be included in any formal negotiations to conclude the war and the transition to majority rule.

An example of how Mugabe would publicly criticize the Americans and the British when he felt it necessary to turn on the pressure can be seen in his response to renewed Anglo-American diplomacy following Ian Smith’s own “Internal Settlement” with Bishop Muzorewa. After Geneva, the British and Americans were aware that Smith might try to negotiate with moderate African nationalists in Rhodesia in order to exclude further negotiations with Mugabe and Nkomo.

The March 3, 1978, internal settlement was the result. Still not sure of the Anglo-American position, Mugabe lashed out at both the United States and the United Kingdom in an August 29, 1978, press conference held in Dar es Salaam. Mugabe reportedly “accused the UK and the US of”

attempting to contrive “yet another internal agreement which leaves rebel Ian Smith as the chief manipulator by merely re-shuffling the positions of established stooges”... He [Mugabe] also warned that any agreement which tries, “to circumvent the sacred principle of the transfer of total power to the people, and aimed at installing a particular leader or leaders” would never gain acceptance, and demanded that the UK and US “desist from their trickery and chicanery as a method of negotiation.” (Lewen 1978)

Therefore, even as Mugabe’s relative position strengthened among Western leaders in this period vis-à-vis that of Nkomo, and certainly that of Ndabaningi Sithole or Bishop Muzorewa, he continued to publically criticize the British and the Americans while becoming increasingly close to both in diplomatic settings.

## THE 1980S

A brief example of Mugabe’s dealings with the British in the crucial weeks before and during the 1980 elections shows his continued accusations against British complicity with the Rhodesians, the South Africans, and Bishop Muzorewa’s UANC. Mugabe’s January 8, 1980, letter to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher complained about the presence of South African troops in Rhodesia, because, he argued, it was agreed in the Lancaster House talks that they would be withdrawn as part of the transition. Mugabe (1980) concludes the letter (which he also released to the press) thus:

We agreed to participate in the forthcoming elections provided they are free and fair. The above enumerated developments in Southern Rhodesia pose a dangerous threat to free and fair elections. With respect, let me not find it necessary to lodge another protest on similar lines in the future. Bona-fides is of essence to all sides, if the hopes of Lancaster House are to be realised.

British diplomats in Maputo asked the appointed British governor in Rhodesia tasked with overseeing the elections and transition, Lord Christopher Soames, to suggest lines to take in response to Mugabe’s letter. Soames (1980a) replied:

The point to emphasize is that ZANLA behavior during the ceasefire is in sharp contrast to that of ZIPRA. The latter have been doing their utmost to comply. Of the incidents of violence and lawlessness across the country during this period and confrontations with the police the great majority have been attributable to ZANLA. There is evidence that ZANLA have been given instructions to exploit the assembly process and its aftermath to exert maximum pressure on the population to support ZANU and evidence also of some ZANLA sections being instructed to remain in the field.

The abuses by ZANLA of the agreed-upon demobilization and campaign rules were so extensive that Lord Soames delayed the return of Mugabe and hundreds of

other ZANU political delegates to Salisbury to campaign for the election. Soames was using the authorization of the planes to take off from Maputo as leverage to force ZANLA's compliance. By mid-February, Mugabe and the others had been allowed to return, and Mugabe met with Soames in Salisbury, following the polling process. Soames sent his account of that meeting back to the FCO, indicating that he lectured Mugabe on the abuses carried out by ZANU-PF but told him that he would not take any further action. He then recounts Mugabe's own misgivings about taking over control of Zimbabwe:

There would be a lot of changes to bring about but he [Mugabe] realised that this should be over a long period of time. He knows that some people regarded him as an ogre but he wasn't. He did not want anyone to feel that they had to leave the country, but there would need to be, and be seen to be, a growing degree of Africanisation, particularly in the civil service. He had many anxieties about how he was going to govern in the immediate future for he realised that he did not have many people of experience or with administrative skills around him. (Soames 1980b)

Mugabe asked if Lord Soames might stay on as governor "for many months" but Soames said the British have a much shorter time frame for independence: "I said that it should be counted in days or perhaps a week, but not much longer. He said he hoped it would be at least months." Mugabe is portrayed by Soames as a more vulnerable leader than is often depicted, perhaps because this vulnerability helped make the role played by Lord Soames and the United Kingdom seem all the more important in the transition to Zimbabwe. It could also have been the case that Mugabe did have misgivings, particularly about the security situation. ZANU had triumphed in the February 14–27 polls, the results of which were announced a few days later on March 4, 1980. Mugabe's ZANU-PF had won the vast majority of parliamentary seats (57/80), compared with Nkomo's ZAPU party's 20 seats and Muzorewa's mere 3 seats.

This was a big victory for ZANU-PF, one that came as a surprise to most Western diplomats, and it would give ZANU-PF the mandate to create a one-party state once they had confronted the minority opposition of ZAPU and its threat to ZANU-PF's dominance. Here again, ZANU-PF would return to the rhetorical context of the war, as Nkomo and ZAPU were viewed after independence as an internal/external threat against the new nation. In this context, it was not the Western powers per se who were responsible for subverting the new nation, but the assumed alliance of ZAPU dissidents with the South African state.

After gaining control of the state, Mugabe and ZANU-PF used their new role to solidify party control by quickly developing a "state of siege" mentality in their rhetoric. Mugabe had spent some years in Nkrumah's Ghana during the late 1950s when Nkrumah perfected the state rhetoric of a socialist one-party African state under attack from the West. By 1980, he could also look to Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda, and even North Korea for examples of one-party states that used an anti-Western rhetoric to galvanize support for the one-party agenda. However, at the same time, Mugabe realized that Western donors and Cold War "goodwill" were essential for developing the Zimbabwean state itself. The peculiar conditionality that he had agreed to at Lancaster made Zimbabwe somewhat unique in that a dual economy existed whereby white farmers and businesses still had access to foreign

exchange through imports and exports, while the majority of Africans were not fully integrated into the regional or world economy. The state, then, became the main source of accumulation and mobility for those who either served in the liberation war or came back to Zimbabwe with skills to help build the new nation. Norma Kriger (2003: 4) has shown how this dual economy, and Mugabe's promises to Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan that he would not harm white business interests, created a situation in which a radical nationalist rhetoric could be deployed against South Africa in particular, while the Zimbabwean economy remained 75 percent dependent on trade with South Africa.

Mugabe was able to leverage both Western goodwill at having avoided a Cold War military confrontation over Rhodesia and Western antiapartheid sentiments into large commitments of aid dollars from Western donors in the early 1980s. This did not, however, limit his anti-Western rhetoric in various international forums, such as the Non-Aligned Movement conferences, the UN, or the OAU. Western powers were so committed to making independent Zimbabwe work as a noncommunist, pro-Western nation that they generally refrained from criticizing Mugabe too harshly for the growing evidence of civilian killings during Operation Gukurahundi—an internal military operation that began in 1983 and continued, off and on, until after the 1985 elections (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) Report 1997; Sibanda 2005; Scarnecchia 2011b).

Perhaps some of Mugabe's most skillful diplomacy came in the early 1980s when he leveraged his pro-Western position vis-à-vis Soviet and Cuban involvement for increased development and military aid from Western powers. Traveling to major Western donor countries, Mugabe consistently expressed a message that he was not interested in becoming any closer with the Soviets, while also getting across the point that he and ZANU-PF supported reconciliation. Robert Keeley (1982c: 2), the first American ambassador to Zimbabwe, sent the following opinion of Mugabe to then undersecretary of state for Africa, Chester Crocker, in September 1982:

I am convinced that Mugabe is sincerely committed to a policy of reconciliation and has been trying his best to impose his view on his associates and convince those across the various barriers that he is serious and means to succeed with this policy. He has done rather better with the white-black relationship than with the black-black one. Mugabe is about the least racist person I have ever encountered, and he seems to exude this quality. Which is why the whites of the country—or most of them—set such store by him. He means it when he says that all Zimbabweans are to be treated equally, regardless of race, color, prior political stance or whatever.

On the one hand, Mugabe was invited to London and Washington DC for official visits with Thatcher and Reagan who praised him as a symbol of racial tolerance and democracy, while back home he was threatening Zimbabweans for supporting opposition parties perceived by him and others in the ruling party to be intent on destroying the new nation.

Mugabe's seemingly contradictory combination of anti-imperialist and anti-Western rhetoric, with his cooperation at the highest levels with Western military and civilian advisors, continued for the first two–three years after independence, and even during the period of ZANU power consolidation during the Gukurahundi

campaign. This continued support must be considered keeping in mind the fact that the Western powers were in desperate need of Mugabe's cooperation. In return, the US and British in particular were not excessively critical of Mugabe's government for the way operation Gukurahundi was carried out or of the consolidation of power around ZANU-PF that occurred at the same time (Scarnecchia 2011b). However, as the following discussion indicates, the Gukurahundi period did begin to tarnish Mugabe's reputation with foreign diplomats in Harare.

The security operations in Matabeleland began an operation very much predicated on Liberation War intransigence that Mugabe and others in his inner circle had perfected during the war. By linking ex-ZIPRA dissidents, and the leaders of ZAPU, with South African destabilization efforts, Mugabe and other leaders found the most effective way to placate both internal and external criticisms. Diplomatic records from the period, however, show how well Mugabe pushed the diplomatic envelope to use threats and counterthreats to lessen the criticisms of the British and Americans during the campaign.

Still, relations were strained as the intransigence of Mugabe, especially in his long-standing competition with Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU, began to break the international image of him as a champion of reconciliation after independence. The Zimbabwean government's handling (or perhaps mishandling) of this case set the stage for a series of diplomatic missteps during the Gukurahundi period starting in January 1983. After the July 23, 1982, kidnapping of six hostages, two Americans, two Britons, and two Australians, the US ambassador and the British and Australian high commissioners met regularly with ZANU officials and Nkomo to see what could be done to help locate and free the hostages. Since the kidnapers had issued ransom notes indicating that they would free the hostages if ZAPU leaders Dumiso Dabengwa and Lookout Masuku were released from detention and confiscated ZAPU properties returned, the ZANU leadership felt that it was the responsibility of Joshua Nkomo, as leader of ZAPU, to negotiate directly with the kidnapers, rather than having the government of Zimbabwe responsible for the negotiations. The government of Zimbabwe's position, according to then minister of state for defense Sydney Sekeramayi, was that it "would not meet the demands of the abductors in any fashion" (Keeley 1982a).

Meeting with Mugabe for the first time on August 4 to discuss the hostage situation, the three diplomats were told that his "reaction had been one of shock and horror over this deplorable incident." He said little could be done until the hostages were located, and "he complained that the local populace had lied to the searchers, had misled them, had 'decoyed' them away from where the bandits had actually travelled" (Keeley 1982b). Mugabe explained that Sekeramayi "had telephoned him . . . to say that five of the hostages had been assassinated. The exercise had become to find the graves." He went on to say that this hadn't been confirmed and that "it is possible the hostages are still alive." Mugabe then began to blame Joshua Nkomo for not taking a more active role in locating the hostages. Mugabe "said that he had been disappointed in Nkomo's half-hearted statement on the subject. Nkomo could have done much more. More generally Nkomo could have condemned what has been going on in Matabeleland . . . He had asked Nkomo to do 'much more' in the way of appealing to his followers to stop the banditry and to ask the abductors to release the hostages. If they are still holding them. ('But you can't depend on Nkomo,' Mugabe said.)" After saying that he had been previously "deliberately avoiding Nkomo," Mugabe recounted the meeting he had had with

him the previous day, saying “with a chuckle” that Nkomo had wanted “his confiscated farms returned to him.” He told the diplomats that “Nkomo had indulged in a series of denials: He was not responsible for the arms caches; he had committed no unlawful acts. The kidnapping had not been a ZAPU act.” Mugabe said he had decided to finally meet with Nkomo to say that

he had tried to involve ZAPU in the government (He meant in 1980–81), but the situation today is that ZAPU could be doing a lot more to help the situation. These ZAPU “youngsters” (the dissidents) had been acting in ZAPU’s name. In Nkomo’s name. Nkomo could stop it. The truth is, Mugabe said, that some of Nkomo’s adherents have been encouraging the Banditry. (Keeley 1982b)

Such an exchange shows Mugabe’s continued willingness to push the responsibility for what was, by any standards, a serious international diplomatic crisis to his rivals in Zimbabwe. At the same time, the old façade of Nkomo as the “father of the nation” and part of the Patriotic Front during the negotiations for independence had completely vanished. Mugabe had no problem ascribing blame to Nkomo, not only for the abductions themselves, but also for the lack of success of the Zimbabwean security forces in locating and freeing the hostages.

The frustration with Mugabe and other ZANU leaders over their inability to take responsibility for the situation is evident in the diplomatic record as the weeks and months unfold. Mugabe was willing to let the Western diplomats know that he was now in control, and Nkomo’s initial response—refusing to intervene unless asked by Mugabe to do so as a national leader rather than the leader of ZAPU—demonstrated that he was now at the mercy of Mugabe and ZANU and that he would not fall into the trap of taking responsibility for the dissident activities.

One year later, in May 1983, the situation in Matabeleland had deteriorated greatly and reports of civilian killings and torture by the 5th Brigade had made their way into the international media as well as local and international human rights organizations. The inability of the Zimbabwean government to bring the dissident violence to an end, and the growing sense that the 5th Brigade was engaged in acts of terror to destroy ZAPU rather than countering the dissidents, made it difficult for Western diplomats in Harare to decide on the best course of action. They were bound by the Cold War reality of wanting to make sure Mugabe and ZANU-PF continued to accept Western military training and foreign aid, but they were also increasingly aware that the ZANU-ZAPU rivalry and the government campaign against ZAPU may lead to a civil war.

Martin Ewans, the British high commissioner, described a meeting of Western diplomats held in early May 1983. He describes how the American ambassador Bob Keeley was under pressure from the State Department to answer questions from Congress about the killings in Matabeleland and that the crisis could have a major impact on Zimbabwe’s future, as it jeopardized “\$75 million worth of aid appropriations for 1984” (Ewans 1983). Keeley argued that “what had been happening in Zimbabwe was itself extremely serious. There just had to be a reconciliation with the Ndebele and a settlement between ZAPU and ZANU, or the country would never hang together and make progress” (Ewans 1983). Ewans writes that he agreed with Keeley’s position and that the diplomats agreed to discuss how they could persuade Mugabe “to follow less confrontational policies.” However, the diplomats also agreed that gaining access to Mugabe “was extremely difficult,”

as Mugabe did not “allow any head of mission to get too close,” and he wasn’t even close to his own colleagues in ZANU: “he might perhaps listen to Muzenda and Nyagumbo as ‘elder statesmen,’ although even then he would be liable to suspect their motives if they were to agree to convey messages to him.” The diplomats found it difficult to come up with anyone to put pressure on Mugabe, and after suggesting “the Chinese, Samora Machel and Lord Carrington.” In the end, the Americans decided that the “only possible interlocutor was Nyerere, although they had no idea if the latter would see the need, and even if so would agree, to tender the right sort of advice.” Ewans (1983) concluded that “a) Recent events have damaged the aid climate here; b) there is a widespread feeling that Mugabe has not been handling matters wisely and needs advice; c) but he is an exceptionally difficult man with whom to establish any rapport.”

This example illustrates a main theme throughout Mugabe’s many years as a diplomat. He was always quite good at presenting himself as a trustworthy and reliable leader to heads of state and other important top-level diplomats, such as secretaries of state, but when it came to his dealings with ambassadors and lower-level diplomats, he was very careful not to build relationships that would allow them to have the sense that they were influencing his decision-making. Former American ambassador to Zimbabwe Edward Laphner (2003), who was deputy chief of mission in the US embassy in Harare in the early 1980s, expressed a similar opinion of Mugabe in a 2003 interview:

Nobody in the diplomatic corps had an ideal relationship with Mugabe. Yes, we had meetings with him. But they took a long time to arrange. He didn’t see a lot of diplomats. He probably saw us and the British High Commissioner more than anybody else. But Mugabe was always a very formal, very correct fellow, very articulate. We took a number of congressional visitors in to see him and he was invariably polite, well dressed, and well mannered. But nobody had a warm and fuzzy relationship with Robert Mugabe. A distant, remote man. (64)

David C. Miller, who served as US ambassador to Zimbabwe from 1984 to 1986, was even more critical of Mugabe’s intransigence than Laphner. In a 2003 interview, Miller relates that he was sent to Harare to replace Ambassador Keeley, who was perceived to be failing to get to know and work with Mugabe. He says that when he first met Keeley in Harare, Keeley apparently said something like, “I’m going to kill the man if you leave me here another six months. Robert Mugabe is going to be strangled by the American ambassador.’ So I had a fairly good sense of the fact that this was going to be a pretty grim assignment.” Miller, however, thought that he was more skilled at getting to know African leaders as he had just served four years as US ambassador to Tanzania, where he got along well with President Nyerere. In the end, however, he relates that he failed as much as Keeley in establishing a relationship with Mugabe. Miller (2003) reflected on Mugabe’s diplomatic skills:

He [Mugabe] was very arrogant, very isolated in many ways, did not know how to use the diplomats that were stationed there, was just an outrageous critic of the United States. We were the largest aid donor to Zimbabwe at that time. . . . He had no interest in working with anybody from the United States, let alone an American diplomat. He just had no idea really what ambassadors did. He didn’t



really know how to use his own ambassadors. He didn't know how to relate to us as a diplomatic corps.

When asked in the interview if he had also felt like strangling Mugabe, Miller replied, "I didn't strangle him either, but I only lasted two years. Keeley lasted four. If I had gone four, I probably would have strangled him, too" (Miller 2003).

## CONCLUSION

Robert Mugabe effectively developed and nurtured his contacts with Western diplomats from the 1960s through the 1970s, and these diplomatic relationships ultimately created the opportunity in the late 1970s to negotiate independence and an end to the war. Once Mugabe successfully took control of the country in 1980, the diplomatic relations between Mugabe and the West continued to be expressed in terms of his closeness to Western leaders in the Cold War context, but at the same time, as domestic politics unraveled and the suppression of Nkomo and ZAPU developed in the early 1980s, those diplomats who dealt more directly with Mugabe became increasingly worried about his lack of reconciliation with Nkomo and ZAPU. This duplicity, which in earlier years had been shrugged off as rhetorical flourishes necessary for the continued military support from China and the Socialist bloc, became much less palatable when the rhetoric and reality became about defeating ZAPU and troops trained and equipped by the British, in particular, were reported to be involved in alleged atrocities against civilians.

During the Cold War, leaders such as Margaret Thatcher, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan needed the support of Mugabe to show that they were successfully limiting Soviet and Cuban influence in Southern Africa and, at the same time, supporting what they increasingly perceived to be a multiracial postsettler state that would serve as a model for a postapartheid South Africa. Mugabe was quite skilled as a statesman to play both sides of this equation: on the one hand, to be personally close with these key Western leaders in order to ask for development aid and to help pressure South Africa to be less destabilizing in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, he continued the rhetoric of pan-African and nonaligned solidarity to remain a significant player both regionally and internationally. However, as this chapter suggests, once in power and particularly during the campaigns against his rival Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU, Mugabe's ability to continue to balance the contradictory diplomatic personae, on the one hand the "model of reconciliation," and on the other the fierce critique of Western imperialism, began to fracture. Most of this strain most likely came from his own hubris concerning his quest to dominate over Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU, even as the security situation in the country worsened. For those Western diplomats who knew what was happening in the country through the information passed on by their contacts, the inconsistency of his message—championing reconciliation with whites while increasingly using the state security apparatus to punish those who supported ZAPU—tarnished his otherwise impressive international image. Still, Mugabe continued to receive support from the Western powers even as they were aware of his knowledge of Gukurahundi crimes and his defense of the policies used against ZAPU.

An illustrative example of the closeness between Mugabe and the United States in the Cold War is Mugabe's meeting with the head of the US Central Intelligence

Agency (CIA), William Casey, in New York at the United Nations in October 1982. Both Casey and Mugabe began the meeting thanking each other for cooperation on the intelligence front. Mugabe also thanked Casey for American “cooperation in developing the Zimbabwean intelligence service” (Secretary of State 1982). Later in the meeting, after Mugabe explained why the military was cracking down against ZAPU dissidents, the US ambassador insinuated that such actions could lead to the United States tying their sizeable foreign aid package to Zimbabwe to human rights. William Casey, in his typical fashion, was less concerned about these issues, and told Mugabe he was only concerned with these issues to the extent that they caused some Republican senators to challenge Zimbabwe’s aid levels. Responding to Mugabe’s claim that the Western media was making up these stories of atrocities, “Mr. Casey said the aid linkage was not paramount, but stressed that Zimbabwe had what was essentially a publications problem and they had to understand that we don’t control what appears in our press” (Secretary of State 1982). For Mugabe, this green light from Casey was more important than the complaints and pressures the US ambassador tried to get through to him, rather unsuccessfully, by their connections with less influential Zimbabwean politicians.

After the Cold War and particularly after the end of apartheid in South Africa, Mugabe no longer needed to hold on to his close ties with Western leaders, as there was no need or opportunity to leverage his anti-Soviet or antiapartheid credentials for foreign aid as he did in the past. As events would unfold in the late 1990s and after 2000, dealing with a viable threat from domestic opposition would, however, once again take center stage in defining Mugabe’s role as an international actor. Once again, Mugabe would return to the rhetoric of subversion, the defense of sovereignty (still defined as ZANU-PF and the nation as the same) and “sellout” politics that had characterized his formative years from 1960 to 1984. This time the source of subversion was no longer the Soviets or apartheid South Africa, but those same Western powers who had done so much to bring Mugabe to power in the first place.

# Sheriff in the “Club of Dictators”?: Robert Mugabe’s Role in the Politics of Southern Africa, 1976–2013

*Munyaradzi N yakudyaa ndJ osephJ akarasi*

## INTRODUCTION

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has been described in some circles as “a club of dictators” in reference to the perceived authoritarianism of its rulers. The implication is that these leaders have self-serving interests and condone each other’s actions, irrespective of their impact on the region’s sociopolitical and economic fortunes. The question however is what role do individual leaders play within the “club”? This chapter therefore examines Robert Mugabe’s role in the organization, focusing specifically on his influence on regional politics since the time he was struggling to assume control of Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle and gain the recognition of the Front Line leaders in the late 1970s. It argues that even prior to Zimbabwe’s independence, Mugabe worked with the Front Line States (FLS) as leader of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), one of the liberation movements recognized by the FLS as the legitimate representative of the oppressed people of Zimbabwe, but not before they had doubted him. By the time he assumed power in independent Zimbabwe, Mugabe already had some measure of influence over his peers in the FLS, most of who were younger than him. His influence was particularly enhanced by the comparative economic might of his country, which made the FLS leaders look up to Zimbabwe as an anchor against the belligerent apartheid regime. Indeed, as Zimbabwe attained its independence, a new regional body largely aimed at regional economic cooperation and integration, the Southern African Development Co ordination Committee (SADCC), was formed with Mugabe immediately playing a pivotal role by virtue of Zimbabwe’s relative political and economic might.

The demise of apartheid, however, transformed regional power dynamics, with South Africa ceasing to be an enemy of the FLS but a colleague. The changing regional security environment necessitated the transformation of SADCC into the SADC. Due to her immense economic muscle, South Africa became the new regional

hegemony, stealing the limelight from Zimbabwe, with Nelson Mandela becoming the new global star and Robert Mugabe seemingly going into oblivion. The chapter thus analyzes how the Mandela-Mugabe tussle helped determine regional politics. Relations between the two seemingly frayed over control of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS) and intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) war when Mugabe apparently either outwitted Mandela or simply bulldozed his position in SADC. Then there was SADC's suspension in August 2010 of its tribunal after it was trashed by Mugabe, SADC's seeming inaction at Zimbabwe's blatant disregard of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, particularly after the March 29, 2008, harmonized elections and the country's blatant refusal to implement electoral, security, and media reforms agreed to with fellow Government of National Unity (GNU) principals under the facilitation of the SADC-appointed South African presidency. Mugabe's regional sway is further demonstrated by the attitudes of the likes of Presidents Jacob Zuma (South Africa), Joyce Banda (Malawi), and Ian Khama (Botswana), among others, who all initially expressed revulsion at Mugabe but subsequently mellowed in his presence. The chapter therefore argues that Mugabe has acted as a sheriff in the regional body, bulldozing his way at will, particularly on issues pertaining to Zimbabwe, and in the process impinging on the country's democratization and general economic development. Research is however not yet conclusive as to the impact of Mugabe's dominance of regional politics on the region's overall quest for sociopolitical and economic integration, democracy, security, and sustainable development.

Methodologically, the chapter largely relies on desktop research. Particularly useful have been secondary texts, newspapers, and SADC reports. Interviews with Zimbabwean politicians, particularly covering the GNU phase, have also been useful, except that these are mainly with opposition politicians only as their ZANU-PF counterparts were largely not forthcoming.<sup>1</sup> Particularly useful were the interviews with Morgan Tsvangirai, prime minister during the Global Political Agreement (GPA) era and leader of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), and renowned academic and publisher Ibbo Mandaza, among others. A personal discussion with Dr. Tomaz Salomao, immediate past executive secretary of SADC, who headed the regional body from 2005 to 2013 and presided over key events that form the basis for the chapter's tentative arguments, notably the 2005 tribunal debacle, 2008 elections, and negotiations that culminated in the GPA, was also instructive although a proper interview failed to materialize. It is however hoped that Dr. Salomao will soon complete writing his memoirs, which should be quite instructive and insightful on some of the outstanding questions about the goings-on behind closed doors in SADC.

### THE FRONT LINE STATES AND MUGABE'S ASCENDANCY TO POWER

Mugabe had a fairly tumultuous rise to the helm of ZANU. He ascended to the post through a "prison coup." As Masipula Sithole (1999: 62) postulates, a "leadership crisis" in ZANU in the Que Que Prison saw Mugabe being elected acting president in 1974 pending a Congress. In November of the same year, Mugabe even led a ZANU delegation to Lusaka for unity talks with the then leader Ndabaningi Sithole being "completely left out of the delegation." The critical point here is that

Mugabe’s takeover at this stage was not recognized by both the Dare reChimurenga, the ZANU high command in Lusaka, and the regional leaders of independent African states who were trying to assist the Zimbabwean cause (62). Mugabe had to return to Salisbury with his tail between the legs and Sithole resumed his leadership of the party. However, after the machinations surrounding Herbert Chitepo’s assassination on March 18, 1975, in Zambia, ZANLA cadres later denounced Sithole’s leadership in the famous Mgagao Declaration (October 1975). The declaration put forward Mugabe’s name as Sithole’s successor, on the instruction of Dare, thus catapulting Mugabe to the presidency of ZANU (see Mhanda 2011: 85).

Mhanda (2011: 87) alludes to the ZANLA officers’ initial misgivings about endorsing an “unknown quantity” like Mugabe as leader of the revolutionary movement. Apparently, these misgivings were shared by some of the Front Line leaders. Machel is reputed to have declared that he “did not trust Mugabe” and proceeded to banish him to Quelimane, “far removed from both the refugee camps and the border with Rhodesia.” It took a lot of diplomatic negotiations to get Mugabe endorsed by the Front Line leaders and released from the banishment to take up the liberation mantle. Even then, his relations with Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, reportedly in favor of the ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo, Mugabe’s sworn enemy, remained fractious.

The reported rejection by Machel and dislike by Kaunda could have implanted in Mugabe a desire to prevail over them in future. This would be typical of the teenage Robert Mugabe described by Holland (2008: 6–8). She posits that being “the butt of jokes among his peers, including his brothers and sisters” in response to the favoritism he received from his mother and priest, Mugabe reportedly became “defiant” and “never sought reconciliation or compromise” and always warned “that he would get even some day.” He was reportedly “driven from early on by a determination to show those who scorned him and his books, who called him a mummy’s boy and a coward, that he was, nevertheless, the king of the castle—and that they would all have to acknowledge it sooner or later” (8). Indeed, Mugabe was to prove to both Machel and Kaunda and the other regional leaders that indeed he was “the king of the castle” or sheriff in the club. This is a legacy that has persisted to date as Mugabe continues to rule the roost in the region.

### MUGABE’S/ZIMBABWE’S ROLE IN THE FORMATION OF SADC

SADC has its genesis first in the FLS and later in the SADCC. The FLS was created in 1976 by the leaders of five independent African countries in Southern Africa, namely, Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia, specifically as a security alliance against the apartheid regime. The FSL leaders reasoned that they could only successfully hedge themselves against the might of apartheid if they were united as a security bloc. Their main strategy was the liberation of the territories still under white minority rule in the region, notably, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Prominent leaders in the FSL at that time were Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania (1964–November 1985), Samora Moises Machel of Mozambique (1975–October 1986), Antonio Agostinho Neto of Angola (1975–September 1979), Sir Dr. Seretse Khama of Botswana (1966–July 1980), and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia (1964–November 1991).

Significantly, the FLS was formed specifically to deal with a security challenge, which is “to crisis-manage the Rhodesia-Zimbabwe war” (Evans 1984) and enforce

the establishment of democratic rule in apartheid South Africa. At the same time, Robert Mugabe was steadily worming his way to the helm of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZANU) amid a leadership quandary after the assassination of Herbert Chitepo in Zambia the previous year (see Mhanda 2011; White 2003; Sithole 1999; Martin and Johnson 1985). Within the year of the formation of the FLS, Mugabe was securely in control of the liberation movement (see Mhanda 2011: 135–168), a development that placed him squarely at par with the leaders of the regional body even before he assumed state power in Zimbabwe. The argument here is that the FLS grouping was formed at exactly the same time that Mugabe was assuming leadership of Zimbabwe's most vibrant liberation movement. Equally significant was that all the leaders of the FLS were his age, save perhaps for Samora Machel who was nine years his junior.<sup>2</sup> On her attainment of independence in April 1980, Zimbabwe became a member of the FLS and Mugabe found himself among his peers.

Concurrent to these events, as Zimbabwe inched toward political independence in the late 1970s, apartheid South Africa was mooted the idea of an anti-Marxist Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS) to safeguard her regional military, political, and economic interests, further presenting a security challenge to the FLS. As Evans (1984: 2) postulates, this constellation would form a regional security and economic bloc comprising South Africa, her Bantustan states of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, and Venda, and such neighboring countries as Botswana, Lesotho, Rhodesia-Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Malawi, and Mozambique (2). Wary of the inherent dangers that would be posed by the successful creation of such a grouping under the hegemonic influence of apartheid South Africa, the FLS leaders thus pushed for the formation of the SADCC, which would champion the region's "economic liberation and the development of a regional communications strategy in order to reduce economic dependency on Pretoria" (2).

The point is that at the time of Zimbabwe's independence, power dynamics within Southern Africa were delicately balanced between the FLS grouping and the prospective CONSAS. Zimbabwe, with an economy and transport network only second to that of South Africa, was therefore poised to determine the direction in which the regional security and power dynamics would point. In 1979, when apartheid South Africa seriously pushed for CONSAS, there was a real possibility that the internal settlement<sup>3</sup> parties could win the elections and probably see Zimbabwe joining the constellation of states under South Africa. This would have seriously tilted the power dynamics in the region in South Africa's favor. However, in the end, ZANU (now renamed ZANU Patriotic Front) prevailed and instead brought Zimbabwe into the FLS grouping much to the consternation of South Africa.

These developments certainly placed Mugabe at the nerve center of regional politics. His position in the region was enhanced by virtue of the strength Zimbabwe provided to the FLS in their quest to counter apartheid South Africa. In the face of continued South African belligerence and bullying tactics in the region, the FLS leaders decided to form a regional organization that would take on South Africa economically. While the decision to create SADCC was made in July 1979, its subsequent formation a year later was strongly hinged on Zimbabwe. In Evans's (1984: 2–3) words, Zimbabwe's membership of the FLS "made possible the true birth of SADCC." In fact, Evans perceives Zimbabwe as "the anvil" upon which SADCC was "forged" because of her economic strength compared to the independent

African states she was joining. SADCC became "an operational reality" while "the regional isolation of apartheid South Africa [was] accomplished."

SADCC took on a more economic thrust than the FLS. As Nyakudya 2013: 13) postulates, its primary goal was economic emancipation and regional integration and coordination. It was all about reducing economic dependence on apartheid South Africa. This directly put spanners in apartheid South Africa's grand design of a regional bloc, CONSAS, which would have turned her into a "fortress." Thus, thanks to Mugabe's Zimbabwe, the birth of SADCC not only entailed the collapse of CONSAS but also further reinforced the emerging "international perception of South Africa as a helpless giant, unable to translate her military and economic might into regional diplomatic supremacy" (13). This was equally bolstered by Mugabe's flourishing policy of racial reconciliation in Zimbabwe that directly flew in the face of apartheid South Africa's notions of white racial superiority.

The significance of Zimbabwe to SADCC can also be observed in the relative power the country brought to the FLS. Of the five countries originally in the FLS grouping, only Tanzania had an army with a semblance of competency and this had been proven in 1978–1979 when the country deployed 10,000 troops that methodically demolished the Ugandan Army under Idi Amin (Nyang'oro 2005: 9). Of the others, Botswana had a miniscule force of no more than 3,000 members; Zambia's army was so ineffectual that Rhodesia carried out raids against ZIPRA cadres and refugees inside Zambia at will and with impunity (see Martin and Johnson 1981); Angolan and Mozambican forces were both engaged against internal insurgencies in the form of UNITA and MNR, respectively. Only Zimbabwe, which had successfully completed integration and transformation of her army made up of former ZIPRA, ZANLA, and RNA forces, offered a whiff of hope that South Africa could be deterred from militarily bullying her neighbors with impunity.

By the time SADCC was officially launched, the FLS (which continued to exist separately) had lost two of its founding fathers. Neto had passed away in 1979 while Khama followed suit on July 13, 1980. That left only Nyerere, born in 1922, as the sole FLS and SADCC leader older than Mugabe. Kaunda was two months Mugabe's junior while Eduardo dos Santos, Neto's successor in 1979, was born in 1942 and thus was way younger than Machel who himself died in a plane crash in 1986. Thus, from SADCC's inception in 1980, Mugabe enjoyed significant authority in regional politics by virtue of his age, which is generally revered in Africa. In fact, by November 1985, when Nyerere stepped down from power, Mugabe was left to rule the roost in SADCC as the eldest statesman. This position was indeed sealed in November 1991 when Kaunda, the last of the FLS founding fathers, was ousted from power after he lost to Frederick Chiluba in a multiparty election. Only the unassuming dos Santos remained as one of the two only "surviving" and serving founding presidents of SADCC. To underline Mugabe's subtle influence, Dr. Simba Makoni, a Zimbabwean politician in Mugabe's cabinet, became SADCC's first executive secretary to serve two full terms.

With the collapse of apartheid in the early 1990s, the FLS lost its *raison d'état* and was thus disbanded in 1992. Similarly, SADCC had one of its key objectives, wading off apartheid South Africa, negated. This necessitated the crafting of a regional grouping with a fresh, broader, and more encompassing mandate, and also embracing South Africa. Ultimately, this saw the birth of SADC with the mandate to attain development and economic growth, evolve common political values and systems, and promote peace and security and the general interdependence of states

in the region (SADC Treaty 1992). A SADC Common Agenda, which entails the principles and values meant to guide the regional integration agenda, was developed from these objectives. At the heart of the agenda are sociopolitical and economic integration and the consolidation, defense, and maintenance of democracy, peace, security, and stability.

It is worth noting here that Mugabe was at the center of these arrangements. It was in Zimbabwe's security interests to ensure that such a grouping was a successful reality. The 1980s had seen the euphoria of independence being dissipated by the civil strife that rocked Matabeleland and Midlands provinces (see Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe and Legal Resources Foundation 1997). Then, there was also the burden brought on the country by apartheid South Africa's destabilization activities. On the other hand, in the early 1990s, Zimbabwe groaned under the weight of the International Monetary Fund's austerity measures dubbed the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) meant to resuscitate the ailing economy (see Mlambo 1997). Under such circumstances, Mugabe sought the way out through a broader coalescence of states in the region.

### FROM SADCC TO SADC: AN ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL GEOPOLITICS IN THE 1990S

While the SADCC made commendable achievements in addressing national economic problems of the countries in the region and the hostile international economic environment as well as dealing with the military aggression of the apartheid regime in South Africa (SADC Declaration and Treaty 1992: 3), its progress toward the reduction of the region's economic dependence and toward economic integration was modest. This can be attributed to the fact that there were still countries such as Mozambique and Angola that were involved in civil wars while Namibia, on the other hand, was in the middle of a struggle against colonialism. Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe was the "only" country with the economic muscle and political "stability." Although it is clear that the region was struggling to achieve economic integration during this period, a critical analysis of the regional geopolitics reveals that the balance was tipping in favor of Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe.

As events would attest, the attainment of independence and sovereign nationhood by Namibia in 1990 formally ended the struggle against colonialism in the region. Elsewhere, the process of dismantling apartheid in South Africa was now at full throttle as evidenced by the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in the same year. These two events were key milestones in the regional leaders' focus on regional integration. The most immediate reaction to these developments was the ratification of the SADC Treaty on August 19, 1992, in Windhoek, Namibia. This treaty brought to fruition the Lusaka Declaration of April 1980, which aimed at "pursuing policies aimed at economic liberation and integrated development of the economies of the region" (SADC Declaration and Treaty 1992: 2). For Robert Mugabe, this was a critical period as it presented him a golden opportunity to stamp his authority on the newly created SADC.

At this time, most of the members of the FLS and SADCC had either stepped down or were having their own challenges in their respective countries. Kenneth Kaunda, for example, had been defeated by the Movement for Multi-party Democracy's Fredrick Chiluba during Zambia's first multiparty elections.



Although dos Santos was still there, he was preoccupied with the challenge of the UNITA rebels at home. In Mozambique, the RENAMO problem was still a thorn in the flesh of the FRELIMO government while Nujoma’s Namibia was still in the process of reconstruction after its recent independence. Given this state of affairs, Mugabe was not only one of the most senior leaders of the new regional body, with the added advantage of his country’s economic muscle. He thus sought to instrumentalize this position as his leverage in the region’s politics. By virtue of his seniority, economic muscle, and the stability in his country after the 1987 Unity Accord with the Zimbabwe African People’s Union, Robert Mugabe had an upper hand and influenced the regional leaders who were experiencing their fair share of challenges ranging from political instability to reconstruction, among others. Thus, during this period, Mugabe had a clearly dominant and unbridled role in the region.

### ENTER MANDELA

In the wake of Mandela’s death in December 2013, former Botswana president Quett Ketumile Masire, made a stunning revelation about the power dynamics in SADC during the mid-1990s. Notable in his memoirs was his account of the relationship between Robert Mugabe and Nelson Mandela, which he described as “turbulent” (*The Independent* December 13, 2013). In Zimbabwe, Masire’s statement sparked debate in both the public and private media houses. Although the magnitude of the tensions might have been exaggerated in some reports, it is clear that the power dynamics within SADC after the admission of South Africa in August 1995 involved two key players, senior sheriff Mugabe, and the democracy-oriented Nelson Mandela.

Central to Masire’s revelation is the Mugabe-Mandela tussle over the OPDS, which was formed on June 28, 1996, in Gaborone, Botswana. Some observers have reasoned that “the establishment of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security represents an ambitious effort on the part of the Southern African sub-region to integrate national political institutions, and to harmonise their values and practices at political level” (Ngoma 2010: 17). As has been indicated earlier, prior to the admission of South Africa into SADC, Robert Mugabe had enjoyed a de facto leadership of the region by virtue of being the oldest sitting head of state as well as having the economic and military muscle in the region. Thus, from the time that South Africa was admitted to SADC, it became a simmering battle of personalities trying to instrumentalize the positions of their respective countries in a bid to gain political mileage. In this case, Nelson Mandela was being celebrated as the hero of democracy all over the world. At the same time, Robert Mugabe’s governance and human rights record was beginning to go on a downward spiral. While the state media in Zimbabwe has dismissed the existence of a feud between Mandela and Mugabe on the basis of what Mugabe said after the death of Mandela, the latter’s visit to Harare in 1996, and the naming of a road after him (*The Herald* December 12, 2013), it is indubitable that Masire’s statement bluntly reflects the deep political contradictions and fissures during that period.

The OPDS became a theater of contestation between Mugabe and Mandela. For Mandela, the legal basis of the OPDS was supposed to derive from Article 10 of the SADC Treaty, which basically placed the summit at the apex of decision-

making processes (SADC Treaty 1992). In other words, according to this provision, the summit and its chair would remain the supreme overseers of whatever institution that would be formed under the auspices of SADC, thus bolstering the influence of the latter. This position, however, contrasted sharply with Mugabe's envisaged composition and functions of the OPDS. Mugabe was bluntly resistant to any institutionalization of the OPDS as he believed that it was possible for it to operate under a separate chair. In this case, as argued by Cawthra (2010: 10), Mugabe's position was influenced by the wish to preserve the tradition of the FLS that the longest-standing president (in this case himself) retain the chair of the organ. This scenario is a clear indication of how Mugabe wanted to keep security issues as the preserve of an informal arrangement of presidents just like the FLS did during the period of SADCC. Mugabe's reasoning was, therefore, that his seniority in the region and a separate and informal arrangement would technically put him at the apex of regional politics.

A more nuanced analysis of this shows that it was logical for the regional leaders to take the legal route as represented by the South African position, but member states were overwhelmed by Mugabe's influence to the extent that they resorted to a political approach by calling a summit in Luanda in a bid to settle the deadlock and clarify the question of the leadership of the OPDS (Malan 1998: 6). Clearly, therefore, although the regional body had a vision to democratize the region, it was not firm on Mugabe. The proposed Luanda Summit did not take place and the matter remained unresolved. The OPDS was therefore not initially subordinated to the ordinary SADC structures, partly because Mugabe, its first chairman, obstinately clung to the office until 2001 even though the chair was supposed to have rotated on an annual basis.

Evidently, the DRC crisis of 1998, which, according to Ngoma (2010: 18), "may have tolled the death knell for diplomatic unity within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and has considerably darkened the future chances of this promising regional cooperation organisation," was a manifestation of Mugabe's intransigence in regional politics. In August 1998, in his capacity as the sitting chair of the OPDS, Mugabe unilaterally called a meeting of SADC foreign ministers whom he easily coerced/bulldozed into sanctioning armed intervention in the DRC (*The Independent* December 13, 2013). In this case, Mugabe deliberately (ab)used his status as the OPDS chair to further his interests in the region behind Mandela's back. Immediately after the Harare meeting, Mandela, in his capacity as the sitting SADC chair, publicly reprimanded Mugabe for his inflammatory move, declaring that the decision for armed intervention was not an SADC decision: "We would not worsen the situation by sending in a military force. We are committed to peace" (*Human Rights World Report* 1999: 17). Mugabe immediately responded to Mandela's call by stating that "no one is compelled within SADC to go into a campaign of assisting a country beset by conflict... Those who want to keep out, fine. Let them keep out, but let them be silent about those who want to help" ([http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Hornet/irin\\_82198.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Hornet/irin_82198.html)).

This shows the magnitude of political discord in the region during this time and the regional leaders were quick to realize the implication of this contradiction between Harare and Pretoria, and thus the decision to convene an emergency Summit of Heads of State in Pretoria on August 23. In a move that was to be common at all future summits summoned to deal with a conflict involving Mugabe, the summit endorsed the Harare recommendations and commended the governments

of Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe for their timely intervention in the DRC. More significantly, a few weeks after the summit, Mandela backtracked from his original position on the DRC conflict when he called a press conference in Durban and announced that SADC had unanimously supported military intervention by its member states in the DRC (Malan 1999: 9). Given this scenario, it is evidently clear that when push came to shove, Nelson Mandela as an individual and SADC as an organization were overwhelmed by Mugabe who had skillfully instrumentalized his control of the organ to subvert the established decision-making processes. Indeed, the SADC summit proved helpless in the face of Mugabe's blatant bullying and political shrewdness as it ended up supporting his unilateral decision instead of stopping him.

While Nathan's (2006: 606) critique of SADC that there is an "absence of common values among member states as there are two key lines of division: between pacific and militarist approaches to regional security, and between democratic and authoritarian orientations in domestic politics" does well in revealing the shortcomings of the regional leaders, it is equally clear Mugabe's actions reveal that he was prepared neither to relinquish power within the regional body nor to allow for democratic positions/consensus. Instead, he sought to use his seniority in the organization to block Mandela's ideas for change within the regional body. Thus, despite innuendos that Mugabe was the star before the sun rose, Mugabe's remained the authoritative voice in the region's power dynamics.

### SADC, MUGABE, AND THE GLOBAL POLITICAL AGREEMENT

Nowhere has Mugabe shown his total domination, if not disregard, of SADC than in the politics of the Global Political Agreement (GPA). After attaining independence in 1980, Zimbabwe experienced relative growth until the late 1990s when the ruling ZANU-PF's failure to discard its *commandist* approach to governance and transform itself from a liberation movement into a democratic organization geared toward national development rather than personal aggrandizement backfired on the country. A cocktail of challenges caused a sociopolitical and economic meltdown that resulted in the 2001 SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government setting up a task force made up of Botswana, Mozambique, and South Africa to work with Mugabe's government to try and confront the challenges, fearful that these challenges could have a knock-on effect on the region (SADC Treaty 1992). Ultimately, as the crisis escalated dangerously, SADC mandated South Africa alone, or its then president, Thabo Mbeki, in March 2007 to negotiate a settlement in Zimbabwe.

Events over the next 15 months clearly showed Mugabe's unbridled authority over SADC. After several months of painstaking haggling, Mbeki successfully mediated an agreement between Mugabe's ZANU-PF and its main adversaries, the two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations in which the disputants agreed on "a range of constitutional, electoral and media reforms which were endorsed by the Zimbabwean parliament in December 2007" (Nyakudya 2013: 91). In defiance of the letter and spirit of the agreement, Mugabe went ahead and unilaterally declared the date for elections without the consent of the other parties and "before a new constitution could be drafted and any meaningful reforms effected" (91).

An even more blatant disregard of SADC principles was to follow after the March 29, 2008, elections when for a whole five weeks the election results could

not be released. The Mugabe appointed Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) mandated to run elections failed to explain the delay. Despite this clear disregard of the 2004 SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, which mandates member countries to follow agreed best election practices, SADC could only watch helplessly and failed to take any action amid speculation and conjecture that ZEC manipulated the results in favor of Mugabe during those five weeks (Dzinesa and Zambara 2011). The announced results did not produce an outright winner and a rerun between Morgan Tsvangirai of the MDC-T and Mugabe was penciled for June 2008. However, the interim period saw massive violence attributed to the state (Raftopoulos 2013: 11), which claimed thousands of lives, leading an alarmed SADC to call for an Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on April 12, 2008. Incredibly, however, SADC's point man in the Zimbabwe crisis, Mbeki, declared that there was "no crisis in Zimbabwe," and hence SADC's failure to institute any formal action to stop Mugabe and ZANU-PF from perpetrating further violence against their opponents (Nyakudya 2013: 91). Citing persistent violence against his members, Tsvangirai withdrew from the presidential election rerun, which, however, was still held with Mugabe the sole candidate, further plunging Zimbabwe into a crisis of leadership legitimacy (91).

To its credit, however, SADC persisted through Mbeki in mediating the crisis and an important breakthrough was achieved on July 21, 2008, when the parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding committing them to seek a resolution of the crisis. Ultimately, the process led to the conclusion of the GPA on September 8, 2008, culminating in an interim power-sharing Government of National Unity (GNU). Its mandate was to prepare the ground for the holding of credible elections that according to Mbeki (2009) would bring about "the normalization of the situation in Zimbabwe and the resumption of its development and reconstruction process intended to achieve a better life for all Zimbabweans on a sustained and sustainable basis." Again, however, the tenure of the GNU further exposed SADC's helplessness against Mugabe as this chapter will show.

Even before the GNU was inaugurated, Mugabe openly violated the terms of the GPA. Contrary to the provisions of the agreement, Mugabe unilaterally gazetted the allocation of ministries to the three signatory parties to the GPA. While he argued that the allocation was based on what the parties agreed, the other parties disputed this (Raftopoulos 2013: 15). As if this was not bad enough, Mugabe also contravened Article 7 (vi) of the GPA, which stated that "the appointments of the Reserve Bank Governor and Attorney General will be dealt with by the Inclusive Government after its formation" by renewing their terms and appointing provincial governors without recourse to his GPA partners (Hoekman 2012: 8).

Mbeki and by extension SADC certainly proved helpless against Mugabe's intransigence and unilateralism. Despite the protestations of the MDCs, Mbeki persisted with his kid-glove treatment of Mugabe, generally referred to as "quiet diplomacy." Despite being president of the most powerful state in the region, if not on the entire continent, Mbeki would surprisingly not act decisively against Mugabe to the extent that critics accused him of demonstrating "hegemonic naivety" (Mhango 2012) for his failure to reign in Mugabe. The general thinking, particularly in the MDCs, was that Mbeki, as president of the regional hegemony, ought to have used his country's economic and perceived military might to get Mugabe to respect the stipulations of the agreement entered into with his adversaries. In any case, Mbeki had been driven by the desire to prove to the Western world in particular that Africans had

the capacity and capabilities to solve their problems on their own, using "African solutions." Furthermore, South Africa was Zimbabwe's largest trading partner and Mbeki would certainly not have wanted to see a "political and economic implosion in Zimbabwe" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013c: 153).

Given such a scenario, it was anticipated that Mbeki would act decisively against Mugabe, especially at a time when he himself was beleaguered in his own country. He was dethroned as president of the African National Congress (ANC) in December 2007 as domestic dissatisfaction with his rule intensified (Nyakudya 2014: 92), but continued as state president and thus mediator of the Zimbabwe crisis. One of his most potent critics was Jacob Zuma, who at that time described Mugabe as "a dictator" (*New York Times* December 17, 2007). At the time of the contentious March 29, 2008, elections, Zuma described as "suspicious" the delay in announcing the results ([www.irinnews.org/April 11, 2008](http://www.irinnews.org/April%2011,%202008)). Then in June, he stated in a more forthright manner "We cannot agree with ZANU PF. We cannot agree with them on values. We fought for the right of people to vote, we fought for democracy" (*Mail and Guardian* June 24, 2008). Indeed, when Zuma succeeded Mbeki in mediating the Zimbabwe crisis, he took up the task in a more decisive way, bringing in the South African Department of International Relations to provide him and his powerful team of personal assistants (Lindiwe Zulu, Mac Maharaj, and Charles Ngqakula) with technical assistance (Nyakudya 2014: 93). His first report on Zimbabwe to the SADC Summit in Zambia on March 31, 2011, was categorical in lambasting "Mugabe's conduct in frustrating the implementation of the GPA and operations of the GNU" (93).

This seeming show of bravado by Zuma against Mugabe would however soon dissipate. In subsequent reports, Zuma went beyond merely toning down his attacks on Mugabe and instead he adopted a stance of spreading the blame for the slow pace in implementing the provisions of the GPA on all the principals to the agreement. Future SADC summits almost always invariably commended Zuma for the progress he was making in ameliorating the Zimbabwe crisis even when it was clear that nothing tangible was coming out of the mediation, especially in as far as key reforms were concerned, notably the preparation of a new voter's roll, introduction of electoral and media reforms, and "realigning the security sector with a multi-party democracy," among others (Nyakudya 2013: 93).

Indeed, Zuma's helplessness toward Mugabe was clearly demonstrated in events pertaining to the collapse of the SADC Tribunal, initially set up to ensure member states' adherence to the SADC Treaty. Article 4 of the Treaty obligates member countries to respect human rights, apply democratic practices, and uphold the rule of law. In a landmark judgment in a case brought against Mugabe's government for its land acquisition policy and practices, the tribunal invoked this article and ruled in favor of the former commercial white farmers (Zimbabwe Situation March 5, 2013). Mugabe simply defied the court ruling. However, as Nyakudya (2013: 94) argues, instead of sanctioning Zimbabwe, SADC inexplicably suspended the court, ostensibly to review its mandate. This forced the former chief justice of the tribunal, Judge Arrianga Pillay, to accuse Zuma of overseeing the collapse of the court "on Robert Mugabe's behalf" (Zimbabwe Situation March 5, 2013). Pillay's argument was that as leader of the continent's most potent power, Zuma should have acted more authoritatively to preserve the court.

It is not Mbeki and Zuma alone who have been forced to bend backward to accommodate Mugabe's seemingly unpalatable positions. The likes of the late

Levy Mwanawasa and Rupiya Banda, Ian Khama, and Joyce Banda at one time or another all voiced concerns with his authoritarianism. Mwanawasa, one of the first leaders to publicly criticize Mugabe, referred to Zimbabwe (under the stewardship of Mugabe) as “a sinking Titanic” ([newzimbabwe.com/December 11, 2009](http://newzimbabwe.com/December%2011,%202009)). On assuming power in Malawi, Joyce Banda spoke strongly against authoritarian rule. However, almost always invariably, these criticisms became muted at summits attended by Mugabe. Mwanawasa, for instance, soon dispatched his deputy, Rupiya Banda, to do damage control in Harare while Joyce Banda also came on board, even agreeing to officially open the 2013 Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (*The Standard* April 8, 2013). She began to openly sing from Mugabe’s hymn book, speaking vociferously against sanctions on Zimbabwe at every opportunity (*The Herald* August 19, 2013). Even Khama, who has maintained his anti-Mugabe stance, insisting that he rigged the July 31, 2013, elections, showed prevarication. A week after the elections, he “dismissed” Mugabe’s election (*News Day* August 6, 2013), but barely two weeks later, he publicly “endorsed Mugabe” ([newzimbabwe.com August 18, 2013](http://newzimbabwe.com/August%2018,%202013)).

Within the GNU, Mugabe continued to act unilaterally in many instances, and SADC, or more specifically, the mediator, could only watch helplessly as he willfully disregarded the regional body and its “point man” on Zimbabwe. While the SADC mediation produced an undertaking by Zimbabwe’s warring parties that they would follow a roadmap that would lead to electoral, media, and security sector reforms before elections could be held, Mugabe went ahead and unilaterally announced the election date through a government gazette. While Mugabe argued that he was constitutionally obliged to declare the date, his unilateralism was against “the letter and spirit of the GPA, which obliged him to consult the other principals, notably the prime minister” (Nyakudya 2013: 98). SADC found itself clueless as to how to deal with the situation. Mugabe noted that he was simply complying with a Zimbabwe Constitutional Court ruling that compelled him to declare the date. SADC tried to urge the principals to go back to the court and seek an extension, but Mugabe flexed his muscles further by threatening the regional body, pontificating thus: “SADC has no power to command us to do that which our court says cannot be done. Let it be known that we are in SADC voluntarily. If SADC decides to do stupid things we can move out and withdraw from SADC” ([www.newzimbabwe.com/news/July 5, 2013](http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news/July%205,%202013)). The elections were thus held without most of the reforms initially agreed upon by the principals through the SADC mediation efforts.

Inevitably, the outcome of the elections was hotly contested after Mugabe and ZANU-PF romped to a comfortable victory. The MDCs cried foul, citing a voter’s roll that was in a mess, ZEC’s failure to avail the voter’s roll to the contesting parties for inspection “within a reasonable time” before elections, as stipulated by law, the alleged denial of a million potential urban voters the opportunity to register to vote and the unfulfilled media, electoral and security sector reforms (*The Independent*, UK, August 1, 2013). There were allegations of serious tempering with the entire electoral machinery, on behalf of ZANU-PF, by Nikuv International Projects, a company from Israel that offers specialist services in voter’s rolls, election results, and intelligence services as well as the bussing in of voters from rural areas to vote in urban areas, particularly Mt Pleasant (*The Zimbabwe Independent* August 9, 2013). Consequently, the aggrieved parties took their complaints to SADC on the grounds that Mugabe’s government had failed to adhere to basic SADC Principles

and Guidelines on Elections. However, the SADC observer mission declared the elections “free, peaceful and generally credible” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013c). Clearly, SADC did not endorse the elections in Zimbabwe as “fair,” but went on to commend Zuma and his team for successfully “facilitating the completion of the GPA” (Nyakudya 2013: 99), in a move that may reflect SADC’s desire to wash its hands off Mugabe’s obstinacy. Ibbo Mandaza captures the SADC leaders’ exasperation with Mugabe thus: “Even when I spoke to Chissano, there was either the reluctance at the basis of age or clear knowledge that he (Mugabe) doesn’t listen, that they had given up on him” (Interview November 6, 2013).

It can be argued that leaders take decisions in their best interests. For example, Mbeki’s African Renaissance ideas (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013c: 156) could have resonated quite well with Mugabe’s pan-Africanist rhetoric, which was his main weapon against the imperialist West and their perceived stooges in Zimbabwe. Nathan also postulates that Mbeki’s stance was mainly influenced by a quest for stability: “For Mbeki the objective is not democracy, the objective is stability” (Interview December 6, 2013). On the other hand, Zuma’s battered image over the Inkandla corruption case and pending presidential election may have “sobered” him up. The same is equally true of Joyce Banda’s climb down—she found herself beleaguered over an underperforming economy and an onslaught from presidential aspirants (see *The Guardian* December 17, 2012) in the face of an impending election, which indeed she eventually lost. Only Ian Khama, with a country enjoying unfettered Western support and presiding over a relatively flourishing economy can afford to thrash Mugabe with impunity.

In the final analysis, however, it is the consistency with which the SADC leaders have always bowed (down) to Mugabe that is astonishing. For all the years that he has been at the helm of Zimbabwean politics, he has consistently held sway over them. He has always had his own way with them, cowing the seemingly vocal into submission at critical times. Tsvangirai laments SADC leaders’ general failure to “use their leverage . . . as they . . . were influenced by Mugabe to take certain positions” (Interview November 3, 2013). Instead of acting on the July 2014 elections dispute, SADC instead elected Mugabe its next chairman while the African Union made him its first vice president for 2015. As SADC chairman, any complaints against Mugabe will be directed to his desk, a real farce. This was shown recently when Didymus Mutasa, dethroned ZANU-PF secretary for administration, wrote to SADC seeking the body’s intervention in the infighting within the party. His complaints against Mugabe were ironically addressed to Mugabe himself and copied to the other leaders (see <http://nehandaradio.com2015/01/01>).

## CONCLUSION(S)

This chapter has shown how Robert Mugabe has since the 1980s dominated regional politics. Of note was his decision to bring Zimbabwe into the FLS and SADC and thus tilt regional power dynamics decisively against apartheid South Africa. While South Africa’s freedom in 1994 marked a dilution of Zimbabwe and Mugabe’s unchallenged dominance of the region, events on the ground revealed Mugabe’s shrewd resolve to maintain control of the direction of regional politics. His dominance manifested itself in the manner he manipulated SADC into intervening in the DRC war on behalf of Laurent-Désiré Kabila, leaving Mandela with egg on his face. For years, he tenaciously held on to the OPDS chair on the strength of his seniority,

contrary to the SADC statutes. Then, during the era of the GPA and the GNU, Mugabe persistently and willfully acted against the SADC agreed-on principles and practices, particularly those governing elections, with his SADC peers apparently clueless as to how to deal with him. This saw the regional body watching helplessly as Mugabe failed to announce the 2008 presidential election results for an unprecedented five weeks. SADC also suspended its tribunal when the court ruled against Mugabe's land reform program and Mugabe openly defied it. To signify his bully boy attitude toward his colleagues in the region, Mugabe openly threatened to pull out of SADC if the body persisted in pushing him to demonstrate democratic tolerance by accommodating the interests of his opponents back home.

Given this, it is evident that Robert Gabriel Mugabe certainly appears to be a larger-than-life character who has successfully held the region under his spell. His own attitude toward his colleagues is summed up by his threat to leave the regional body when he was put under pressure over the tribunal, declaring that Zimbabwe was in SADC "voluntarily" and could therefore leave anytime it so wished. The threat cannot be taken lightly considering that Mugabe previously pulled Zimbabwe out of the Commonwealth without batting an eyelid after it criticized him of gross abuse of human rights (BBC News December 8, 2003). The question is: how has Mugabe been able to achieve such a feat for over three decades? Is it astute shrewdness or sheer dictatorship? Could it be a question of pan-African solidarity among the regional leaders who see Mugabe's politics resonating with their own ideological orientations, or is it merely a case of political expediency where the opportunity cost of not supporting a brother president or fellow club member would be disastrous? Answers to such questions will only come to light when those who work with, or have worked with, Robert Mugabe begin talking. Insights into the goings-on behind closed doors at SADC Summits will certainly be useful in seeking these answers. Unfortunately, as Nathan admits, "what happens behind closed doors is often very difficult to capture" (Interview December 6, 2013). Finally, a broader study would need to examine how far Mugabe's stranglehold over the regional leaders has impacted on SADC's quest for regional integration and sustainable development. However, what is certainly clear is that Mugabe's dominant influence over goings-on at the SADC executive level has meant that the regional body has generally endorsed his positions on issues pertaining to Zimbabwe's quest for a democratic dispensation to the detriment of the country's economic growth and stability.

#### NOTES

- 1.. We are indebted to Michael Aeby, PhD candidate in the History Department at Basel University, Switzerland, for allowing us unlimited access to transcripts of his numerous interviews, which proved quite invaluable.
- 2.. Dates of birth of the founding presidents of the FLS: Kaunda—April 28, 1924; Khama—July 1, 1921; Machel—September 28, 1933; Neto—September 17, 1922; and Nyerere—April 13, 1922. Mugabe was born on February 21, 1924.
- 3.. The Internal Settlement was the agreement between Ian Smith's Rhodesia Front government and the political parties within Rhodesia, namely, Bishop Able Muzorewa's UANC, Chief Chirau's ZUPO, and Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole's ZANU.



# In the Footsteps of Robert Gabriel Mugabe: Namibian Solidarity with Mugabe's Populism—(Bogus) Anti-imperialism in Practice

*Henning Melber*

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes the close Namibian-Zimbabwean ties among the governing parties and especially their long-standing leaders Robert Mugabe and Sam Nujoma. The evidence presented testifies to the popularity Mugabe and his policy enjoy among the “hard core” Namibian nationalists. Since independence, close bonds were knitted between the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO of Namibia, now SWAPO Party). Both were successful as anticolonial movements to seize political power at independence (1980 and 1990, respectively) without abandoning political control ever since. While initially ZANU and SWAPO were not particularly close, this changed since the mid-1990s due to the regional shifts and subsequent strategic alliances.

Topical issues, which beyond the growing personal friendship between the two leaders Mugabe and Nujoma impacted upon and shaped the closeness and reinforced solidarity among like-minded actors, were mainly the homophobic, antigay sentiment and the land issue. Both notions and policies are used as exemplary evidence to illustrate how they are instrumentalized for an anti-Western discourse, packaged in a pseudoradical rhetoric and narrative. It is argued that the populism admired and shared distracts from the failure of delivery toward the majority of the former colonized people as a result of the limits to transformation. Instead, such rhetoric replaces truly emancipatory policies in Namibia, which is governed by a new elite pact using superficial anti-imperialist stereotypes as a disguise. This seeks to distract from the fundamental problem that the new society has not managed any meaningful redistribution of wealth but remains based in inequality for the benefit of a few.

## ZANU-PF AND SWAPO: ZIMBABWEAN-NAMIBIAN SOLIDARITY

Special relationships exist between SWAPO as the political party holding firm control over the Namibian government with a two-thirds majority in parliament ever since 1995 and those states in the neighborhood under similar governance structures, which are based on the transformation of liberation movements into parties in control over government (such as in Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe). These represent a particular influential group within the subregional configuration of SADC. Robert Mugabe rose to popularity mainly since the mid-1990s among Namibian policymakers representing SWAPO as the liberation movement in government. This was partly in sharp contrast to Nelson Mandela's rapid rise to the status of an international icon. The latter's meteoric ascendance to global political celebrity status was a factor that gave birth to the close personal friendship between Mugabe and Nujoma as leaders struggling for self-determination in neighboring former settler societies. In their view, Mandela did not deserve such admiration, since strictly speaking they were the ones who had organized in exile the resistance against white minority rule in their countries, while Mandela was "only" spending time in prison protected from the harsh outside realities, involving a great deal of internal power struggles too.

According to Mugabe and Nujoma, turning Mandela into an international figurehead of Southern African leaders braving settler colonial rule as first-generation freedom fighters was not justified. As "hands on" leaders exposed to and surviving long-standing tough politics in exile at the top of their organizations, they expected similar admiration. In addition, their old friendship with Laurent-Désiré Kabila, dating back to the 1960s in Dar-es-Salaam, was another factor bringing them even closer together. Both leaders decided in 1998 to come to the rescue of the Kabila regime under siege by sending troops to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). While as a reward each of the countries received a diamond mine in compensation for the material and human costs (IRIN 2000), the joint military operations (which for much more obvious geostrategic reasons also involved the Angolan army) were not purely a business transaction (which beyond the material side also cost the lives of soldiers from their countries). It was motivated as a gesture and act of friendship, which deliberately ignored and deviated from a noninterventionist approach officially maintained by SADC and in particular promoted by Mandela. Unfortunately, hardly any of these dynamics are adequately included in a recent stocktaking volume dealing with Namibia's foreign relations, which ignores the special relations between Zimbabwe and the DRC under Kabila to a disturbingly large extent (Bösl et al. 2014), though du Pisani (2014: 377–378), who in passing deals with the DRC intervention, sensibly concludes

that Namibia has not acted resolutely and consistently in respect of every foreign policy case where human rights and other aspects of human security were threatened. This was so, for example, in the conflicts in the DRC and Zimbabwe. In both cases, Namibia's foreign policy behaviour reflected older forms of solidarity politics emanating from the former liberation struggles in the region, as well as divisions within SADC. Rarely did Namibia act within a normative corset on these issues, and in doing so, undermined the idealist seam of its foreign policy that privileges a "peace through law" approach. (388)

As a result of this constellation strongly influenced by personal ties, the Nujoma government never missed an opportunity to document its unconditional loyalty to Mugabe's rule since the late 1990s. The Namibian election observer team was in 2002 among the very first to whitewash the blatantly rigged presidential elections that kept Mugabe in office. The tone of the congratulatory message conveyed by the secretary general of SWAPO (SWAPO Party 2002) to the administrative secretary of ZANU-PF after Mugabe's reelection speaks for itself:

On behalf of the leadership and the entire membership...our elation over the resounding victory scored...Your party's triumph is indeed victory for Southern Africa in particular and the African continent at large. It is victory over neo-colonialism, imperialism and foreign sponsored puppetry. We in SWAPO Party knew quite well that despite imperialist intransigence and all round attempts by enemies of peace, democracy and the rule of law to influence the outcome of the elections in favour of neck-chained political stooges, people of Zimbabwe would not succumb an inch to external pressure. They spoke with one overwhelming voice to reject recolonization. Their verdict should, therefore, be respected unconditionally by both the external perpetrators of division and their hired local stooges, who have been parading themselves as democrats...As we join your great nation in celebrating this well deserved and indeed well earned victory over the forces of darkness and uncertainty, we wish to call upon the people of Zimbabwe to prove to the prophets of doom that they can do without their unholy blessing, through hard work. In the same vein, we call for unity of purpose among the African people as the only viable weapon to ward off outside influence.

It is noteworthy that the party's secretary general signing this message was Hifikepunye Pohamba. Two years later, he became the party's presidential candidate and thereafter successor to President Nujoma, after the latter pushed him through by all means as his declared crown prince (Melber 2006), subsequently resulting in a party division, which led to the establishment of a new opposition as a breakaway faction.

The solidarity displayed by Namibian leaders with the manipulations and vote rigging, as documented already in March 2002 after the blatant hijacking of the presidential elections by the reigning ZANU-PF under the directives of Mugabe continued ever since. It was manifested in the ignorance displayed concerning the manipulations and vote rigging before, during, and after the parliamentary elections in March 2005. The official Namibian election observer delegation was among the first (before the results of the vote count were even announced) to proclaim that the elections showed no irregularities.

President Mugabe's visit to Namibia on February 27–28, 2007, was declared to be a symbol of the enduring friendship between the two countries, notwithstanding public protest by some local human rights activists. The SWAPO Party Youth League (SPYL) condemned the planned protest as symptomatic of the "reactionary and unpatriotic tendencies of Western-backed non-government organisations" (Weidlich 2007). Civil society protest over the massive outbreak of renewed oppression of the political opposition from March 11, 2007, onward resulted in another demonstration, at the end of which the protesters were banned from presenting a petition to the Zimbabwean High Commissioner, in clear violation of the constitutionally enshrined rights (Sasman 2007). An opposition party motion

in Parliament to discuss the Zimbabwean situation was dismissed by the SWAPO majority and the foreign minister declared such a debate would amount to interference in the internal affairs of another country (Kanguechi 2007). In August 2007, the late John Makumbe, a scholar from the University of Zimbabwe and prominent critic of the government's policy, was to give a public lecture at the University of Namibia. The event had been announced publicly long ago. But the office of the vice chancellor cancelled the lecture at the same day it was to take place, reportedly on the instruction of the former head of state, who was the university's chancellor (Ngavirue 2007). As a result, the lecture was held at a different venue off campus and drew a large audience.

In marked contrast to the restrictive handling of access to public space for critics of the Mugabe government, the Zimbabwean high commissioner could propagate the ZANU-PF views freely and prominently through publishing articles in the state-owned daily newspaper *New Era*. The state-financed organ was also involved in the establishment of a Southern African newspaper, the *Southern Times*, in September 2004. Co-owned, cofinanced, and staffed by Namibian and Zimbabwean stakeholders (*New Era* and *Zimpapers* in a 50:50 partnership titled *NamZim*), it publishes since then on mainly Southern African affairs with a clear bias propagating the ZANU-PF line. Since its inception, it operates from the offices of *New Era* with significant losses but remains subsidized by Namibian taxpayers' money. Being in denial of any of the blatant forms of abuse of power by the governing ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe has been the characteristic of the official Namibian-Zimbabwean relations. This put the degree of willingness of the Namibian political office-bearers to apply the norms codified in the Namibian constitution and the normative frameworks the government had subscribed to also internationally in question.

High-ranking members of SWAPO continued to voice unconditional support to the ZANU-PF government. The then army commander General Martin Shali visited Zimbabwe in mid-2008 for scheduled talks with the military. When journalists of some local independent media questioned this as an inappropriate act, the official response was that the visit had been planned long ago and had nothing to do with the political situation. Such "generosity" was again documented in the tolerance if not outright support of the ZANU-PF regime's refusal to vacate the seats of political power as a result of the lost elections in 2008. At a political rally in late August 2008 in Windhoek, the deputy minister of labor, at the same time a member of the party's Central Committee, claimed that SADC countries were misled by Morgan Tsvangirai and will need to apologize to Mugabe and Thabo Mbeki. At the same event, the minister of lands and resettlement, a member of both the Central Committee and the Politbureau, claimed that President Mugabe was reelected free and fair (*Allgemeine Zeitung* 2008). Hard-liners of such caliber are also prominently visible among the leadership of the SWAPO Youth League as well as the Elders Council, the Women's League, and the party-affiliated National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW). An extraordinarily strongly worded editorial in the state-owned *New Era* (2008) dismissed "Botswana's Macho Politics on Zimbabwe" and criticized its neighbor's call to close the border as "a declaration of war by other means." Accusing Botswana of "bellicose behavior," the editorial further bemoaned "a leadership deficit. SADC's strong men as were Kenneth Kaunda, Julius Nyerere, Augustinho Neto, Samora Machel, Sam Nujoma and Oliver Tambo are becoming a rare species in a region that once held hope for Africa." This indicated the prevalent

desire among Namibians for the strong men and is another evidence explaining the admiration for “the last Mohican” in the person of Robert Mugabe.

Zimbabwe’s prime minister Morgan Tsvangirai visited Windhoek on March 28, 2011, to meet Pohamba as head of SADC in order to lobby for his party’s position on Zimbabwean politics. Despite his office as prime minister in the government of national unity, the leader of the Movement for Democratic Change was reportedly given the cold shoulder, as in all previous years. Not by accident, a representative of ZANU-PF was however the guest of honor at the SWAPO congress in late November 2012. When he delivered an address, his reference to SWAPO and ZANU-PF being like Siamese twins was approved by the delegates with roaring applause and cheering, documenting the fraternal bonds.

The close ties also found their expression in the endorsement of ZANU-PF’s orchestration of the 2013 elections, which were a final step for the Mugabe regime toward regaining political control. Namibia was among the first to send a congratulatory message to ZANU-PF and President Mugabe for their electoral victory of July 31, 2013. When the Namibian civil society election observation team, upon return from Zimbabwe, issued a statement expressing concern over the legitimacy of the election results (NANGOF TRUST 2013), they were taken to task by the deputy minister for foreign affairs, who had headed the official Namibian election observation delegation. “The problem with the elections is,” as he explained, “that some people went there with pre-conclusions, assuming that the elections would be rigged. Now they are looking for rigging which does not exist” (Kazondovi 2013). Furthermore, SWAPO explicitly dismissed the concerns expressed by Botswana as a fellow SADC member state over the irregularities, when the party secretary general in a statement to the media after a politburo meeting reiterated that “Southern African leaders should respect the will of the people of Zimbabwe.” According to the reporting journalist, “Swapo was in no mood to let such calls (like the one from Botswana, H.M.) dampen its celebration of the victory of its allies in Zimbabwe, instead urging all and sundry to keep their noses out of Zimbabwe’s domestic affairs” (Ndjebela 2013).

### FORMER LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AS “THE END OF HISTORY”

What might be perceived by outside observers as an arrogance born of power by African despots, however, is certainly more than this and goes much deeper. The lecturing gestures of the Tony Blairs, George W. Bushs, David Camerons, and the like are in a fashion considered as arrogance guided by an attitude occupying a moral high ground while not following the same standards applied to others in their own foreign policies in support of their geostrategic interests. At the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in early September 2002, President Sam Nujoma caught the participants by surprise when he in a hitherto unprecedented manner blamed the British prime minister personally for the situation in Zimbabwe and added: “We are equal to Europe and if you don’t think that, then to hell with you. You can keep your money. We will develop our Africa without your money” (Amupadhi 2002). The president made similar statements the same day in an interview to BBC, broadcasted worldwide.

This is more than merely a manifestation of megalomania. It is the articulation of deep-seated frustration and a feeling of being humiliated by those who claim to

hold the power of definition over what is right and what is wrong—for the purpose of suiting their own interests. In contrast, the leadership of the anticolonial movements, engaged in long and bitter struggles for self-determination against white settler minority regimes, which far too long were at high human costs backed more or less openly by the Western powers, feel unduly treated. This feeling resonates with the general mood among ordinary people who admire their leaders for standing up against Western arrogance and self-righteousness—even though it reflects a similar attitude on the side of the African leaders (after all, two wrongs make not a right).

From another perspective, for the national liberation movements and their support base, the seizure of power, often at high human costs, signals in their understanding something similar to the end of history. From this understanding follows that a liberation movement should stay in power as a political party and government forever after succeeding in its anticolonial struggle:

The NLMs [national liberation movements], share what can only be termed a common theology. National liberation is both the just and historically necessary conclusion of the struggle between the people and the forces of racism and colonialism. This has two implications. First, the NLMs—whatever venial sins they may commit—are the righteous. They not merely represent the masses but in a sense they are the masses, and as such they cannot really be wrong. Secondly, according to the theology, their coming to power represents the end of a process. No further group can succeed them for that would mean that the masses, the forces of righteousness, had been overthrown. That, in turn, could only mean that the forces of racism and colonialism, after sulking in defeat and biding their time, had regrouped and launched a counter-attack. (Johnson 2002)

Jacob Zuma visited Namibia as the ANC president on December 8, 2008—a couple of months before assuming office as South African head of state. He met with President Hifikepunye Pohamba and the former president Sam Nujoma. A joint communiqué released after the visit stated: “It was noted that there is a recurring reactionary debate around the need to reduce the dominance of former liberation [*sic*] movements on the African continent. In this regard the emergence of counter revolutionary forces to reverse the social, political and economical gains that have been made under the leadership of our liberation movements was discussed.”<sup>1</sup> In early August 2011, Windhoek hosted leading representatives from another five former liberation movements now in political control as governments in Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. The final summit took place on August 11 and was preceded by consultative meetings between the youth wing leaders and the party secretaries general. Agreement was reached that such meetings should take place as side events at every SADC summit to strengthen relationships. The next meeting followed on March 8, 2013, in Tshwane, hosted by the ANC. The heads of parties commended “the ZANU-PF for their leadership and for guiding the country towards elections.”<sup>2</sup> Given that these heads of parties are at the same time the heads of government in their country, this clearly is a partisan position taking sides in advance of the ZANU-PF efforts to ensure an electoral victory by all means. The meeting also confirmed the plans “to working together in realizing the objective of building the political school in Tanzania” as “important initiative in retaining the legacy and heritage of our liberation movements.”

Namibia's prime minister Hage Geingob was among the participants attending the meeting. Since then, he has been elected end of November 2014 as Namibia's next president, who takes office on March 21, 2015. As he then confirmed to a journalist, the party school would be sponsored by the Chinese government. He added: "We can then send our young people to be educated there about politics and other things" (Immanuel 2013).

Clearly, as these alliances demonstrate, the specific culture of liberation movements as governments adds additional weight to the particularly close ties between ZANU-PF and SWAPO as well as the personal interaction among the leaders and the large degree of approval among the electorate (cf. Melber 2002, 2003, and 2009). A spontaneous ad hoc deviation by President Pohamba from his prepared speech during the official inauguration ceremony of a school in the northern region of Namibia testified further to these close bonds. When he learnt that the principal is a Zimbabwean, he remarked off the cuff: "We want to thank our brothers and sisters in the Republic of Zimbabwe. I hear that the principal of this school is a Zimbabwean. Zimbabwe is a friendly country, we worked together as a team to liberate our two countries and after liberation we decided to continue working together... this wonderful relationship must continue" (Haufiku 2013). In the following subsections, the focus is on two issues that testify to the mental and ideological links existing between political office-bearers in ZANU-PF and SWAPO and in particular bearing the imprint of the Mugabe mindset.

## HOMOPHOBIA AS CULTURAL PSEUDO-ANTI-IMPERIALISM

The notorious homophobic outbursts of Mugabe were triggered more emphatically with the public appearance of the 1990-established organization Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ). Its activists had applied for a stall at the Zimbabwe Book Fair in 1995, which was considered as a provocation (and ultimately dismissed). The opening of the book fair by Mugabe was used as a platform to insult same-sex relations in hitherto unheard tones and denounce them as indulging in worse-than-animal-like behavior. Ever since then, Mugabe was on a rampage when it came to ridiculing homosexuality as perverse, un-African, and as imposed by the decadent Western European imperialist powers. The "coincidence" between this hitherto largely nonexistent discourse bordering to hate speech and the presidential election campaign was striking and disclosed some cynical rationale: "Both Mugabe and his supporters characterised homosexuality as a threat to an idealised patriarchal culture and national values, frequently and explicitly linked to Western imperialism and 'reactionary forces'" (Eprecht 1998: 644).

The unprecedented outburst was the beginning of an "anti-homo campaign," which led to widespread and ugly manifestations of hate and quickly spilled over to Namibia, where leading political office-bearers of the SWAPO government were eager to join Mugabe in the rants (cf. Melber 1996a and b). Same-sex relations were equated with Western efforts to undermine African societies in preparation for regime change. Dubbed as "Mugabe homophobic-copycats" (Simo 2001), Nujoma and the Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni were quick in following the homophobic outbursts and fanatic rants for which their esteemed colleague in Zimbabwe had set the tune in the mid-1990s. As observed, "since the beginning of the Namibia's anti-gay campaign, the homo-rants by Nujoma and other SWAPO hierarchs have

sounded eerily like Mugabe's" (Simo 2001). State-sponsored homophobia, inspired by Mugabe's strategy emerging since 1995 to abuse the sentiments for campaigns, which turn the intolerance into a question of "true Africanity versus Western decadence," thereby reinforcing the image of the liberators from the colonial yoke as the true anti-imperialists who do not sell out, has since then been firmly established within Namibian social engineering from above (Long 2003).

Namibia's head of state Sam Nujoma confirmed such a suggested perception attributed to him and others, when in 2002 he addressed the Namibia Public Workers Union (NAPWU) Congress and lectured the delegates about the necessity to fight Western imperialism and decay at all fronts:

Today it is Zimbabwe, tomorrow it is Namibia or any other country. We must unite and support Zimbabwe. We cannot allow imperialism to take over our continent again. We must defend ourselves... In Namibia, we will not allow these lesbians and gays. We fought the liberation struggle without that. We do not need it in our country. We have whites who are Namibians, but they must remember they have no right to force their culture on anyone. If they are lesbian, they can do it at home, but not show it in public. I warn you as workers not to allow homosexuality. Africa will be destroyed. (Barnard 2002)

Shortly afterward, upon his return from the Johannesburg WSSD, he told his newly appointed prime minister and foreign minister: "I told them off. We are tired of insults (from) these people. I told them they can keep their money... that these political good governance, human rights, lesbians, etc, that they want to impose on our culture, they must keep those things in Europe" (Amupadhi 2002).

This discourse, however, offers an interesting alternative reading in the light of far-reaching evidence that the claimed "un-Africanity" of same-sex relations has roots in the indigenous communities, who often have their own words for such sexual orientation dating back to times before the white colonizers appeared. Based on interviews with local activists exposed to discrimination because of their sexual orientation, a Swedish student concluded: "Maybe the most powerful resistance is the ability to contradict the idea of homosexuality as not African. The mere existence of LGBT-people in all parts of the country contradict the state-sponsored homophobia. By using their identity as Africans, as Namibians, my respondents bounce the blame of European inheritance back to the authorities by accusing them of European homophobia" (Lundholm 2009: 49). However, this sensible counterposition does not effectively counteract the impact the homophobic outbursts have, which are often met by a large degree of approval and support among the population. Hence, the vendetta is indeed a suitable tool to mobilize support for those in leadership positions, who claim to represent true "Africaness" by firmly opposing and dismissing same-sex relations as Western decadence imposed upon African societies and thereby eroding morale.

## THE LAND POLICY AS REAPPROPRIATION OF HISTORY

When he was declared Nujoma's choice, Pohamba developed a hitherto unseen commitment to address the land issue.<sup>3</sup> In a special announcement televised end of February 2004, Namibia's prime minister Theo Ben Gurirab confirmed the new



policy approach as indicated shortly before by Minister Pohamba in Parliament. From then on, the government would also make use of expropriation of land. Zimbabwe's minister of information Jonathan Moyo, on an official visit in the country, expressed his satisfaction about the historical moment he could witness. In early April, a team of six experts seconded from Zimbabwe visited Namibia to assist in the evaluation of the seized land. In his May Day speech, President Nujoma confirmed that expropriation of farms would not only target underutilized land but also serve as a punitive measure. He warned "minority racist farmers" that "steps will be taken and we can drive them out of this land... as an answer to the insult to my Government."

In mid-2006, the local progovernment Zimbabwean media quoted the Namibian deputy minister of lands and resettlement as praising during a visit the fast track land reform being suitable for Namibia too. This was officially downplayed back home as being quoted out of context. But Nujoma declared in a speech he held at a political rally with reference to the issue that "if the people of Zimbabwe did this, we can do it in the same manner" (Mbangula 2006).

The tide once again turned at a time when the next parliamentary and presidential elections (toward the end of 2014) started to leave their mark on the political rhetoric of those eager to be reelected: "while it may well be that the Namibian government is aware of the costs of Zimbabwe-style reform, the slow pace of existing land reform is always likely to render expropriations more attractive, were SWAPO to come under radical pressure from below or to face serious challenges by opposition political parties" (Southall 2013: 241–242). Revitalizing during 2012 the discourse initiated once before ahead of elections in 2004, it became more openly discussed to seek a policy, which would leave the "willing buyer-willing seller" practice behind and apply state power more rigorously in transferring land. In an interview to Al Jazeera, Namibia's president Pohamba warned in October 2012:

A conference on the land suggested that those who have plenty of land they should sell it to the government. And we tried to get the land from them, but unfortunately there is reluctance. Something else has to be tried. We are not talking about confiscation, we are talking about them to sell the land to the government in order for the government to distribute the land to—I don't like to use the word black—but to those who were formally disadvantaged by the situation.

For the last 20 years we have been appealing to them, that please let's consider ourselves irrespective of our colour. As one people, as Namibians and if a Namibian is suffering, let's all sympathise with him. Here we have hundreds if not thousands of Namibian people who have no land and therefore are suffering... We have the policy of willing seller, willing buyer, that has not been working for the last 22 years and I think something has to be done to amend the constitution so that the government is allowed to buy the land for the people. Otherwise, if we don't do that we will face a revolution. And if the revolution comes, the land will be taken over by the revolutionaries.

Not surprisingly, delegates to the SWAPO congress at the end of November 2012 reinforced demands for a revised land policy and urged the party to take new initiatives for an accelerated land reform and redistribution of land from (white) commercial farmers to hitherto landless (black) Namibians. A representative of ZANU-PF

addressed the congress and received most applause when suggesting that Namibia should follow the Zimbabwean example.<sup>4</sup> The matter resurfaced in early December 2013 at the party's politburo meeting. Founding president Sam Nujoma, who was in attendance as an honorary member, reportedly "insisted that the party seriously look into the issues surrounding land delivery of both residential and agricultural land" and called for a national referendum to address the land issue once and for all. According to the report, he was then informed that such a referendum would be unconstitutional (Ndirimba 2013).

Nonetheless, the debate about adequate ways to achieve a redistribution of land continued unabated into the 2014 election year. Prime Minister Hage Geingob, the party's vice president and also the nominated presidential candidate for the 2015 to 2020 term in office, was quoted during a visit to China in April 2014 by a journalist of the Namibian Press Agency that Namibia would never follow Zimbabwe in terms of land policy. This was widely reported in the local media and welcomed by the commercial farmers' Namibian Agricultural Union (NAU). The prime minister's office subsequently hastened to deny that this was the meaning of the statement and clarified that this was a wrong interpretation (Immanuel 2014). In parallel, the SPYL in a press statement issued on April 24, 2014, sought to set the record straight in its own way by declaring:

What the Vice President meant was that the government has been patient and waiting for the settler to voluntarily surrender land to avoid the Zimbabwe-style land reform... The settler's organisation, the NAU, should know that years of strawberry-policy will soon come to an end. Radical land reform will happen whether in the next 5 years or the next 15 years. The successful Zimbabwe-style land reform option remains on the table. (Amupanda 2014)

It is predictable that the issue will not be amicably resolved as long as the gross inequalities characterizing the country's socioeconomic realities suggest that it is the assumedly rich, white farmers who are to be blamed for the gross inequalities. Instead, the Zimbabwean-style fast-track approach will remain a useful and suitable projection to create the misleading impression that the Namibian situation (also in terms of climate, land fertility, and productivity) would provide similar opportunities. While this is a completely unfounded option out of reality with the material conditions in the commercial, private-owned farming areas, it holds an attraction in the eyes of those equating land with wealth. At the same time, it also offers a suitable and convenient arena to create the impression that anti-imperialism would be a matter of grabbing land, while the other property relations based on a capitalist mode of production and ownership in private hands remain untouched and rather benefit the new elite and its resource exploitation and revenue based self-enrichment strategies. The pseudorevolutionary narrative of the land reform as proclaimed redistribution of wealth therefore is a convenient smoke screen to distract attention from the real issues at stake—that a privileged new elite has in principle joined a privileged old elite in a postcolonial oppressive and exploitative system that does not benefit the majority of the erstwhile colonized population even remotely, even though they had reasons to expect it under a government claiming to represent the people (cf. Melber 2007, 2011, and 2014).

As the popular forum “SMSes of the Day” in the local newspaper *The Namibian* documents, despite its attraction, not everyone falls for this populist rhetoric. Here are two examples in response to the last documented debate:

\*SPYL should investigate what happened to all the farmland already taken by government. Most of it was taken by top government officials, including ministers and other top Swapo members and their families. This is already unproductive land. You cannot give each Namibian land. Farmland is needed for production or should we go the way of Zimbabwe where the Chinese are now living on those taken farms! While investigating our farms, find out how farm workers are being treated and paid by the new owners of these farms. By the way, do you own a farm?

\*IT is sad to hear prominent people talking about taking land the Zimbabwean way. Namibians do not need such irrational talk from people who are climbing the political hierarchy. The problem is that you are not experiencing the suffering that the Zimbabweans have gone through, but if you wish to suffer, you are free to go ahead. Experience has taught me that logical reasoning must prevail when making certain decisions. Do not be fooled by cheap propaganda from our Zimbabwean government about the success of the land reform. I am from there and no one can tell me otherwise. There are so many options to get land from the so-called settlers but forced seizures is certainly not one of them. Land is surely needed but choose other means of getting it—Moyo, Rundu.<sup>5</sup>

### BOGUS ANTI-IMPERIALISM

Despite his official retirement from government politics in 2005, Sam Nujoma (as SWAPO president in office until November 2007) remained actively involved in policy matters and was especially vocal in terms of Namibia’s policy to Zimbabwe. After all, a Harare Street bears his name in recognition of the bonds between the two experienced statesmen. On July 1, 2006, Nujoma used a political rally in a village in the party’s northern stronghold area to reiterate his unconditional support for Mugabe: “If the English imperialists make a mistake today to occupy Zimbabwe, I will instruct Swapo to go fight for the Zimbabweans,” he told his audience, adding, “you touch Zimbabwe, you touch Swapo” (Mbangula 2006). As the Zimbabwean newspaper *The Herald* reported on July 9, 2009, Nujoma had visited Harare on July 7–8, 2009, “to appraise himself on the situation on the ground.” Interestingly, this did not make the news in Namibia, though the state media usually cover the activities of the founding father extensively. Zimbabwe’s minister of state for state security in the president’s office Dr. Sydney Sekeramayi confirmed Nujoma’s visit and was quoted as saying: “He is a friend of Zimbabwe. He came here to see the situation in Zimbabwe. We have worked together on various issues and he wants first hand appreciation of things” (Africa News Service 2009).

The anti-imperialist mentality shared by Mugabe, Nujoma, and others is one permanently suspicious and believes to be under constant siege since being surrounded by imperialist and neocolonial conspiracies only seeking regime change. After the news broke at the end of 2013 that the British Labour government under Tony Blair had allegedly considered a military intervention in Zimbabwe, former president Sam Nujoma was interviewed in his Northern Namibian home village. He told

the reporter: “It should be clearly stated that any attack on Zimbabwe is an attack on Sadc. I can be commander myself, we are already fighters and we don’t need guns or training from anyone. We congratulate Zanu-PF and President Mugabe for fighting the machinations of the British and neo-colonialists in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is a shining example on the African continent” (Sasa 2013). The firm bonds between Nujoma and Mugabe are, however, even within the continent not respected or appreciated by everybody, as the former Namibian president had to learn unexpectedly the hard way during a visit to Accra in December 2010. While addressing students at the University of Ghana, he was jeered when mentioning Robert Mugabe as a great leader. Students reportedly burst into laughter and even asked him to step down from the podium: “For close to five minutes Nujoma stood silent and embarrassed as the rowdy students took issues with him at the mention of the Zimbabwean dictator as a great leader. They booed and jeered him and some threw stuff at the bemused former Namibian leader. Organisers then pleaded with the students for him to finish his lecture” (Benso 2010). In a similar vein, a University of Namibia student commented on the issue of leadership in current Namibia. In a reader’s letter published in the most widely read local newspaper, he maintained:

Most of all, the leader must have utmost respect for human dignity and not see other people as instruments to abuse or as enemies, but partners in development. Namibia needs a leader who can put politics of political parties aside and address the challenges we Namibians, particularly young Namibians, face.

Namibia needs leadership that is emotionally healthy, leaders who are willing to endure a healthy debate without being emotional. Namibia needs leadership that is meek, people who are accountable and don’t point fingers when faults arise; not always rushing to blame westerners or donors.

We want leaders who realise that if you mess up, it is your responsibility to clean up. (Taapopi 2014)

Such responsible leadership is claimed by both president Robert Mugabe as well as Sam Nujoma, the “founding father of the Namibian nation”—a title conferred upon him after retiring as head of state in 2005. As birds of the same feather, they have established a firm bond for the past 20 years. They consider themselves as genuine freedom fighters who cultivated the heroic narrative and patriotic history that they almost single-handedly liberated “their” countries through the barrel of a gun. As Nujoma firmly declared at the end of 2013 to a journalist: “We say no to the return of imperialists in our lifetime and we follow in the footsteps of Robert Gabriel Mugabe” (Sasa 2013).

## CONCLUSION: THE OLD IN THE NEW

More than Nujoma, Mugabe stood the cause and personified the trajectory the first generation of “hands on” liberation fighters can relate to and identify with. At the same time, far from being considered as an anachronism or dinosaurs, their mentality shaped by a specific socialization as core members of the struggle generation, turned them into role models as “leaders maximo” for whole generations. To dismiss their antics as out of touch with reality would be a gross underestimation of the ongoing impact and a misjudgment of the attraction such agency still

holds for those who have all reason to feel humiliated, degraded, disrespected, and denied of any true social emancipation by those who since the days of slave trade and colonialism have had control over most of the resources in this world, including those in Africa. Hence, it is a plausible, albeit knee-jerk reaction to identify with the ramblings of the “old men” who stubbornly refuse to surrender. The tragedy, however, lies in the fact that they in turn represent a new system that reproduces in socioeconomic terms largely the features of the old system and cultivates concepts of power, hierarchy, and control, which resemble features of the old.

To that extent, both Mugabe and Nujoma, as well as the cohorts of their loyal supporters, have not come much further than those so aptly criticized by Frantz Fanon in his manifesto on “The Wretched of the Earth” already more than half a century ago. Writing at a time when the Algerian war of liberation had not even ended, Fanon prophesied the abuse of government power after attainment of independence and in the wake of establishing a one-party state. In a chapter in the original English translation entitled “The Pitfalls of National Consciousness” (adapted to “The Trials and Tribulations of National Consciousness” in the version quoted), he predicted that the state, which by its robustness and at the same time its restraint should convey trust, disarm, and calm, foists itself on people in a spectacular way, makes a big show of itself, harasses and mistreats the citizens, and by this means shows that they are in permanent danger. Fanon (2007: 112) continues by explicitly criticizing the role of the leader in this context:

Before independence, the leader, as a rule, personified the aspirations of the people— independence, political freedom, and national dignity. But in the aftermath of independence, far from actually embodying the needs of the people, far from establishing himself as the promoter of the actual dignity of the people, which is founded on bread, land, and putting the country back into their sacred hands, the leader will unmask his inner purpose: to be the CEO of the company of profiteers composed of a national bourgeoisie intent only on getting the most out of the situation.

Honest and sincere though he may often be, in objective terms the leader is the virulent champion of the now combined interests of the national bourgeoisie and the ex-colonial companies. His honesty, which is purely a frame of mind, gradually crumbles. The leader is so out of touch with the masses that he manages to convince himself they resent his authority and question the services he has rendered to the country. The leader is a harsh judge of the ingratitude of the masses and every day a little more resolutely sides with the exploiters. He then knowingly turns into an accomplice of the young bourgeoisie that wallows in corruption and gratification.<sup>6</sup>

There is little reason to adjust such sobering assessment in retrospectively reviewing the role of most leaders in the context of African decolonization. To a large extent, and despite certain modifications, the warning remains relevant. Neither Mugabe nor Nujoma, like many others, have offered us sufficient reason to dismiss the critical perception and the underlying suspicion that reminds us of the famous statement by Lord Acton that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

What had been diagnosed with regard to the policy in the case of the political rule in independent Zimbabwe is an insight, which remains relevant, also for Namibia,

and might explain why the chemistry between the two former liberation movements and their leaders is based on such mutual recognition, if not admiration:

Whilst power relations had changed, *perceptions* of power had *not* changed. The layers of understanding regarding power relations, framed by socialization and memory, continued to operate... actors had changed, however, the way in which the new actors executed power in relation to opposition had not, as their mental framework remained in the colonial setting. Patterns from colonial rule of “citizens” ruling the “subjects” repeated and reproduced. (Yap 2001: 312–313 emphasis in the original text)

In Namibia’s capital Windhoek, the Robert Mugabe Avenue starts at a corner of Nelson Mandela Avenue in the city’s northern outskirts, to finally end in the southern suburbs. The Nelson Mandela and Robert Mugabe Avenue are both intersected by the Sam Nujoma Drive. The Mugabe Avenue also passes the Independence Museum, which was opened on Namibia’s independence day on March 21, 2014, and later the offices of the country’s founding president Sam Nujoma and the new Namibian State House complex, where it finally crosses the Laurent-Désiré Kabila Street. This probably worldwide unique constellation of a remarkably symbolic road network is a tempting scenario, which invites for a diversity of interpretations. It might be enough here to simply conclude, however, that it illustrates the variety of options senior political leaders in the (Southern) African context had at their hands with regard to the ultimate course of their careers.

#### NOTES

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1. Joint Communiqué between the SWAPO Party and the African National Congress, December 9, 2008, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=./anccdocs/pr/2008/pr1209.html>, accessed on December 14, 2008.
2. Communiqué: Heads of Political Parties of Former Liberation Movements. Statement issued by Gwede Mantashe, ANC secretary general, March 9, 2013, <http://www.safpi.org/news/article/2013/communique-heads-political-parties-former-liberation-movements>, accessed September 9, 2013.
3. The following chronology of events between February and June 2004 is based on the local newspaper coverage.
4. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSILWSY471Y>, accessed January 2, 2014.
5. *The Namibian*, SMSes of the Day, April 28, 2014.
6. I thank Kalle Laajala, who assisted me in locating the quote.

## Robert Mugabe: The Will to Power and Crisis of the Paradigm of War

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### INTRODUCTION

Over the years, people, black and white, high and low, have struggled to make sense of Robert Gabriel Mugabe, leader of the ruling ZANU-PF party and current president of Zimbabwe. Some people view him as great nationalist revolutionary, a great liberator, and father of the nation while others think of him as a tyrant, a dictator, and the undertaker of the nation (Norman 2008; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009b: 1141). Mugabe has now embraced the politics of resentment and is constantly on a warpath, with his real and imagined enemies threatened with violence and elimination. He identifies the source of his country's problems as his enemies' making and the solution to them as the violent elimination of such enemies. The language of enemies, war, guns, violence, and elimination has dominated his political life spurning decades now. This chapter thus argues that Zimbabwe is entangled in an unprecedented economic and political crisis because of perpetuation of a vicious paradigm of war by Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party, which claims to be the alpha and omega of the political leadership of the country through its declaration that it alone has primal legitimacy deriving not from elections, but from active participation in the epic anticolonial struggle (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014).

A paradigm of war is defined as "a way of conceiving humanity, knowledge, and social relations that privileges conflict or *polemos*" (Maldonado-Torres 2008: 3). In his groundbreaking book entitled *Against War* (2008), the philosopher and decolonial theorist Maldonado-Torres articulated the core contours of the paradigm of war that are constitutive of coloniality. The paradigm of war, characterized by racial hatred, was institutionalized since the initial colonial encounters in the fifteenth century, genealogically traceable to the emergence of Euro-North American-centric modernity in 1492. It was founded on the politics of racial hatred and denial of humanity of black people, which is part of the darker side or underside of modernity (see Mignolo 2000, 2011). It has the ability to turn those who were involved in the liberation struggle against such monstrosities as imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neocolonialism, and coloniality to end up becoming monsters

themselves. Constitutively, the paradigm of war is fed by racism and is inextricably tied to “a peculiar death ethic that renders massacre and different forms of genocide as natural” (Maldonado-Torres 2008: xi).

In his *Will to Power* (1968), the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche articulated the core contours of the paradigm of war, insisting that war was the natural state of things and that human beings were destined to rarely want peace and if they do so it was for brief periods of time. According to Nietzsche, “the world is the will to power.” It is dominated by human beings who are always attempting to impose their will on others. There are no truly altruistic human actions and the idea of selfless action was discounted as a psychological error informed by Judeo-Christian thought (550). “The commandment to love one’s neighbor has never yet been extended to include one’s actual neighbor” (382). Nietzsche ([1909] 1990: 102) therefore posited that “he who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster . . . When you gaze long into an abyss the abyss gazes into you.” Here Nietzsche was addressing the other important aspect of the paradigm of war—that of dehumanizing its victims and making them to see war as natural, in the process falling into what Frantz Fanon (1968) understood as “repetition without change.” In this case, the “repetition without change” takes the form of embracing the paradigm war in one’s search and struggle for peace and new humanism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014).

The paradigm of war eventually becomes the main obstacle to human liberation and flourishing. This is because it is sustained by an unending reproduction of perpetrators and victims in which today’s perpetrator becomes tomorrow’s victim and vice versa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014). It is opposed to the paradigm of peace that was pursued by humanists like Mandela, which produced political justice. The paradigm of peace transcends the paradigm of war and conceptions of justice such as criminal justice involving punishment of certain individuals as advocated for by the Nuremberg paradigm of justice, which is predicated on the logic that violence should be “criminalized without exception, its perpetrators identified and tried in a court of law” (Mamdani 2013b). According to Mamdani, criminal justice targets individuals whereas political justice affects entire groups. Whereas the object of criminal justice is punishment, political justice seeks political reform. The difference in consequence is equally dramatic. The pursuit of political justice requires that you decriminalize the other side. This means to treat the opponent as a political adversary rather than as an enemy. This makes sense only because the goal is no longer to punish individual criminals, but to change the rules and thereby reform the political community. Morally, the objective is no longer to avenge the dead but to give the living a second chance (Mamdani 2013b: 33).

This chapter is not just an undue obsession with the personal role of Mugabe because such an approach can unscrupulously rebuild the discredited “big men thesis” that prioritized the role of particular “big men” like King Shaka of the Zulu, who are said to have single-handedly built nations and states and also single-handedly destroyed them (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012a: 317). But a study of Mugabe’s life of struggle inevitably enables a critical decolonial ethical engagement with the broader question of the meaning and essence of being human (subject, subjection, subjectivity, and liberation) and conditions that inhibited human flourishing, in this case the paradigm of war, colonialism, and apartheid. This is because among former nationalist liberation movements still ruling in Southern Africa (FRELIMO in Mozambique, MPLA in Angola, SWAPO in Namibia, and ANC in South Africa),



ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe has been the most intolerant to, and deploys violence the most against, political opponents. It deploys the ideology of Chimurenga (war of liberation) and the strategy of Gukurahundi as the two pillars toward its drive for hegemony. The Gukurahundi strategy entails violent and physical elimination of enemies and opponents (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b: 1–3).

This chapter therefore adopts a critical decolonial ethics of liberation that privileges paradigm of peace, humanism, and racial harmony as opposed to the imperial/colonial/apartheid paradigm of war and racial hatred. At the core of critical decolonial ethics of liberation is the unmasking of imperial/colonial/apartheid systems that were driven by the logic of racial profiling, classification, and hierarchization of human beings. The paradigm of war resulted in the denial of humanity of black people and enabled enslavement, conquest, colonization, dispossession, exploitation, and notions of impossibility of copresence of human races. Decolonial humanism is opposed to the paradigm of war and is committed to the advancement of the unfinished and ongoing project of decolonization as a precondition for the paradigm of peace and postracial pluriversal humanism. Decoloniality yearns for pluriversity (a world within which many worlds fit harmoniously and coexist peacefully; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014: 9).

Humanists like Mandela and even Mugabe experienced and suffered from the consequences of being a racialized and dehumanized subject as well as being written out of the human ocumene and being reduced to dispensability. Uniquely and paradigmatically, instead of this experience turning Mandela into a monster in the Nietzschean sense, he emerged from it fighting for a new world governed and informed by a paradigm of peace and underpinned by principles of pluriversal humanism and cohumanness (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014: 2–3).

Mandela pushed for democracy and human rights without putting “African” as the adjective. This is why Slavoj Žižek (2013) credited Mandela for providing a model of how to liberate a country from apartheid colonialism “without succumbing to the temptation of dictatorial power and anti-capitalist posturing.” He elaborated that “Mandela was not Mugabe” as he maintained South Africa as a multiparty democracy, ensuring that the vibrancy of the national economy was insulated from “hasty socialist experiments” (10). Apparently, Mugabe criticized Mandela as a saint who was too soft on whites at the expense of black communities (Mugabe, cited in Myburgh 2013), and others criticized him for being a “moderate” that failed to empower the historically and economically disadvantaged black population in South Africa.

However, Mandela’s stance set him apart from such other African nationalist liberators like Mugabe of Zimbabwe who ended up frustrated by the policy of reconciliation<sup>1</sup> and finally reproduced the colonial paradigm of war of conquest predicated on race. By the end of 1990s, President Mugabe increasingly articulated the decolonial project in Zimbabwe in racist, nativist, and even xenophobic terms predicated on the idea of “conquest of conquest,” “prevailing sovereignty of Zimbabwe over settler colonialism,” and notion of “Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009a, b).

Unlike Mandela’s nationalism, Mugabe’s nationalism had escalated to what appeared like “reverse-racism” as a form of liberation when he pushed for fast-track land reform program predicated on compulsory land acquisition from white commercial farmers to give to black Zimbabweans (Mugabe 2001). Fanon (1968) had warned of the dangers of degeneration of African nationalism into chauvinism,

reverse racism, and xenophobia and he characterized this regressive process as “repetition without change” cascading from pitfalls of national consciousness. Mandela carefully managed to distinguish himself as a committed decolonial ethical leader and successfully avoided degeneration into reverse racism, nativism, and xenophobia (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014).

The paradigm of war pursued in Zimbabwe has always emphasized the elimination of political opponents viewed as stumbling blocks toward achieving desired “liberation.” In other words, the country is now exhausted from progressing through a series of *Zvimurenga* (wars of liberation) from 1896 to the present. This, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, has plunged the country into what Fanon described as the nightmare of repetition without difference. Zimbabwe has been repeating and practicing the canons of racial nationalism (reverse racism) as a solution to the problems rooted in white settler racial colonialism, eliminating those who appeared to stand on the way, particularly those residing in former white owned commercial farms (white farmers and black farm workers; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010).

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009b), Mugabe is struggling to extricate himself from what Mamdani (2013a) termed the “settler–native question” and defined as both a political and historical question permeated by the linkages between settlers and natives, which cannot be dealt with in isolation of the other. Mamdani (2001c) noted that “you cannot have one without the other, for it is the relationship between them that makes one a settler and the other a native. To do away with one, you have to do away with the other” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009b: 1145). Initially, in 1980, this was resolved through the national reconciliation policy that privileged white settlers’ status quo economically. However, in 1997, Mugabe was clearly determined to solve the settler–native question in favor of the native this time around through “conquest of conquest” to impose the sovereignty of the people of Zimbabwe over whites including gaining “the possession of our land.”

However, this “conquest of conquest” cannot be a satisfactory resolution of the settler–native question as it does not usher in the desired paradigm of peace that could create a pluriversal society. According to Mamdani (2001c: 65) “a single citizenship for settlers and natives can only be the result of an overall metamorphosis whereby erstwhile colonisers and colonised are politically reborn as equal members of a single political community.” Even the word “reconciliation” was not adequate to capture this metamorphosis. What was needed was the establishment of “a political order based on consent and not conquest,” consisting of “equal and consenting citizens” (see also Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009b: 1145).

Therefore, the Zimbabwe crisis is largely an African crisis, which, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2010), emanates from what Frantz Fanon (1968: 167) termed “the pitfalls of national consciousness” that leads to national tragedy. Its roots are traceable to the limits of decolonization and the poverty of the social basis of African nationalism as an emancipatory project and hence Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2010) called it the crisis of the Zimbabwe national project. It emerged from many unresolved issues, including modes of accumulation; definition of the authentic subject of liberation; problems of belonging; racial nationalism and contested teleology of decolonization. The colonially produced black nationalist bourgeoisie thus found itself repeating what the white settler bourgeoisie did and organized themselves into what could be called “loot committees.” All this was covered under the noble gloss of either Africanization of civil service, nationalization of means of production, or indigenization of the economy. The colonialists called it pacification of

barbarous tribes and civilizing mission. The nationalists call it Chimurenga and liberation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010).

At times, this nationalist bourgeoisie class both degenerates into open tribalism and plunges their countries into ethnic cleansing or they collude with the colonialists and again plunge the workers and peasants into nonfreedom. At times, they degenerate into narcissism and victimhood and die railing against imperialism and colonialism while butchering their citizens and looting national resources ahead of peasants and workers. The worst level is when black people engage in “black-on-black” violence as part of the struggle to achieve freedom. Xenophobia that rocked South Africa in 2008 is a case in point. This highlights that to some extent, the colonially produced bourgeoisie were and are a liability to the African emancipatory project (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010).

For more than a decade now, Zimbabwe has been experiencing an unprecedented economic and political crisis under the leadership of Mugabe. For the country to expect a brighter future beyond this crisis, it is crucial that Zimbabweans first find a thorough, deeper, sober, and honest identification, understanding, and explanation of reasons that plunged the country into the crisis (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010). For example, during the tenure of inclusive government (2008–2013), Zimbabwean politicians engaged in a brutal simplistic “pass the buck” game concerning the causes of the crisis. Mugabe’s ZANU-PF blamed what they called imperialist sanctions advocated for by the MDC while the MDC held ZANU-PF responsible for the political and economic meltdown. However, our main preoccupation here is to identify those traces of the paradigm of war that we believe are tearing apart the country. We will begin by highlighting some works that have attempted to analyze Mugabe.

### WHAT HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT ROBERT MUGABE?

A lot has been, and continues to be, written about the role of Robert Mugabe in the current Zimbabwean crisis. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012a), Mugabe’s figure seems to be haunting many of the academic narratives of the crisis. Many of those accounts appear to blame Mugabe for the current economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe (315). Stephen Chan, for example, writing in 2003, and being careful not to brand him as a demon and as being mad like some writers did in early 2000, argued that Mugabe has actually been bad for Zimbabwe (xi). Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera’s (2010) edited volume holds Mugabe responsible for destroying the economy and for authorizing state violence on citizens opposed to his rule. Richard Bourne (2011: 78) argued that the Zimbabwean crisis must not be attributed to “Mugabe’s evil,” but to a combination of historical developments that involved Britain, Africa, and the world. His book, however, also attributes the crisis to Mugabe’s “abuse of power.”

Daniel Compagnon (2011: 7), while also blaming fellow African and non-African leaders who let Mugabe have his way and taint the image of the continent through his actions, emphatically holds Mugabe “responsible for the collapse of Zimbabwe.” Wilbert Sadomba (2011), a liberation war veteran, highlighted that since the liberation struggle days, Mugabe’s actions were informed by the imperatives of gaining and holding power and this perhaps explains why he betrayed the “authentic” objectives and agendas of the liberation struggle. According to Sadomba, even the recruitment of guerrillas under Mugabe’s leadership of ZANU

from 1977 was consciously used as a weapon for manipulating power and entrenching leadership positions. Sadomba also stressed that Mugabe's aptitude to dominate and control, using divide and rule tactics and clinical personnel management, is one of his major strengths that has often been misread and miscalculated by his opponents, with disastrous consequences for the nation (41–42). This is similar to Chan's (2003: xi) view that Mugabe's rise to the ZANU leadership was crafted by deccits and treacheries.

### THE PARADIGM OF WAR THROUGH MUGABE AND ZANU-PF'S GUKURAHUNDI STRATEGY

As noted earlier, since the colonial days, Mugabe and his party have always deployed the strategy of Gukurahundi and the ideology of Chimurenga as two pillars toward their drive for hegemony in the country. The Gukurahundi strategy entails violent and physical elimination of enemies and opponents (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b: 1–3). "Gukurahundi" is defined here as a strategy of annihilating all those opposed to the Chimurenga ideology and to ZANU-PF hegemony. It is rooted in the exigencies of the armed liberation struggle, in which violence was embraced as a legitimate tool for resolving political challenges (7). The term "Gukurahundi" is derived from a colloquial expression in the Shona language that means "the storm of the summer that sweeps away the chaff" (Sithole and Makumbe 1997: 133). It refers to the weather event that clears away the dry, scaly protective casing from cereal grains that remains on the land after the harvest, although at times this early storm also destroys crops and weeds, huts and forests, people and animals, opening the way for a new ecological order (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b: 11).

Politically, Gukurahundi had a revolutionary goal of destroying the white settler regime, the "internal settlement puppets," the capitalist system, and all other obstacles to ZANU-PF ascendancy. Sithole and Makumbe (1997: 133) described "Gukurahundi" as a "policy of annihilation; annihilating the opposition (black and white)." Wilfred Mhanda (2011) detailed how the Gukurahundi strategy was widely used within ZANU in exile. Sadomba (2011) also detailed how the Badza/Nhari rebellion was crushed in 1974. The Nhari rebellion of 1974 became the first major disciplinary case to be dealt with by the Dare reChimurenga (the military-political council that coordinated the liberation struggle in ZANU) and the High Command (see Mazarire 2011: 577–578). Thomas Nhari and his comrades were executed on the orders of Josiah Tongogara and in contradiction to the trial verdict of Herbert Chitepo (a lawyer, the highest-ranking ZANU official in charge of the struggle in exile, and the national party chairman who had the power to preside over serious political cases), who had recommended demotions and other forms of punishment rather than execution (see Chung 2006: 88–95).

According to Fay Chung (2006), the ZANU High Command adopted execution as a form of discipline because it believed in the "Old Testament version of justice of an eye for an eye, a death for death." As a result, all those considered to be failing to adhere to the party line fell victim to violent disciplinary measures enforced by the ZANU Departments of Defence and Commissariat that included outright elimination using military ways (94). The motivation behind this form of discipline was punishment with elimination, not the paradigm of peace, which involves rehabilitating or reforming the opponent.

In the 1970s, the strategy of Gukurahundi, including execution, was well entrenched within ZANU. It was deployed not only against ZAPU structures inside Rhodesia (see Moore 1995b; Ranger 1995: 203–210), but also against ZIPA cadres within ZANU. The determination to expose sellouts and counterrevolutionaries became a virtual obsession. Mazarire (2011) highlighted that camp authorities practiced “a new order of discipline” against ZIPA cadres that included public beatings carried out until the accused soiled themselves and pit structures called *chikaribotso* were dug to detain prisoners underground (578, 580). Robert Mugabe, who took over as ZANU party president in 1977, celebrated the violent destruction of ZIPA in these words: “We warned any person with a tendency to revolt that the ZANU axe would fall on their necks” (Vambe 2008: 1).

While Gukurahundi was officially adopted as a strategy of dealing with opponents in 1979, a year that was declared “Gore reGukurahundi” (the year of the storm) (see Sithole and Makumbe 1997), its genesis in ZANU could be traced to 1963 when ZANU was formed after ZAPU, under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo, had splintered. Enos Nkala, who was part of the new ZANU group, declared, “Now I am going to see to it that Joshua Nkomo is crushed” (Meredith 2002a: 32). Rivalry between the two groups eventually degenerated into uncontrolled violence characterized by gang warfare, petrol bombing, arson, stoning, and assaults (32). Timothy Scarnecchia (2008) aptly argued that the roots of political violence in Zimbabwe can be traced to the nationalist politics. His study of township politics and violence in colonial Zimbabwe established that violence escalated from 1963 between the supporters of the original ZAPU and the breakaway ZANU. Scarnecchia also established that the nationalist leadership sanctioned violent campaigns against specific categories of township residents to solidify support and, most tellingly, he highlighted that violence between nationalist supporters was driven less by fundamental political differences than by the struggle for dominance between leadership cliques (Scarnecchia 2008), a nuance of what Masipula Sithole termed “struggles within the struggle.”

In Bhekimpilo Moyo’s (2009: 7) words, Zimbabwe’s violent nature of politics originated in the years leading to the struggle for independence when early formations of democratic spaces were quickly trampled upon to make way for violence, manipulation, and elite formation by the state. According to Moyo, an understanding of the historiography of the townships’ social and political life, together with the stifling of the democratic political tradition and the frequent resort to violence, can help to understand the paradigm of war that the country finds itself in currently (7–8). Therefore, the violent nature of Mugabe and his party after independence should be understood within the context of colonialism, which produced African nationalism and African nationalists. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012b), colonialism was a terrain dominated by conquest, violence, police rule, militarism, and authoritarianism. It was never a terrain of democracy, human rights, and freedom. Stefan Mair and Masipula Sithole (1997) also argued that the liberation war actually reinforced the authoritarian culture. African nationalism was thus deeply tainted by the colonial culture of politics of intolerance, militarism, tribalism, and violence (see also Ranger 2003; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009b: 1144–1145).

Furthermore, looking at the violent struggles for dominance between leadership cliques within the nationalist parties since the colonial period, what Masipula Sithole (1999) termed “struggles within the struggle” in colonial Zimbabwe, it is clear that nationalist movements failed to build and nurture democratic institutions.

There was also lack of peaceful coexistence among ethnicities, genders, and generations leading to the use of violence and coercion to maintain discipline. To some extent, the nationalist struggle was therefore a breeding ground for violence, intolerance, and commandism, and Mugabe is a product of this struggle (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012a: 317). This commandism and authoritarian nature of nationalism and the liberation war, together with its antipathy toward democracy and human rights, was also highlighted by Norma Kriger, Terence Ranger, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, and Richard Bourne.

ZANU's philosophy of confrontation entailed embracing violence as a legitimate political tool for fighting for independence and the destruction of opponents and enemies. Zvobgo wrote of the "ZANU Idea," which he elaborated as the "gun idea" that was foundational to the party's ideology of confrontation and violence (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b: 11). Gerald Mazarire (2011: 571), researching the issue of discipline and punishment in ZANLA, established that the gun was celebrated in ZANU as a tool for restoring order and "cleaning up the rot." The official implementation of the Gukurahundi strategy included Eddison Zvobgo (Information and Publicity Secretary of ZANU in 1977), drawing up a "hit enemies list" in 1979 comprising ranking personalities of the "internal settlement" parties (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b: 11).

In a manner similar to the Nuremberg paradigm of justice, which is predicated on the logic that violence should be "criminalized without exception, its perpetrators identified and tried in a court of law" (Mamdani 2013a, b; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014), during the 1979 Lancaster house negotiations in London, Mugabe threatened that Rhodesian prime minister Ian Smith and his "criminal gang" would be tried and shot, and that "white exploiters" were not going to be allowed to keep an acre of land (Meredith 2002b: 7). After the negotiations, Mozambique's president Samora Machel had to warn Mugabe of the dangers of ruining the economy through forcing whites into precipitate flight, having experienced the same situation when whites were forced off Mozambique in 1975. Therefore, Mugabe's manifesto was stripped of all reference to Marxism and revolution and cajoled to embrace racial reconciliation principles that denounced racism, whether practiced by whites or blacks, as an "anathema to the humanitarian philosophy of ZANU" (7). It is therefore not surprising that Mugabe later on abandoned the principle of racial reconciliation as it was never his policy in the first place, but one that was imposed on him.

Even in the run up to the elections in 1980, Mugabe's ZANU-PF was said to be using massive intimidation in campaigning, going to the extent of violating the ceasefire agreement by withholding thousands of their liberation fighters (guerillas) from reporting to holding camps so that they could use them to intimidate and influence the campaign. Nkomo, the leader of ZAPU, actually argued that the word "intimidation" was mild; "People are being terrorised. It is terror" (Meredith 2002b: 10). Arriving in Salisbury (Harare) from Mozambique on January 27, 1980, Mugabe was welcomed by huge crowds with banners portraying rocket grenades, land mines, and guns, with the youth wearing tee-shirts displaying the Kalashnikov rifle, the election symbol ZANU wanted to use but which the British, overseeing the elections, had disallowed (7). This perhaps aligned with the statement made by Mugabe in 1976 when he was quoted as saying, "Our votes must go together with our guns. After all, any vote we shall have, shall have been the product of the gun. The gun which produces the vote should remain its security officer-its guarantor.

The people's votes and the people's guns are always inseparable twins" (Mugabe 1976, cited in Meredith 2002b: ii).

Therefore, when Mugabe and his party ascended to power in 1980, the state itself adopted the Gukurahundi strategy, deploying violence against those, such as PF-ZAPU and ex-ZIPRA cadres, who happened to be constructed as enemies of the state. The strategy of Gukurahundi has also been extensively used as a central pillar of state-making and tactic of regime security by Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b: 7).

### USE OF VIOLENCE BY THE STATE AFTER 1980

Apparently, the country enjoyed a very limited period of "honeymoon" after independence, a period during which Mugabe seemed to be and perhaps was a moral statesman, committed to some efforts toward reconciliation and development of the country, earning the respect of the whole world (Chan 2003: x). But when Mugabe and his ZANU-PF ascended to power in April 1980 after winning the elections, he was seized with forming a one-party Marxist state. But Joshua Nkomo and his PF-ZAPU stood in the way. He craved for total demolition of his main obstacle in attempting to form a one-party state in Zimbabwe. At a rally in Stanley Square in November 1980, Enos Nkala, Zimbabwe's first minister of finance at independence, but was soon moved to become minister of defense, and ZANU-PF's and Mugabe's most trusted leader from Matabeleland, called upon party supporters to form vigilante groups "to challenge PF-ZAPU on its home ground" (Nyarota 2009).

Other speakers also complained that "only in Bulawayo did police commanders not meet visiting ministers," as Home Affairs minister, Joshua Nkomo (ZANU-PF's main target) was in charge of the police (Ranger 2010: 248). After the discovery of an arms cache at Ascot farm belonging to Nkomo's ZIPRA in 1982, Mugabe likened Nkomo to "a cobra in the house," with the only way to deal effectively with it being "to strike and destroy its head." Nkomo's party's businesses, farms, and properties were then seized by the government (Meredith 2002a: 63–64). Edgar Tekere, the secretary general of ZANU-PF, and Enos Nkala talked of the need to crush ZAPU. Nkala, a Ndebele himself, called Nkomo a "self-appointed Ndebele king" who needed to be "crushed." Tekere argued that Nkomo and his guerrillas were germs in the country's wounds that needed to be cleaned up with iodine (63).

Addressing a ZANU-PF political rally in November 1982 in Bulawayo's White City Stadium, Nkala actually promised total destruction of PF-ZAPU. This sparked off a two-day exchange of fire between ZANLA and ZIPRA armies in Bulawayo's Entumbane suburb, where returning soldiers of the two guerrilla armies were temporarily and separately cantoned. This initial confrontation spiraled into the temporary campaign that engulfed Matabeleland, with Nkala openly cheering as Fifth Brigade massacred his own people (Nyarota 2009).

"Gukurahundi" was also the name for an exclusive Korean-trained ZANLA force (5th Brigade) that was deployed in Matabeleland and the Midlands regions in the period 1982–1987, leaving more than 20,000 civilians dead (CCJP and LRF 1997; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b: 5–6, 11). According to Nyarota (2009), if Nkala was not the cause of Gukurahundi, it was certainly the catalyst. Mugabe's 5th Brigade army acted as an army of occupation, committing atrocities at will in the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces (Meredith 2002a: 67).

Enos Nkala later became a very powerful man, being the most senior politician from the Matabeleland region of Zimbabwe to hold office in the top echelons of the ruling ZANU-PF party. After Joshua Nkomo and his PF-ZAPU party won all the Matabeleland seats in the 1980 national elections, Nkala became obsessed with crushing Nkomo and PF-ZAPU. According to Nyarota, to demolish Nkomo's domination became Nkala's personal challenge. To single-handedly unseat the PF-ZAPU leader and to wrest Matabeleland and deliver it to ZANU-PF became Nkala's self-appointed mission until his fall eight years into his postindependence career as a ZANU-PF politician and a minister of government. Nyarota (2009) postulates that by 1988 Nkala had become one of the most feared men in the government of Zimbabwe, arguably more feared than Mugabe himself. But the deployment of the Gukurahundi strategy in the 1980s against the Ndebele-speaking people, who were accused of harboring dissidents, was only an early manifestation of the culture of violence that today is affecting the whole country (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b: 5–6, 11). In the early 1980s, it was not only Joshua Nkomo and his ZAPU who were targets of elimination.

Mugabe's government also arrested white MPs and military men accused of attempting to overthrow his government, and force in the form of torture was used to make them confess their crimes. In 1985, angry at whites who had overwhelmingly voted for the former white prime minister's party, Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe, Mugabe denounced Smith and the whites as racists who should leave the country and find a home elsewhere, threatening that "we will kill those snakes among us, we will smash them completely" (Meredith 2002b: 56–57).

The country is now constantly on a paradigm of war mode perpetrated by ZANU-PF and its allies. In 2004, ZANU-PF produced another list of traitors and sellouts to be eliminated. The list included Archbishop Pius Ncube, a critic of Mugabe; Trevor Ncube, owner of critical independent newspapers; Geoffrey Nyarota, a journalist; leaders of the MDC, including Morgan Tsvangirai, Welshman Ncube, and Paul Themba Nyathi; Wilfred Mhanda, leader of the Zimbabwe Liberators Platform that was opposed to the main association of war veterans that had reduced itself into ZANU-PF storm troopers; and critical public intellectuals including Brian Raftopoulos, John Makumbe, and Lovemore Madhuku (Tendi 2010; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b: 11). ZANU-PF has continued to use the strategy of Gukurahundi whenever its hegemony is threatened. Military-style operations such as Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Urban Clean-Up) of 2005, Operation Mavhoterapapi ("Where did you put your vote?") of April–August 2008, and Operation *Chimurumumu*, which involved abductions of opposition and civil society figures, testify to the consistent use of the strategy of Gukurahundi against those identified as threatening its hegemony (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009a). As noted earlier, the strategy of Gukurahundi is used by Mugabe in conjunction with the ideology of Chimurenga in perpetuating the paradigm of war.

The ideology of Chimurenga has also been used to polarize the nation, fragmenting Zimbabweans into patriots, war veterans, puppets, traitors, sellouts, born-frees, and enemies of the nation. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012b), the class of patriots and veterans comprises those who participated in the liberation struggle (the Second Chimurenga) in general and all members of ZANU-PF specifically. Members of the opposition MDC political formations are viewed as traitors, sellouts, and puppets who deserve to die if the Zimbabwe nation is to live. For example, since 1999, the MDC leadership and their supporters have been attacked as a



creation of the United Kingdom and the United States as part of their neoimperialist agenda of regime change. During the third Chimurenga, popularly known as “Hondo Yeminda” (the war for land reclamation), the MDC was also accused of being a front for white commercial farmers who were resisting land reform, and by 2000, white commercial farmers constituted the worst enemies of the nation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b: 10). President Mugabe viewed this as a “conquest of conquest” marking the triumphalism of black sovereignty over white settlerism (see Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009b). During this time, ZANU-PF also strategically used the Chimurenga ideology as a political tool to prop up its waning popularity, especially among peasants and other landless constituencies (see Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya 2011). Now, this ideology, as “a doctrine of revolution” (Ranger 2005: 8), indistinguishable from the strategy of Gukurahundi, also authorized a culture of violence (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b: 11). The ZANU-PF and its leadership even boasted that they had “degrees in violence” (Blair 2000, cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b: 11). As such, the use of the ideology of Chimurenga by Mugabe has been extensively revived since 2000 to counter any advance by the opposition especially toward election times. The nation began to be defined in autochthonic and nativist terms, with the idea of “Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans” being popularized by Mugabe. This included the “Occidentalizing” of white citizens (see Muchemwa 2010: 505; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009c).

When political opposition to Mugabe mounted around 2000, he responded by becoming more ruthless. For example, in a state banquet in 2000, he was quoted saying, “I do not want to be overthrown and I will try to overthrow those who want to overthrow me,” claiming that it was the whites, the British and Americans, who were “our real enemy” responsible for the economic plight affecting Zimbabwe. ZANU-PF party activists and war veterans became the major weapons used to attack and terrorize opposition supporters and also took a lead in invading farms formally owned by whites in the country (Meredith 2002a: 17). In 2008, 28 years after independence, on the weekend before the March 29 national poll, Robert Mugabe, campaigning in Stanley Square at Makokoba Township, threatened the Bulawayo community, which has been known to be anti-ZANU-PF since independence.

Historically, people in Bulawayo and Matabeleland as a whole have always voted en bloc and followed one leader at a time. They were united under the late ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo and followed him through thick and thin. After his death, and with the emergence of the MDC in 1999 as a strong opposition party, Bulawayo residents shifted their loyalty to the MDC. Many trace Matabeleland’s fraught identity politics to the unresolved legacies of Gukurahundi massacres of the early 1980s (*Standard*, March 23, 2008), which have long been ignored by Mugabe and his ruling ZANU-PF government. Mugabe now threatened that any vote for the opposition MDC party would be tantamount to a wasted vote. He argued there was no way the MDC could be allowed to rule Zimbabwe as it was led by puppets of the Western countries bent on reversing the gains of independence. Mugabe said:

You can vote for them (MDC), but that will be a wasted vote. You will be cheating yourself as there is no way we can allow them to rule this country. . . . We have a job to do and that is to protect our heritage. The MDC will not rule this country. It will never, never happen. *Asisoze sivume* [we will not agree]. (*Chronicle*, Monday, March 24, 2008)

For Robert Mugabe, ZANU-PF is the only people's party that speaks for the people and shall always govern in their name. He regarded opposition parties, especially the MDC, as bootlicking British stooges, traitors and sellouts, political witches and political prostitutes, political charlatans and two-headed political creatures (*Chronicle*, Monday, March 24, 2008). In May 2014, the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Collaborators' Association (ZLWACO), which claimed to "remain loyal to our revolutionary party and our President" and also threatened that it was ready to front a new "economic war," urged the government to nationalize all strategic minerals in the country so as to "fully liberalizes" the economy by 2018 (*NewZimbabwe*, May 4 2014).

In April 2014, ZANU-PF's secretary for administration, Didymus Mutasa, also doubling as presidential affairs minister, told party rivals the current ZANU-PF top leadership was ordained to lead for life. "We should respect the elected leadership until they say they want to retire. But we have not seen those who have said they want to leave office. They are retired by God. That's how things are done in ZANU-PF" (*NewZimbabwe*, April 12, 2014). In June 2014, Mugabe ranted that ZANU-PF had been infiltrated by "weevils" bent on destroying it from within. In response, in typical ZANU-PF language synonymous with the Gukurahundi strategy of elimination, Mutasa urged that those "weevils be 'gamatox-ed' (by a pesticide) so that they would all die" (*NewZimbabwe*, June 8, 2014). However, tables have now turned against Mutasa. Mugabe has sacked him from his government in December 2014, together with the former Vice President Joice Mujuru and 16 ministers suspected to be anti-Mugabe but accused of plotting to overthrow President Mugabe and conducting themselves and performing below expected standards and outcomes. ZANU-PF provincial chairpersons thought to be aligned to former vice president Mujuru were also purged. Former ZANU-PF spokesman Rugare Rumbo and for War veterans national leader Jabulani Sibanda were removed from their positions and were also expelled from ZANU-PF.

When Mutasa voiced opposition to the December 2014 ZANU-PF Congress, Mugabe responded by insulting him as a "stupid fool' that cannot be corrected, a stray braying ass/donkey, an individual with small brains, disorganised mentally, deranged, if not close to being insane" (*Chronicle*, January 23, 2015). The opposition MDC-T spokesperson Obert Gutu argued Mugabe's hate language, together with an amazing degree of intolerance and hatred toward his opponents, was not surprising as it has been the hallmark of his rule since 1980 (*NewZimbabwe*, Friday, January 23, 2015).

Therefore, Stephen Chan (2003) rightly argued that Mugabe "refus[es] to allow the *Chimurenga* to die" because for Mugabe "to fight is more important than to be cleansed." To Chan, this was a sign that Zimbabwe "can never be cleansed because there cannot be an end to fighting" (183). In other words, today's victims, at the hands of Mugabe and his party, are also itching for an opportunity for revenge, and, in the process, becoming tomorrow's perpetrators of violence, leaving the country ravaged by an unending paradigm of war.

## CONCLUSION

Mugabe's political life has been dominated by the paradigm of war, characterized by the language of enemies, war, guns, violence, and elimination of his perceived real and imagined enemies. He blames the country's problems on his enemies and

the solution to them as the violent elimination of such enemies. This chapter argued that the paradigm of war perpetuated by Mugabe and his ZANU-PF contributes largely to the unprecedented economic and political crisis that hit Zimbabwe since around 2000. This paradigm of war is sustained by an unending reproduction of perpetrators and victims in which today's perpetrator becomes tomorrow's victim and vice versa.

Mugabe's ZANU-PF claims to be the alpha and omega of the political leadership of the country by the declaration that it alone has primal legitimacy deriving not from elections, but from active participation in the epic anticolonial struggle (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014). This exhibits the core contours of the paradigm of war that views war as the natural state of things and human beings as destined to rarely want peace, and if they do so, it will be only for brief periods of time. For Mugabe, "the world is the will to power," as posited by Nietzsche (1968: 550). It is dominated by human beings who are always attempting to impose their will on others, at whatever cost. The inclination is to hold on to power at all costs, even without anything to offer to the masses, and to violently crush any political opponents. This was succinctly captured by political commentator Jonathan Moyo (Minister of Information in the current ZANU-PF government) on the eve of the 1995 national elections, before he joined ZANU-PF, when he argued that "ZANU-PF has no political philosophy beyond the desire of its leadership to stay in power by hook or by crook" (Meredith 2002b: 105).

#### NOTE

1. For example, on April 18, 1980, on his inauguration as the prime minister of Zimbabwe, Mugabe was quoted as saying, "It could never be a correct justification that because the whites oppressed us yesterday when they had power, the blacks must oppress them today because they have power. An evil remains an evil whether practised by white against black or black against white" (see Meredith 2002: 15). This reconciliatory act earned Mugabe the status of being an international hero and revolutionary leader who sought a pragmatic way forward.

PART III

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Masculinity, Gender, and Corruption

# Mugabe the Man-Nation: Two Views of Culture in the Construction of Masculinities in Zimbabwe

*Robert M uponde*

## INTRODUCTION

There is no one overarching and conclusive meaning of Robert Mugabe the man and the phenomenon; although there are certain ways he can be read as a coherent subject via the sighting of recurrent motifs in the modes of his thinking, feeling, and operation. These leitmotifs denote who he is although not necessarily who he says he is. There is always tension between the gown and the man, the face and the intentions, the mirror and the image. The image that informs how we construct what we consider to be his meaning and what he chooses to project in order to control the proliferating and undisciplined meanings generated about him can best be considered to be the result of long and frustrating peeks through the flyblown windows of his shadowy world. Since his private life instinctively turtles in unless probed by a trusted and coached state-employed journalist for vote-catching purposes, he is nowhere as legible as the peekaboo personal life of the iconic Nelson Mandela. Mugabe the man is assembled by the public through rumor and gossip—and the fragmented patchwork of self-narratives that come across as part of the elaborate mirages he throws around for political gain. In the absence of a coherent and patiently and soberly constructed autobiography,<sup>1</sup> researchers have to rely both on the art of restorative masonry as well as that of scrap iron sculptors: the arts of recovering and reading significances in broken shapes and found objects. The curiosity of a bricoleur is required in both instances. I too depend on bricolage in my reflections on the contested meanings of Mugabe. A man who thrives in divisions and conflict, he is best understood in dichotomous terms. The conflictual essence of his persona requires patient quarrying in order to separate fakery from reality and absolutes from nuances.

## MUGABE OR TSVANGIRAI? THE JOYS OF OVERSIMPLIFICATION

Post-2000 Zimbabwe, the focus of my reflections on the intriguing and desperate crises of the meaning<sup>2</sup> of Mugabe, has therefore relied on the consolations of oversimplification by creating absolutes as descriptors of the struggle between Morgan Tsvangirai and Robert Mugabe. Either Mugabe or Tsvangirai. Or neither Mugabe nor Tsvangirai to lead. Variations on these options: Mugabe will offer stability as he has control and support of security forces; Tsvangirai will bring in the money from the British. Or Tsvangirai represents the face of a change Zimbabweans can trust (a Barack Obama derivative); and Mugabe's vision, in its "purest form," is viewed as the marrow of true Zimbabwean sovereignty. All these positions are legitimate, but blind to the ways in which they are consciously or unconsciously primed to respond to and accentuate masculinity as the *idee fixe* that drives Mugabe's nationalism and patriotism. Mugabe constructs specific and self-serving meanings of masculinity as central to the fortunes of the nation and how democratic culture is molded in Zimbabwe.

Two examples will suffice. Mugabe's struggle against Rhodesia's past and present is billed as a struggle for unfettered manhood against wicked, white men who sat on the bellies and chests of the black men they had robbed, subjugated, and pummeled into endless servitude during the colonial and neocolonial eras (*vapambi vepfumi vaive vakatigara matumbu nematundundu*). *Kugara matumbu nematundundu* (to sit on someone's belly and chest) is itself a way of making a resisting man a subdued woman, hence the need to masculinize terms of the struggle and criminalize traces of femininity in a man. Mugabe's tussle with Joshua Nkomo, his archrival from the bush-war days, was couched in masculine terms, which concentrated on differences in height and girth (Mugabe represented himself as apt for office because of his fit-to-box medium height and weight; and the tall, heavy-built, big-bellied, slow-moving Nkomo, while grudgingly extolled as Father Zimbabwe, was incongruously portrayed as an oversized cowardly woman who was unfit to contest an election).

The practice of representing opposing masculinities as incongruities and deformities and therefore laughably unfit for the highest political office of the land is integral to Mugabe's figuration of himself as the irreplaceable man-nation. Mugabe's masculinity is defined so much by who becomes a man (by supporting him) and who becomes a woman and an animal (by refusing to go along with him). Competing masculinities are regarded as, at worst, pale versions of "real men" (*amadoda sibili*): incompetent, shifting, and vulnerable others who can only be used to denote how unwell the nation might become if they should be allowed to rule the country. Mugabe and his henchmen viewed Joshua Nkomo in the early 1980s as *bhuru rengozi* (a bull possessed by evil spirits) while Mugabe was cast as the much-admired Karigamombe, the slayer of that haunted bull. In 2008, he described Simba Makoni as a frog, mule, pubescent, and female prostitute without clients; and the little-known Towungana as a scabby donkey (see Manheru in *Herald*, May 4, 2008). At worst, these descriptions are couched in language that conjures the debased and unlovable. At best, his opponents are viewed as floating iconoclasts and malcontents trying to chip away at the formidable monolith of nationhood called Mugabe.

The choice of symbolic leadership material is reduced to two types of masculinity. These are the hard-hitting, fist-waving, and unbending type represented by Mugabe versus the soft, big-bellied, fat-cheeked, and pliant version that Nkomo

and Tsvangirai depict, which carries connotations of being an overfed traitor. It will be so for a very long time to come. Women leaders will be chosen to rule or support the man-nation on a scale that tips them toward one of the two versions of masculinity. I want to suggest that the reconstructions of the struggle between MDC (Tsvangirai) and ZANU-PF (Mugabe) point to a deepening crisis of these concepts of masculinity as man-nation. I will argue that the meaning of Mugabe, or what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009b: 1139) calls “Mugabeism”—a “populist phenomenon propelled through articulatory practices and empty signifiers”—and what I see as the practice of deploying fakes and fakery should be sought in the ways in which he imagines the idea of himself and his ways of feeling and thinking as the quintessential man-nation. He seeks to impose severe restrictions on the availability of this self-serving practical and symbolic concept and political resource and keep it away from his opponents in the opposition camp as well as those within his own party and government. This is one of the main reasons why the succession debate in his party is virtually criminalized and treated as high treason. There can only be one original man-nation for all time, hence the godly and cultic status of Mugabe’s masculinity, and the stylization of its symbolism in colors and fabrics that speak to his putative ultramodern, ethnic, and grassroots character and perspectives.

In this chapter, I will look specifically at the ways in which the powerful hold of the man-nation (as Mugabe and ideal of nation) might be gleaned and experienced from the ways Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai have been imagined through their election campaigns. I will draw on novels, poems, songs, viral e-mail, web-based newspapers, gossip, and text messages surrounding post-2000 elections in order to trace the movement of images and social energies in these two broadly limned figures of seemingly diverse manhood and politics. It may surprise us, or cheer us, that either way, our newfound reasons for struggle might be leading us toward a place in the Eden of the future where things are expected to be different but will be very similar in as-yet-unthought-of ways. I will conclude by arguing that, far from being just a struggle about democratic space and culture, current renovations of the man-nation (by which I mean both the persona of Mugabe and the ideas about a single version of masculinity that he perpetuates as the ideal of the nation) are bedeviled by their inability to imagine a more troubled binary of masculinity beyond the austere vision represented by Mugabe, and the softer, malleable, seemingly empathetic, “tea boy” version represented by Tsvangirai. The future of these two masculine images has much to do with how the Zimbabwe nation will reconstruct and liberate itself or elaborate the paths of its liberation. This contrastive romance of men *in* masculinities will bear diverse tributaries to its growth. It will underpin an evolving story of past and present that the current struggles for nation-rebuilding adumbrate.

### MUGABE AND TSVANGIRAI: ZIMBABWE’S BOY CODE

Much of what William Pollack’s (1998) *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood* construes as the universal unwritten Boy Code can be adapted to apply to the way Mugabe imposes certain injunctions on his party and the nation as the only way one can be patriotic and hence authentically belong. He literally lives up to the ideals of the Boy Code that he endorses and foists on members of his party and judges opposing models against. For starters, “the code is a set of behaviors, rules of conduct, cultural shibboleths, and even a lexicon, that is inculcated into

boys by our society—from the very beginning of a boy’s life” (xxv). It consists of basic stereotyped male ideals or models of behavior that are governed by “do-or-die rules or injunctions.” Pollack divides these models of stereotyped behavior into four basic imperatives: the “sturdy oak”; “give ‘em hell”; the “big wheel”; and “no sissy stuff.” I will abridge and adapt Pollack’s investigation of these models (xvii–xxvi; 3–64) for the purposes of this discussion.

As sturdy oaks, ZANU-PF men should be “stoic, stable and independent.” They should never show weakness or grieve openly. So whereas in opposition media Tsvangirai is portrayed as empathetic and emotionally responsive; gentle, with a mythicized female sensitivity to pain and suffering; a simple and reachable father and brother who was often caught on camera wiping away tears of grief at the burial of MDC activists who were murdered by Mugabe’s thugs; Mugabe, ever dry-eyed, has never been shown shedding tears for any losses and at any funeral. His real men should not share their pain and insecurity but “exhibit bravado and braggadocio,” act confident and contented in the face of loss of mass support, spiraling hyperinflation, widening social chasms, eruption of cholera, and international travel bans. There is no option of changing course because that would be construed as “sissy stuff”—lack of resoluteness in the face of danger and odds. True ZANU-PF patriots plough ahead with their disastrous policies as unthinking “sturdy oaks,” and do not tolerate any stalling or whining from their ranks. Any doubts are quashed with the brutality they deserve. So, as true patriotic men, they must put on an acting job in order to hide their fears and swim against the rapids with the rest of the shoal. They must act like violent supermen and perform daring feats by loping multiple mutant zeroes off the worthless Zimbabwe dollar until it dies a predictable death through irreversible irrelevance and contort their necks in order to look East even as the Chinese loot their economy and are looking West themselves.

They “give hell” to the electorate when it rejects them and drive millions of malcontents into exile and the Diaspora, disenfranchising them in the process and destroying their homes in an operation called *Murambatsvina*. They even threaten to discard the ballot in favor of the gun if anyone suggested that they would lose a free and fair election. Hence Nathaniel Manheru (aka George Charamba, Mugabe’s presidential secretary and spokesman) wrote in praise of “pissing on the ballot”: “A mere X on a piece of paper, all done in time shorter than life-creating ecstasy, can steal a free people, steal a heritage, steal a freedom, steal land, steal a future? . . . surely it must be a lot easier to shit on, and even shoot—yes shoot—the ballot box for the preservation of your independence” (*Herald*, May 4, 2008). Mugabe gave credence to this idea just a week before the violent and bloody presidential runoff: “the ballpoint pen must not defeat the gun. We don’t want to see the ballpoint pen defeating the gun.”<sup>3</sup> *Vari kuti iyo ballpoint ngaitevere nzira yemubhobho*” (*Herald*, June 21, 2008). In other words, *mubhobho* (the gun), also Zimbabwean slang for the penis, should lead the pen (a puny penis). Mugabe as man-nation is the double-barreled fire-spitting gun, the real *mubhobho*, and the single-barreled pen with its cold single splotch in the shape of an X on a sheet of paper is for wimps such as the opposition movement.

“Give ‘em hell” speaks to the natural attraction to macho violence that Mugabe exhibits in most of his actions and speeches. He cannot handle rejection, and like a true macho man, he blames his defeat on someone or something else and never himself. This time, it is the unthinkable idiocy of allowing the pen’s X on the ballot too much power to decide the country’s fate, instead of fists and bullets as in Wild West movies; another time it is the provocative machinations of the British.



Consequently, the culture of regarding elections as warfare—*wafa wafa wapona wapona* (slay or be slain) as Mugabe called it in July 2013—is the norm of the man-nation. In this social space, society is “avalanched” by destructive images of masculine autonomy while at the same time it is asked to uphold the impossible and obsolete ideal of peace and kindness that comes with fear and loss (see also Pollack 1998: xviii–xxv).

Masculine autonomy relates to being unfazed in the face of loss. Even when they lost the 2008 election, and were heading for an uncertain future in the presidential runoff, ZANU-PF presented themselves as dominant and powerful, and only slightly inconvenienced, because the “big wheel” is about avoiding shame at all costs, “to wear the mask of coolness, to act as though everything is going all right, as though everything is under control, even if it isn’t.” They would not ask for help or directions when stuck in the quicksand of obsolete political ideologies and unworkable economic policies, because asking for help means admitting to interconnectedness and mutuality, possibilities that are tabooed in true ZANU-PF men’s thinking. They would rather go it alone than be subjected to strictures by neighbors (Manheru in *Herald*, April 26, 2008).

Currently, Mugabe is the Wild West Man, the Lone Ranger, the brinkman in a fast-receding Zimbabwean man-nation. He is *jongwe* the cockerel; the man of steel, war-hardened, unwavering, unblinking, bred on the classical Boy Code, the warrior masculinity hardened by the smoke of the gun; a Coriolanus figure who is most alive when he is in violent conflict and is unable to move from the helmet of war to the cushion of civil politics. Morgan Tsvangirai, who exists outside the slay-or-be-slain Boy Code of Zimbabwean politics, is represented by Mugabe as puppet and front man of the British; as *baas*-boy mostly because of his having worked as a foreman at a white-owned nickel mine; and tea boy as he is much supported by the West who demonize Mugabe. Therefore, the idea is that he should be presented as brainless, a white man’s used condom, a trade unionist and war deserter who has only ever negotiated wage increases (not serious matters such as sovereignty, land, history, bloodshed, and war). As he is not amenable to the politics of bloodletting-as-manhooood-enhancing, his withdrawal from the presidential runoff after 200 of his supporters were murdered disappointed Mugabe and his apologists who believe that an election is by nature a fight to the last man standing, and would have liked to take the contest to the next gut-spilling level. A headline screamed: “Let’s disembowel Tsvangirai on June 27” (*Herald*, May 23, 2008). Jonathan Moyo expressed disgust at the squeamish and sissy nature of Tsvangirai who could not manfully withstand “hell” when confronted by ZANU-PF’s vampirism. He wrote: “There is nothing to be gained in political terms by counting dead bodies in order to turn that into a political manifesto.” Speaking like a gambler denied some pickings at a blood sport, Moyo continued: “Tsvangirai’s withdrawal seemed to hold the electorate in contempt on the grounds that it is not mature enough to withstand political violence and intimidation and, therefore, it cannot be trusted to vote its conscience” (Maingire 2008). Tsvangirai, a sad victim of necrophobia, whose blood curdles at the sight of a mere several hundred dead bodies of his supporters, cannot be expected to be the man to be trusted with shedding the right amount of blood for the purposes of sovereignty. He cannot finish the job of sovereignty. It is primarily and exclusively the job of those who have shed blood before, those who went to war.<sup>4</sup> The mask of masculine autonomy and strength, and the unflinching gaze at gore, are assumed to be naturally granted to Mugabe by virtue of his participation

in the liberation war. They have converted the experience of postcolonial patriotism and the man-nation into a reality slasher movie at every election,<sup>5</sup> according to his brand of masculinity a ghoulish disposition. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007) has branded this tendency of Mugabe to be relaxed around the long trail of dead bodies that characterizes his rule and wax lyrical when delivering graveside eulogies as necrophilia. In opposition media, he is viewed as the undertaker of the nation.

In summary, the Boy Code politics advocated and practiced by Mugabe and his party is that “boys will be boys” (war vets will be war mongers) because they have the political testosterone to whip up and sustain the aggression. Typical Mugabe men, such as Jonathan Moyo, exhibit behavior that involves “insensitivity and risk-taking” because that is what *amadoda sibili* (“real men”) do. If the “real men” do not have the necessary levels of political testosterone, they are told that this is not the ZANU-PF way, “boys should be boys” (war vets should be violent war mongers), and are forced to fulfill the stereotype of the dominant man-nation man. To put it in William Pollack’s (1998:58) words, if they are not “quick to tighten the laces on their gender straitjackets,” they can be ostracized and stripped of their ill-gotten privileges because “boys should be boys.” The coercive and heart-hardening strategies lead Zimbabwean society (mostly those at the receiving end of the pandemic brutality of the violent “revolutionary” party) to view war vets and ZANU-PF men as prisoners of their party and history, and generally as a politically unsocialized lot (cf. Pollack, 1998: 62). If there is a myth that “boys are toxic” and a concomitant “anti-boy” sentiment, as Pollack suggests, there is such a strong perception in Zimbabwe that Mugabe’s warrior and narcissistic masculinity is toxic, which defines the nation as a place of unending loss and mourning.

In contrast, opposition media portrays Tsvangirai as someone who has evacuated Mugabe’s Boy Code politics and mannerisms. They caricature Mugabe as the opposite of the man that he claims to be: an old, ramshackle body with swollen ankles and failing eyesight (a festering male body that can only produce political pus). Others view him as the master of the harem<sup>6</sup> that includes his wife Grace and all the men of his political party (and an unproductive harem at that because it has produced only three known children). Zimbabwe is ruled by a bisexual man then, politically and metaphorically speaking? Is there reason to wonder why Mugabe cross-dresses his male enemies? (Simba Makoni is viewed as a female prostitute without clients; Joshua Nkomo was portrayed in a woman’s dress).

Mugabe is fascinated with the handsomeness and height and build of his opponents (ugly, fat, short), rather than with their ideas. It is probably a naughty woman’s obsession as depicted in Joyce Win’s (2008) satirical article “A Girl’s Presidential Guide.” As a prospective voter, Win spent time in March 2008 caricaturing how to make choices based on whether a presidential candidate dressed well or looked cute because none of the male candidates had ideas that could persuade her to vote for their party. This fascination with height, girth, and looks, which Mugabe evinces, makes him a poorly feminized patriarch (because he is not attracted to the complexion of ideas but looks), much as he likes to distance himself from what is not “real men.” His is a patriarchal masculinity that endangers animals by associating them with demeaned enemies to be eradicated. It also misuses the idea of sex and procreation (themselves central to the making and reproduction of nations and “real men”) by likening it to a meaningless and flawed election, a stain on the ballot.

Tsvangirai is looked upon by Mugabe as the lucky bastard who gets to be loved by the people (construed as a beautiful woman) against all logic. Critics

who hate Tsvangirai have constantly remarked on his unlovable, fat, pockmarked cheeks; short, porcine nose; and dwarfish and stout figure, and have wondered how he managed to entice his late beautiful wife Susan, as well as other women after the death of Susan in March 2009. In politics, this has translated into the abuse of Tsvangirai by failed and bitter politicians such as Arthur Mutambara who described him as indecisive (the logic being: because a real man shoots straight, talks straight—to follow the language of erections); and as an intellectual midget (if you can't beat him on his choice of beautiful women, then don't talk about the size of his cock, but the size of his brain!). Mutambara shares this revulsion with Mugabe who cannot understand how such a midget and ugly man can attract more support than the intellectual giant (Mutambara, a rumored associate professor of robotics; and Simba Makoni, who holds a doctorate in science) and the handsome man with ever-thundering big fists (Mugabe, who claims to hold multiple degrees in violence).

What is missed in these exchanges is that Tsvangirai's feminine masculinity, as perceived and abused by Mugabe and his supporters, is ironically more appealing to the wider population than a hardened, tough-talking, fist-waving, head-butting masculinity such as Mugabe represents. He is viewed as a mother (caring, soft-hearted) who dies for her children, in order to protect them; a mother who takes the abusive father (Mugabe) head on in order to ensure the safety of the children and the home. His pulling out of the presidential runoff held at the end of June 2008 was largely and approvingly described as an act of courage and self-sacrifice—the sign of someone who is not power hungry and is willing to give up his ambitions as a man so that the brutality meted out to his nation-family might stop. It is the “ultimate sacrifice” a female masculinity will make. It is a refusal to live by the terms of the Boy Code that has led to the proliferation of the Wild West Men and the Lone Rangers and Destroyers in political life in Zimbabwe. It is a gesture that suggested possible routes and permutations to transcend and reorder the ways Mugabe has made the man the nation.

Indeed, Tsvangirai memorably laughed off the pejorative label of “teaboy” in March 2008 and promised the people in Bulawayo that as teaboy he will bring in tea with lots of milk come election time. Arguably, he very nearly delivered on his promises by ensuring the steady flow of thick and sweet tea throughout the country for the duration of his tenure as prime minister in a controversial Government of National Unity between 2009 and 2013. During this time, Mugabe came across as the proverbial Dyembeu, the man who eats all the seed in the granary and forgets that he will have to plant again come rain season. His vindictive indigenization policies caused massive deindustrialization and unemployment, a trend that he has deepened with his landslide (pun intended) victory at the polls that terminated the Government of National Unity in July 2013.

### MAN-NATION: A BALLSY NO-BALLS MAN?

More vicious critics have seen Mugabe as a sexually deprived and politically depraved, one-ball man. They have prayed for his public humiliation and painful death. Election stories placed Mugabe into a tripartite narrative of betrayal and lack as hallmarks of Zimbabwean history: from King Lobengula/Cecil John Rhodes, Ian Douglas Smith, and Robert Gabriel Mugabe. Sample this message circulated on various social media and by SMS and viral e-mail on the eve of the March 29,

2008, election: “*Zimbabwe yajaira. Lobengula akaitonga asina kudzidza. Smith neziso one. Mugabe nejende zvaro haana. Chokwadi ingabudirira sei nyika yezvirema? Vote wisely*” (Translation: “Zimbabwe is inured to abuse. Lobengula [the Ndebele King] ruled it although he was illiterate. Smith [Rhodesian Prime Minister] governed it and he had one eye. Mugabe rules it today but he does not have a single testicle. How can a country ruled by disabled leaders prosper? Vote wisely”).

We may wonder at the obsession with images of sickness and deprivation, lack and disability, balls and near-blindness (as illiterate or one-eyed) in the portrayal of Mugabe and leaders before him. Registered in these circulating images are the sickening “ableist” prejudices, where disabled and deformed bodies are considered undesirable freaks. Such glee at the sight or prospect of disability (whether of a foe or alien) flouts black Zimbabwean taboos that outlaw the deriding of infirmity and bodily disorders. *Seka urema wafa*. You can only mock the disabled body when you are dead and thus beyond being disabled yourself! However, when it comes to the figure of Mugabe, culture and taboos are thrown out the window. An unspoken argument would be that in Shona society elders say that *chirema chikati ndinokurova chine chachakatsika* (if a disabled person challenges you to a fight it is because there is a wicked trick up his/her sleeves). Mugabe, cast as an aged, infirm, and jingoistic man, does like to punch and badmouth his opponents a lot, and therefore he deserves the brickbats that come his way. The images of bodily disorder and inadequacies proliferate much like anti-Mugabe insurgents and are elaborated on with malicious imagination and churlish pleasure. They often come across as outright wishful dreaming and pathological lying, which are converted into the equivalent of suicide bombing in order to unseat and bury Mugabe in every imaginable sense. I will provide three examples that illustrate how the unrelenting history of distress has produced rumor-narratives that seek closure to the draining possibilities of the man-nation. These examples relate to Mugabe’s eventful encounter with a goat; the desacralization of his godly status; and verifiable cracks in the body of a colossus as he succumbs to the resolute termites of ageing.

On December 21, 2005, the *Zimdaily* carried a headline that rippled with the promise of a Stephen King horror movie: “Billy Bashes Bob.” As this story is no longer easily accessible on the defunct website of this online newspaper, it is important to reproduce a large section of it, warts and all:

A billy goat did some rough, instant justice to the President when his motorcade stopped to refuel enroute to the eastern resorts of Nyanga. The president, popularly known as Bob got out stretching his legs, and speaking to a couple locals. He was holding a bottle of water, when a Billy goat developed a profound interest and chose to pursue it. Whilst Bob swung the bottle at the goat, it quickly and sharply pierced Bob’s scrotum, and large bowel. Mugabe’s notorious bodyguard seemed unable to prevent the attack as the goat lunged towards the president, perhaps the goat should be handling his security in future.

The Billy goat was congratulated and declared a national hero by the readers of the *Zimdaily* at a time when the opposition was in disarray and no one had a clue how to unseat the seemingly invincible Mugabe. Readers were a wee disappointed that the goat did not actually kill Mugabe but nevertheless hoped that the wounds he sustained might never heal. The obvious wishful misrepresentation of facts was acknowledged by the readers as glaring but heartily welcomed as

a retributive distortion that would work as a panacea to the blatant and insensitive lies of ZANU-PF and its leader. The *Zimdaily* and other online Zimbabwean newspapers, driven by maddening desperation for a day of reckoning with Mugabe, continued to manufacture his deaths or narrow escapes from doomsday. His marital problems came in handy as they were blown out of proportion in order to knock the colossus in the knees and bring his woe-mottled face closer to his tormentors for the final coup de grace.

At the same time as the Billy goat political fiction was published, doing the rounds on the *Zimdaily* pages was the love triangle story that said that Grace Mugabe was suspected of having slept with all sorts of influential men, including Changare, the late Mugabe aide who had been accused by Grace Mugabe of being too concerned about her movements. The heroism of the goat still on their minds, readers of the *Zimdaily* sang praises to Changare, and wished Grace could pass on *njovera*, HIV, and all sorts of STDs to Mugabe so he would die. That way, through diseased sex, Grace could become the heroine of heroines in the democratic struggle for the death of Mugabe. These rumors about sexual incapacity, a cold matrimonial bed, and flights and fights in the Mugabe house have something to do with how the opposition as well as the majority culture imagine the strong, healthy, virile man. Mugabe himself counters these rumors by insisting on a hyper-masculinized self in whom elections are conflated with erections and campaigns with courtship. While with advanced old age sexual dysfunctions may be the norm, he self-resurrects his masculinity by playing hard and staying hard in a jingoistic and eroticized power politics. Like the “real man” that he is (never mind detractors who argue about his balls and wish them ruin), he can shrug off the stories about his wife’s alleged infidelity (frailty thy name is woman!) as disruptive irritations (a big man does not cry!) and concentrate his energies on the hardness, strength, and staying power required to achieve the bigger vision of sovereignty (the “big wheel” effect) and repulse the ubiquitous and ever-encroaching British. If he has no success in sex, as his detractors allege, he has unambiguous success in sovereignty, unlike Tsvangirai who has lost on both fronts.<sup>7</sup> It is the very reason he sublimates humanly feelings to godly superciliousness.

Since in June 2008 he said only God will dethrone him as he was put in power by God, he is viewed as the very picture of human political history that has gone wrong. As a reaction to his self-apotheosis, a viral e-mail, which was circulated in mid-April 2008, parodied the bellicose and self-righteous, vote-rigging Mugabe in a “prayer.” As the “Zim Prayer” (author anon.) may no longer be on the Internet, it is worth quoting it verbatim:

Our father Mugabe who art in Harare, how bad is your name that it can be hated in all corners of the world. thy kingdom is no more. give us this day our poll results and forgive us for voting you out as we forgive you for trying to rig. lead us not into stoning you but deliver us from your policies, for thy is the cruelty [*sic*], the poverty and shame for ever and ever be gone  
Amen!!!

His power and glory turned into vinegar. Pestered by the very real possibility of Mugabe going nowhere at all and continuing to foul up their lives, the dignity and resonance of the original prayer was mangled and transformed into a seething discontent. The much-awaited elusive death of Mugabe is captured in a dramatic

headline: “The Brutal End of Mugabe: Collapses, Falls Off Chair in Kampala” (*Zimdiaspora*, July 28, 2010). Similar “true” stories, accompanied with authentic visuals, appear in the media, the most telling one being about him caught on camera being driven in a golf cart in Lusaka because of infirmity. Sensing the ultimate scoop about Mugabe’s last puffs of breath, Gift Phiri, the *Zimdiaspora* reporter, converted his story into a premortem obituary: “He has been a big, robust man, fond of marathon speeches, fiery anti-West rhetoric, long conversations with his ministers and friends, but has been reluctant to step down even in this advanced age. In the face of adversaries who have done everything possible to get rid of him, pointedly Britain and the US, he has been tempted to hang on.” He prepares readers for the daunting and haunting challenge ahead: “It is in imagining a Zimbabwe without Mugabe, or Mugabe’s Zimbabwe.”

However, it is the tastelessness of the reporter’s conjectures and platitudes that is notable about the brutal end of Mugabe: “Mugabe has survived Western sanctions. Will he survive failing health?” In August 2010, Mugabe was 86 years old and plagued by predictable old-age ailments, so there is no prize for guessing what would eventually kill him. However, this kind of reporting underlines the frustrating lack of closure to a distressful experience of dictatorship, especially in the absence of a viable option. Troubled with their own death anxieties in the event of an undying Mugabe continuing to rule over their lives, while their own life expectancy contracts, it is not difficult to appreciate how such a besieged people can recondition and regenerate their enemy’s own vindictiveness and necrophilia. The stories of Mugabe’s endless deaths and sickness continue to redirect productive energies to a concentration on the invention of a disabling feeling of a pervasive and perpetual funeral wake (*mariro*) in social life as in political activity. Lest we forget, it is Mugabe who taught us to render our history in such mournful and death-conscious terms by recycling footage of the war dead, and making death so central to the making of a national ethos. While thinking about our liberation we keep reminding ourselves of the heartrending and never-ending *mariro* (funeral wakes) we would have to experience in the event that the puny ballpoint pen ever defeated *mubhobho* the gun, and conversely if the *mubhobho* continued to rule our lives. The hyphen between man-nation is a space of choiceless grief.

Therefore, instead of organizing political action to liberate themselves, the population invests time and resources in observing vigils for Mugabe’s illness and death through Facebook and Whatsapp, and paying obeisance to political conjurers such as Baba Jukwa. Mugabe is aware of the political advantage of playing possum by appearing to be ill and close to death as it demobilizes his opponents who only have to do little campaigning with the hope that a 90-year-old man might not make it to the finish line. He did make it and secured a controversial landslide victory in 2013. Bickering and splintering opposition forces are now planning their political careers on the basis of whether Mugabe will succumb to natural wastage or assassination by his disgruntled lieutenants before the 2018 election. My point here is that there is a scam at the heart of Zimbabwean politics, whose mastermind is Mugabe himself who has made the man-nation a practical, indissoluble compound and potent idea, hence the need for all of us to have our senses overwhelmed when we are asked to think whether it is possible to imagine Zimbabwe without Mugabe. The grief we endure is a result of buying into fakery (e.g., the Billy goat story, Mugabe’s fight with the British, his obsession with “factionalism,” and imaginary assassination plots in his party) as the guiding light to political salvation. It is also

grief that exudes from allowing ourselves to hyphenate the starting points of our future destiny and identity as post-Mugabe. That too is a con now naturalized in political and social thought.

### CHOICELESSNESS OF GRIEF: MUGABE GOES A-WOOING

In this section, I will give a brief outline of the fake and his fakery, the desired image and the image behind the image. I will argue that the choicelessness of grief caused by Mugabeism can be misunderstood if the tension between the gown and the man and the mirror and the image is not appreciated. I will discuss a few examples of fakery, which come across as political miracles in the shape-changing transformation of the man-nation. They include: the spin he put on why he fired Jonathan Moyo, his minister of information and publicity; the role of women and youth in the party; and the idea that Mugabe dresses to match the aspirations of the nation. I will invest some space to reflect on the biggest of all political scams at the heart of the man-nation when Mugabe went a-wooing the electorate and a diesel mystic.

When Mugabe fired Jonathan Moyo from his Cabinet in February 2005, there was great excitement across all political and media divides. The firm action was interpreted as an indication that Mugabe could rise above being beholden to certain personalities and show the nation a clean hand. Moyo's grief should therefore be understood as the necessary price he had to pay in order for Mugabe to generate a new rhetoric of care, consistency, and a new language of how the educated and business elites within his party cannot be trusted. Moyo's grief was a timely and sound investment for Mugabe's politics that now represents a return to the source of its power, the simple-minded loyalty that its patronage system demands. Joice Mujuru, whom Mugabe said he elevated to the vice presidency because she is "decent, revolutionary, honest, truthful and trustworthy," is contrasted to the likes of academics such as Jonathan Moyo, men who do not mean what they do or say (see *Herald*, February 21, 2005). Joice Mujuru<sup>8</sup> enabled Mugabe to revisit the discourse of perseverance, loyalty, and reward so he could say, "She deserves it. I know her perfectly well. She is very dependable" (*Herald*, February 21, 2005). But beyond the grief of Moyo and the much-advertised elevation of Joice Mujuru<sup>9</sup> is the desire by Mugabe to be seen not only as a firm leader on top of his game, but as a modernizing democrat and revolutionary. Having dealt Jonathan Moyo an unkind, but deserved blow (Moyo was his erstwhile *amadhodha sibili*), itself a demonstration that Mugabe "can still punch," he proceeded to perform a few miracles.

On the first miracle, he says; "You ignore the women, you are gone. Don't ignore the youths" (*Herald*, February 21, 2005). His wearing of a youth subculture bandana and hood in the name of "party colors" at the launch of his party's manifesto in February is closely linked to his desire to be viewed as attractively youthful in body and ideas, something his archrival Morgan Tsvangirai does not need to prove. This desperate desire to be forever young (when he turned 83 he quipped that in fact he had turned 8 plus 3 years—11 years!) is not just a cynical take on the idea of age as a mere number, but includes strategies of infiltrating spaces and modes of cultural production. His attempts at having his gravelly and sonorous but totally unmusical voice incorporated into new pop songs by the youths of Zimbabwe is a case in point (see Shumba in *Zimonline*, September 12, 2007). He could then be viewed as a "pop" celebrity in order to woo the youths to join ZANU-PF. The

content of the pop songs, which was largely made up of excerpts from his speeches, was given a sense of contemporaneity by being conjoined to a youthful hip-hop musician's lyrics, and conferred gravitas by also being accorded a status second in rank to the national anthem. This way the much-aged Mugabe and the young Zimbabwean could be viewed as segueing effortlessly into each other to create a timeless flow of energies and memories across generations: the old man's voice providing obligatory historical grit to the lilting optimism of the undying youth of the tried and tested party.

Another telling example of fakery and how the desired image jars with the image it hides is when Mugabe confuses elections with erections and feminizes the electorate. Since the voting public is feminized by Mugabe, a NO vote is viewed as a rejection by an ungrateful woman. As a frothing and frustrated Nathaniel Manheru put it in stark sexual terms when again the voters had denied Mugabe an outright victory in the March 2008 election, and an uncertain runoff was imminent: "Who does not want to mount, who? Inevitably, the contest became complex and pregnant" (Manheru in *Herald*, May 4, 2008). Mugabe feminizes and infantilizes the voters: the very reason he can argue that whether Tsvangirai wins or loses the election, he will never vacate his seat of power, because he knows better than these children and women who vote with their bellies and not brains and principles. *Vakadzi ipwere, vanofuririka!* (Women are children, they are impressionable). Who does not want to mount them, who? Contempt for and objectification of women, if not outright misogyny, remain unresolved and hidden behind Mugabe's cross-dressing of his foes and his sexualization and feminization of the body of voters.

It is no surprise then that Mugabe's February 2005 rhetoric teemed with sexually suggestive language that converted the campaign for votes into an amorous courtship where the whole nation is presented as a hard-to-get woman, and Mugabe himself is the eligible suitor, persistent and patient. Mugabe is quoted in Matabeleland, while presenting computers at a school:

In 2000, the vote was by and large "NO." But if a man is rejected by a woman, if he is still in love with her, as we are still in love with you, he will come back again. Is she going to say "NO," again? So there I am, laughing and joking, very jubilant and hopeful that this time I will give her the ring. Well, there it is, I will come again although this is not the time for the second attempt. After the launch of our election campaign on Friday, that's the time we will be coming to talk to you in a serious way and we will establish whether our destiny will be together. (*Herald*, February 8, 2005)

These are indeed ominous words couched in the language of courtship. It should not escape the memory of Zimbabweans, not even their indigenous experiences, that frustrated suitors have been known to stalk and abduct the objects of their affections. It is astonishing that women's groups in the alternative movement let this dangerous rhetoric pass without challenging it. Violence escalated in the run-up to the March 2005 poll, in the name of impressing the "woman" who said "NO" twice to Mugabe in 2000 and 2002. The notorious Operation Murambatsvina (the slum-clearing exercise that displaced nearly a million people across the country in order to dislodge malcontents who bred in shacks and peri-urban centers) was launched soon after Matabeleland and Harare voted overwhelmingly against Mugabe in 2005. In other words, Mugabe was warning the woman he was wooing: *ukandiramba*



*ndinoita jambanja* (if you reject me I will deal with you). Schooled at fore-pangs, the woman had said NO again, knowing that once she said YES that would be the last time the suitor would bring her gifts or see her again until the next election/erection. So, *ukandida ndinoita madiro* (if you accept my hand I will do as I wish with you) is very much a consistent philosophy of this kind of suitor. Man-nation is the choice the woman will make with love and still feel raped.

The second miracle is that Mugabe is his dress and his dress is the nation's dreams. In an article that reads like a press briefing titled "Fashion and Presidential Campaigning," Happiness Zengeni jubilantly describes how in 2008 Mugabe and his wife Grace "incorporated fashion into politics in the most elegant manner" in order to dress the part. The couple is portrayed as almost always "dressed to match," and Mugabe himself is said to have "moved out of his traditional dark fitting suits and has gone for a more versatile and relaxed look with an ultra-modern and ethnic touch." This observation is important to make in an election year in which the fist-waving and ever-taut 84-year-old Mugabe was being challenged by his ebullient and crowd-pulling 56-year-old archenemy Morgan Tsvangirai. His ultramodern side is represented by his donation of thousands of "state-of-the-art" computers to schools at every rally, while his ethnic dimension, which is expected to be interpreted as a signifier of authenticity and rootsy identity, actually speaks to his violent clannish and patronage politics. Happiness Zengeni, unable to decipher the familiar public knowledge about Mugabe, continues happily and zaniily with his dictated script. Developing his argument from the ethnic and ultramodern aspects of Mugabe, he observes: "His mode of dressing could in some circles be termed as 'grass-roots,' fitting for a man of the people or being reminiscent of the early safari-suit days." Zengeni's approved expression of nostalgia for the Mugabe of the safari-suit days is scarcely able to connect the same man with the atrocities in Matabeleland and the Midlands during the first decade of independence, the indiscriminate destruction of thousands of homes of the urban and peri-urban poor in the name of slum-clearing in 2005, and the systematic violent displacement and murder of supporters of the Movement for Democratic Change in the run-up to the presidential runoff of June 27, 2008. The idea of a "grass-roots" man hardly collocates with a leader who becomes a man of the people by rigging elections and disenfranchising millions of disgruntled voices in order to stay in power. Of course, unbeknown to a blind scribe such as Zengeni, the fashion adopted by Mugabe for the presidential campaign has "a deceptively simple look" in order to dissemble but the elitism and distance that are masked by the grass-roots look are too shrill to be muffled by Amai Mugabe's embarrassingly flamboyance, which is barely disguised by her "African attire complete with a turban (doek)" and "trendy glasses!" The irony in the platitude that is posed as a scintillating question is lost on Zengeni: "So do clothes make a President?" Mugabe the president makes the clothes, they do not make him! Zengeni tries to be chatty while presenting what in his view must be an erudite response to the rhetorical question he posed himself:

Well, apart from national symbolism, this is why the President wears these colours:

Red outfit—the President wears the red outfit, as it is an expressive colour. It creates attraction and excitement. The President naturally portrays an image of excitement, energy, enthusiasm and confidence.

Zengeni forgets to remind readers of torched villages, bodies dumped in disused mines, maimed opposition members, and thousands force-marched to Mugabe's rallies in order to bump up numbers to create the necessary "image of excitement, energy, enthusiasm and confidence."

Yellow outfit—similar to red as it creates attraction and excitement. However, it suggests a more fun, optimistic and jovial mood. The colour tends to bring about cheery feeling to the group.

Zengeni is actually aware of the symbol drain caused by the tautology of meaning in red and yellow, which is what Mugabe is well known for in his rendition of patriotic history and recitation of obituaries of heroes of his own party. It would require supreme imagination and magnanimity for millions of systematically displaced and forcibly "diasporised" Zimbabweans to encounter the daunting, red-eyed, cataract-ringed stare of Mugabe and experience jovial and cheery feelings.

Green outfit—the colour depicts a natural look, as green is always associated with nature. The President wears it to give a more humble and sincere personality.

Humble and sincere do not belong in the same world as Mugabe, and hence the need to play-act. Obstinance and williness are more acknowledged as qualities naturally synonymous with his politics. Green and nature? The environmental degradation that intensified with the land invasions and the problem of waste disposal management in all the cities and towns during Mugabe's multiple terms in office have for long been a contributory factors to the poisoning of nature.

Black—the colour gives a feeling of perspective and depth. Symbolizing elegance and refinement, it is always regarded as a prestigious colour. The President wears it as the colour of authority and power.

Perspective and depth in terms of the inflexible, one-eyed (pun not intended in spite of the president's failing eyesight) versions of sovereignty and history daily parroted by the president himself. Elegance and refinement come from stashes of wealth that cannot be subjected to normal accounting procedures. Dictatorial authority has given the color black a terrifying meaning to those at the receiving end of tyranny: it signifies loss and grieving.

So, clothes do unmake and expose a president especially when the qualities they are intended to communicate are subverted by the body and mind behind the layers of cloth. The desired image does not carry the truth of the knowledge readers have of the image behind the image. It is comparable to the tale of two different worlds between Mugabe's state-sanctioned iconography, which graces public buildings, and the unauthorized footage that dominates the unregulated social media and Internet sites. The authorized collection shows a cool-headed, steadfast, farsighted, and collected head of state. The "illegal" ones, much closer to reality, display him with his trademark red-eyed, hypervigilant side glance set in a long crumbling face. There is an unbridgeable gap between aspiration and reality. Published a week before the blood-spattered presidential runoff, "Fashion and Presidential Campaign" is not only an exercise in wishful political image-remaking, but an instance of how

the predominant modes of cultural and political imagination are motivated by the production of fakes and fakery that are used to rehabilitate the vicious politics of the *mubhobho* hidden in the symbolic accessories of culture.

The third miracle that illustrates the endemic and dramatic nature of the culture of fakery that Mugabe intuitively produces and responds to is the hilarious story of the “diesel *n’anga*” that broke out in 2006 and made make-believe headlines. Rotina Mavhunga, an illiterate mystic who hardly completed three years of primary school education, conned Mugabe into parting with Z\$5 billion and a farm after she “discovered” refined diesel oozing out of rocks in Maningwa Hills in Chinhoyi. Walter Marwizi (2007) described the equivalent of a Dreamworks or Disneyland plot in his incisive indictment of Mugabe’s legacy: “This wealth, in the form of diesel. . . , she told mesmerized ministers, could help the country out of the economic quagmire spawned by violent seizures of productive farmland in 2000.” Future studies could dwell on the primitive gullibility of a versatile, ultramodern president with a touch of ethnicity, giving credence to the suspicion that Zimbabwe is doomed as it is ruled by mentally inadequate personages. Again, the desired image of the enlightened and refined man-nation crumbles in the face of reality. When it became clear that an entire government (which included much-feared senior army, police, and internal security ministers) had been conned by “someone who says she did not even know what she was saying” (Marwizi 2007), Mugabe tried to extricate himself from the embarrassing situation by claiming that the beauty of the female mystic had blinded his ministers (see Nkatazo 2007). State-sponsored headlines screamed: “Diesel *n’anga* saga: Justice must be done, says President” (Matambanadzo 2007). In an interview titled “Governor: Why We Believed *N’anga*,” a senior official in Mugabe’s government tried to explain why the scam happened: “There are reasons. . . . The government and the President believe in African culture, we believe in spirit mediums” (Manyukwe 2007).

This rip-off is not unrelated to the unending scams that Mugabe himself plays on the entire populace in the name of African culture, authenticity, and grassroots and being ultramodern. Donning a fundamentalist Apostolic Faith gown complete with a crooked shepherd’s rod in hand in order to be called Madzibaba Gabriel or Angel Gabriel, while at the same time claiming unwavering faith in the Roman Catholic Church and making expensive trips to the Vatican to witness papal ceremonies, believing in spirit mediums (contrary to his apostolic/Pentecostal faith), and consulting an illiterate diesel mystic on matters of national importance is part of the elaborate fakery that clothes the man-nation. It is this simultaneity of dissonant practices that makes Mugabe a shape-shifting changeling. One day he is clad in a youth subculture bandana and hood; another day he is in a shapeless Apostolic Faith gown (signaling humility and a Spartan life); and soon after he is marrying off his daughter Bona to a pilot who belongs to ZAOGA, the born-again Christian gospel of material prosperity. It is also during Mugabe’s rule that Zimbabweans witnessed the unprecedented mushrooming of fake prophets and mystics, the majority of whom enjoy patronage from senior members of his party. Therefore, contrary to the coherence that his presidential campaign fashion show tries to construct, his vision is made up of a hotchpotch of beliefs and faiths and is ultimately diverse and un-synthesized, hollow and horrifying.

## CONTRASTIVE ROMANCE: THE LOVE TRIANGLE BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

If we imagine a script in which Tsvangirai, portrayed as an ugly, pimply-faced Chinamapezi—the despised folkloric figure—is a suitor whose beauty is hidden in his heart, Mugabe would successfully audition as the handsome, angry old man with a heart of stone. He would be one of the shape-shifting suitor-lions in Shona folktales, who misled pretty girls into a valley of dry bones in spite of the protestations of their little brother (Tsvangirai?) who had seen through the canine-flashing smiles and roar-laughter of his sisters' beaux. It is the ingenuity of the scorned boy that saves the girls from being eaten by the men-lions. While, according to his admirers, Tsvangirai is a more fatherly soft man figure, Mugabe sees him as open to abuse and exploitation by those who want to take "his" Zimbabwe. In Mugabe's eyes, Tsvangirai is the suitor-lion misleading the gullible population into being recolonized. While Tsvangirai's is a romance of an as yet un-rooted masculinity, which bears hope for all animalized and cross-dressed victims of Mugabe's xenophobia and hypermasculinity, his defeat at the polls in July 2013 underlines the resurgence of a narrative of masculinity where Chinamapezi (the hidden golden heart) and the perspicacious little boy who warns his sisters against dating men-lions have no guaranteed meaning.

What we are likely to see in the future is a novelization of the love triangle of Adam, Eve, and the Snake (the enemy-opponent as animal) in a mock-up of the new Eden that Zimbabwe may have been all along. This love triangle might be understood in two ways: first, when we consider that there are three players in this romance; and second, when we contemplate how a story of intense conflict between two sets of masculinities is resolved.

It is worthwhile to insert this discussion in the literary domain where it belongs. The first novelization of the conflict *for* Zimbabwe *between* Robert Mugabe *and* Morgan Tsvangirai is remarked on by W. P. Madamombe in a letter to the *Sunday Mail* (November 25, 2007). He is struck by resemblances to the contemporary political scene in plot and characterization that are achieved by a little-known 30-year-old writer Elias Machedze in his novel titled *Sarawoga* (Left alone; 2004). The novel itself, set in the old world of the Shona people, and almost immediately prescribed as an O-Level setbook, recalls the plots of an earlier famous Shona writer, the late Archbishop Patrick Chakaipa. His most significant old-world novels *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* (One out with ten arrows) and *Pfumo Reropa* (Spear of blood) depict bloody struggles between an underdog and superior forces, with the former triumphing through ingenuity and determination. Madamombe (2007) reads *Sarawoga* in a way that explains why it was made a setbook a few months after publication.

If you read the book, you will agree with me that the author fully supports President Mugabe. One of the main characters—Dzivamiseve [a pool of arrows]—is just like Cde Mugabe, who fought and continues to fight against imperialists, remains consistent, courageous and well composed in the battle despite threats from the whites and their puppet, Sarawoga.

At the end, the spirit mediums reward Dzivamiseve with a landslide victory and kingship of the land...

The power-hungry Sarawoga tries to overthrow the legitimate leader Gandamiseve [thrower of spears] with the help of the whites, but to no avail...

Since it is already a setbook, we hope it will cultivate a new political culture in our students. With the harmonized presidential and parliamentary elections looming, the book will go a long way in ensuring that more people will vote for Zanu-PF and its leader Cde Mugabe.

Need I say more except that this is such a hilarious and concise summation of the political project that novels are called to arm (a pen in this case is a welcome sword!). The entrenched aesthetics of the Third Chimurenga does not allow for critical nuance. The love triangle is simple: Sarawoga (the snake in the Garden) wants to betray both the country/nation (Eve) and its heroic and patriotic Gandamiseve/Dzivamiseve (Adam, the guardian of the soil) to the whites (other wily snakes). It is a conflict over who truly loves and protects Eve/country. It is about two masculinities: the traitor and the patriot in mortal combat over an impressionable and passive woman. The triumphant ending seems to be an unquestionable given in so far as Chimurenga literary politics go.

I want to slightly nuance this reading of masculinity through a rethinking of the conventional anticolonial love triangle. In order to perform this task, I will draw direct inspiration from the work of Beth Kramer (2008) on “postcolonial triangles.” Kramer draws our attention to “the unique power structures that emerge when two men become competitors over the female object” (construed as the nation for my purposes). She particularly examines examples of “triangulated desire that portray female characters who serve as the conduits facilitating male homosocial relations” (2). The founding and now displaced love triangle of Zimbabwe is the one involving the struggle between Mugabe and Ian Smith (the British/colonizer) for the control of Zimbabwe. It was rehabilitated in a postcolonial situation when Mugabe entered into a warm relationship with the British for the purposes of exploiting Zimbabwe for their mutual benefit. Kramer characterizes this “asymmetrical relationship” between the former colonizer and the emerging nationalist elite over the former colonized body or indigenous people as a “homosocial triangle” in which two sets of masculinities “mutually gain strength at the expense of the continued oppression of the former colonized body” (3). Post-2000, Mugabe appears to upend and dislodge this model of triangulated desire by returning the conflict to the shape it is given in *Sarawoga*. But in spite of the seeming triumphant romance of a landslide victory over an indigenous rival, what is missed is how Zimbabwe as a woman is simply trashed as a matter between two men.

It is a conflict in a love triangle that should be read in two ways. One of the contestants, who wants to “mount” uninterrupted, warns the other: “don’t come between me and my woman” if you want the happiest relationship between you and me. This repeats the preindependence Mugabe-Smith rivalry, which led to armed struggle. The second scenario, which is the postindependence Mugabe-British homosocial bonding, says: “don’t let the country come between us.” The post-2000 Mugabe-Tsvangirai relationship has strong elements of the two readings, but takes the conflict to an unexpected level. Here, contrary to received political wisdom as routinized in *Sarawoga*, “the bonds between rivals become a stronger presence than any feelings toward the female object” (Kramer 2008: 7). Nathaniel Manheru commented on the “mad mating of supposedly contrary ideas”

between the two political rivals during the term of the now defunct Government of National Unity (2009–2013). He raises the homosocial if not homoerotic possibilities enlivened by what he called “political dalliance” in a “tightening tango” of “the Mugabe-Tsvangirai antipode” now “yoke-able in political courtship [as], actually steady infatuates” (Manheru in *Herald*, February 21, 2009). It seems that the colorful display of irreconcilable contention was only an exhibition of mating behaviors.

Further, the violence between the two rivals masks masculine inadequacies and fears, and revivifies the Boy Code. As Kramer (2008) argues, the presence of the female object in this triangulated relationship “heightens the emasculating effects of male violence.” Kramer further observes that “to be feminized or suffer gender confusion within a framework that includes a woman is, however, dire” when compared to a struggle between men where the female gaze is absent (10–11). For Mugabe to contemplate defeat at the polls by a marauding bachelor such as Tsvangirai would have been dire indeed (so he refused to step down until Tsvangirai was humiliated), as it was for Tsvangirai whose hasty marriage to Elizabeth Macheke collapsed temporarily when he lost power in 2013.

Tsvangirai seems to have morphed into a Mugabe as he refuses to step down from the leadership of his party (see 2013–2014 media reports), but the point missed by his critics is that it is not a question of leadership renewal, but the love triangle that can only be displaced once he has had another manly go at Mugabe and resoundingly defeated him in the full glare of “his” Zimbabwe. What enlightens my views about the reconsolidation of the seemingly receding man-nation into an indissoluble masculine national ethos is the way in which the love triangle as a national romance continues, as Kramer argues, to reincorporate masculinity in the new leadership of the country at the expense of the continued oppression of the indigenous people. It highlights what Kramer (2008: 12–13) considers “the great strides that would need to be taken to reverse a dominant male ideology.” The man-nation is Mugabe’s original contribution to the scam at the heart of the love triangle we call patriotism in Zimbabwe. It is again unwise, and an indication of the seductive power of the fake, to suggest that now that the *jongwe* (the cockerel) is believed to be publicly henpecked,<sup>10</sup> it is a sign that the man of steel, the colossus, is irreparably corroding. It is the same tried and tested ruse by the man-nation to appear to be helplessly weak and at the mercy of forces that ironically prolong his stay in office. That where Grace, his wife, points, the president now follows (cf. Makinwa 2015) is a political master stroke that actually elevates the deplorable version of the impressionable and passive woman in a love triangle to the status of an overpowering mother-nation. The man-nation is saying: “I answer to Amai Mugabe, the mother-nation. Don’t come between me and my motherland. You answer to me. I am her man. She is my Zimbabwe. Obey or else. . . .” It is a love triangle in which the oppressed indigenous people now have to compete for the elusive affections of two formidable lovers: the man-nation and the mother-nation.

#### NOTES

1. Mugabe is a politician and intellectual who is rabidly suspicious and contemptuous of books that touch on his life and times. He had no kind words for the David Martin and Phyllis Johnson book published in 1981, wishing only his

own black people (perhaps someone from his own clique that he could trust) had written it, even though it was largely complimentary of him. He burst into anger when Edgar Tekere published his memoirs, which recalled some unflattering aspects of Mugabe's sexual life. He saw it as "the machinery of biography" intended to contain and splinter his authority in the ruling party. He has never written his own life story to set the record straight, but is discomfited when he is written about in the numerous biographies whose writers he does not approve of.

2. Future research could focus on a much more multimodal approach to the study of the man and his ways. I have in mind here the way he is represented in biographies (black and white), sculpture, painting, cartoons, adverts, film, poems, plays, songs/music, and novels.
3. To show that this was not just a knee-jerk reaction to the all-too-real possibility of losing the election and a future of unbridled looting of farms and the economy, the idea of privileging murder and violence over the citizens' constitutional right to a protected secret ballot in order to cow Zimbabweans into voting ZANU-PF was actually central to Mugabe's politics. His chief strategist Jonathan Moyo spelt it out a week after Mugabe's widely condemned and disputed "election" into office: "It is important for the pen to be able to play its permanent role in the democratic process. It's important that there be entrenched mechanisms that will not allow the pen to become an enemy of the history of the country and the heritage of the country. The gun was held by people who are still in charge of this country. It makes logical sense that the gun is more important than a pen" (Maingire, *Zimbabwe Times*, July 11, 2008).
4. Nathaniel Manheru (*Herald*, April 26, 2008) writes: "Sensible people and powers must know that. We know iron; we know blood, indeed we easily tell the smell of gun powder, the sound of projectiles looking for targets. We have seen and fought wars, including a long one which founded us as a sovereign People, a sovereign Nation."
5. Novels such as *We Need New Names* (Noviolet Bulawayo), *Running with Mother* (Christopher Mlalazi), and *Harare North* (Brian Chikwava) record the normalization of bloodletting and other forms of violence by the state in post-2000 Zimbabwe.
6. Margaret Dongo, an ex-Mugabe supporter and independent politician, suggested that all Mugabe's male parliamentarians are his subdued wives.
7. The fracturing of Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC party after being resoundingly defeated at the polls by the groggy old man Mugabe in July 2013 is explicitly related to how his sensational misfortunes in sex and politics are interlinked.
8. See Lene Bull Christiansen (2007) and how she argues that Mujuru accedes to the nationalist-patriarchal Boy Code and reaps massive material and political benefits from sucking up to hegemonic masculinity. Events that led to her humiliating dismissal as vice president in December 2014 point to the fact that she was simply a pawn and political plug in the murky games of the "big boys" in her party.
9. Grace Mugabe emerged in 2014 as the power that shapes ZANU-PF's dynastic politics. Supported by her husband, she ironically accused Joice Mujuru of extortion, corruption, causing division in the party, and plotting to assassinate the president. Mugabe repeated his wife's accusations and called Mujuru a liar, a gossip, an extortionist, and an ungrateful person, who was incompetent and murderous (see, e.g., Makinwa 2015).

10. At the ZANU-PF Congress held at the beginning of December 2014, the media, which itself often glibly peddles patriarchal values, was excited by Mugabe's admission that he is controlled by his wife. A much-circulated news item goes like this: "At the party meeting of some 12,000 delegates, Mugabe, who had spoken at the podium in a rambling fashion, stopped only when he got a note from the First Lady. He read it and informed the audience: '*Mukadzi anyora uyu, hanzi mave kutaurisa. Ndizvo zvandinoitwa kana kumba. Saka ndinofanira kuteerera*'" (It's my wife who has written this note. She says I am now talking too much. That's how I am treated even at home, and so I must listen/obey) (see Makinwa 2015, and other media reports).



## Grappling with Mugabe's Masculinist Politics in Zimbabwe: A Gender Perspective

*Rudo B. Gaidzanwa*

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins by conceptualizing masculinities and their deployment in politics through the career and life of Robert Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe. In this process, there will be an analysis of the trajectory of Mugabe's career, which is intertwined with that of Zimbabwe, and his engagement with his political foes, his party colleagues, and the populace of Zimbabwe. The chapter examines the deployment of specific types of masculine behavior, norms, and values in political engagements by Mugabe, paying specific attention to the cultural, social, economic, and gender contexts in which he has operated.

There is a paucity of biographies about Mugabe despite his international prominence as a leader of an anticolonial liberation movement, an African country that has dominated the news globally because of its long war of national liberation that ended in 1980, the land reform program of 1999–2000 and beyond, the Matebeleland atrocities associated with the 5th Brigade of the Zimbabwean National Army in 1983–1987, and the charged rhetoric and animosity between Mugabe and the Western powers, particularly Britain under Tony Blair since 1999 following the launch of the land reform, popularly dubbed the “Third Chimurenga.” Heidi Holland's *Dinner with Mugabe* (2008) discusses the actions of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), Mugabe's party.

Mugabe himself has not written or published his memoirs, and so sociologists and other scholars have to depend on a variety of other sources such as public speeches and communications to understand his motivations and reasons for the choices he has made at specific moments of his life and career. Edgar Tekere, former secretary general of ZANU-PF, wrote *Tekere: A Lifetime of Struggle* (2007) about his life in the struggle to liberate Zimbabwe, and described the ascendance of Mugabe in ZANU in 1977 and beyond, culminating in his election as the prime minister of independent Zimbabwe. Tekere fell out with Mugabe and formed his own political party, the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). However, it is also clear that the public and the private persona of any human may be quite different

and are influenced by many considerations including propriety, public opinion, and political correctness and expedience. This analysis draws on public sources of data such as books, speeches, newspapers, and academic commentaries on the events spanning Mugabe's life and career.

## THEORIZING HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES

In order to understand the issues around Mugabe's deployment of political, social, and economic power and its use to dominate others within and outside his party ZANU-PF and in male-dominated political systems, the concepts of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities and genders are useful. Connell (1987) has cogently explicated the concepts of hegemonic, that is, dominant, empowered, and socially and economically significant masculinities that can legitimize and reproduce their power. Connell (1991: 186) also considers subordinated, oppressed, and disempowered masculinities such as those of the poor and homosexuals. Carrigan et al. (1985) also indicated that the differentiation between hegemonic and subordinated masculinities includes power and other relations, division of labor, patterns of emotional attachment, psychological and institutional differentiation as part of other collective practices. The chapter focuses on Mugabe as a politician through an analysis of his gendered decision-making, activities, pronouncements, and choices.

The chapter also discusses Mugabe's gender relationships with men and women in his party, the general polity, and his family. In this way, it undertakes an analysis of some of Mugabe's political activities beyond his relationships with the women in his life, his party, and his country. The chapter describes and analyzes the growth of the cult around him, the admiration that he garnered among his party members, particularly his cabinet, their mode of communication and interaction with him, taking into account that Mugabe has garnered admiration in Africa, particularly South Africa. This is juxtaposed with the strained and acrimonious relationship he has had with the Western governments, particularly the British under Tony Blair, his antipathy toward homosexual people, the public manifestation of his ageing, and the discourses around succession to the presidency of ZANU-PF. All these events shed light on the issues of gender masculinity and its salience, deployment, and enactment in Mugabe's life and politics.

## THE WAR YEARS

The foregrounding of the military during the war for national liberation was inevitable, given the focus on fighting and winning battles, hearts, and minds of civilians and combatants. The Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), a very masculine organization under the command of Josiah Tongogara, had become very powerful and was romanticized by a significant section of the population in Zimbabwe. The politicians, specifically Robert Mugabe, who was the commander in chief of ZANLA and president of the ZANU and his army ZANLA, were based in Mozambique and his army fought in the eastern and northeastern parts of the Zimbabwe, then called Rhodesia, infiltrating through the long borders with Mozambique through the Manica, Tete, and Gaza provinces. Tekere, a ZANU stalwart, in his biography noted that the politicians and the military did not mix well and the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA) rebellion was based on the distrust that the worker and military cadres of Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU)

and ZANU had for the politicians, whom they considered to be *zvigánanda* (bourgeois), ready to negotiate a settlement rather than fight to liberate their country. From Tekere's memoir and his description of the opinions of Ndabaningi Sithole, then leader of ZANU, about Mugabe, we can conclude that Sithole viewed Mugabe as a reserved man who was more comfortable as a bureaucrat than as a soldier.

Tekere also noted that Samora Machel, himself a soldier with little formal education, confided to him, after the Chimoio massacre, that he did not consider Mugabe to be soldier material and did not like Mugabe. In any event, Robert Mugabe became the secretary general of ZANU while still in prison in Gweru and was finally commissioned president of ZANU in Chimoio in Mozambique in 1977. According to Tekere (2007), he and Tongogara shared an affinity for militarism and were both aware of the difference between themselves and Mugabe in terms of their appetite for fighting. The military masculinities in Mozambique dominated all other masculinities, resulting in generalized suspicion directed at those cadres who were not good at war and with no stomach for the life of the war zones and fronts. The Mozambique era really showcased the abilities of the dominant masculinities of legendary cadres such as Josiah Tongogara, Rex Nhongo, and others who excelled at waging war efficiently and successfully, eclipsing or diminishing other cadres who were not so inclined to military exploits. Thus, most women were in support roles such as commissariat work, nursing, and teaching. Mugabe received mixed reviews as indicated by Tekere (2007: 94) in his memoir, where he and Tongogara expressed doubts about Mugabe's capabilities as a commander in chief of a party and army fighting to liberate their country.

### GENDERING THE WAR AND THE GOVERNMENT IN 1980

The war front was gendered and the masculinities of the soldiers who commanded the warriors and those who fought in Zimbabwe were the most dominant. Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000) has written a definitive account of the experiences and roles of women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle. In her account, Nhongo-Simbanegavi describes some incidences of indiscipline and abuse of some civilians in many sectors by some of the male liberation fighters. She also analyzes and critiques the treatment of women combatants in general and the composition of the Women's Affairs Department leadership of ZANU in Mozambique, in which the wives of the top political brass of ZANU became the office bearers in 1979 though the majority of the female combatants who had fought in the war were young, rural women. Teurai Ropa, head of the Department for Women's Affairs, was the wife of the ZANLA operations commander Rex Nhongo. Her deputy was Sally Mugabe, the wife of Robert Mugabe, the president of ZANU and commander in chief of ZANLA. Julia Zvobgo, the secretary for administration in the Women's Affairs Department, held a master's degree and was the wife of Eddison Zvobgo, the publicity secretary of ZANU. As Nhongo-Simbanegavi observed, Sally Mugabe and Julia Zvobgo had arrived at the war front rather late in the war and their husbands' influence over their appointments could not be ruled out. Thus, they were ignored by the female combatants they were supposed to help. Nevertheless, Mrs. Zvobgo and Mrs. Nhongo were inserted high in the party list and stood and were elected into the first parliament of independent Zimbabwe. Teurai Ropa Nhongo had been a combatant in her own right, and after marrying Rex Nhongo, she was able to rise to the headship of the Department for Women's Affairs. In this instance, the wives

of dominant men, particularly Zvobgo, were able to rise to important party and, subsequently, national positions.

Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000) argues that women in the ZANLA camps resented their marginalization in support functions, their prohibition from using contraception, and their stigmatization for falling pregnant in the camps. However, the issue of contraceptive use was particularly thorny because the morality behind the decision was based on patriarchal thinking, namely, that combatants came to fight and not to have children and that the combatants' parents sent their children to war in good faith and these children should be returned home in virgin condition! This thinking ruined many a young woman's life because many pubescent men and women experimented with sex and young women fell pregnant and could not carry out war functions efficiently. Many of the poor, rural women fighters were lumbered with children, whose fathers were unknown or had died in combat, and were destitute because of poor parental opportunities during and after the war.

In addition, in the run-up to the election, Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000) indicates that significant numbers of female ZANLA cadres were returned to Zimbabwe as refugees so that they could mobilize the population and campaign for ZANU, which they did successfully. ZANU won the election, taking 57 of the 80 seats. However, these women later lost out on benefits because they were never compensated as combatants while males were, and many of the women lived and died in poverty in rural and urban Zimbabwe after 1980. Thus, young women paid a very high price for sexual activity in the camps. They were stigmatized for promiscuity, lumbered with children, and had their futures blighted because the bulk of ex-combatant and civilian men did not consider them suitable marriage material. The promiscuity of the men was not seriously questioned or punished. Tekere (2007) cites an incident where he thrashed a senior ZANU man because he no longer wanted a young woman who had borne his child and had therefore sent her away.

Among the civilians in Zimbabwe, the war ravaged and disrupted people's lives, putting women into new and invidious positions whereby they had to provision the civilian and the fighting men, cook, clean, and convey intelligence on troop movements. Young women in the ZANLA camps also had to carry arms to the front and put their lives at risk since they initially had no military training or skills to defend themselves. They frequently died in contacts with the Rhodesian army or were captured, tortured, and killed for supporting the "terrorists." Nhongo-Simbanegavi argues that ZANLA's slogan, "*Pamberi nemugoti*" (Forward with the cooking stick!) aptly captures the views of ZANLA regarding the expected roles for women, civilians, and combatants alike, in the war and subsequently, liberated Zimbabwe. Women's roles were conceptualized within the realms of domesticity even though the war situation thrust many other roles on women.

As many men were in wage labor in the towns, mines, and farms or joined the war, women increasingly bore the burden of tilling the land and dealing with the demands of the ZANLA combatants for food, clothes, shelter, intelligence, and, to some extent, sex. The masculinities of the armed men were very dominant and also demanding since combatants demanded food and clothes, which could be provided by business people who owned shops and waged men and women who also had to provision their families in rural areas. The civilian men were subordinated and their masculinities diminished by those of the combatants who were perceived to have made a larger sacrifice for the nation. There was some resentment of the demands made on business people and civilians because of the reprisals that were

visited upon them when caught by the Rhodesian soldiers, but they had no option but to comply. Combatants also demanded shelter and sometimes sex from the rural young women, antagonizing the elders and parents of these young women, but they too had no alternative but to comply since they were not able to defy the armed men of war.

The onerous demands on women without any concomitant expansion in the benefits accruing from the war created some disillusionment among many women, civilians, and combatants alike. The postwar poetry of Freedom Nyamubaya, a female ex-combatant, aptly captures these feelings of alienation and betrayal felt by many female combatants after the war. Thus, the dominant masculinities of the fighting men converged with the power emanating from their arms, their sex and gender roles, resulting in their prominence in war time and postwar statuses and narratives in comparison to the female ex-combatants and rural civilians and *chim-bwidos* (auxiliary, young, rural women). The domestication of all women through the war narratives and the prominence of institutions such as the Women's Affairs Department of ZANU, led by wives of the top men, are glaring. It is as if "women's affairs" had nothing to do with the struggle for national liberation! The roles played by female civilians also went largely uncelebrated and unrewarded because there were no schemes to compensate the civilians who were injured or disadvantaged by the warriors from both sides of the war. The War Victims' Relief Fund and other funds were directed at the combatants, marginalizing the civilians who had to start life afresh, poorer than they had been before the war started. Civilians lost their lives, property, and livelihoods, and their sacrifices were downplayed in the postwar narrative of sacrifice, suffering, and entitlement to postwar relief and compensation.

Nhongo-Simbanegavi's account of the experiences of women in ZANLA shows that the dominant gender interests and femininities in ZANLA were those of the privileged cadres who had achieved high positions as fighters or as support staff. They tended not to understand the gendered interests of the subordinated women whose femininities were frustrated through attempts to force celibacy on them while rape by armed men was an ever-present risk. Their needs to express themselves sexually without necessarily risking pregnancy were stigmatized. Thus, unwanted motherhood blighted many a young woman's life, and when they died, their children became war orphans. If the women and their children were lucky enough to survive the war, their parents, usually impoverished by the war, were confronted with the return of traumatized daughters with very little education, trailing children of doubtful or unknown paternity, all needing support. The film *Flame*, made after independence, became controversial precisely because it raised uncomfortable issues (for ZANU) about the treatment of women by men in the ZANLA camps. Thus, even the men whose masculinities were subordinated in ZANLA were able to exploit and subordinate some of the women in the camps precisely because of the masculine dividend that accrued to them regardless of their subordinated masculinities in the ZANLA hierarchy.

The government that was installed in 1980 with Mugabe as its head included Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and ZANU members of parliament. ZANU fought the election using the cockerel as its symbol, having been forbidden to use an AK rifle as its election symbol. The cockerel, *jongwe*, in Shona, became Mugabe's name and has continued to symbolize his dominance over his political opponents. Joshua Nkomo, the veteran nationalist and leader of ZAPU, used the

symbol of the bull. His party garnered 20 seats in comparison to Mugabe's 57 out of the 80 seats that were contested.

Nkomo, in his autobiography *The Story of My Life* in 2001, mentioned his physical humiliation at being seated in an obscure corner of the stage, behind junior ministers and officials, out of sight of the global press, as well as his wife's tearful reaction at the treatment meted out to him during the independence celebrations. The dominance of "Jongwe" the rooster, the symbol of ZANU, that ruled the roost in the person of the president was established and demonstrated publicly and has increased over the years of independence, marked by his installation as executive president. When the Unity Agreement with ZAPU was signed, in the wake of the Gukurahundi atrocities where it is estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 people were killed in Matebeleland, the legal and constitutional consolidation of Mugabe's hegemony was complete. The rooster had triumphed and its crowing heralded the dawn of a new era dominated by ZANU in the Patriotic Front Alliance, albeit with remnants of a weakened, emasculated, and subordinated ZAPU. Mugabe called the Gukurahundi atrocities "a moment of madness." As a result of the Unity Accord, ZANU and ZAPU merged, resulting in the formation of ZANU-PF in which ZANU remains dominant while ZAPU stalwarts were absorbed into less strategic cabinet positions and the civil service.

The ceremonial presidency that had been held since 1980 by Canaan Banana, a cleric, was abolished when Mugabe became executive president in 1987. By this time, the militant faction of ZANU-PF was on the defensive and Mugabe was now in charge and empowered by the executive presidency. As Tekere argues in his memoir, the cadres whom he called "the generals," Tungamirai, Kadungure, and Nhongo together with Munangagwa, began to exert influence on Mugabe and became his close advisors, and the threesome comprising Nyagumbo, Nkala, and Tekere himself, who had been incarcerated with Mugabe in Rhodesia, increasingly became marginalized. Tekere (2007: 55) says that "the generals" advised Mugabe to not be too approachable and even organized a tour to Malawi to learn from the "*Banda system*" ... "*to see how the despot ruled.*" Tekere was subsequently expelled from the government in 1981 after the shooting of Adams, a white farmer. He was also expelled from ZANU-PF in 1988 through a motion moved by Mugabe and supported by 45 members and opposed by 15 members and 30 abstentions of the 90-strong ZANU-PF central committee. Thus, the influence of the ZANU militants began to wane, paving the way for the flourishing of a postwar muscular executive presidency with sweeping powers. Thus, Mugabe's masculinity became increasingly hegemonic within as well as outside his own party and was subsequently to be affirmed despite his age, his incarceration, and the problems he faced in dealing with his political competitors such as Ndabaningi Sithole, Joshua Nkomo, and others. Significantly, he was able to become president during Ian Smith's lifetime, triumphing over his settler foe who had sworn that "*never in a thousand years*" would blacks rule Zimbabwe (Smith et al. 1981: 45).

Canaan Banana, who had been the ceremonial president since 1980, was outed as a homosexual after Jefta Dube, one of the men he had sexually violated, shot a colleague who had taunted him by calling him "Banana's wife." In the court case that ensued, Mugabe's government was embarrassed and Banana was incarcerated, albeit in relaxed jail conditions. Mugabe was later to live uneasily with rumors of homosexuals in his cabinet and his tirades against homosexuals were most likely

influenced by the Banana scandal despite or maybe because he wanted to send a message to them about his feelings regarding their sexualities, which were not acceptable to him. However, the Banana affair was embarrassing to ZANU-PF and might explain Mugabe's public antipathy toward homosexuals after that. Homosexual people represent a deviant masculinity and sexuality to Mugabe and many other people, and he takes every opportunity to castigate them.

The attempted arrest of Mugabe "for torture... a crime against international law" in 1999 by Peter Tatchell, a Labour activist, angered Mugabe so much that he called Tony Blair and his government "little men," and accused them of "using gay gangster tactics." Lamb (2006: 207) recounts how Mugabe also described Kenyan-born Peter Hain, a junior Foreign Office minister in the Blair government who had been an antiapartheid activist, as "the wife of Tatchell." Lamb's assessment is that Mugabe was angered by the presence of the British press and security people who had allowed Tatchell to come close enough to accost him. For many years after that incident, Mugabe made many virulent speeches, denouncing Blair, his government, Peter Tatchell, and homosexuals. The most recent of these antihomosexual tirades occurred during the Zimbabwe Independence celebrations in April 2014, where he denounced homosexuals and dared them to produce children as normal heterosexual couples do. The ongoing legislative initiatives in Uganda, Nigeria, and other African countries that criminalize all except heterosexual practices and people are likely to buttress Mugabe's views about sexuality. In addition, the alliance between the African religious right-wing clerics, denominations, and politicians is most likely to generate new initiatives and strengthen existing ones against people of minority sexualities. Thus, the restatement of the legitimacy and superiority of procreative heterosexuality is marked and it is juxtaposed against "nonprocreative" homosexuality, which is not capable of producing biologically and socially legitimate progeny for men through women.

### THE ILLNESS AND DEATH OF SALLY MUGABE AND MUGABE'S QUEST FOR CHILDREN

Mugabe's son died of malaria in infancy while he was incarcerated, and the Rhodesian settler government would not even allow him to attend his son's funeral. Such an experience would embitter most people, and Mugabe was no exception. Sally Mugabe had kidney problems, and she subsequently died in 1992 without having another child. While Sally Mugabe was ill, Mugabe conducted a dalliance with Grace Marufu, a secretary in his office. This dalliance produced a daughter and, later, two sons. By the time Sally died, she knew about Grace and Mugabe and about two of their three children. In an interview with *Dali Tambo* in May 2013, Mugabe stated that before she died, Sally knew about his desire for children, and they had an agreement around the issue. However, when the news about his relationship with Grace Marufu and their first child leaked, journalists who broke the story were harassed and detained. Needless to say, Mugabe's wish for a child resonated among many Zimbabweans, male and female. In the dominant Shona, Ndebele, Kalanga, Sotho, and other patrilineal cultures of Zimbabwe, procreativity by both men and women is encouraged and patrilineages will go to great lengths to ensure that a man does not die without progeny even if this entails that one of his brothers and/or paternal cousins will impregnate his wife, preferably without

his knowledge, if he cannot do so himself. It is considered to be quite tragic for a person to die without bearing a child.

The Roman Catholic Church's senior clergy officiated at and blessed the marriage of Grace and Mugabe despite the adultery committed by both Mugabe and Grace prior to their official marriage. Of course, some Catholics were very unhappy at what they considered to be the two-faced behavior of the masculinist Roman Catholic Church, which holds ordinary people to its doctrinal teachings, proscribing marriage between people who are not in "a state of grace" and not in line with church doctrine. However, in this case, the senior Roman Catholic Church officials obviously turned a blind eye to the issues raised by the union, with many Zimbabwean Christians silently condoning the stance of the Roman Catholic Church because they agreed with the reasons for the marriage and would have done the same if they had been in the same predicament! It is also possible that the Roman Catholic Church feared political repercussions that could result from refusal to marry Mugabe, himself born and raised as a Catholic. In any event, Mugabe's political clout helped him to achieve respectability and to demonstrate and assert his masculinity as a father and husband in a socially acceptable way through a Catholic marriage and by fathering children. He, like other men, could become an ancestor and the marriage of his daughter, Bona, in 2014, pleased him, and he expressed his happiness at having lived long enough to see her married. Thus, despite his incarceration and torture at the hands of the settler government, he has been able to achieve fatherhood and to sire children who, in turn, will most likely bear him grandchildren, ensuring that he establishes a lineage and will not be forgotten.

The importance of achieving masculinity through fatherhood is common to many cultures of the world, and men and women who participate and die in wars and through other calamities, without leaving progeny, cannot become ancestors in African and other cosmologies. Thus, African and other social scientists need to understand the importance of parenthood for men as a component of masculinity and a route to achieving socially accepted ancestor status in many societies. Mugabe's life experience shows the importance of fatherhood and, to some extent, marriage as a means of expressing socially acceptable masculinity even among men of power and influence.

## MUGABE, LAND, AND GENDER ISSUES IN ZIMBABWE

Land has been a very contentious issue in the history of Zimbabwe. Since the Ndebele immigration under Mzilikazi, land issues have featured in the discourses between the different groups that inhabit contemporary Zimbabwe. However, this discussion focuses on the gendered discourse on land rights, particularly for black women in Zimbabwe.

The land controversy resulting from the large-scale invasions of land by war veterans and other people from 1999 onward ignited a long-running dispute between Mugabe, his government, and the British and Western worlds. After independence in 1980, the British-funded Model A schemes where households were allocated arable, residential, and grazing land through a permit system in which land was usually registered mostly in the names of men. By 1991, less than 15 percent of the settlers were female-headed households, despite the fact that such households comprised 30 percent of all rural households in Zimbabwe. When the issue of women's



land rights was raised by women's organizations and activists, Mugabe denounced women's demands for joint land registration (Gaidzanwa 1998). On the eve of the ZANU-PF women's congress in 1994, Mugabe castigated women for asking for too much, for rebelling against men, and for refusing to accept the culturally accepted roles for them in patrilineal marriages. On that occasion, Mugabe said:

If the woman wants property in her own right, why did she get married in the first place? Better not wed then because marriage means you are together with the husband as head of the family. If these ideas (about family property being registered in the names of both spouses) are being brought by whites amongst you as they come from Europe, then they are bringing you terrible ideas. (Holm 1994:3 6)

Clearly, Mugabe gave little credit to black Zimbabwean women in the party and outside it for the capability to think independently! The masculinist state bias evident in land legislation, practice, and generational devolution of land mirrored the views of many men and some women and contributed to the continued masculinist bias that pervades land policy in Zimbabwe. Mugabe's statement was very disappointing to women. Matondi (2012: 185) points that in Mazowe, women "were the last beneficiaries, after men were satisfied with their choice of plots." Despite the government's agreement during a donors' conference on land in 1998 that 20 percent of redistributed land would be accessed by women, this undertaking was never formalized through the Inception Phase Framework Plan of 1999–2000 and was never honored during the Fast Track Land Reform (Matondi 2012).

Matondi (2012: 188) cites Vice President Msika, in 2000: "I would have my head cut off if I gave women land... men would turn against this government." He also cites the vice president saying that giving wives land or even granting joint titles would "destroy the family" ([womennewsnetwork.net/2010/08/31/zimbabwewomenfarmer-893](http://womennewsnetwork.net/2010/08/31/zimbabwewomenfarmer-893)).

During the Utete Land Commission (2003), women on the ground complained about being marginalized in land allocations countrywide. The commission found that in most parts of the country, women accessed around 15 percent of the land in the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), and the subsequent prevarication and contradictions by politicians in response to advocacy for women's rights to property jointly with men or without them was a betrayal of the promises made to women in elections and other campaigns where women's support was sought and secured. The prevarication continued when, in October 2009, President Mugabe said, in the light of the proposed constitutional reform, that

our sincere wish [is] that women's food generation activities can be improved... This can only occur when... policies regarding women's access to land and the provision of farming inputs and credit are put in place... In Zimbabwe, we continue to do our best in prioritizing allocation of land and farming inputs to our women, thus empowering them... through our land reform programme. ("Government to Empower Women through Access to Land," *Chronicle*, October 16, 2009)

To date, the low allocations of land to women in both urban and rural areas continue to be a sore point and a source of women's marginalization and vulnerability

to domestic and gendered violence, poverty, and dependence on men. The instrumental use of speeches to women about land rights while doing very little to assure them of more secure land rights points to the cynical manipulation of women for political purposes.

Apart from land issues, the representation of women in all national bodies has continued to be low. Within his own party, after the July 2014 elections, Mugabe appointed very few women, arguing that there were not enough educated women in ZANU-PF. He appointed only four women (12 percent) in a cabinet of 30 people despite women constituting 52 percent of the population. The new Zimbabwean constitution mandates that women should constitute at least 50 percent of all public offices while the Southern African Development Community also mandates that all member countries should have women's representation in political offices of 50 percent by 2015. Mugabe obviously needed to balance provincial, ethnic, factional, and other interests in the government, and so he decided to sacrifice all considerations of politically correct, gender-based appointments. This partly explains the paucity of ZANU-PF women in cabinet and other positions. ZANU-PF is currently riven by factional strife and masculinist tendencies have surfaced because the second person after Mugabe in ZANU-PF's power hierarchy is Teurai Ropa (Joice Mujuru), and in ZANU-PF and in the nation at large, a significant proportion of the population does not consider a female president to be robust enough to fight off all the contenders for the presidency. The prospect of a female president should Mugabe resign or die is not culturally and socially acceptable to Zimbabweans who consider men to be superior to women, and these sentiments have been expressed openly through the social and other media in Zimbabwe and beyond.

### DISMANTLING AND EMASCULATING WHITE AND BLACK SKILLED PROFESSIONAL AND WAGE LABOR POWER IN ZIMBABWE

The emasculation of white, particularly male power began during the war of national liberation when white men were conscripted into the Rhodesian army from 1974 onward, resulting in those young men who did not want to serve militarily in the Rhodesian army "taking the gap." Some of the young men who remained were not aware of the extent of the war and the significance for their livelihoods and considered war service in a romantic light. As Lamb (2006) relates in her book *House of Stone* about two families in Rhodesia, the front line of the war was on the farms that produced food, earned foreign exchange that fueled the economy, and provided white conscripts. Many white families moved into the towns for safety, but the war intensified, resulting in a negotiated settlement in 1979 when it became evident that the costs of a struggle to the death were not beneficial to both black and white people of Zimbabwe. Independence in 1980 signaled the beginning of the emasculation of white, male hegemony, which was premised on economic, social, and political power. More whites emigrated, depleting the 200,000-strong white population, representing around 4 percent of the population, to less than 50,000 in 2002 after the inception of the Fast Track Land Reform in 1999. As Lamb points out, while the white population declined, it still continued to dominate agriculture, mining, industry, commerce, and banking.

The Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe in 1999 dismantled a significant component of white economic power in postindependence Zimbabwe. The agricultural sector, dominated by white farmers who produced the bulk of export crops such as flowers and horticultural products, ran the manufacturing, tourism and wildlife, and other sectors. However, the price for this economic disempowerment has been very high and is being borne by the poorest Zimbabweans. At the height of white dominance in the economy, Lamb (2006) states that 40 percent of export earnings came from the agricultural and related sectors and maize production was as high as 1.5 million tons declining to less than 200,000 tons by 2005 when the bulk of the former white farms had been occupied. In addition, 350,000 farm workers who supported more than 1 million people lost their jobs. Moreover, 350,000 casual and seasonal workers, the majority of them female, also lost their jobs and livelihoods since the bulk of the new black settlers were not able to pay the wages mandated by the state for the agricultural sector. The seizure of farms formerly owned and worked on by white farmers has precipitated the collapse of the economy although ZANU-PF attributes the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy mainly to sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe as a result of the seizure of white-owned lands.

The land seizures undermined white power and masculinities, especially because the farmers, industrialists, and other business people were not able to match the state's potential for violence, dispossession of property, and the resultant impoverishment that occurred when people lost their property. However, while white masculinities were undermined, the economic collapse also undermined black masculinities across the economy as men lost jobs in diverse sectors of the economy. Emigration for economic and political reasons by both poor and professional and skilled men, and to some extent women, accelerated to the point where by 2008, Zimbabwe had a Diaspora estimated at over 3 million people. A study by the UNDP in 2010 estimated that in 2009, the Zimbabwean Diaspora remitted US\$1.4 billion, comprising more than 10 percent of Zimbabwe's gross domestic product. Thus, Diaspora remittances trumped both export earnings and development assistance in significance for the economy of Zimbabwe. Of this Diaspora, 50 percent of professionals emigrated after 2000, when the land seizures and the economic collapse started, resulting in Zimbabwe being ranked as 10th of 157 countries in the world that have experienced a significant brain drain. Thus, in the racialized, militant rhetoric around state power in Zimbabwe, Mugabe has managed to demobilize white power while pursuing policies that have pauperized black, working-class, and peasant men, women, and children. By 2014, most Zimbabwean cities and towns had little clean running water, electricity, and health services. The infrastructure has crumbled while corruption around the state is rife, resulting in economic decline and deflation. Poverty has deepened and Zimbabwe, which used to be a middle-income country in 1980, has now declined to poor country status with a high maternal mortality rate of 960 per 100,000.

### SUBORDINATED AND EMASCULATED MASCULINITIES IN ZANU-PF

Diverse masculinities exist in ZANU-PF, but the emasculation of most of the men and the dominance of Mugabe is glaring. The subordinated masculinities of the

bulk of the cabinet men produce very embarrassing public displays of obeisance, obedience, and other forms of self-abasement. While in Shona and Ndebele cultures people do compose and recite praise poetry in honor of both men and women and for chiefs and kings, the praise poetry is linked to the history of the clans, their exploits, characteristics, and accomplishments (Hodza and Fortune 1979). However, the praises that are showered on Mugabe tend not to conform to any known cultural practices in their idioms and foci. Guma in *Nehanda Radio*, an online newspaper, wrote an article on August 7, 2013, listing and describing the sayings and expressions of self-abasement and what he termed “bootlicking” by various ministers and religious men who enjoyed Mugabe’s patronage. Guma describes how these men praised Mugabe while belittling themselves and, sometimes, their parents and families and indicating their dependence on him in order to ensure their inclusion in the “spoils” resulting from Mugabe’s power. While the state media address Mugabe as “head of state and government and commander-in-chief of the defence forces,” Guma states that Mugabe’s emasculated men go beyond what can be considered acceptable praise. In 1990, Tony Gara, a former mayor of Harare, started the praise singing when he famously called Mugabe “God’s other son.”

Guma lists the praise singing men, citing Obert Mpfu, former minister of mines and now minister of transport, who, in documents brought to court in the course of a diamond mining scandal, was found to have habitually signed off his letters to Mugabe with the phrase, “Your ever obedient son.” Guma also observed that Mpfu knelt as he talked to Mugabe during the celebrations of Mugabe’s 89th birthday in February 2013. Kneeling is expected from and practiced by women in Ndebele and Shona cultures.

Another minister, Webster Shamu, in admiration of Mugabe, told the press at a gathering in 2013 that if he had had a choice, he would have been born as Mugabe’s son. What his parents would have thought about this statement is open to conjecture, but the public were aghast when he continued, stating that Mugabe was feared the world over for his intelligence. He gushed about Mugabe having Cremora (a coffee creamer) over his whole body. Shamu was later found to have presided over the ministry in which the looting of the public broadcaster took place. He is still a minister in Mugabe’s government.

In 2011, ZANU-PF’s chairman Simon Khaya Moyo is quoted by Guma describing Mugabe as “a liberator of unparalleled proportions who God should keep for a long time to rule Zimbabwe.” Khaya Moyo continued, “His Excellency you are a liberator of unparalleled audacity. You are a useful and amazing leader and we pray to God to make you stronger and continue to lead us from the front.” Khaya Moyo, from Nkomo’s ZAPU section of the Patriotic Front, is perceived to be an aspirant to the second vice presidency of ZANU-PF, which has been vacant since the death of John Nkomo, and since he is from a minority ethnic group, he has to be in the president’s good books if he wants to improve his chances. This might explain his sycophantic hyperbole.

Not to be outdone, tourism minister Walter Mzembe is quoted by Guma praising Mugabe, in a gushing birthday message, “You are a pillar of tourism development in Zimbabwe, and many a times we are tempted to declare you a tourist attraction, a centre of tourism development.” Guma also noted that Mzembe broke into tears when he was handed a life-size portrait of Mugabe in 2012, at the 37th Africa Travel Association Congress in Victoria Falls. Said Mzembe on that occasion, “I was overcome by emotion. I did not expect this. It is monumental! At times I fail to explain

to the ordinary person how it feels to serve under a first republican President. This is why I could not hold back my tears.” In June 2014, Mzembi surpassed himself, likening Mugabe to Jesus during a ceremony in which Zimbabwe was awarded the 2013 “World’s Most Preferred Cultural Destination” award for cohosting the United Nations World Tourism Organisation General Assembly with Zambia and the “Favourite Destination” award by a Romanian tourism organization. “I find myself in the same position as the Biblical John the Baptist who was a forerunner to Jesus Christ and of the son of God he said he could not untie the laces of his sandals” (*NewZimbabwe*, June 4, 2014). Stan Mudenge, the late minister of higher education, is cited by Guma as praising Mugabe, the guest of honor, for more than 20 minutes at the launch in September 2012 of the Research and Intellectual Expo by state universities, teachers’ colleges, and polytechnic. He described Mugabe as one of “Africa’s all-time greatest men,” stating that even Mugabe’s enemies envied his “encyclopaedic” memory, wisdom, and courage. Mudenge continued, saying that Mugabe was “a colossal figure, a fountain of knowledge and wisdom, a teacher, father, a fearless and consistent politician . . . He has been rated one of Africa’s all-time greatest men.” On that occasion, Mugabe produced an enigmatic smile, probably in embarrassment and amusement!

Clerics have not been reticent in this hyperbolic praise singing either. Bishop Johannes Nyamwa Ndanga, head of the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe, in 2013, is quoted by Guma telling his followers: “Mugabe is our king and kings are not elected, they are installed by God . . . President Mugabe is being abused by Tsvangirai while we watch. How can he (Tsvangirai), young as he is, contest against him at the age of 89? Tsvangirai is beating up our old man and we cannot afford to fold our arms.” Guma observed that Ndanga urged his followers to register as voters, arguing that Tsvangirai was being disrespectful to Mugabe by competing with him for the presidency of Zimbabwe! Guma also describes another cleric, the late self-proclaimed spiritual healer Madzibaba Godfrey Nzira, who, in 2011, was controversially freed from serving a 20-year jail term for rape. A year before the conviction, Nzira had claimed Mugabe was a “divinely appointed king of Zimbabwe and no man should dare challenge his office.” Guma observes that in 2003 Nzira was jailed for 32 years, later reduced to 20 years, on seven counts of rape and one count of indecent assault involving two women who had sought help from him. Guma states that the day Nzira was convicted 2,000 members of his sect beat up the magistrate, the court officials, and the policemen on duty. Guma argues that Nzira’s bootlicking of Mugabe paid off when he walked out of prison a free man, after being offered a presidential pardon. The 58-year-old later succumbed to a heart ailment at his house at the “Julanifiri Santa Shrine” in Chitungwiza.

The need to signal benign intentions and a lack of desire to compete for power is essential and is indicated by the lengths to which ZANU men in particular will go to grovel to impress President Mugabe. The incident on May 29, 2014, in which Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri, whose *nom de guerre* was Comrade Stephen Chocha, collapsed during a police pass-out parade demonstrates the constant need to signal and express self-abasement as part of the repertoire of the subordinated masculinities of the bulk of the men who run state institutions in the Mugabe government. Commissioner Chihuri apologized profusely to his officers, to his minister of home affairs, to Mugabe, and to the public who attended the pass-out parade for his collapse, which was due to “working overnight for quite some time and . . . a mix up of my shoes . . . The right shoe is a bit small and there was no circulation on

that leg” (“Chihuri Collapses, Says Sorry,” by Farirai Machivenyika, *The Chronicle*, May 30, 2014). Chihuri followed that statement with a comment intended to indicate Mugabe’s fitness and his own inability to measure up to Mugabe’s fitness: “I just want to say now finally, those people who think the President is not fit must ask me because we were together, we went through the same paces and there he was, up and about up until now when something caught up with me, so they must take care.” What Mugabe makes of the public fawning is open to discussion, but it must embarrass him sometimes especially when the praise singers do not perform well in their portfolios or are accused of involvement in corruption and malfeasance. Nevertheless, the subordinated men obviously deploy this behavior because it signals their public acceptance of their subordination to him and communicates their benign intentions, lack of malice, or intention to compete with him for power.

There are very few occasions when Mugabe has publicly named and shamed or singled out specific officials for poor performance, dishonesty, or corruption, despite the revelations about corruption in many parastatal bodies and ministries since independence in 1980. One of the few occasions include the identification and denunciation of Goodwills Masimirembwa, an unsuccessful ZANU-PF contestant to an urban parliamentary seat in Harare in July 2013. Masimirembwa was later “exonerated” by Mugabe, and two Ghanaians were identified as the guilty parties who are said to have swindled would-be investors of millions of dollars. Mugabe makes general pronouncements against corruption, but there are few occasions when corrupt officials have been punished. Usually courts or commissions of inquiry and similar processes are deployed and the politicians who are identified as guilty of corruption are sentenced or publicly identified and then they are pardoned or moved into less prominent roles, out of the limelight. Ken Yamamoto in an article in an online newspaper *NewZimbabwe*, on April 9, 2014, lists a long line of corruption scandals involving ZANU-PF functionaries who were found guilty of corruption but were “rehabilitated” and presently hold high public offices. These include Frederick Shava, who was subsequently pardoned after being found guilty of corruption in reselling for profit vehicles bought at Willowvale, a state-supported car assembly plant in the Willowgate scandal. Frederick Shava is currently serving as Zimbabwe’s ambassador to China. Similarly, Yamamoto states that Jacob Mudenda, the current Speaker of Parliament, “who illegally sold Scania trucks at exorbitant prices to a ZANU-PF linked company . . . Is . . . addressed as Mr Speaker, Sir” (Yamamoto 2014a). Thus, these men are dependent on Mugabe’s tolerance and need him to maintain their livelihoods in an environment where they are known to have undermined the public good.

Mhanda (2011), in his memoir *Dzino: Memories of a Freedom Fighter*, observes that Chihuri was one of the “rebels” in ZANU during the years in exile in Mozambique and had been incarcerated for six months in pits in Chimoio and for another year in Machava prison before rustication in Balama, a rural settlement, after being accused of plotting a coup against the ZANU leadership in 1977. In 1977, Tekere (2007) states that a cohort of young military men rebelled against the ZANLA leadership in 1977, on the grounds that the leadership was too “bourgeois” because they had agreed to negotiate a settlement for Zimbabwe. Some of the men who were accused of rebelling against the leadership of ZANU in Maputo include the late Dzinashé Machingura (Wilfred Mhanda), Musoni (Sam Geza), Eiias Hondo, James Nyikadzinashe, Austin Mudzingwa, and others. The “rebels” were arrested and incarcerated and were only released after independence. Some of the “rebels,”

including Augustine Chihuri, the police commissioner, were “rehabilitated” after suitably “repenting” and were offered positions in the party and/or government. Rugare Gumbo, another rebel, “repented” and later became a member of parliament and is the current spokesman for ZANU-PF. Musoni also “repented” and served as a permanent secretary in the Ministry of Lands.

### INSUBORDINATE MASCULINITIES

Wilfred Mhanda (Dzinashwe Machingura), a “rebel” to the end, died unrepentant and was buried in Harare on May 31, 2014, without any honors, despite his status as a commander in the liberation army. Another unrepentant rebel, Edgar Tekere, left Mugabe’s party in 1989 and formed his own party, the Zimbabwe Unity Movement. He was subsequently allowed to rejoin ZANU-PF but never allowed to hold any position in the party for five years.

In ZANU-PF, it is unusual to find men who refuse to subordinate their views and wishes to those of its president, Robert Mugabe. Two of those few men, Nkosana Moyo and Jonathan Moyo, have openly exhibited “insubordinate” behavior while in Mugabe’s government. Dr Nkosana Moyo, a physicist, was appointed minister of industry and international trade after the June 2000 elections. The land invasions gathered pace with war veterans occupying agricultural land and businesses belonging to whites. Moyo, appointed as part of the technocratic cabinet in 2000, resigned, citing the lawlessness and attacks on farmers and business people in Zimbabwe and arguing that they created a climate that was inimical to the conduct of business and to the growth of the economy. This act by Nkosana Moyo was unprecedented and Mugabe lashed out at him, accusing him of being a weak-kneed coward and not a real man. Mugabe is reported as saying: “I do not want ministers who are in the habit of running away. I want those I can call *amadoda sibili* (real men), people with spine... Our revolution... was not fought by cowards. If some of you are getting weak-kneed, tell us and we will continue with the struggle” (*Newsday*, November 28, 2012). Nkosana Moyo tendered his resignation from outside Zimbabwe and moved on to another career elsewhere. His experience was notable because no other minister had ever resigned voluntarily from Mugabe’s government and his action, daring to walk out of Mugabe’s cabinet, a feat that no other man had ever dared, exhibited insubordinate masculinity.

Unlike Nkosana Moyo, Jonathan Moyo was a card-carrying member of ZANU-PF who was appointed into the cabinet after rejection of the 2000 constitution through a referendum. A political scientist from the University of Zimbabwe from where he had trenchantly criticized Mugabe’s government, particularly the attempt to legislate a one-party state, Jonathan Moyo joined the ZANU-PF government in 2000. He distinguished himself as an ardent supporter of the party, masterminding the crafting of harsh media laws, namely, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), under which hundreds of journalists were imprisoned and three newspapers shut down. One of these newspapers was the independent *Daily News* with the largest circulation and whose press was bombed and the paper subsequently shut down.

Moyo fell out with Mugabe after he was implicated in a plot, supposedly hatched at Dinyane School in Tsholotsho, a rural district in Matebeleland, where some ZANU-PF heavyweights were accused of scheming to prevent the nomination of Joice Mujuru to the position of vice president in ZANU-PF on the basis of her

gender. For this perceived act of treachery, Jonathan Moyo was publicly rebuked by Mugabe and dismissed from ZANU-PF's central committee and politburo. He was subsequently dismissed from ZANU-PF in 2005 after defying a ZANU-PF ruling that the Tsholotsho seat should be reserved for a female ZANU-PF candidate. Jonathan Moyo stood in Tsholotsho as an independent candidate and won the seat. He was subsequently readmitted into ZANU-PF in 2009, after he had masterminded the campaign for ZANU-PF in the wake of the win by Morgan Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), in both the parliamentary and presidential elections in March 2008. The runoff for the presidency resulted from the win by Tsvangirai, which, however, did not give him 50 percent plus one vote, required to give him an outright claim on the presidency after the first vote. Violence erupted against the MDC during the runoff for the presidency, resulting in the formation of a government of National Unity brokered by Mbeki in 2008. Jonathan Moyo was rewarded with inclusion in the party structures and as a ZANU-PF member of Parliament once more. He spent the Government of National Unity (GNU) years working on ZANU-PF's election strategies for 2013. Together with the military, he masterminded Mugabe's and ZANU-PF's 2013 election campaign, which was highly contested and the results disputed by the opposition, the EU, Australia, the United States, and African countries such as Botswana. In that election in 2013, Jonathan Moyo lost his Tsholotsho seat by a narrow margin to a woman from the MDC. The interpretation of the opposition who disputed the election on the basis that the results were rigged with the aid of Nikuv, an Israeli firm, was that ZANU-PF "rigged Jonathan Moyo out" of his seat to exert control over him and ensure that he was at the mercy of ZANU-PF for his political existence thenceforth.

In the post-GNU government, Jonathan Moyo was appointed minister of media, information and broadcasting services. It did not take long before he got into trouble again when he clashed with the ZANU-PF spokesman Rugare Gumbo over dissemination of information regarding party elections. A report in *Newsday*, November 25, 2013, suggested that the ZANU-PF politburo had gagged Jonathan Moyo and ordered him to desist from discussing party issues in the media. However, worse was to come when Mugabe launched a vicious attack on Jonathan Moyo, in a gathering of mourners at the funeral wake of Nathan Shamuyarira in Borrowdale, Harare. Mugabe accused Moyo of dividing ZANU-PF from within. He continued his attack on Jonathan Moyo on the occasion of the burial of Nathan Shamuyarira, a veteran of the liberation struggle who was declared a national hero in June 2014. On that occasion, Mugabe called Jonathan Moyo a "weevil" and the "devil incarnate," who used his intellect to divide the party. Contrasting Moyo and Shamuyarira, Mugabe castigated Moyo for not giving party views prominence in the media. Of Shamuyarira, Mugabe said: "The views that he published were the views of the party. I am saying this in light of what is happening now where our minister of Information wants to pit leaders of the party against each other." The background to Mugabe's denunciation of Jonathan Moyo was the denunciation and naming by the public media, of corrupt civil servants, ministers, and government and ZANU-PF officials and their looting of funds intended to finance buffer maize stocks, water works, and health care for civil servants among other things. Hefty sitting allowances and salaries were awarded to ZANU-PF cronies on public boards and many other scams were publicized by the public media under Moyo. Moyo fired the board and top



management of the state broadcaster, which was millions of dollars in debt and had failed to pay workers for over seven months. Moyo also created an Information and Media Panel of Inquiry to examine media ethics and standards in Zimbabwe. The populace was regaled with story after story of looting and theft of public funds, resulting in disquiet and alarm within ZANU-PF.

In apparent reference to Jonathan Moyo's appointment of new editors whom Mugabe considered to be critical of ZANU-PF to state-dominated newspapers at Zimpapers, Mugabe said: "If we have such in our midst, we fish them out. You do not use counter-revolutionary people who only yesterday were condemning the party and put them at the forefront" (*Newsday*, 2014). After such invective from Mugabe, the public thought that Moyo had overstepped the ZANU-PF mark and was going to be expelled from ZANU-PF again, for good this time. However, after a meeting between Mugabe and Moyo, Moyo posted a tweet on his account on June 14, 2014, saying, "Mugabe is like a father to me. He has every right to direct my paths and correct me when I do wrong. I admire my leader." Whether those sentiments are genuine remains to be seen, but from Moyo's past, it is clear that he has his own mind and will always have a troubled and tempestuous relationship with the type of authority exerted on juniors and the levels of unquestioning obedience required of ministers in Mugabe's government. In any case, his "insubordination" according to ZANU-PF, coexisting with his indispensability to the party project, creates future problems in the relationship between the dominant, insubordinate, and subordinated masculinities within ZANU-PF.

### MORGAN TSVANGIRAI AND HIS WORKING- CLASS MASCULINITY

Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the Movement for Democratic Change, has been a thorn in the flesh of Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF since he became leader of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trades Unions (ZCTU) and, subsequently, leader of the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change in 1999. Morgan Tsvangirai is lampooned in the state-controlled press for his humble beginnings in a nickel mine, rising to the position of leader of the ZCTU and his lack of a college education. The ZCTU mobilized workers to stage a successful nationwide stay away in protest at the involvement of Zimbabwe in a war in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the awarding of unbudgeted pensions to war veterans that brought about the crash of the Zimbabwe dollar in 1997 on "Black Friday." Morgan Tsvangirai, through the ZCTU and the National Constitutional Assembly and a coalition of civil society and nongovernmental organizations, was able to mobilize Zimbabweans to reject the constitution crafted by the Constitution Commission of 1999, which was government-dominated. This was one of the many setbacks that Mugabe was to experience at the hands of Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC. The struggle between the MDC and ZANU-PF resulted in the defeat of Mugabe and his party by Morgan Tsvangirai and his MDC in the harmonized elections of March 2008. In that election, the MDC captured 99 seats in the House of Assembly while ZANU-PF won 97, the smaller MDC, led by Arthur Mutambara, won 10 seats and an independent, Jonathan Moyo, a former ZANU-PF minister, won his seat. He has since been "rehabilitated" and has rejoined ZANU-PF and is now a minister again. After "logistical problems" a week after the elections, ZANU-PF and the MDC were found to have won 30 Senate seats each.

The presidential election results, delayed for 32 days, showed that Tsvangirai had beaten Mugabe, winning 47.9 percent of the vote against Mugabe's 43.2 percent. Tsvangirai's votes were deemed to be below the 50 percent plus threshold necessary for him to secure the presidency. A runoff was held but Tsvangirai withdrew from the runoff after violence was unleashed on the populace by the military. In the subsequent government of national unity, brokered by Thabo Mbeki, Mugabe remained president and Tsvangirai became prime minister. The reversal of the fortunes of ZANU-PF was the first major one over three decades of Mugabe's rule and undermined the hegemony of ZANU-PF. Since 1997, Zimbabwe's economic decline has steadily accelerated, slowing down during the GNU years of 2008–2013. The GNU ended in 2013 and another election in 2013 produced a contested landslide victory for ZANU-PF but was followed by deflation and a return to the 2008 economic crisis. During the period of the GNU, Tsvangirai's person and behavior were scrutinized, lampooned, and demeaned, and his dalliances with women were publicized despite his widower status. This was in contrast to the behavior of ZANU-PF ministers and functionaries, including the president, who have committed adultery and other morally reprehensible offenses against "culture" and "custom."

By 2014, most major cities in Zimbabwe had little clean water and electricity was in short supply, resulting in frequent blackouts in most major cities. Infrastructure has decayed and unemployment is over 90 percent. Poverty has increased dramatically. According to the UNDP, Zimbabwe is now a classed poor country in crisis and ZANU-PF and Mugabe have been forced to reconsider their political demeanor and economic policies and reengage the Western community with whom they have been at loggerheads since 1999.

The dominance and status of Mugabe have been dented by the economic crisis and the huge Zimbabwean emigration and resultant Zimbabwean Diaspora of over three million people globally. Similarly, having to reengage the West is not comfortable given the strident war of words over sanctions that Mugabe has waged against the West. The ageing of Mugabe and his frequent trips to Singapore for treatment intensified the jousting, shoving, and positioning of the competing factions within ZANU-PF and the war of words between Mugabe's party heavyweights, indicating their recognition of the countdown toward the end of his rule and the need to position themselves to take control of ZANU-PF. Throughout Mugabe's reign, there was consistent falling out between Mugabe and his former comrades-in-arms such as Joshua Nkomo, Josiah Chinamano, Edgar Tekere, Enos Nkala, Eddison Zvobgo, and others. The impatient and subordinated masculinities that have been stunted over the 34 years of Mugabe's rule over Zimbabwe continued to explore means to express themselves. In 2004, Emmerson Munangagwa, who had garnered support from at least six provinces of ZANU-PF, was elbowed out of the vice presidency in favor of Joice Mujuru, under the pretext that there was need to affirm women in ZANU-PF. Joice Mujuru became first vice president with support from her husband, Solomon Mujuru (Rex Nhongo). Subsequently, Solomon Mujuru died mysteriously in 2011, in a fire at the farmhouse in Beatrice that he was allocated during the land invasions. His death left Joice Mujuru politically exposed, and the erosion of her power and its base was to be revealed in 2014, in the run-up to the 2014 December congress of ZANU-PF.

## MUGABE'S AGEING, DISTRESSED MASCULINITY AND THE EMERGENCE OF GRACE MUGABE AS A POWERFUL PLAYER IN ZANU-PF

The signs of Mugabe's ageing became more apparent as he was captured asleep in pictures by journalists during international conferences, his delegation of the bulk of the campaigning during the general election of July 2013 to his vice president, Joice Mujuru, and his limited appearance in many meetings nationally. His illness and treatment "for cataracts" became quite noticeable and sparked comments about his imminent death in tabloids, online chat rooms, and other places. In 2014, the emergence of Grace Mugabe as a nominee to the leadership of the ZANU-PF women's league was construed as part of the plan for Mugabe to prepare his wife for office to protect their family's influence and fortunes should he become incapacitated or die. Oppah Muchinguri, the then incumbent leader of the ZANU-PF Women's League, supposedly volunteered to stand down in favor of Mrs. Mugabe. Mrs. Mugabe was awarded a doctoral degree on the same day as Joice Mujuru, by the University of Zimbabwe, whose chancellor is President Robert Mugabe, during its annual graduation ceremony in 2014. The award of the degree was denounced by the press and other members of the society on the grounds that Mrs. Mugabe had not been registered as a doctoral student for the requisite amount of time and had no prior qualifications to justify her registration for or award of a doctoral degree. No sooner had that controversy died down than Mrs. Mugabe's tours around the country to "meet the people" started. During these tours, Mrs. Mugabe attacked Joice Mujuru, urging her husband President Mugabe, to "baby dump" her failing which she was going to do so herself. Grace Mugabe accused Joice Mujuru of wearing miniskirts despite her ugly figure, looking so ugly "that dogs and fleas would not disturb her carcass," corruption, extorting 10 percent stakes from private businesses, stealing diamonds, plotting to kill her "Gaddafi style and drag her through the streets, over the tarmac, plotting to assassinate Mugabe and take over as President." Joice Mujuru only issued a couple of terse statements in which she pleaded innocence to all the charges directed at her and declared her continued loyalty to ZANU-PF and President Mugabe. Mrs. Mujuru indicated that she was being framed as a "traitor," a "sellout," and a "murderer" through the state apparatus that was being abused despite the absence of any credible evidence to support the accusations. In any event, Mrs. Mujuru decided not to attend the December congress of ZANU-PF because she feared that the occasion would be used to humiliate her. Her fears were justified because many ZANU-PF members of the politburo and Central Committee who were suspected to be aligned to her were denounced by party mobs, manhandled, and barred from filing their nomination papers to contest positions in the party in the run-up to the congress and during the congress.

While these attacks were going on, President Mugabe did not intervene or say anything substantive to restrain the party members who were violating the rights of the suspected "rebels." The perception created was that his wife had taken over the powers accorded to him by the constitution, thereby undermining his masculinity. The leader of the liberation war veterans, Jabulani Sibanda, waded into the fray, denouncing Grace Mugabe's "bedroom coup" and stating that "power was not

sexually transmitted.” These statements immediately landed Jabulani Sibanda into trouble, resulting in his arrest and firing from the position of war veterans’ leader.

The distressed masculinities in ZANU-PF eventually expressed themselves through their jostling and organizing behind the scenes in the run-up to the December 2014 ZANU-PF congress, resulting in the denunciation of Mugabe’s first vice president, Joice Mujuru (Teurai Ropa Nhongo), and nine ZANU-PF provincial chairpersons, Mugabe’s comrades-in-arms such as Didymus Mutasa, Rugare Gumbo, and Webster Shamu, and others such as Nicholas Goche, Ray Kaukonde, Francis Nhema, Walter Mzembi, and so on who had supported Mugabe for decades. Thus, the list of old friends and comrades-in-arms who were ditched by Mugabe grew by the day as the party members from the Mnangagwa group and their friends, purported to include Oppah Muchinguri, Jonathan Moyo, Tom Zhuwawo, Mugabe’s nephew and Saviour Kasukuwere, and other factions, fought to oust and incapacitate the Mujuru group. At least fifteen ministers and deputies thought to be aligned to Joice Mujuru were fired from their jobs in two rounds of “dumping” confirming Grace Mugabe’s statements and threats about the “dumping” that she had predicted during her tours round the country. These events confirmed Grace Mugabe’s positioning as a significant power behind Mugabe, whom party members could only ignore at their peril. During the congress, Mugabe himself, in exasperation at being passed a note by his wife after one of his lengthy speeches, petulantly complained to the congress audience that he had been told by his wife to wind up his long speech and sit down. He stated that this was the way he was treated at home, and so it was prudent for him to do as he was told! This statement was received with some dismay in some quarters and dismissed with laughter as a joke by others. Mugabe compounded the problem toward the end of the congress by shouting “*Pasi ne ZANU-PF*” (Down with ZANU-PF), a Freudian slip or whatever analysts may prefer to call it. The armed forces leadership quickly corrected him and he shouted the correct formulaic slogan, “*Pamberi ne ZANU-PF*” (Forward with ZANU-PF), but by then, the damage had been done and newspapers spilt ink on this gaffe, using it to confirm their oft-repeated statements that Mugabe was too old to be in office and had lost his memory, was suffering from Alzheimer’s, and so forth.

The ZANU-PF congress of 2014 endorsed President Mugabe as its leader and candidate for the 2018 elections when he will be 94 years of age. In the wake of the congress, more members of the party were fired from government in 2015, on accusations of alignment to Joice Mujuru’s group. However, the fissures in the party continue to fester as the witch-hunting continues unabated and the party realignment continues.

The biggest winner after the congress appears to be Emmerson Mnangagwa, co-vice president with Phelekezela Mphoko, a former ZAPU cadre. Mnangagwa controls many portfolios including vice presidency, rotating ZANU-PF chairmanship, and the role of minister of justice, chief of intelligence and the leader of government business in the National Assembly. In addition, the portfolio of security, formerly held by Didymus Mutasa, the presidential affairs minister who was fired in the run-up to the December 2014 congress, is also purported to be held by Mnangagwa although there has been no public announcement to that effect. The party chairperson position previously held by Simon Khaya Moyo, accused of being a Mujuru ally, has been abolished and the duties thereof devolved to the two

vice presidents. Simon Khaya Moyo has been demoted to party spokesperson, having lost out of the vice presidency, normally reserved for former ZAPU cadres, to Phelekezela Mphoko. Thus, the rout of the Mujuru cabal appears to be complete and the Mugabes appear to have consolidated their hold on power within ZANU-PF by elevating Grace Mugabe to leader of the ZANU-PF Women's League where she can support and promote Robert Mugabe's ailing and ageing masculinity to safeguard the interests of the Mugabe family against predation or seizure by any government that might be installed in the post-Robert Mugabe era. Grace Mugabe also has the task of consolidating Mugabe family power and interests into the next regime as her children mature. It might well be that she has developed an interest in a political career of her own beyond the Women's League position that she used as a stepping stone into the ZANU-PF politburo. However, the fate of Joice Mujuru in the wake of her husband's demise illustrates the hurdles that lie in the path of a widowed woman without spousal support to guarantee and protect her grip on power.

Unless Grace Mugabe remarries or makes strong alliances within the higher echelons of ZANU-PF in the event of her husband's demise, it will be hard for her to make inroads into the higher echelons of ZANU-PF in her own right. Joice Mujuru, a decorated war veteran, was unable to protect her position after the death of her husband, Solomon Mujuru. Whatever alliances widows can make, they cannot guarantee power of the magnitude enjoyed by men in ZANU-PF. The widow of Herbert Chitepo, the ZANU chairman who was assassinated in Zambia, was only able to aspire to and secure a ministerial position. The widow of Tongogara, the ZANLA's top commander, was only able to secure a lower-level job in the military after independence. Most of the women in ZANU-PF or ZANLA were not able to crack the masculinized politics of ZANU-PF. The purges of 2014, which claimed the scalps of senior and founder members of ZANU-PF, show how critical masculinized and entrenched power and influence are for survival and achievement in ZANU-PF for aspiring politicians. Mugabe also has the problem of securing this power for his wife as he ages, to ensure that she can protect family interests into the post-Mugabe future. It has to be noted that contending masculinities are also keen to express themselves more fully in ZANU-PF. It still has to be seen how Mugabe's rule will evolve and be transformed as he enters the twilight of his rule and whether and how other subordinated masculinities in his party and those contending for power outside ZANU-PF will handle the transition from Mugabe to the next president of Zimbabwe.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined and discussed the hegemonic masculinity of Mugabe, expressed through his private and personal life and its public manifestation, his political decision-making and public relationship with political opponents and supporters. The hegemonic masculine model that has been displayed by Mugabe may not be replicable, but it does set a precedent for subsequent presidents to emulate and utilize. The Mugabe model utilizes and privileges a masculinist state stance as evidenced through land, gender, and other policies and practices within ZANU-PF and the state where women, junior, and errant men are moved in and out of state and party positions according to the degrees of loyalty and utility that they have for ZANU-PF, for its leader, and for other masculinities in the state.

The homophobic masculinities within ZANU-PF and outside it have been given traction by Mugabe's personal stance against homosexuals. This stance has also been adopted by various religious and cultural masculinities, which, like Mugabe's, have diverted attention from the poverty and economic collapse characterizing Zimbabwe after 1999. Thus, Mugabe has utilized his personal and state power to truncate the rights of those who have opposed, admonished, or differed with him. These include his ex-comrades such as Ndabaningi Sithole, former president of ZANU; Edgar Tekere; Joshua Nkomo, former ZAPU president and vice president of Zimbabwe; Dzinashe Machingura, a commander of the Zimbabwe People's Army; Morgan Tsvangirai, president of the Movement for Democratic Change; as well as Tony Blair, the former prime minister of Britain, and George Bush, the former president of the United States of America, and others. Campbell's (2000) analysis critiques the ZANU-PF model of liberation and its masculinization of state and individual power that it has inherited from colonialism and perpetuated in ways that undermine people's rights. Campbell argues that the patriarchal models of liberation are exhausted and need to be transcended. In particular, his critique points to the authoritarian character of ZANU-PF and its inheritance of the colonial state apparatus that suited the existing repressive impulses within ZANU-PF and created new intolerances and injustices. Campbell's argument is that ZANU-PF has Africanized the structures of domination.

This chapter has cited the use of totems and praise poetry of clans and ZANU's use of the cockerel, a symbol of cocky masculinity, which Mugabe is now identified with. The ministers and other beneficiaries of Mugabe's largesse outdo each other in praising him in traditional and nontraditional ways as a sign of their admiration and submission to his superior masculinity and power, thereby personalizing their subordination in a party that has many aspiring subordinates. In this way, they are able to outdo other aspiring subordinates in expressions of subordination in order to access state positions that enable them to travel on foreign trips with expenses paid by the state, cars, perks, domestic workers, and, most importantly, to access tenders and business that is done by the state.

In this way, the subordinated masculinities also grow their own following, employ their friends and kin, access state resources, and forge linkages with foreign and local entities that do business with the state for private benefit. Thus, the worst that can happen to a minister or senior civil servant is to be fired from the state and government because that cuts off their access to state resources. Instead, errant or rebellious masculinities may be reined in by rustication for a suitably long enough time for them to become poor or destitute and then if they are suitably repentant, they are rehabilitated and readmitted into the party and, eventually, state structures. It takes very determined and self-assured cadres of ZANU-PF to resist resubordination to the masculinity of the party and its leader. In the case of the Mujuru group who were suspended or ousted from their positions, it is very clear that they did not fight or contest their suspension from power in the party by its leader. They declared their undying loyalty to President Mugabe and ZANU-PF in spite of the treatment meted to them. While they declared their innocence of the crimes they were accused of, they did not take any legal action or attempt to exonerate themselves from the accusations. They recognized that they had benefitted from the party and did not want to lose whatever they had been allowed to walk away with when they were demoted or fired from government.

Many also hoped to make a comeback if there was a change of government. In fact, this has happened to cadres such as Dzikamai Mavhaire, who had previously called for Mugabe “to go” and been fired only to be rehabilitated in 2013 when he was made minister of energy, only to be fired again for supporting Mujuru in 2014. Another cadre, July Moyo, lost his party and ministerial position in the wake of the Tsholotsho debacle in 2004 but has made a comeback in 2014 in the province of Masvingo, where he has been elected the deputy secretary for administration in the politburo. Other Munangagwa supporters have been elevated to party positions, illustrating the wisdom of waiting patiently for the wheel to turn and their group’s influence to resurge and ensure their reinstatement in the party and the government. Thus, all these subordinated masculinities are schooled to wait patiently for their turn and desist from fighting the party and its leader as a strategy for holding on to what they have amassed through the party. Those that leave the party are severely punished and denied hero status or state benefits. Ndabaningi Sithole and Dzinashe Machingura (Alfred Mhanda) suffered this fate.

As Nhongo-Simbanegavi has argued, the women in ZANLA and subsequently ZANU-PF also experience selective recognition at specific historical junctures. During the struggle for national liberation, the propaganda machinery of ZANU gave the impression that ZANU was serious about gender equality, but the events after independence, namely, Operation Clean Up and the statements about women not being “educated enough” to warrant inclusion in significant numbers and in important portfolios in government, indicates the opportunistic deployment of the rhetoric of gender equality by Mugabe and his party. Joice Mujuru, a decorated war heroine, is a good example of what can happen to a woman who exhibits ambition for power in ZANU-PF. Mujuru, “a woman for that matter,” as Mugabe remarked, was perceived to have erred by showing an inclination to succeed Mugabe although she had been led by Mugabe to think that she had to aspire to greater things in the party! Thus, Mugabe has been able to mobilize diverse state institutions and laws to subordinate his rivals such as Morgan Tsvangirai. In his party, he has mobilized the party machinery to make his followers compete against each other for his favor, resulting in their exhibition of openly sycophantic behavior to survive within party and state structures and access resources for self-enrichment. Mugabe’s hegemonic masculinity has developed, thrived, and is intact despite his illness and old age. It remains to be seen what character the succession within ZANU-PF will take. However, the model that has been institutionalized for 34 years is that of a hegemonic masculine ruler with total control over his party and government. Whether his successors can replicate it or not is open to discussion but it has created an example that will be hard to undermine since it is premised on quiescent masculinities and femininities within his party and a strong military, police force, and other arms of the state that legitimize that type of rule.

## Corruption and the Comrades: Mugabe and the “Fight” against Corruption in Zimbabwe, 1980–2013

*Wesley Mwatwaraa ndJoseph Mujere*

### INTRODUCTION

General narratives, and more specifically scholarly work, on Zimbabwe’s crisis have largely centered on Mugabe’s role in its manufacture, especially his land reform and, in turn, his relationship with the Western countries as a result thereof. At home, state media often present Mugabe as a protector of “African” values especially his no-nonsense stance toward issues such as homosexuality and lesbianism and yet very little has been written concerning one issue that he personally appears to have had problems dealing with from a historical perspective—corruption. At present, Zimbabwe stands among countries most affected by graft. Utilizing various case studies from the 1980s to the present, this chapter examines how and why the all-powerful leader seems to freeze in the face of corrupt activities involving some of his lieutenants and the impact this has had on the generality of Zimbabweans. It also discusses popular conceptions of corruption and how Mugabe has managed to coexist with obscene wealth and naked corruption since independence despite an earlier commitment to ZANU-PF’s Leadership Code. The chapter concludes that Mugabe’s continued association with and tolerance of politicians implicated in acts of grand corruption is part of an intricate power retention matrix.

What started off as an act of rebuke by President Robert Mugabe against the then chairperson of the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation (ZMDC) Goodwills Masimirembwa, who allegedly pocketed US\$6 million of diamond revenues, boomeranged on the leader’s political party as it sparked a series of exposé that revealed the obscene salaries received by Mugabe’s political associates in various parastatals (Salarygate Scandal) (Mushava 2013; Mutimukulu 2014; Nyathi 2014). However, the story got to an interesting point when a few months after his stern rebuke, Mugabe, in a television interview on his birthday, exonerated Masimirembwa for the crimes he was initially accused of (Zhangazha 2014). Indeed, the period



between Masimirembwa's accusation and exoneration had sparked debate within ZANU-PF in particular and the Zimbabwean society in general regarding grand corruption with some believing that those in the league of Hapison Muchechetere and Cuthbert Dube would continue to be exposed (Chipunza 2014; Share 2014). So revealing were the media stories that even the president's spokesperson was fingered in cases of graft at the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation and Public Service Medical Aid Society (PSMAS) (Kadungure 2014; Tshuma, 2014).

In her capacity as the acting president, Joice Mujuru (the vice president), amid the continued embarrassment of directors of parastatals, chastised the public media for being agents of ZANU-PF's enemies before demanding that they stop reporting on corruption because the issue would be dealt with at the "top" level (*The Herald*, October 2, 2014). This thinking, as we will show, is part of a continuous process of ZANU-PF's attempts to cow the media into adopting self-censorship or a certain version of journalism sympathetic to its interests, no matter how deleterious grand corruption is to society. ZANU-PF has historically considered exposing corruption, as one investigative journalist argues, as

a definite lack of patriotism, bordering on treachery, for a journalist to investigate and expose corruption thereby exposing the political leadership and tarnishing the image of Zimbabwe in the eyes of the international community. It was argued that having become privy to such controversial information, a truly patriotic journalist would dutifully and quietly pass it on to the relevant authorities in the interest of national cohesion. The information would then travel along the correct channels until it reached the desk of the president, where His Excellency would prescribe the most appropriate solution to the problem. (Nyarota 2006: 203)

We are keenly aware that Mujuru's position on corruption and the media captures yet another issue poignantly put in the form of a question by Nyarota—arguably the doyen of investigative journalism in Zimbabwe—who wondered if exposing corruption was in the national interest or covering it up, ostensibly, all in the national interest (203)? Like Nyarota's work, Hill's (2005) book is also written with a journalistic flare—not surprisingly so as it was initially meant to be a newspaper story. However, we are not particularly interested in engaging with the question of "patriotic" journalism at the theoretical level, which Mujuru alludes to, but we readily use media material to capture contemporary societal perceptions of both corruption and to understand how Mugabe and his party have dealt with the issue of grand corruption since 1980. Hill (2005: 45) has argued that the issue of corruption in Africa became a pervasive problem, especially in Zambia, Malawi, and Kenya, where in the 1990s new governments had taken over from liberation movements, because "lack of preparation meant that corruption endured, and often grew worse, while the governments did little to tackle poverty and unemployment." Unlike in these countries, where regime change temporarily slackened primitive accumulation tendencies, Zimbabwe offers a very interesting case for examination as the powerful ruling elite has largely remained the same since independence.

While Mujuru's chastisement of the media was widely interpreted by those sympathetic to the ZANU-PF government as a personal opinion, what later transpired, as we will argue, reflected the party's true position on the issue as it was revealed that this "sensitive" matter was to be dealt with at the "top" level (the president's office) in a more sanitized manner with the "criminals" hidden from public

scrutiny and with their names not leaked to the press (*The Herald*, October 2, 2014). But, of course, this was not before the matter was taken to parliament where in a more blunt manner, two ZANU-PF parliamentarians Joseph Chinotimba and Temba Mliswa took turns in accusing fellow ZANU-PF politicians of being corrupt and challenged them to declare their assets and leave politics for business (Machiwenyika 2014). Indeed, all this capture trenchantly the very pertinent issues affecting Zimbabwe at the moment and calls for an investigation into how grand corruption became pervasive in Zimbabwean society and how Robert Mugabe, under whose watch it developed, has historically dealt with this issue.

Although a lot has been written about Robert Mugabe in the past few years, especially regarding issues such as land reform, the economic crisis, political violence, and his unflinching stance against homosexuals, very little has been written about how he has grappled with corruption since independence. In mainstream media, he is often presented as Africa's strongman, yet an aspect that affects his government that he seemingly has not addressed with his usual radicalism appears to be that of corruption. The following statement from Nathaniel Manheru (2014), a *Herald* columnist suspected to be George Charamba (Mugabe's spokesperson), is an example of how people view Mugabe as a no-nonsense upholder of African values:

I am trying to visualise President Mugabe sunk in an EU conference chair in Brussels, listening to the following words from one Mr Di Rupo: "We cannot tolerate that some are denied their rights and persecuted for their origins, sexual orientation, their religion and their convictions." Mr Di Rupo is no nobody. He is Belgium's openly gay premier, something which leaves me wondering whether my use of the pronominal gender "he" is accurate, is shorn of unwanted connotations even. For all we know, Di Rupo might very well be the cooing side in the amorous gay equation that rules his passionate side!

This study utilizes a number of sources that are available in the public domain, including his own words, to examine his attitude and stance toward graft. Though two types of corruption—grand corruption and administrative/petty corruption—can be identified in Zimbabwe, we are particularly interested in examining grand corruption by people in positions of power to defraud either the state or companies. Administrative/petty corruption typically involves the demand for bribes by judicial officers, law enforcement agents, education, health, and transport sectors for discharging services to the community. Though we concede the presence of corrupt elements in the colonial administrative structure, we do not share (Mushava 2013: 5) view that the destruction of the cultural and value systems by colonization and the establishment of colonial political, economic, and social structures in Zimbabwe is the taproot for the current spread of grand corruption. Rather, we argue that in postcolonial Zimbabwe, the scourge has worsened because of the culture of impunity that the current government has established, especially in cases where politicians are involved.

Although we share Yamamoto's view that corruption in Zimbabwe is not a recent phenomenon, and his pessimism that nothing will come out of the current "fight" against corruption, we challenge the idea that Mugabe does not act strongly against corruption because he is corrupt. Yamamoto (2014a) suggests that the reason the fight against corruption will not succeed is because the head of this mafia

or yakuza-like operation “sits in the highest office in the land.” Unlike Yamamoto who partly utilizes unfinished court cases to buttress his argument, we argue that for Mugabe, corruption has a functional use. It difficult to believe that his erstwhile comrades including Tekere, Nkala, and Makoni (leader of the Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn Movement) have not brought any sufficient evidence or even suggested that he is corrupt; rather, they emphasized that their fallout with him was because he does not tolerate opposition from within the party. These people worked with him for many years and would have used Mugabe’s corrupt activities, if any, to push their political agendas. Like Musewe and van der Merwe (2014), we argue that the fundamental problem we face in Zimbabwe is the lack of the moral authority and political will of the president to profoundly change a system that has worked so well to achieve his singular objective of being a president for life. Indeed, everything about Zimbabwe, “its institutions, its policies, its values, its management practices and its dialogue have been manipulated or engineered to achieve just that.” Thus, we argue that corruption is part of Mugabe’s power retention matrix.

Though managing to identify most of the high-profile corruption cases, and the general impact of corruption on Zimbabwean society, Nyarota’s account shows neither change, nor linkages, nor continuities in the manner in which grand corruption has been viewed in Zimbabwe since independence. Dumiso Dabengwa (1998: 198–200), one time politician in ZANU-PF, also wrote in the 1990s noting the changing nature of corruption and yet did little to examine the specter of corruption in Zimbabwe’s postindependence government—obscenely prevalent at the time of his writing. His recommendation was that ministers in charge of police should take a leading role in stamping corruption (200). In fact, Dabengwa, who was in charge of police as minister of home affairs in the 1990s, failed to walk this talk. As we will demonstrate, this analysis of corruption in Zimbabwe is simplistic. Thus, a historical perspective such as the one we offer in this chapter provides a starting point for anyone seeking a more nuanced understanding of how ZANU-PF politicians have taken advantage of the postcolonial experience to accumulate property at the expense of many and how Mugabe has, in turn, blackmailed his compromised comrades to support his political ambitions.

## CORRUPTION AND THE ZANU-PF LEADERSHIP CODE, 1980–1990

Admittedly at independence, ZANU-PF faced a number of challenges, including converting the war economy to a peace economy, uniting a nation divided by almost two decades of civil war, and removing racial discrimination (Bond and Manyanya 2003). The new leadership of Zimbabwe consisted of people who had either spent various timespans in incarceration, suffered some form of racial discrimination under white rule, or fought in the liberation war. Thus, they possessed a high sense of entitlement to the new state, and from this arose the *takaifira* (we died for it/we suffered for it) syndrome (Tendi 2013).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is pertinent to mention that the new leadership, despite public posturing that they were Marxist socialists, suffered from ideological kwashiorkor. Very few of them, as this chapter will show, adopted socialist principles. At the wheels of this behemoth was Robert Mugabe—an avid supporter of Machiavellian principles—who was prepared to retain power no matter the cost.

That political survival became the major political aim is succinctly captured by Masipula Sithole and Wilfred Mhanda in their analyses of the liberation struggle through the struggle-within-the-struggle framework (Sithole 1979). Political squabbles within the liberation movement gave birth to a leadership that was both intolerant and paranoid. Furthermore, the command structure of the liberation movements were mobilized in such a way that all positions within the postcolonial government were in fact expected to support the position of the leader. Although this mode of interaction between the leadership and its political supporters resulted in an ideological contradiction as some of the former liberation fighters accumulated properties within a short time, political survival meant that those implicated were saved from prosecution. Thus, we argue that it did not take long after independence for corruption to be turned into “post-independence Zimbabwe’s biggest growth industries” (Nyarota 2006: 204).

Shana (2006) argues that the most unanimous opinion condensed from audit reports, donor reports, household surveys, business environment and enterprise surveys, legislative reports, and diagnostic studies available between 1980 and 1987 was that the incidences of corruption, though present, were minimal no matter how they were defined. Unlike Shana, we argue that a more nuanced study of the Zimbabwean society in the 1980s reveals that corruption was rampant though it remained largely outside the media gaze. This was because all media was state-controlled then. Shana does not realize that Zimbabwe inherited a corruption-ridden society from the outgoing colonial regime, and that the specter of corruption thrived during that time despite some cases getting more media attention than others. Thus, we argue that the most popular corruption cases (*State vs Paweni*, *State vs Charles Ndhlovu*) were a microcosm of the macrocosm since behind the seemingly corruption-free environment lay a society riddled by graft. The Paweni case revealed that politicians could escape persecution for their role in grand corruption. In this case, the late Kumbirai Kangai, who authorized payment of fake invoices, was never sanctioned, while Paweni was jailed (Yamamoto 2014b). Kangai remained a cabinet minister for decades after the scandal and went on to preside over the Ministry of Agriculture years later, where he oversaw the pillaging of the Grain Marketing Board (GMB). Kangai’s involvement in all these scandals did not stop him from finding final resting space at the country’s National Heroes Acre (Yamamoto 2014b).

Indeed, as Young (1998: 145) has argued in the case of corruption in the military, the liberation war incubated the development of clientelist relations in the insurgent militaries (ZANLA, ZIPA, and ZIPRA), which created a chaotic situation that was difficult to rectify after independence (Takaendesa-Mupanduki 2012). Thus, we also argue that the charge by the breakaway commanders Thomas Nhari and Dakarai Badza in 1974 that “wholesale corruption riddled the high command” of the ZANLA leadership held some truth. In fact, General Josiah Tongogara, ZANLA commander (1973–1979), was “distrustful” of most Zanu nationalist politicians as he openly considered them “corrupt,” and, thus, reportedly treated himself as the moderating force in Zanu’s political setup (Tendi 2013: 839; Tekere 2009; Chung 2006). In the 1970s, the leaders of the Front Line States as well as other organizations were alerted of the problem of corruption among a number of liberation movements in Southern Africa. For example, Mhando, the foreign minister of Tanzania, one of the influential members of the Front Line States, accused leaders of liberation movements in the 1970s of being corrupt (Sellström 1999:

249). He accused them of “sitting at the cafés in Dar es Salaam or fluttering around the world begging for weapons and money” (249). Even Sweden, which was one of the major funders of liberation movements, got concerned with the levels of corruption with liberation movements (Sellström 2002a).

As will become evident, what morphed into corruption after independence was, in fact, an intricate clientelist system ultimately demonstrating the relationship between individuals, the networks they create, and institutional politics, some of which went as far back as the liberation war (Young 1998). The incidences of “strange happenings” (corrupt activities) increased tremendously after 1980, and even as early as 1981, the issue partly led to a fallout between Edgar Tekere, the secretary general, and Robert Mugabe, president of ZANU-PF and the prime minister of the country (Tekere 2007; Holland 2008). However, though in his autobiography Tekere presents himself as a lone voice in this campaign against cumulative tendencies during the early 1980s, he too was compromised as his infamous expensive tastes did not tally with his income as a government minister. For instance, just a few months after joining government, he was already driving a very expensive and posh Jaguar (Holland 2008). Despite his expensive tastes while in government, Tekere, after his fallout with Mugabe, which led to his expulsion from ZANU-PF, founded a political party, the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), whose main draw card in the 1990 general elections was fighting corruption (Chung 2005).

Attempts to create a centralized economy along socialist lines inadvertently resulted in a series of contradictory responsibilities as the state became the employer, consumer, regulator, and producer. This status quo offered opportunities for the new leadership to plunder state resources. In this scenario, “ministers and other top officials became wealthy individuals overnight, while the government adopted a ‘no questions asked’ attitude.” Networks of corruption inherited from the outgoing government were inherited by corrupt elements in the new political leadership. For instance, networks of corruption in the army were inherited from the outgoing white government, especially the Selous Scouts’ illegal trade of guns for ivory with South Africa (Young 1998: 146). These activities remained latent in public view. The first major corruption scandal after independence was the one involving businessman Samson Bernard Paweni, who “was tried and convicted for inflating charges for the transportation of imported relief food supplies in the rural areas during the 1982–84 drought” (Nyarota 2006: 208).

As a number of politicians in government began to be fingered in corruption scandals, it became necessary for the ZANU-PF government to act on the issue. It was against the background of deepening corruption scandals and the general public’s anger that on August 10, 1984, Robert Mugabe launched the ZANU-PF Leadership Code. The major objective of the Leadership Code was to preclude leaders, especially members of parliament, provincial governors, members of the judiciary service, uniformed forces, members of the ZANU-PF central committee and cabinet ministers, among others, from using their influential positions for economic benefits. The code also stipulated that leaders should disclose their assets and also that they should not use their relatives as fronts for their business ventures. This was hailed as a great step toward curbing corruption and clientelism within the government and civil service. It was an ambitious step to rid the party and the government of corrupt elements.

The code became one of the key issues discussed at the ZANU-PF conference in December 1984. At this conference, Mugabe assumed total control of the party as he was formally acknowledged as party leader and was also appointed to head a new 15-member Politburo set up to control government policy. Accordingly, he was given the right to choose all its members (Meredith 2002a: 80). Senior government officials drummed up the rhetoric about how the code would drastically reduce levels of corruption, especially among people in leadership positions. In 1985, Maurice Nyagumbo, then secretary for administration of ZANU-PF, declared that in spite of negative reports, “in certain western newspapers claiming that certain provisions of the code relating to the maximum amount of land leaders could hold had been changed because of internal pressures within the party. This is completely untrue. This code is going to be implemented and, indeed, many leaders have already declared assets I am very encouraged by this” (The Department of Administration 1985). In spite of its seemingly good intentions, the Leadership Code achieved very little. Soon leaders devised ingenious methods of subverting the code. For example, doing business using a relative’s name became one of the ways through which leaders circumvented the code. This was rampant among politicians as well as people in the military, the police, and judiciary, among other sectors. For instance, in 1985, Lt.-Gen. Mujuru purchased two adjacent farms in Shamva, retail stores, financial and marketing services and a hotel in Bindura under his brother’s name (Young 1998: 172). This became a common way of subverting the government’s leadership code, which had precluded leaders from accumulating wealth using their positions (172). Besides using an official residence in a wealthy suburb of Borrowdale, Mujuru also lived on a 1,500-acre farm in Ruwa, east of Harare (Meredith 2002b: 82). Meredith (2002: 82) argues that all these acquisitions were with Mugabe’s approval. Despite suggesting otherwise, Young (1998: 172) posits that though it was difficult to view Mujuru’s acquisitions as illegal, what was sinister was how somebody could acquire so much wealth from a military salary alone. It was therefore up to Mugabe to invoke the leadership code and the result was that his failure encouraged other government officials to attempt to get rich quickly.

The rhetoric from the top leadership of the party made it apparent that the political elite would continue to accumulate wealth through corrupt means. By the end of the decade, the leaders had completely abandoned socialist pretences, and with it the Leadership Code. In 1989, under what is commonly known as the Willowgate Scandal, senior military, government, and ZANU-PF party officials purchased Toyota Cressida cars at a government-controlled price of Z\$27,000 and resold them on the black market for Z\$110,000 (Young 1998: 171). It is rather ironic that Nyagumbo, who had strongly supported the leadership code as the secretary general of ZANU-PF, would become embroiled in the Willowgate Scandal just a few years after making such statements. That even a secretary for administration of the ruling party was caught by investigative journalists at *Chronicle* in the country’s biggest corruption scandal shows how entrenched grand corruption was within the government structures.

Having established earlier on that military corruption had increased after independence, it is not surprising that some of the notable names fingered in the Willowgate Scandal were military people including Minister of Defence Enos Nkala, Commander of the Army Lt.-Gen. Solomon Mujuru, and Air Force Commander Air Marshal Josiah Tungamirai (Holland 2008: 24). The subsequent inquiry, the Sandura Commission, forced Nkala to resign, found Lt.-Gen. Mujuru not guilty

on a technicality, and acquitted Air Marshal Tungamirai due to strong mitigating factors. The commission considered Tungamirai's service to the state in his acquittal while he declared "he did not know the price of the vehicle in question was controlled" (Young 1998: 172).

Mugabe failed to punish his cronies who had been implicated in the Willowgate Scandal in spite of the overwhelming evidence. In fact, the findings of the Sandura Commission, which he appointed to investigate the scandal, were never made public, and after a few years those involved bounced back into influential positions in ZANU-PF and the government. Among those caught in the corruption net were his "closest friends" Enos Nkala, the defense minister, and Maurice Nyagumbo "who had been entrusted with special responsibility for administering Zanu PF's Leadership Code" (Meredith 2002a: 86). Frederick Shava who was convicted of his crimes was sentenced to nine months in prison for perjury but spent no less than a day in prison after Mugabe pardoned him (Meredith 2002a: 87). Mugabe justified himself thus, "Who amongst us has not lied? Yesterday you were with your girlfriend and you told your wife you were with the president. Should you get nine months for that?" (87). Shava, the beneficiary of this leniency, and in whose defense Mugabe spoke, had bought and sold so many vehicles that the Sandura Commission criticized him for "behaving like a car dealer" (Laiton 2014).

After his public appearance before Justice Wilson Sandura, Nyagumbo committed suicide. After his death, the "trials" ceased, and dozens of other "accused" got off scot-free while there was a consensus that the Willowgate trials had been used to remove political rivals (Chung 2006: 267). Two precedents had been set: one was that by sacrificing a few high-level people, public anger could be assuaged; and the second was that any corruption scandal could be used to remove political and ethnic rivals (267). At that point, people began doubting whether the justice system was up to the job of dealing with corruption and whether Mugabe himself was serious about dealing with the corruption scourge. Currently, Fredrick Shava serves as ambassador of Zimbabwe in China, while another politician Jacob Mudenda, a "proven crook" during the Willowgate Scandal, was recently appointed the Speaker of Parliament in Zimbabwe (Yamamoto 2014a).

One fascinating thing about the Willowgate Scandal is that, though acknowledging their guiltiness, some of the shamed political elites claimed that they were being victimized by Robert Mugabe. For instance, Nkala claimed that his resignation from government was prompted by what he saw as Mugabe's instrumental use of the Sandura Commission. Nkala averred that the Sandura Commission, which was tasked with investigating Willowgate, was weaponized by Mugabe to target potential internal rivals (Tendi 2013: 840). Nkala believed that Mugabe failed to protect Nyagumbo from both public embarrassment and prosecution and hence the suicide: "he [Mugabe] could have protected Nyagumbo. We invited Mugabe to join nationalist politics in 1961. ZANU was formed in my house in 1963 and we made Mugabe our secretary general. We were comrades in detention. We built Mugabe up and when he got power he ate us all" (Tendi 2013: 840). Thus, Tendi concluded that whatever the veracity of Nkala's claim, Nyagumbo's death, Nkala's and Tekere's departure from ZANU-PF, and General Solomon Mujuru's retirement from the military (and eventual death) left Mugabe as the commanding figure in the ZANU-PF hierarchy and in his relationship with the emerging generation of service chiefs (841).

Instead of dealing with the culprits as one would have expected, Mugabe chose to deal with his political enemies. Accordingly, two of his high-profile victims were Tekere who was fired from the party in October 1988, among other things, over his hard-line stance on corruption and also his criticism of Mugabe's one-party state idea; and Geoff Nyarota, the Willowgate whistleblower, who lost his job as the editor of the *Chronicle* (Meredith 2002b: 86). At the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) where the anticorruption crusade campaign had many adherents, Mugabe unleashed his antiriot police who crushed a student anticorruption demonstration with excessive force (88). To further stifle opposition from this section of society, Mugabe went on to impose draconian measures in form of the University of Zimbabwe Amendment Act in 1990.

The decay in revolutionary ethos and state autonomy after independence is attributed by Fay Chung (2006: 19) to a number of influences. The "populism" resulting from the need to cater for the electorate's preferences, rather than political ideals, went hand in hand with forms of corruption and the rise to prominence of *mafikizolo* opportunist elements within ZANU-PF and both served to undermine the strength of the party as a vanguard force. Thus, as Nyarota (2005) argues, the Leadership Code fell by the wayside as wanton acquisition and the capitalist predatory tendencies that the code sought to suppress reasserted themselves with a vengeance. The cancerous spread of corruption among the ruling elite can be blamed not only on their personal lack of integrity, but also on the weak institutional systems whose processes were shrouded in secrecy. This secrecy was born out of a combination of Ian Smith's sanctions breaking economy and ZANU-PF's struggle as a liberation movement against enemy infiltration and attack (Chung 2006: 325). It was thus not a coincidence that the Willowgate Scandal, the biggest corruption scandal that had happened since independence, happened just four years after Robert Mugabe had launched the Leadership Code.

Having established that the Leadership Code gave Mugabe an opportunity to deal with corrupt elements within his party and government, his uncharacteristic soft stance on such a moral case requires interrogation. More surprisingly, Mugabe did little beyond issuing verbal remonstrations. The formation of the Government of National Unity in 1987 was an opportunity for Robert Mugabe to stamp hard on the corrupt as it gave him enormous powers. He was declared executive president by Parliament, combining the roles of head of state, head of government, and commander in chief of the defense forces, with powers to dissolve Parliament and declare martial law and the right to run for an unlimited number of terms of office. His control of appointments to all senior posts in the civil service, the defense forces, the police, and parastatals gave him virtual stranglehold on government machinery and unlimited opportunities to exercise patronage (Meredith 2002a: 79).

Although Mugabe was not directly fingered in the corruption charges that occurred during this time, the major taint to his public image was the fingering of his wife (the late Sally Mugabe) in the Willowgate Scandal. Indeed, the failure of the Leadership Code can be blamed on the general insincerity of the entire ZANU-PF leadership to adhere to this set of principles, yet we argue that more than anything else Mugabe's own power considerations in the 1980s largely explain why the situation was (and still is) not addressed. Informing our argument is the idea that as the leader of government the responsibility to stop the rot was (and still is) his. It was doomed from its inception because of its ultimatum that leaders



should “forego wealth or quit masquerading as leaders” (Nyarota 2005). We readily acknowledge Moore’s (2006) view that, “in Mobutu like fashion, he (Mugabe) has granted extensive corruption opportunities to key figures at certain moments, only to flag their crimes when they need to be side-lined—sometimes into prison,” but we also seek to understand why this became part of Mugabe’s *modus operandi*.

First, Mugabe’s hesitancy in shaming his corrupt colleagues can be gleaned from his upbringing. Perhaps those around him had observed that he was an extremely hesitant individual especially on issues that did not directly challenge his position as the prime minister. Could it be that those that claim to have given the position he now occupied freaked him to the extent that he still felt so personally indebted to them that he could not see them fall by the wayside? Like Holland (2008), who wrote more generally about Robert Mugabe’s personality, we specifically seek to understand how and why corruption thrived under his watch. A number of Mugabe’s peers, including George Kahari, James Chikerema, Edgar Tekere, and Donato Mugabe (Mugabe’s late brother), have all profiled him as a weak character despite the public image of a strong man (Holland 2008). In particular, George Kahari believes that Mugabe has got a terrible inferiority complex, which emanated from his socialization as a child (7). Indeed, Tekere’s account of how Mugabe took over control of ZANU from Ndabaningi Sithole in the mid-1970s conjures a picture of a reluctant person capitulating to “thuggish pressure” from individuals like Tekere, Enos Nkala, and Maurice Nyagumbo who had been at the forefront of “Zimbabwean nationalism’s violent history” (42). What Holland concludes from these revelations is that Mugabe may have been a principled man but “when faced with self-preservation, he was vulnerable to corruption” (42). We may not be sure whether the president’s inaction in the face of grand corruption is a result of his personal weakness or pragmatism, but the idea that self-preservation seems to be his paramount consideration fits very well into his profile as an avid Machiavellian. Indeed, the 1980s were particularly difficult for Mugabe as he faced increasing destabilization from apartheid South Africa while at home the war against his nemesis Joshua Nkomo’s supporters in Matabeleland must have been of paramount importance to him. Thus, using this logic, corruption in government did not directly threaten his position as the two mentioned scenarios. In any case, the same corrupt government officials were his strongest allies in the fight against the two external threats. Firing them would have weakened his political grip and with the benefit of hindsight, we argue that preserving ZANU-PF is an issue close to his heart to this day.

### PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION AMID POVERTY, 1990–2000

The 1990s offered multiple opportunities for looting as ZANU-PF’s adoption of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) showed its abandonment of the socialist agenda. It also marked the unofficial abandonment of the Leadership Code. Not surprisingly, therefore, a myriad of scandals involving government officials became commonplace from this time. The following list<sup>2</sup> is evidence to this:

1. 1987: Zisco Steel Blast Furnace Scandal
2. 1987: Air Zimbabwe Fokker Scandal
3. 1986: National Railways Housing Scandal

4. 1988: Willowgate Scandal
5. 1989: ZRP Santana Scandal
6. 1994: War Victims Compensation Scandal (Where healthy ZANU-PF chefs claimed up to 100 percent disability and received hundreds of thousands of good Zimbabwean dollars in compensation)
7. 1995: GMB Grain Scandal (Kangai Walked)
8. 1996: VIP Housing Scheme (Public money was used to build VIPs', including First Lady Grace's, house)
9. 1998: Boka Banking Scandal (US\$968 million fraud perpetrated on the Zimbabwean people with the RBZ and the office of the president accused of attempting to cover it up)
10. 1998: ZESA YTL Soltran Scandal
11. 1998: Telecel Scandal
12. 1998: Harare City Council Refuse Tender Scandal
13. 1999: Housing Loan Scandal
14. 1999: Noczim Scandal (managers corruptly siphoned millions of dollars out of the oil firm, which was reeling under a deficit of about US\$5 billion)
15. 1999: DRC Timber and Diamond scandals (UN reported military and other bosses were implicated)
16. 1999: G MBS scandal
17. 1999: Ministry of Water and Rural Development Chinese tender scandal
18. 1999: VIP Land GrabS scandal

As can be seen, there were many corruption scandals in the 1990s but one thing they share in common is how those implicated were allowed by the president to go scot-free. We will not examine all of these in depth but will pick a few examples to demonstrate how the culture of impunity was nurtured during the 1990s till it became part of the bureaucracy. During this time, Mugabe cast himself as somebody not really interested in worldly possessions, yet corruption and patrimonialism, which went out of control during this time, could be traced right to his door step.

One of the worst cases of corruption during this period was the 1997 War Veterans' Gratuities corruption scandal. After facing so much pressure from the war veterans who wanted to be compensated for their participation in the liberation struggle, the government set up a War Victims Compensation Fund (WVCF). The compensation that the war veterans received was to be commensurate with the percentage of their disability. Led by Chenjerai "Hitler" Hunzvi, who had dubious war credentials, war veterans demanded an initial payment of Z\$50,000 and Z\$2,000 monthly payments. According to Bond and Manyanya (2003: xi), "the deal, aimed at quieting war vets protest over the Mugabe regime's failure to meet even their basic employment and survival needs, was a budget buster." The economic crisis that was triggered by the war veterans' compensation has been well documented. However, what needs to be interrogated is the corruption that characterized the process and the role of Robert Mugabe in this. According to Nyarota (2006: 215), "in a case of naked fraud of gargantuan proportions, the WVCF was looted by men and women who cashed in on their liberation war credentials, whether real or imaginary, to plunder the meagre resources of a country that had been liberated while some of them were still babies in diapers." Fit-looking

government officials, military officials, ZANU-PF officials and other connected individuals claimed disabilities percentages has high as 90 percent or even higher. According to Nyarota (2006: 216), “in normal circumstances, the public would expect a police chief to be 100 per cent physically fit. Yet Augustine Chihuri, the police commissioner, was assessed to be 90 per cent disabled.” This encapsulates the levels of looting that was happening in the country under the watch of Robert Mugabe, notwithstanding his rhetoric.

That the looting of the WVCF happened under Mugabe’s watch was not surprising. Since the 1980s, Mugabe had demonstrated his proclivity to pay lip service to the problem of corruption. Just like what he did following the Willowgate Scandal, after a public outcry over the looting of the WVCF, Mugabe appointed yet another commission of enquiry—the Chidyausiku Commission. One of the people exposed by the commission was Mugabe’s brother-in-law, Reward Marufu, who had received a staggering Z\$822,668 for his 95 percent disability (Nyarota 2006: 217). In spite of the announcement by the attorney general’s office that Marufu would be prosecuted, nothing was done. In fact, none of the people who had looted the WVCF were ever prosecuted for their crimes. Nyarota concludes that “the Reward Marufu case was a prime example of how Mugabe paid mere lip service to the eradication of corruption in Zimbabwe” (218). It is evident that Mugabe had again put political expedience and his own survival above the need to effectively deal with the problem of corruption. His method of appointing a commission of enquiry and later ignoring its recommendations and not publicizing the findings of the commission also shows how he often turned a blind eye to corruption among his close comrades. This does not tally with Mugabe’s image as a powerful, principled, and uncompromising leader. Thus, in considering Mugabe stance on corruption in Zimbabwe, it is important to differentiate between rhetoric and practice. Outside the initial successes Mugabe scored in the 1980s in improving education and health, by the year 2000, grand corruption had become by far the major noticeable trait of ZANU-PF’s rule (Chung 2005).

#### POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS, 2000–2014

By the end of the 1990s, it was clear that grand corruption had won the day as Mugabe, the legal enforcer of the as yet to be formally annulled Leadership Code, did nothing beyond public remonstrations of nameless corrupt government officials. While the situation obtaining at the close of the century clearly called for immediate intervention, the period after 2000 saw a further escalation with the military also taking a major say in this looting matrix. That the pilot of this system was out of touch with reality is demonstrated by Mugabe’s accusation against Masimirembwa and his later withdrawal of the same. This marked a shift from the previous public remonstrations where Mugabe had mobilized correct intelligence to attack political enemies in his party. In this case, Mugabe was, as he later claimed, misinformed. Those that supplied the supposedly bad intelligence were not publicly remonstrated nor did they resign in shame. Thus, James Maridadi (MDC-T parliamentarian) argues that the president must resign in embarrassment for failing to deal with corruption as well as misinforming the nation over graft allegations leveled against former Zimbabwe Mining and Development Corporation (ZMDC) boss Goodwills Masimirembwa (Mhlanga 2014). Indeed, by 2013, corruption became so endemic that the media became vocal in calling for the resuscitation of

the forgotten Leadership Code (Guvamatanga 2014; Mataire 2012). Grand corruption had become so common to ZANU-PF's operations that Temba Mliswa, ZANU-PF provincial chairperson for Mashonaland West, called a press conference justifying his demand for US\$165 million from an investor he had taken to powerful Zanu PF politicians to facilitate a business deal (Bwititi 2014; Wafawarova 2014).

In the 1980s, Mugabe had demonstrated his wish for a one-party state, which was scuttled by his erstwhile friend Tekere. Other opposition leaders such as Bishop Abel Muzorewa and Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole were tainted by their previous association with the colonial regime and their political parties offered tepid opposition up to the mid-1990s. Mugabe's wish to have total control both in government and in party politics largely explain the direction that the country took during this time. Such a vision could only be sustained by centralized bureaucratic control, which used secrecy to dominate and control the civilians, thus allowing corruption to flourish (Chung 2005: 326). The absence of a vibrant opposition political party which gave ZANU-PF room to maneuver as the government came to an end with the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999. For example, the processes regarding the redistribution of land after 2000, despite the formation of several committees, was not in the public arena.

In the post-2000 period, when the ZANU-PF party lost considerable power to the new MDC, prebendalism became rampant. State militarization—Mugabe's incremental appointment of serving and retired military officers to state posts—which became the norm after 2000—is a form of prebendalism, because it is elite clientelism. Most of the recipients of these posts are often driven by a sense of entitlement when making personal use of state resources that emanates from what military elites view as their sacrifices during the liberation war (Tendi 2013: 841). Other than the case of General Mujuru and Air Marshal Josiah Tungamirai, discussed in the previous sections, very few military officials had been caught in the corruption net in the 1980s and 1990s. Tendi argues that prebendalism maintains military elites' loyalty to Mugabe and gives them a potent incentive to protect ZANU-PF from defeat in elections, which would deny them the entitlement to state positions that afford considerable personal privileges and advantages. He posits that Mugabe increasingly opened the state's door to military elites, giving them their "turn to eat" and showing resolute determination to defend their new entitlements from an opposition party takeover (841). But as Tendi notes, there are some military elites like Brigadier General Douglas Nyikayaramba who represent a section of military elites with deep ideological commitment to ZANU-PF and Mugabe's continued rule (841). However, the majority of the military elites have weighed down state enterprises. For instance, Major General Elliot Kasu at ZBC, Samuel Muvuti at GMB, and the late Major General Karakadzai at NRZ (Moyo 2014).

Unlike the previous decades when nationalist politicians played a leading role in the pillaging of national resources, the post-2000 period was characteristically different in that the nationalists were now tagged with military elites. Writing on the South African case, Lodge (2014) traced the problem of neopatrimonialism to the networks of power within the ruling parties. In these networks, the powerful become the patrons who provide for and protect those under them. Lodge (2014) exposes the complex networks of corruption within ANC and how Jacob Zuma is a central figure in these patronage networks. Similarly, and although not as open as in the case of Zuma, Mugabe has arguably been a central figure in ZANU-PF's

patronage networks that have fueled corruption and the culture of impunity. His power to pardon those caught up in corruption scandals, as what happened in the Willowgate Scandal, was used by political elites as some kind of insurance against prosecution and imprisonment. This amounted to an instrumentalization of graft by those controlling patrimonial networks and with the power to pardon those useful to the networks and condemning the few viewed as expendable. This explains why in spite of the large number of corruption scandals in postcolonial Zimbabwe only a few were ever prosecuted for their crimes. Indeed, most of the people fingered in corruption scandals were high-ranking politicians, most of whom continued to hold high-ranking positions in ZANU-PF and in government, which fed the culture of impunity. As Shana (2006: 7) has put it, “involvement in corruption appears to have enhanced their political careers not damaged them.”

The land reform program instituted from 2000—ostensibly in the interest of fair distribution of land to landless Zimbabweans—soon became fertile ground for misappropriation. Government ministers, officials, and top military and police officers ignored the land reform policy of “one man one farm” with some acquiring several properties and passing them on to relatives. It is interesting to note that the president has so far instituted seven land audits, which have confirmed the obvious—that most of his ministers, senior police, intelligence and military officials possessed more than one farm. In August 2003, he declared that he would deal with those who had seized more than one property, but the threat was greeted with stony silence. To date, no looted farms have been returned, and no action has been taken against the culprits. Finally, there are the allegations that emerged in 2007 concerning misappropriation of funds at the Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Company (ZISCO), the country’s sole steel producer. Following an official inquiry, parliament conducted hearings in which allegations were made against a number of senior politicians said to have benefited from payments made by the company. The major scandals that rocked the country during this period demonstrate this. For instance, the Harare Airport Scandal (2001), pillaging and milking of Ziscosteel (2005–2008), pillaging of diamonds in Chiadzwa (2006–present), the Airport Road Scandal (2008–2014), the perpetual milking of Zimbabwe and the pillaging of the central bank under Gideon Gono, and the current Salarygate Scandal.

Under pressure, Mugabe allowed the formation of the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC). ZACC is a well-known toothless bulldog, which has neither prosecuted white-collar crime nor gotten any conviction since it was formed. In 2013, the commission got search warrants to investigate cabinet ministers Saviour Kasukuwere, Obert Mpofu, and Nicholas Goche. The commission also wanted to investigate Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation and the National Indigenisation and Empowerment Board. At that time, Sukai Tongogara, ZACC’s general manager in charge of investigations, went into hiding after she was intimidated and threatened with arrest for her efforts to investigate the culprits (Yamamoto 2014b).

During this time, high corruption cases also now involved the first family itself. Some critics have accused the first lady of amassing huge tracts of land in the Mazoe area in clear deviance of the government’s “one person one farm” policy. Several key members of the ruling party became obscenely wealthy and the popular perception is that they have accumulated it through their political connections rather than

pure business acumen. Minister Ignatious Chombo's wealth, which came into the public space in 2010 through an acrimonious divorce case, left many wondering how he could have amassed so much wealth within a short time. So revealing was the case that one newspaper report screamed, "If you needed an insight into how Zanu PF corruption and plunder has enriched several of its ministers and activists look no further than Local Government Minister Ignatious Chombo."<sup>3</sup> Obert Mpfu, then minister of industry, was impeached by Parliamentarians in 2009 for admitting that Ziscosteel had been looted and milked out by senior government officials and later prevaricating on that position. Obert Mpfu oversaw asset stripping at the country's premier steel company and was later to preside over the Mining Ministry after which he became fabulously wealthy and now owns a bank among other assets (Yamamoto 2014b).

Another major case is the one involving Munyaradzi Kereke, former advisor to the Reserve Bank governor Gideon Gono, who has launched a lawsuit with the Constitutional Court seeking an order from the court compelling the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission and the prosecutor general to investigate his former boss for looting US\$37.5 million from the central bank (Yamamoto 2014b). Munyaradzi Kereke also sued the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission for not investigating Gideon Gono. Kereke alleged that Gono stole from state coffers during his tenure. Kereke also went further to sue the ZACC for not investigating Gono despite him providing them with "incriminating" evidence (Yamamoto 2014b).

In all these instances, Mugabe placed himself at the forefront of tackling this scourge and yet the society was highly suspicious as to whether he would proceed beyond rhetoric. Lovemore Madhuku's stance regarding this latest "fight" against corruption is typical.

It is actually a mistake to believe that Zanu PF is fighting corruption. All the State enterprises, the parastatals that are involved, these are institutions that have always been Zanu PF since 1980... If you get to what was happening at PSMAS and so on, you get ZANU PF because all those guys, Cuthbert Dubes and so on, are all Zanu PF... They are not fighting any corruption; they think the public is so gullible and can be defeated and believe they are fighting corruption. (<http://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2014/03/10/madhuku-twists-knife-into-zanu-pf>)

Without doubt, the corruption scandals that were exposed by the media in 2013 surpassed the previous scandals in terms of media coverage and public interest. What is more interesting is that this happened just a few months after ZANU-PF resoundingly defeated MDC and consolidated its power. This is the reason why the corruption scandals exposed, especially by the public media, have been linked to factionalism within ZANU-PF. Writing on media coverage of corruption scandals in 2013 and 2014, Prof. Jonathan Moyo, the minister of information, stated, "The full spectrum of the mainstream media, without any exception, should be commended for the excellent job it is doing in the coverage of the abuse public funds and assets by some boards and management elements in some public enterprises."<sup>4</sup> Yet in spite of this, very little was done to bring to book those exposed for their involvement in corrupt activities such as awarding themselves very high salaries.

Mugabe, for his part, just made the familiar pronouncements that his government has a “zero tolerance” for corruption. Yet Mugabe is portrayed as the quintessential incorruptible leader who should be emulated by all Zimbabweans. As Moyo (2014) puts it,

While many in the leadership of the civil service, parastatals and local authorities are wont to be the first to mimic President Mugabe’s stance at level of slogans, they are in fact the last to practice those slogans in their specific responsibilities at their workplaces. The time has come to judge the leadership in Government, the civil service, parastatals and local authorities not on the basis of what it says but on the basis of what it does. In other words, the time has come for the leadership in these sectors to be little Mugabes in both word and deed.

Unfortunately history does not back Moyo’s argument that being “little Mugabes” would equate to having an uncompromising stance against corruption. Even before the ink on the sensational articles exposing corruption scandals had dried, high-ranking officials within government such as the Vice President Mujuru were already arguing that the publication of the corruption scandals by the media was the work of “the enemy within” trying to destabilize the party. That President Mugabe had to backtrack from his rather sensational criticism of Masimirembwa for accepting bribes from Ghanaian investors exposes the failure and indeed the inability of the highest office in the land to deal with the problem of corruption among his comrades. ZANU-PF has continued to live in an existential mode where corruption is often viewed as a small problem that should not be allowed to destabilize the party. Pardoning of those caught in corruption scandals has therefore become the *modus operandi* for Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party.

### CORRUPTION AND THE ZANU-PF SUCCESSION MATRIX

The year 2014 proved beyond reasonable doubt Mugabe’s true position regarding corruption and how it fitted into his power retention matrix. Whereas we have so far shown that in the post-2000 period, Mugabe was not only offering looting opportunities to people important to his continued stay in power but also that he was unwilling to turn against his corrupt lieutenants as long as they were not challenging his position directly, 2014 is peculiar in that he got rid of close to 90 per cent of the party’s top hierarchy in the name of cleansing the party of corrupt and subversive elements (Mandaza 2014). Joice Mujuru, who had earlier in 2014 spoken of internal enemies aiming to destabilize the party, seemingly had the president’s support evidenced by Mugabe’s attack on certain members of his party at Nathan Shamuyarira’s funeral, whom he referred to as weevils that were bent on destroying the party from within.<sup>5</sup> Although Mujuru was widely condemned for seemingly supporting the corrupt officials that had been exposed, her statement was meant to show how corruption had become imbedded in the succession issue. At the time that Joice Mujuru made her controversial remarks in February 2014, it was correctly noted by one Mike Davies, a political analyst at Cape Town-based Kigoda Consulting, that the emergence of the various corruption scandals was linked to faction fighting within ZANU-PF (Latham 2014). Tellingly, this anticorruption campaign coincided with the Mujuru faction’s victories in provincial party elections

in November 2013, and the corruption expose was seen as the Mnangagwa faction's effort to regain its foothold (Latham 2014). In these provincial party elections Mujuru's faction won control of eight of the country's ten provinces (Latham 2014).

A faction allegedly led by Emmerson Mnangagwa, which had been trounced in the PCC elections, was seemingly out of contention but they regrouped and made the first lady, Grace Mugabe, their chief weapon in their assault against Joice Mujuru. In fact, quite a number of demonstrations were spearheaded by the first lady, who addressed rowdy followers declaring that if the president did not remove the "corrupt" vice president, she would take matters into her own hands (Kwaramba 2014). For months, the president did not utter a single word regarding the infighting, but when he did, it was not difficult to discern that his interests were that of self-preservation. The result was Mujuru's dismissal in December 2014 for, among other things, allegations of plotting to oust and assassinate President Robert Mugabe, corruption, abuse of office and extortion charges. Preempted and purged within weeks and days of congress were 9 out of 10 elected provincial chairpersons, some 100 out of 160 legislators, about 10 out of 20 senior politburo members, including Mujuru herself (Mandaza 2014). Among the casualties were Didymus Mutasa (Presidential Affairs minister), Webster Shamu (Information Communication Technology), Francis Nhema (Indigenisation), Olivia Muchena (Higher and Tertiary Education), Dzikamai Mavhaire (Energy), Nicholas Goche (Public Service), Simbancuta Mudarikwa (Mashonaland East Provincial Affairs minister), and Munacho Mutezo (Energy deputy minister). He also dismissed Flora Buka (minister of state for Presidential Affairs), Paul Chimedza (Health deputy minister), Sylvester Nguni (minister of state in former Vice-President Mujuru's Office), Tongai Muzenda (Public Service deputy minister), Petronella Kagonye (Transport deputy minister), Fortune Chasi (Justice deputy minister), and Tendai Savanhu (Lands deputy minister) (*The Independent*, January 9, 2015).

Tellingly, the people leading the corruption assault against the vice president were themselves of questionable backgrounds. Indeed, as Magaisa (2014) has noted, Zimbabweans believe that most ministers and their relatives and political connections have been beneficiaries of corruption:

But all that matters very little because all they have to do is accuse of you and you alone corruption or other related crimes. You can't say but others stole, too! If they think you are stubborn, they will direct the police to arrest you and the prosecution will take the longest time in the world, opposing every bail application that you make, until you have really felt the pain of prison. The courts, too, will find reasons not to grant you bail.

The instrumental manner in which the corruption charges were being laid could be seen in the allegations that erupted after the ZANU-PF Congress that saw the ouster of Mujuru from ZANU-PF. The public media reported that a company called Glow Petroleum and persons connected to it benefited enormously (millions of dollars) from the exemption to pay fuel duty on the basis that the fuel was destined for the military establishment, when, in fact, it was meant for the commercial market.<sup>6</sup> All that was mentioned was that "some senior government officials, prominent politicians and businesspeople have been implicated in the scam."<sup>7</sup>



Noting that unlike during the highly publicized corruption expose in 2014, those accused remained nameless and yet Mujuru and other government ministers had just been fired on the basis of mere accusations, Magaisa (2015), therefore, raised pertinent questions:

Who are these people and why can't they be named? State media is not known for protecting identities of politicians if they are named in corrupt activities, especially if they are opposition politicians. It has to be recalled that rampant and wildly-fired allegations of corruption felled Mujuru and her group in December. It did not matter whether they were founded on fact or fiction or both—the method worked and soiled her image and reputation in a big way so that by the time Congress was convened, she was already down and out. It has not escaped us that in the beginning she or her associates were not being named. The naming and shaming only began much later in the battle, when the truth of whom was targeted could no longer be hidden.

Although many during the public attacks felt that Mujuru was being persecuted but she has a chequered past herself, especially going back to the looting of the War Victims Compensation Fund as she claimed 55 percent disability and collected a cool Z\$389,472. In total, the compensation fund lost more than Z\$112 billion or an equivalent of \$450 million from the looting frenzy (Yamamoto 2014b).

An interesting dynamic to all these purges is that ultimately the fate of the accused rests not with the courts but with Robert Mugabe, who will choose punishment commensurate with the “crime” committed by the rebels (*The Independent*, January 9, 2015). In January 2015, it was reported in the media that Mugabe will decide whether Mujuru would be prosecuted on graft charges when he returns from his holiday in the Far East (*The Independent*, January 9, 2015). The Zimbabwe Republic Police’s (ZRP) team of detectives, led by Chief Superintendent Luckson Mukazhi, to investigate Mujuru searched companies and premises linked to her after securing a search warrant from the High Court. However, it was alleged by a senior police officer that although investigations had reached an advanced stage, Mugabe would ultimately make the decision on whether Mujuru is to be prosecuted or not. The officer argued, “She may no longer be the vice-president, but the matter is being treated sensitively hence the President will make the decision, like he normally does in high profile cases. The Commissioner-General (Augustine Chihuri) will obviously brief the President on the investigations and he is the one who will decide how we proceed” (*The Independent*, January 9, 2015). The argument that the police could act against ZANU-PF politicians only when the president approved has merit given, as we have already shown, the long record of brazen criminal activities by ZANU-PF politicians that were never brought to court. Indeed, Police Commissioner Chihuri began to take some action against those accused of corruption after getting a lead from the president himself. During the Congress, Mugabe stated that “all those implicated in corruption cases shall be arrested if substantial evidence is gathered. Even if you are a minister, deputy minister or senior civil servant, you will be fired. Give us evidence. Evidence, evidence, evidence!” (Nleya 2014). Chihuri unwittingly revealed the partisan nature of police work in Zimbabwe during a police pass-out parade held a few weeks after the ZANU-PF December 2014 Congress. He declared, “Let me assure the nation that the Zimbabwe Republic Police shall leave no stone unturned in bringing all

perpetrators of corruption to book. This stance is in line with the organisation's constitutional mandate and, more importantly, with His Excellency the President of Zimbabwe's (Robert Mugabe) sentiments during the official opening of the 6th Zanu PF National People's Congress" (Nleya 2014). As such, Mugabe will continue to use grand corruption and threats of prosecution as vital cogs in his power retention scheme.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused the lens on the issue of grand corruption that affects the Zimbabwean society. At home, state media often present Mugabe as a protector of "African" values and often suggest that Mugabe will take action against those implicated in grand corruption. Utilizing various case studies from the 1980s to the present, this chapter has explained inaction in the face of corrupt activities involving some of his lieutenants, and the impact this has had on the generality of Zimbabweans. It has discussed popular conceptions of corruption and how Mugabe has managed to coexist with obscene wealth and naked corruption since independence despite an earlier commitment to ZANU-PF's Leadership Code. This chapter has also moved away from the trajectory of contemporary historiography on the Zimbabwe crisis, which has largely centered on Mugabe's role in its manufacture and, in turn, his relationship with the Western countries as a result thereof. Rather, through an analysis of the dynamics of grand corruption since 1980, we have challenged the view (including Mugabe's public postures) that Mugabe is the centerpiece of the "fight" against graft. Contrary to the popular belief that Mugabe has zero tolerance to corruption, we have argued that the growth of this specter under his watch emanates from Mugabe's wish to control his compromised comrades through blackmail and to discourage them from challenging his position. Thus, we conclude that Mugabe's continued association and tolerance of politicians implicated in acts of grand corruption is part of an intricate power retention matrix.

## NOTES

1. This argument was also raised in the 1990s when ex-combatants were demanding gratuities from the government for the role they played in the liberation struggle.
2. C. Z., "Scandals That Rocked Zimbabwe's Economy," <http://changezimbabwe.com/index.php/news-mainmenu-2/1-latest/2973-scandals-that-rocked>, accessed April 7, 2014.
3. "Messy Divorce Exposes Minister Chombo's Mega Riches," <http://nehandaradio.com/2010/11/05/messy-divorce-exposes-minister-chombo%e2%80%99s-mega-riches/#sthash.w6w0UXcW.dpuf>, accessed January 13, 2015.
4. <http://nehandaradio.com/2014/02/04/full-text-jonathan-moyo-statement/>, February 4, 2014.
5. "Live Blof: Cde Shamu Burial," <http://www.herald.co.zw/live-blog-cde-sha-muyarira-burial/>, *The Herald*, June 7, 2014, accessed January 13, 2015.
6. "Fuel Scam: Zimra Launches Probe," *The Herald*, January 1, 2015.
7. *ibid.*

PART IV

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Global Coloniality, Racism, and Militarism

# Mugabe's Land Reform and the Provocation of Global White Antiblack Racism

*Chimusoro Kenneth Tafira*

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I endeavor to link three intricately connected phenomena that have characterized the Zimbabwean situation in the recent past: Mugabe, land reform, and the global white antiblack racism. In order to understand why Mugabe moved from liberation era “communist terrorist,” to postindependence celebrated statesman and back to “terrorist,” one has to be adequately familiar with the global matrices of power of which race is the chief explanatory and classificatory device.

A major player in this scenario has been the global media complex, which is an octopus, is quick and fast, well-resourced, and has a devastating capacity to drown all other discourses. Thus, there has been a posture of the Western imperialist discourse as redemptive and messianic while those who have strayed out of line like Mugabe are demonized, denounced, and denigrated. The binary representation of Mugabe as a liberator/oppressor, saint/demon is subject to both internal and external factors, whereby he has always reacted to actions borne out of political expediencies and opportunities.

It is my take that Mugabe has consistently been in unenviable positions. As a colonial product, just like all African liberation leaders, he was caught up, as Du Bois (1903) explains, in a “double consciousness”; on one hand, there is commitment to liberation, including traveling a journey of harsh personal experiences and sacrifice, and on the other, confronting a desperate ambition to be accommodated by the very system they were fighting. Thus, Mugabe is beholden in a conflictual desire to be accepted by the West, while at the same time unleashing anti-West, anti-imperialist, and anticolonial rhetoric that endears him to all those seeking redemption from depredations of colonialism, at the same time earning himself the wrath of imperial assaults.

This explains the ambivalences of Mugabe's policy positions: while seemingly oppositional to the West, his regime has also been eager to be recognized by the same Western governments and financial institutions. This complicates Mugabe's “decolonization” project: it is difficult to discern whether his is an honest and

radical anticolonial and anti-imperialist stance or something born out of bitterness of a colonial infantile, who always seeks for accommodation and attention? As a result, any analyses of Mugabe's land reform have to note these inconsistencies and ambiguities. In this chapter, I draw instruction from these vacillations.

In the late 1990s, the southern African nation Zimbabwe embarked on a large-scale land reform, the Third Chimurenga, a move that would change the politico-economic and social fabric of that country. The eruption of the land revolution was a precipice for an enormous economic crisis, a sociopolitical upheaval, and Zimbabwe became the center of a nuanced gaze, moral censure, antipathy, laudatory admiration, and interminable contestation from antipodal political and ideological convictions. If the Zimbabwean crisis is one of the greatest dramas of the recent past, the land reform has been unprecedented in African postcolonial history. The man at the center of this discussion, Robert Mugabe, has been both blacklisted and venerated by those who are for and against land reform. As an introspection of this subject shows, and the analyses of this matter in toto lays bare, there has been an intoxicating dishonesty, while commentaries on Zimbabwe and the land issue are just a façade, a veneer, a bad faith (Gordon 1997) that hides an underlying racist tone, a venerable global white antiblack racism, thus revealing the hideous nature of the international power structure and the vast machinations at its disposal. The question, then, is what really constitutes the Zimbabwean problem?<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I intend to interrogate this question and locate Mugabe in the broader web of forces in which he becomes implicated and in fact the whole panoply of the Zimbabwean narrative.

The Zimbabwean land revolution in the late 1990s and early 2000s has put the country on the international panorama, more so its leader, Robert Mugabe. While politically and ideologically, land reform has sought to consummate the teleology of not only Zimbabwean liberation struggle, but elsewhere in Africa and the formerly colonized Third World, there have been opposition and resistance to such maneuvers from blacks themselves, conservative and right-wing whites, and the white left and so-called white radicals. In popular imagination and in many white peoples' psyche, Mugabe has emerged as a "racist" despot or tyrant, "mad Bob," and a "black Hitler." Such representations are however not an aberration, they are rooted in the country's protracted liberation struggle where these depictions were common cliché for colonial and Western media and popular imagination. They have been buttressed by Mugabe's own inflammatory militant and anti-imperialist rhetoric. On the other hand, he is valorized by an especially disenfranchised African and Diaspora youth who regard him as the epitome of the struggle against colonial injustice.

One emergent strand that has been reflected in the past decade of Zimbabwean crisis, and often neglected in scholarly circles, is the nature and depth of global white supremacy and global white antiblack racism, stretching across valences of white rationale and whites of different political and ideological persuasion. The reluctance by imperialist forces to acknowledge the need for racial justice and the resultant "imperialist gangsterism" reveals a persistent white antiblack racism as racist vitriol and detestable commentaries in the comments section of various online, print, and visual media attests. However, there are contradictions: while whites have exhibited racist attitudes, a significant number of blacks have been unwitting followers of these thus validating assertions of erstwhile

black thinkers like Fanon and Biko on the need for psychological emancipation. Mugabe and Zimbabwe's land reform has been indicative of the nature of global white supremacy and has laid bare a pertinacious racism especially when white privilege is threatened.

### LANCASTER HOUSE AGREEMENT AND THE PITFALLS AND LIMITS OF DECOLONIZATION

The contemporary Zimbabwean situation has to be, wherewithal, contextualized at the moment of decolonization, or lack of it. After a long drawn and heroic armed struggle, the major belligerents of the Zimbabwean war (the Patriotic Front and Ian Smith's government and its black ventriloquists) sat in late 1979 at Lancaster, Great Britain, to thrash out a compromise that would usher Zimbabwe's independence from colonial rule.<sup>2</sup> Lancaster was a Mephistophelean pact; an epic tragic and dreadful moment of compromise that was inimical to the credo that revolution knows no compromise and overturns and destroys everything that gets in its way.<sup>3</sup> It is well known that Smith suffered irreparable losses in the war and was on the brink of a major military defeat. The question that boggles the mind is why didn't the liberation movement, like Castro's forces in Cuba, march to Salisbury and seize power? Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b) notices the entrapment of coloniality and the myth of African liberation. He also observes four important issues in this schema: relations of puppetry by African leaders with the West whereby those who refuse are eliminated; postponement of decolonization struggle in 1980; deracialization without decolonization; and the birth of Zimbabwe as a neocolonial state. He writes:

I must emphasise that the celebrated Zimbabwe that was born in 1980 was a neo-colonial one. It was not what we fought for. At the Lancaster House conference, the forces of global imperial designs represented by Britain and the United States of America actively intervened and directly so to produce neo-colonial Zimbabwe where the erstwhile white settlers retained what they looted during colonial rule. Our politically triumphant leaders in ZANU PF tried to perfume this betrayal through emphasising the policy of reconciliation. The reality is that coloniality was being rehabilitated.<sup>4</sup>

As a neocolonial trap and a snare of neocolonialism (Fanon 1964: 55), Lancaster settlement was: "Directly responsible for compromising a 'revolutionary' transition, under which racially biased inequalities in land and asset distribution could have been resolved" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013b: 209).

Mugabe pursued a policy of reconciliation with whites, where "swords would be turned into ploughshares" and where everybody, black and white, would work for the progress and greater good of the nation. The policy was pacifist-apologist and immensely pleased the imperialist world that had eyes on the country's resources. Such magnanimity made the imperial forces not to see Mugabe as a liberation era "terrorist leader" but a bona fide modern African statesman. He was feted in world's major capitals, celebrated, honored, and knighted. These accolades would also be bestowed on Nelson Mandela as a reward for appeasement. Mugabe's favor and dalliance with the West and the white universe only lasted as long as he pandered

to their whims, which answers the question why he turned from a hero of Western imperialism to a much loathed villain.

Zimbabwean whites never grasped the hand extended to them. They were only too pleased in their enclaves where no black person dared enter unless they were servants and scrubbers of floors. Although most of us never had contact with whiteness for large parts of our lives except in the workplace or private schools, Zimbabwe remained a binary division between black and white. First, there was white flight: in 1980, some proceeded to apartheid South Africa because black majority rule was to them unpalatable; withdrawals of children from formerly whites-only schools to more expensive private ones in the hope that blacks won't afford and retreat to more dear residential suburbs. Of course, farms remained fiefdoms of white commercial farmers where neoapartheid Rhodesian settler colonialism built on agro-economy where subordination of indigenous peasants remained intact. The black subject as property in the agro-capitalist relations that is consistent with the value of white supremacy where the black skin serves as a badge for subordination, servility and labor, and the tyranny of the semifeudal farms was incongruent with liberation ethics and ethos.

The postindependence Zimbabwe's accommodation and alliance with settler farmers, capitalists, and imperialism (see also Sadomba 2013) made it Janus faced: while on one hand it erected Marxist-Leninist rhetoric of *Gutsaruzhinji*<sup>5</sup> and aligned itself to the then Eastern Bloc, on the other it established an uxorious relationship with imperialism. Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans didn't have a stake in the economy. In other words, Zimbabwe owned nothing despite professing to a mixed economy; government-controlled parastatals were festering with corruption, mismanagement, and neopatrimonialism whose zenith was the 1989 Willowgate Scandal.<sup>6</sup> Majority of these were however privatized in the early 1990s in line with IMF/World Bank induced Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), which caused a myriad of hardships on citizens. Mugabe's regime had successfully tuned in with neoliberalism and bound itself with the Washington consensus. These arrangements are similar to Fanon's (1967a) and Cabral's (1979) intonation that the postcolonial setup is that of junior and subordinate partnership with imperialism, whereby the native bourgeoisie doesn't own the means of production but rather scrounges and fattens itself from the chaotic nature of capitalist relations. In such a scenario, the native bourgeoisie and prefecture often receive a prebend from imperialism.

Zimbabwe couldn't or didn't decolonize in 1980 and reclaim ownership of national motive and productive forces and means of production, which remained in colonial and imperialist hands, and by the time it decided to wrest these, the geopolitical world had changed. Zimbabwe paid dearly for her nonownership. Erstwhile imperialists who controlled Zimbabwean industry and political economy deinvested and withdrew their capital and investment in racial solidarity with their white commercial farmer kin. Zimbabwe was reduced to penury, her economy crumbled, and a crisis of unbelievable magnitude unraveled. The hypothesis here is if Zimbabwe, from independence on, had control of the motive and productive forces, at a time it could find friendship and strike alliances with the eastern countries that supported it in the guerrilla struggle, by 2000, the story could have been different. Second, I would like to insinuate that Zimbabwe procrastinated on her decolonization has partly to do with, dealing with an amorphous black subjectivity that was opposed to land reform. I will deal with the latter subject in the following pages.

## THE ZIMBABWEAN LAND REVOLUTION: CORRECTING INJUSTICES OR UNJUST CORRECTION?

Since the labor and land question were intricately bound together, the African had no incentive to leave the land to go and work and it was necessary for colonialists to deprive him of that land (Chinweizu 1987; Comaroff and Comaroff 1997). Landlessness is an instrument for economic exploitation and national oppression because it is the cornerstone of the whole economic edifice of colonized nations—a situation that can only be altered by the oppressed and exploited people. In colonial Africa, landlessness ensured the thriving of the migrant and forced labor systems on farms and mines whereby depressed wages and alimony awarded to blacks were a striking characteristic of colonial exploitation (Chinweizu 1987).<sup>7</sup> Black radical traditions have always recognized that, first, the agrarian and the national question are interconnected and intersected and share a similar solution and denouement. Second, land is the primary means of production, and therefore land and nationhood have always been like Siamese twins. Of course, the primary reason for the Chimurenga wars was the dissatisfaction by dispossessed black Zimbabweans on the loss of their land, and thus the revolutionary struggle aimed at its restoration to its rightful owners, the blacks. Third, despite white settler colonialists and their descendants having lived long in the colonies, that didn't give them right of ownership to the land.

Mugabe has often indicated that, following the Garveyite, Africa for Africans, which meant to restore Africa back to blacks, Zimbabwe is for Zimbabweans, and that the white man is not indigenous to Africa, as a means to assert autochthonous claim to land. As for European descendants claiming to be African because they were born on the continent, the question is who has the titular right to call themselves African given the experience of racism and being black in a white-dominated world, a fact that necessitates reclamation of African identity (Buntu 2008). Fourth, the land question is bound with the political and economic; for this reason, land becomes the primary objective of the anticolonial struggle.

In his speech "Message to the Grassroots,"<sup>8</sup> Malcolm X makes important observations. First, the struggle for land is a revolutionary struggle. Second, land equals independence and revolution, and revolution and bloodshed are synonymous. In the process of reclaiming the land, the battle is between the landless and the landlord in which the former should be prepared to bleed. As revolution is geared toward land, an independent nation is realized and this is driven by black nationalism. Malcolm speaks: "Revolution is based on land. Land is the basis of all independence. Land is the basis of freedom, justice and equality."<sup>9</sup>

Third, Malcolm sums up that all major revolutions, from the United States, to France, Russia, China, and Algeria, were about land and its equitable redistribution.

In non-Western societies like Zimbabwe, ownership rights are expressed in the ability to control the fertility of the soil and are reserved for those whose ancestors bring rain, thus certifying an autochthonous claim to the land (Lan 1985). Land, however, was communally shared with the chief acting as a trustee; land was a resource meant for the well-being of every member of a community. On the other hand, the key tenets of capitalism views land, labor, and wealth as commodities, goods produced not for use but for sale (Wolf 1971). Land is not a commodity in nature; it only becomes so or is defined as such by a new cultural system that aims



at creating a new kind of economics. Wolf argues that land is part of the natural landscape, not meant to be bought or sold. In most non-Western societies, it is not regarded a commodity because rights to land are aspects of specific social groups and its utilization is an ingredient for specific social relationships (277).

In a capitalist society where land becomes a commodity, that impulse had to be necessitated by stripping these social obligations accompanied by the use of force, which deprived original inhabitants of their resources. In Zimbabwe, Cecil John Rhodes and his imperial arm, the British South Africa Company (BSAC), obtained land through stealth, deception, and brutal methods, thus setting in motion the process of land dispossession. Such actions were of course vigorously opposed through armed insurrection by the Ndebele and the Shona, who however were defeated and their country fell under colonial rule. The colonial regime consolidated its grip through a raft of legal mechanisms. For example, the 1930 Land Apportionment Act (LAA) moved black people from land they had occupied for generations and LAA was the root of all land laws that followed like the 1969 Land Tenure Act, which replaced the LAA, blacks were allocated land in unproductive areas, and whites occupied 80 percent of prime agricultural land.

Land struggles, despite being historical, reveals an emergent African/black nationalism whose poster boy is Mugabe. Moyo (2013; see also Scoones et al. 2010) records that in 1980 15 million hectares were controlled by 6,000 whites; in 2009, over 13 million hectares were owned by 240,000 black families; and by 2010, the Fast Track Land Reform (FTLR) had redistributed 10 million hectares of prime agricultural land that a decade earlier was held by 4,000 white farmers. For this reason, the FTLR had led to deracialization of commercial farming as 80 percent of middle- and large-scale farms are now owned by blacks (Moyo 2013: 50) and in the process a new person, a new human participating in wholly new kind of economics emerged. Thus, the nature of Zimbabwe's agricultural and property relations was radically altered while there was increased access by black Zimbabweans to the country's natural resources, which were a monopoly of a white minority (Moyo 2013). Zimbabwe's land reform punctured dominant narratives that the process was centered on Mugabe, his cronies, and those affiliated with ZANU-PF.<sup>10</sup> The perception is that land revolution was a consummation of ideals of the liberation struggle.

According to Moyo and Chambati (2013), in the post-Cold War era, Zimbabwe's land reform stands out. The fact that it happened amid dictates of neoliberal onslaught, intellectual dishonesty, and hostile media campaign (Chari 2013) shows the depth of imperialist interests in resource endowed Third World nations. Moyo (2013: 29) writes: "Land reform was meant to redress historical settler-colonial land dispossession and the related racial and foreign domination, as well as the class based agrarian inequalities which minority rule promoted."

## THE CONTEMPORARY NATURE OF GLOBAL WHITE SUPREMACY

When we talk of contemporary global white supremacy, we are also looking at its local manifestations, which of course seek broader alliances and racial solidarity in the entire global white world. Antiblack racism unites all whites of different classes, ideological and political persuasion, value systems, and normativity. This I

call unity in racism, which transcends the class/economic imperative; it is biological but is intertwined with the value of shared ethos of which racism is the primacy. In the white world, nations may fight each other, even bloody and brutal battles, but will unite against other races because of a built-in solidarity in their relations with other races (Williams 1971).<sup>11</sup> It is expressed in grand narratives in which the non-Western world (which is nonwhite, rather black, brown, or yellow) is supposed to follow. Such campaigns are often hidden behind the rubric of liberal democratic discourse with lofty sounding terms such as good governance, corruption, human rights, and so on. Zimbabwe had to face a melange of unscrupulous forces where the nefarious role of colonial powers, international capital, financial institutions, the opposition MDC, Western media, private and international media and scholars opposed to land reform. The land reform was deemed as chaotic and the occupiers were said to be committing widespread human rights (Sadomba 2013), whose fictitious figures were often concocted, became the *raison d'être* of white supremacist staple of propaganda.

The media and its interlocutory representation of the Zimbabwean drama are crucial in understanding the sly and sinister nature of white antiblack racism. From South Africa to major Western capitals, media houses have represented Zimbabwe, land reform, and the man at the center of this imbroglio, Mugabe, as anachronistic and inimical to progress that modernity professes. According to Ogenga (2010), the media representation of Zimbabwe is sensational, superficial, amounts to misrepresentation, and such journalism is subsumed under Western lenses, tenets of liberal democracy, and human rights while ignoring discourses on pan-Africanism and national patriotic history. In this scenario, we can glean the theme of buffoonery and imbecility. South African media, for example, have represented, in cartoons and “opinions and analyses,” controversial black political figures like Julius Malema and Jacob Zuma as buffoons and imbeciles, a fact given credence by their lack of collegial education. But Mugabe is an intellectual, so the media have constructed him as a bloodthirsty tyrant, a political thug, a dictator whose authoritarian grip on power has denied Zimbabweans fundamental freedoms and human rights. Incidentally, during the liberation struggle, Mugabe was represented in the Western media as a black Hitler and freedom fighters were terrorists, and during the land reform saga, the same depiction was repeated. At one time, US president George Bush viewed Zimbabwe along with the reclusive communist North Korea and Iraq as an “axis of evil,” and Mugabe as the most evil man on earth besides Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. Such consideration, a self-righteous and puritanical form of white supremacist arrogance, belies insidious actions of the United States and her allies, which are built on unprovoked military excursions, dethrones and destabilizes governments around the world, and installs puppet and dictatorial leaders. An article by a person named George Monbiot challenges this: “Robert Mugabe is portrayed as the prince of darkness, but when whites expel blacks from their lands, nobody gives a damn.”<sup>12</sup>

Some letters to the editor attest to how Mugabe and Zimbabwe are viewed. For instance, one Richard Stewart from Johannesburg wrote in the South African *Mail and Guardian*: “Mugabe stole the farms from the white people, many of whom had farmed in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe for generations and gave them not to ‘farmers’ but to his family members and political allies.”<sup>13</sup> The same author goes on to say: “More than one million black Zimbabweans who were employed on the farms lost their jobs and, in many cases, were run off the farms by their new owners.” Another

person called N. M. Bekker-Smith also wrote about Zimbabwe: “It has been a curse of a lie and deception and bloodshed; it has been the curse of economic destruction, oppression and injustice; it has been the curse of arrogance, pride and the worship of one man.”<sup>14</sup>

Zimbabwean white academic and economist Tony Hawkins, who is prominent for pro-Rhodesian and right-wing views, once criticized Joseph Hanlon for being a ZANU-PF apologist when the latter defended Zimbabwe’s land reform in a book he and his Zimbabwean coauthors published; this book objectively analyzes the Zimbabwean land reform program (see Hanlon et al. 2012). Hawkins contended food and livestock production collapsed between the years 2000 and 2012. The cause was land resettlement, which reduced high productivity in commercial farms and this shows Hanlon’s “political and racist myopia.”<sup>15</sup> In response to Hawkins’s article, one commentator wrote that if “Smith was a racist, Mugabe was an ubber [*sic*] racist” and that “Mugabe is the greatest racist to ever walk on African soil” and that he is a “tyrant and a despot.” The depiction of Mugabe in both black and white psyche reproduces racist colonial narrative of black people as “orang-outang,” primate, beastly, bestial and subhuman (see also Jordan 1968; Fanon 1967b), “bloody monkey,” and “munt.” Since Mugabe is seen as animalistic and a devil, most white people and their black appendages wish him dead and wonder how he could live to such a ripe old age. This is contrary to African values, nobody wishes another’s death, even their enemy’s, and only a witch does so.

Global white supremacy is very dishonest, immodest, deceptive, arrogant, and hypocritical and thrives on racist vitriol, gimmicks, lies, slander, character assassination, disinformation, and misinformation. When entrenched white privilege is threatened, as what happened in Zimbabwe, all whites of various political persuasions, convictions, and class differential express racial solidarity. At an international level, there is what I call imperialist gangsterism where Western nations and their Third World surrogates gang up against the mischief of taking away the trough imperialism has hitherto been feeding on. Mugabe and Zimbabwe had to be punished accordingly for prurient disobedience; such punitive measure(s) have to be of satisfactory severity and should act as a future deterrent to those that stray from the line imperialism draws.

Soon after the FTLR, the US congress passed sanctions on Zimbabwe, under the guise of these being “targeted” at the country’s hierarchy. The Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) was an act ostensibly meant to promote transition to democracy, end of “lawlessness,” and economic recovery in Zimbabwe. The ZIDERA Act of 2001(S.494), signed into law by George Bush and sponsored by senators Bill Frist and Russell Feingold, has been directly responsible for the country’s declension into economic crisis. Indeed, the spirit of the act encapsulates neoliberal capitalist tenets of rule of law and respect for ownership and title of, and right to, property. Those who opposed the act, such as Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney (a black woman) of Georgia, were rigorous in their objection and considered it, at the bare minimal, racist: “I asked a question of my colleagues who were vociferously supporting this misdirected piece of legislation: ‘can anyone explain how the people in question who have now the land in question in Zimbabwe got title to the land?’”<sup>16</sup> She continued: “When we get right down to it, this legislation is nothing more than a formal declaration of US complicity in a program to maintain white-skin privilege. . . it (ZIDERA) is racist and against the interests of the masses of Zimbabwe.” ZIDERA is just one example

of global matrices of power at play, whose sinister motives are and have always legitimated themselves through pieces of legislation.

### *WhiteVictimhood*

Zimbabwean white commercial farmers represented a brutal, sadistic, retrograde, repressive, and exploitative form of agro-capitalist relations. The large swathes of land they occupied were their fiefdoms, which they ran on semifeudal terms. During the liberation struggle, farms were centers of right-wing paramilitary activities and farmers were staunch supporters of Smith's white supremacist potentate. In colonial and post-1980 Zimbabwe, black farm workers were chattels and human property, underpaid, exploited, worked long hours, and had neither pension nor benefits. Generations were born, bred, and died on the farms, which was the only home they knew; at old age or death, they had nothing to show for decades of service. When land reform came, white farmers were evicted. A new narrative emerged, especially in the media: white victimhood. In the wake of instability caused by land reclamation, priority was given to white farmers and their families who were now seen as innocent victims (Chari 2013) of hard-pressed methods of Mugabe and his "henchmen." Assault and killing of white farmers (of which about 18 died) in the land reclamation process was gaining more prominence and currency than that of blacks.

White victimhood was meant to evoke feelings of sympathy, empathy, and downright condemnation of Mugabe, his rule, and the land reform program. Here we see a devaluation of black ontology and elevation of white subjectivity. The roots lie deeper in experiences of colonialism. Maldonado-Torres (2007) has suggested that colonial ontological difference, a product of coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, makes the weight of the colonized Other's ontological density lighter than that of the colonizer. For Fanon (1967a) and Biko (1967), the existential reality of the black body is different to the white body, of which skin color and race is the criterion and measure for full humanity. Moreover, there's the hierarchy of the order being, which produces the binary between human and non/subhuman.

One such case is the documentary *Mugabe and the White African*, which follows Michael Campbell, his son-in-law Ben Freeth, and their family who challenge Mugabe at the SADC tribunal for racial discrimination and human rights violations where they claimed that it is because of their race that they were oppressed. The SADC tribunal ruled that Zimbabwe's land reform was racist and the farmers should have been compensated. The South African Supreme Court of Appeal upheld the ruling and ruled that Zimbabwean government property in Cape Town be attached and sold to offset litigants' legal costs. In another case, David Coltart, a former Zimbabwean minister of education, aligned to MDC (himself at one time a Selous Scout),<sup>17</sup> commented that the draft constitution was racist because the clause on land (Section 27, which stated that no compensation would be paid for acquisition of land) perpetuated land discrimination.<sup>18</sup>

White supremacy, which historically enjoys ill-gotten gains and privilege obtained from the blood, sweat, and tears of the colonized, is quick to cry "reverse racism" when that privilege comes under siege. Whites who are implicated hide their guilt, or are reluctant to admit it, by accusing the victims, the blacks of racism and hate, of which historically blacks have been victims. For that reason, "reverse racism" is based on a false and dishonest premise: "When the slave takes the whip from the slave master and whip him with his own whip, that is not reverse racism, it's the

slave getting out of the yoke of bondage and slavery.”<sup>19</sup> According to Malcolm X (1965), the guilt complex or guilty conscience of white people arises from their perpetual fear that blacks will do to them what they did to the latter. The black radical tradition has always maintained that blacks can’t be racist because they have been victims of power inherent in white supremacy, which was meant to subjugate and exploit them (Mngxitama 2009; Ture and Hamilton 1967 [1999]; Malcom X 1965). According to C. L. R. James (1994), white antiblack racism is designed for racial domination while antiwhite feeling by blacks is meant to end that domination and is an expression of the desire for equality. In a global world where racism continues to reign, talk of correcting historical racial injustices become opprobrium, provocative, and criminalized. Criminalization of discussions on race and racism, subjects that are taboo and sacrilegious, at a global and local level, and intolerance to speech about white privilege show the defects of color-blindness and postracialism.

At Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980, a large-scale white flight to apartheid South Africa ensued. These were die-hard Rhodesians who were driven by the right-wing credo, “Rhodesians Never Die,” who believed white people were destined to rule for eternity; who never gave up the nostalgia of Rhodesia and indeed shied away from participation in national affairs; whose imagination of being ruled by blacks, moreover, those with “Marxist-Leninist” credentials, was at the least horrifying. In the wake of land reform, unrepentant Rhodesians in both Zimbabwe and South Africa, some of whom were part of Smith’s murderous security forces that committed atrocities on black Zimbabweans and who were apostles of racism and white supremacy, metamorphosed into champions of human rights, good governance, and rule of law and convinced the world that Mugabe and his rule was abominably racist. In this project, they fronted, and put black mannequins into employ, as a veneer for white antiblack racism.

### *The Bifurcated Black Subject: The Good Black and the Bad Black*

The shortwave Zimbabwean decolonization process meant little psychological liberation from exigencies of 90 years of British colonial rule. Indeed, colonization isn’t only physical but also mental and epistemological. The much-vaunted Zimbabwean education system, which has produced a layer of highly educated and loftily literate citizens, didn’t mentally decolonize black subjects. Although the education system and curricula conformed to the ethos of the post-1980 visions, residues of colonial epistemic violence remained etched in the psyche of Zimbabweans. This is recognized when the country was waging a war with white supremacy where “feelings of inferiority” and “dependency complex” (Fanon 1967b: 80) were abounded. The education system didn’t tutor Zimbabweans to be owners but rather workers in the capitalist relations of production. The societal norms replicated colonial jargon of “loafing” and “laziness” to refer to those unemployed, unemployable, or even artists. In other words, work or finding work at the white man’s employ was the highest ambition of every Zimbabwean child, student, adult, and parent. Black labor, the foundation of colonial economics, reinforced inferiority and since physical labor in such contexts is degrading it had to be a burden of inferior people (Cabral 1979; Cesaire 1972; Wolf 1971; Du Bois 1965) and sloth, indolence, and laziness were colonial inventions to mark and distinguish colonizers from Africans (McClintock 2000).

Yet while it is true that the postindependence regime managed to deracialize society, there indeed were shortfalls. A bifurcated black subject entered the scene: one observed the need for reclamation of productive forces from colonial entrapment; the other was outright oppositional and openly sided with the narrative produced by global white supremacy. The latter, a black surrogate that apes and always aspires to be like their racist white masters, including “structurally adjusted Zimbabwean intellectuals” did not believe in the ability of black people in making the land productive (Moyo and Chambati 2013: 11). These were firmly convinced that blacks can't operate or run things on their own and “the lack of confidence of the ‘Negro’ in himself and his possibilities is what has kept him down” (Woodson 2009: 51). Woodson continues to say that the reason is the “Negro” hasn't recovered from the slavish habit of berating his own and celebrating others and would prefer to work under a white employer or supervisor than a black one.

The unconscious desire to be white is a result of a colonial racist society that enables that condition because of the ethos of superiority of one race over another (Fanon 1967a). These are replicated in the postcolony. Such individuals are often called *zvivototo* in Shona parlance and *izibotho* in Nguni languages—those blacks who alienate themselves from their fellow beings in service of interests that are inimical to the whole fellowship. In Malcolm X's words, these are house niggas that loved the master more than they loved themselves, would save the master's house rather than their own, and veritably believed that they and the master were one. According to Malcolm, the modern house nigga is elevated by the white world, made prominent and anointed a spokesman for all blacks in an employ that is inimical to the black revolution.

In the colonial narrative, the distinction between a good black and the bad black is that the latter is “cheeky” and should be punished and the former rewarded for passivity, tractability, and acquiescence. The latter, in Malcolm X's words, is a field negro who has nothing to lose but his chains and would go to greater lengths to attain liberation, including inflicting a little damage to the master's property, and at worse burn down the plantation.

White supremacy as a colonial project believes blacks cannot manage themselves or their own affairs, a result of inferiority complex or what Fanon (1967b) calls “epidermalization of inferiority.” Black experience of slavery and white supremacy convinced blacks to believe in their own inferiority (Rodney 1975). Inferiority complex is a malady and the task is how to remove that unconscious desire (Fanon 1967b). Fanon's prescription involves the need to aid the patient become conscious of his unconscious so that he “abandons his attempts at hallucinatory whitening” (75) and in fact recognizes his agential capabilities and acts against the social structure. In post-1980 Zimbabwe, white employers especially in farms used colonial words like “boy” or “girl” to refer to full-grown and elderly blacks. Among blacks themselves, such appellations and significations were common: “garden boy,” “spanner boy,” “butcher boy,” “house girl,” “house boy”; in farms, workers addressed their employers as *baas*. This happened in post-1980 Zimbabwe.

Global white supremacy elicits oppositional and intractable responses from subordinated subjects, and that response is often named “reverse racism,” of which Mugabe's militant and often inflammatory anti-imperialist rhetoric is construed. The visibility and an identifiable blackness in an antiblack world and the experience of living in such a world guides the dialectics of black agency (Gordon 1997).

Blacks always respond to white supremacy and its alienation of blacks by rhetorically constructing a collective identity, and the basis of that rhetoric is race (Gordon 2003). Black uses of rhetorical tropes that are constitutive of language of defiance are grounded in an ideological and epistemological foundation (Gordon 2003). In the United States, for example, notwithstanding protestations of many whites, race is of primary importance both in the dominant white ideologies that seek to oppress blacks (some more explicit than others) and in the ideology of black activism that sought black liberation (25). The actional black subject, the bad nigga, is always a proponent of liberation.

The racial schism of the Zimbabwean situation and the persona of Mugabe reveal a binary North (white) and South (black) antagonism (Ogenga 2010). The Zimbabwean *Herald* columnist, Nathaniel Manheru (2014) writes: “When you reconstruct the identities of people repelled by him [Mugabe], identities of those who find him odious, despicable even, the boundaries point to a world of white, a world with a long nose, long drooping hair, and five rich meals a day.”<sup>20</sup> He adds:

And when you try to reconstruct the worlds populated by those who like or dislike him, you end up with two clashing cosmos. Those who like and admire him constitute a rich world of colour and flat noses. They fill the lowest but very crowded rungs on the ladder of being. His admirers draw from the world’s flotsam and jetsam, which makes him a hero of the underdog. They own no media, dominate no great discourse.

Mugabe’s talk on indigenous ownership of Zimbabwean resources has yet again been an anathema despite, in black radical traditions, being a desideratum. According to Malcolm X, following the Garveyite tradition, economic empowerment implies that:

the economic philosophy of Black Nationalism means that our people should be re-educated into the importance of economics and the importance of controlling the economy in the community in which we live. And the social so that we can create jobs for our own kind instead of having to picket and boycott and beg the white man to give us jobs.<sup>21</sup>

Mugabe has called for empowerment and indigenous ownership of resources as necessitated by exploitation by Western companies:

You are the owners, *imi* (you), but some of you don’t think you are complete you need a white man next to you. Ah *ini* (I) I think a white man next to me diminishes the reality of what I think I am. The totality of me. Your ownership of resources is inherent, is given you by God, if you don’t believe in God, believe in nature. You were born here, you own the soil, you own all that grows, all that lies beneath. Those are the things we own that is what we believe and the *varungu havadi kunzwa izvozvo* (white people don’t want to hear this) because if we were to go to west Africa you get to a country, Gabon and others, France was given the ownership of the oil resource *kunzi ndeyenyu yese* (saying the oil is all yours), you can mine it and sell it *isu mozotipawo* (you can only give us a percentage) percentage and *vanopa* 12% to 13%.<sup>22</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Nigerian critic Chinweizu once pondered: asking the question if Africa is liberated often elicits an emphatic negative answer.<sup>23</sup> The reason is Africans must be politically, mentally, culturally, and economically independent, must be truly sovereign, and must act independently without outside interference.

One day, I had a conversation with a friend who told me Mugabe's legacy is blotted by exigencies of Gukurahundi, where the Western world remained silent because it was black-on-black violence, otherwise he is a great pan-Africanist in the pantheon of veritable black leaders that have led their people to redemption. Mugabe's place in history is secure despite certain blunders in his reign. The decision to support land reclamation augurs well with numerous masses of blacks on the continent and in the Diaspora, who have suffered effects of slavery, colonialism, and a persisting coloniality. It may well be contested: why did Zimbabwe's land reform happen at the time it did? Was it an epiphanic, a climacteric, or a Damascene moment? That question doesn't concern us here; what matters most is that land redistribution happened and that is a crucial era in African and Third World history. Mugabe's defiance in the face of a hostile white world, imperial machinery, and insurmountable forces endears him to black youth who are proscribed outside the materiality of societies in which they live. For Kwame Nkrumah (1973: 190), it is necessary for the youth to be schooled in the workings of colonialism and imperialism and be able to "smell out the hide-outs of neo-colonialism." The struggle against colonialism and imperialism continues; it didn't end at the lowering of colonial flags and insertion of new ones (Cabral 1979). Revolutionary humanists will in their astute perception observe that land revolutions remain crucial for nationhood, personhood, liberation, freedom, and material, social, and economic well-being of those who have been subjected to hideous and vile forms of coloniality. Between 1980 and 2000, Zimbabwe was trapped in coloniality; her destiny lay under the ambit and dictates of imperialism. Land reform constitutes a lofty revolutionary ideal and forms part of the decolonization process, a project that is permanent and remains unfinished.

Despite Mugabe being reviled, and Zimbabwe being represented in the most reprehensible terms, Zimbabwe will in the near future provide an inspiration to landless blacks everywhere. The subject of Zimbabwe and Mugabe is hugely controversial. For many blacks the dilemma is: anyone supporting Zimbabwe's land reform is construed as legitimating Mugabe's rule; any vilification of Mugabe by blacks easily falls into the racist trope of representation. In the face of a vicious racist onslaught, all blacks all over have to agglutinate and rally in defense of Zimbabwe's land evolution.

## NOTES

1. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Poverty of Zimbabwe's Political Discourse," <https://www.newzimbabwe.com>, May 3, 2013.
2. The conference guaranteed protection of private property, authored Zimbabwe's constitution, and left land in the hands of whites.
3. Malcolm X, "Message to the Grassroots," speech in Detroit, November 10, 1963.



4. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Towards 'Decoloniality' in Zimbabwe," <https://www.newzimbabwe.com>, September 22, 2013.
5. *Gutsaruzhinji* was a dominant propagandist catchword of early years of independence. It literally means socialism.
6. When the scandal exploded, a minister Maurice Nyagumbo, in ignominy and shame, committed suicide. He was declared a national hero. Government ministers and senior officials bought vehicles from the Willowvale Mazda Motor Industries at a very low price and resold them at a handsome profit.
7. In South Africa, the system was called *isibalo*; in Zimbabwe, *chibharo*, whose semantic meaning connotes rape.
8. Malcolm X, "Message to the Grassroots," Detroit, November 10, 1963.
9. *Ibid.*
10. See Ian Scoones, "Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities," article in *The Zimbabwean*, November 4, 2010.
11. Chinweizu believes such solidarity must be emulated by blacks.
12. George Monbiot, "Land Reform, Mugabe and Racism," <https://www.progress.org/2004/11/09/land-reform-mugabe-and-racism>.
13. Richard Stewart, letter to the editor, "Zimbabwe Stands by Its Thief," *Mail and Guardian*, August 30–September 5, 2013.
14. N. M. Bekker-Smith, letter to the editor, *Mail and Guardian*, August 30–September 5, 2013.
15. Tony Hawkins, "Zimbabwe's Land Seizures: Joseph Hanlon's Racist Myopia," <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/en/page71619?o,d=380254&csn=Dcta>, May 31, 2013.
16. These comments were obtained from <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/CynthiaMcKinney/news/pr0li205a.html>.
17. Selous Scouts were a branch of Smith's security forces that committed atrocities and widespread human rights violations during the liberation struggle.
18. Article by Pamela Mhlanga, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/03/05/draft-constitution-perpetuates-racism-coltart>, March 5, 2013.
19. Khalid Muhammad of Phil Donohue Show, 1993.
20. Nathaniel Manheru, "Western Media: Reading the White Man's Mugabe," *The Herald*, February 22, 2014.
21. Malcolm X, "Action That Will Get Results," on Joe Rainey's Philadelphia Radio Show, *Listening Post*, March 20 1964.
22. "President Outlines Vision for Nation," *The Herald*, September 2013.
23. Chinweizu, "Education for Liberation in Black Africa," paper presented at CODESRIA Conference on 50 years of African Independence, Legon, September 2010.

## A Fanonian Reading of Robert Gabriel Mugabe as Colonial Subject

*TendayiS ithole*

### INTRODUCTION

Robert Mugabe is a difficult subject to define and understand. This is largely because Mugabe is a colonial subject that played a pivotal part in the decolonization struggles but continues to manifest multiple contradictions as a postcolonial actor. Since the dawn of the twenty-first century, Mugabe's signification became locked in the form of two registers—of liberal and nationalist signification. The liberal signification holds that Mugabe is a villain, despot, tyrant, human rights violator, and the figure of evil. This liberal signification with its hegemonic form and content creates a liberal consensus where the world without Mugabe will be a just world. This even goes to the extent of having a one-dimensional narrative of who Mugabe is, and this is the signification that has even assumed the level of common sense. Mugabe is all things gone badly—a leader who degenerated from a liberation hero to the typical postcolonial tyrant—thus, the cause of Zimbabwean crisis.

The nationalist signification on the other hand creates its consensus of Mugabe as a revolutionary, the father of the nation, the liberation hero, and the outstanding African statesman alive. This signification also assumes the counternarrative to the liberal consensus, and Mugabe is seen as the victim of the colonial and imperialist vile and advocates the cementing of the gains of the liberation struggle. The nationalist signification also advocates a nationalist monolithic history, patriotism, and memory. The liberal and nationalist significations are complex registers in their own as they are fraught with ambiguities and contradictions. However, what they seek to do is to assume the point of common sense in understanding Mugabe, thus claiming to be definitive truths themselves.

This will mean Mugabe continues to vacillate between two registers—the liberal signification and the nationalist signification. The signification of Mugabe is not the truth, but a political idea. Truth is not absolute and there are various positionalities of truth in relation to Mugabe. The political idea of Mugabe can be convincing and not convincing depending on the positionality of truth he is being looked at from. Thus, Mugabe cannot be pinned in one of them simply because he is a

complex subject who is a product of colonialism, and he continues to be influenced by its subjectivity as he is the president of the colonial state. Therefore, Mugabe will not be located as a sovereign subject, but the colonial subject who is caught in the colonial logic and its infrastructure, which is the colonial state. The colonial state is the making of *exteriori* forces that are systematic and systemic to reproduce the antithesis of liberation. The intervention this chapter seeks to engage is the complex trajectory of Mugabe's signification *à la* Fanon's critique and to show how Mugabe cannot be reductively praised or dismissed.

## THE COLONIAL SUBJECT

The ontological fixation of the colonial subject is to render its existence as being marred by what Fanon refers to as an “inferiority complex,” that being the psychic economy that assumes permanence and, on the other hand, the phenomenon that the colonial subjects must escape from. The signification of the colonial subject is that of the humanity questioned—a perpetual child in need of a parental figure who is the colonizer—and this is the colonial logic that Mugabe is not immune from. In the eyes of the West, Mugabe is a perpetual child and his deeds, which plunged Zimbabwe into crisis, could have not been unfortunate if there was a parental figure—the West and its paternalistic guidance. This is fundamental when considering the fact that Mugabe as a statesman is not allowed to exercise his discretion of taking the land that rightfully belongs to Zimbabweans from the colonial settlers. It means that Mugabe should have abided by the colonial instructions as a child abides by his parents, and not anyhow, taking measures that are necessary for the liberation that Zimbabweans fought for. As Fanon ([1952] 2008: 69) correctly argues, “The feeling of inferiority of the coloni[s]ed is the correlative to the European's feeling of superiority. *Let us have the courage to say it outright: It is the racist who create his inferior*” (emphasis original).

The coming into being of the colonial subject is the basis of its construction. It is the construction of the other, the aberration from the norm. The construction of the colonial subject is both systematic and systemic to docile subjectivity to be ensnared within the colonial infrastructure, and it will act as scripted by colonialism and the very act of deviating from this scripted subjectivity will be harshly punished. It is to be a subject that is structured in the colonial order of things and, as such, not being a threat to the colonial order that perpetually and structurally subjugates its Other—the colonial subject.

Whether this is in the domain of the colonial (un)conscious, Mugabe is the colonial subject despite his muses that he is a sovereign subject. Colonial subjects “were the coloni[s]ed who are ‘the subjects’ of the coloni[s]ing power” (Cowles 2007: 29). Under conditions of colonialism, the colonial subject is excluded from human fraternity and the virtues that are attached to it since it is a subject that is fixed in the barbarian margins. What remains is that subjectivity is informed by the law of the colonizer, even though colonial subjects claim to have broken free from colonial power if they happen to exist in the independence period.

The law of the colonizer serves as the bedrock on which subjection rests. Whether there is resistance or submission, in the figure of things colonial, there is bound to be the reproduction of colonial subjectivity that serves as a script through which the colonial game is played. Thus, it does not mean that this power is only produced in the colonial regime, but it also finds its reproduction in the political life of the

postcolonial regime. As Cowles notes, the problem of subjectivity revolves around the fate of the colonial subject. Colonial power in its inscription through colonial law brings to being the existential conditions of violence and appropriation upon the colonial subject. Colonial power does not inaugurate peaceful coexistence of human beings. Racial difference is institutionalised, naturalized, and normalized.

The ontology of the colonial subject is that of the questioned humanity, which, according to colonial stereotypes, remains the shell of humanity that is plagued by lacks and deficits. Therefore, the ontological make-up of the colonial subject essentially means that the colonial subject is expelled from the fraternity of the human and relegated to the existential abyss of the nonhuman. This configuration of ontology of humans and nonhumans is largely informed by the colonial logic of what Mamdani (2012) refers to as “define and rule,” which claims ontological absoluteness of the settler at the expense of the native, and drawing clear lines between these two subjects. The ontology of the native is a void that will never be filled, and it is in need of self-justification and no matter how it justifies itself, it will never be filled. The ontology of the settler is what it is, it is *itself*—that is, the settler is justification—it is the settler who defines who the settler is and who the native is. The very form of subjectivity is the sole domain of the settler because it is a settler who orchestrates the colonial condition. If Mugabe is the native qua the colonial subject, how can he have ontological density where subjection still exercises its might? Mugabe’s subjectivity as the colonial subject is that he is black and is located in the geopolitics of Africa. The race and the geography of the colonial subject are determining factors where the colonial subject will be put outside the realm of the human. Geographically, being in Africa is to be in the land of nowhere—a vacuum where suspension of life is normal. Racially, being black is to be in the category of a fallen race, the one that cannot have the politics of fraternity, let alone that of life itself.

The colonial subject comes into being through the cementing of what Maldonado-Torres (2008) refers to as “misanthropic Manichean skepticism.” This is the marker of difference that affirms a hardened line and which depending on the form of regime becomes invisible or visible. It is visible in the colonial regime where oppression is overt, and it is invisible in the independence regime where oppression is covert. The visibility and invisibility makes no difference, and both cannot hide the structural violence that affects those who are at the receiving end of subjection.

Mugabe is the creation of colonialism, and having being created by colonialism he is the colonial subject. The colonial subject is the figure that underwent and still undergoes subjection that (re)produces dehumanizing effects and creates the subjectivity that renders the ontology of the colonial subject impotent. Mugabe resisted subjection with his comrades through the armed struggle (Chimurenga) and the political position was that of being anticolonial and anti-imperial. Mugabe’s railing against the West means that he is a free-floating subject, and it gives the impression that he is immune from colonial trappings, while he is entangled in them.

Even after independence, Zimbabwe, because of being in Africa, is still at the lower rung of humanity and political status as a nation. Thus, being a member of the United Nations and Mugabe assuming the platform of the latter does not necessarily place Zimbabwe in the circle of humanity—that is, the imperial being and imperial nationhood. For Zimbabwe was a colony and it will still be a colony as it is located in the margins of the empire, that which does not see Africa as the political actor but as the entity to be acted upon. In the configuration of the empire,

Africa as a whole is still a colony. The place of the colonial subject is the particular configuration of power—that is, global imperial designs that cannot by any means confer on Mugabe a new form of subjectivity. This is because Mugabe does not, in the eyes of the West, deserve any form of respect, freedom, and humanity. He is, rather, a typical colonial subject plagued with the colonial stereotypes of not being able to govern and to lurch on the famous dictum “natives cannot govern themselves in peace.”

Mugabe was supposed to, it seems to the colonial logic, be caught in what Fanon ([1952] 2008) refers to as “a dependence complex” and not to be his own political subject. The dependency complex is the “psychological phenomena that govern the relations between the coloniser and the colonised” (610). The colonial subject in this relationality does not possess any form of subjectivity. For it is the colonizer who is in charge of the relational infrastructure and yet reproduces the superior-inferior complex. Simply put, the colonizer is superior and the colonized is inferior. This then means that Zimbabwe at the epitome of colonial settlerism will have the forms of lives that are informed by racial subjection, even if there is a claim that it is an independent nation. The privilege of the settler will be legitimated in the face of the dispossession of the colonial subject. It is clear that “colonial racism is no different from any other racism” (65), and this is instructive to the extent that Zimbabwean settler colonialism could not be absolved to be of lesser evil than other settler regimes (say apartheid), but to register the fact that colonialism is absolute evil. In Zimbabwe, even after independence, what remained was a colonial state and this hastens the declaration that “a given society is racist or it is not” (63). Zimbabwe has been confounded by racism due to the fact that it is a colonial settler society qua colonial state. The coming of independence did not end racism except to illegalize it and something cannot come to an end for the mere fact that it is illegal.

For Mugabe is not a subject of self-creation, but the colonial subject for whom creation is something of the *exteriori* force (the West). The subjectivity of Mugabe is influenced by the political forces and the logic of power is consistent in placing him as the colonial subject. The sense of the self, therefore, is that which is trapped in the colonial identification by negation, and hence the pronounced subjectivity that is propelled by the constant and sharp critique of the West. For Mugabe, his subjectivity is not that of his oppressors, but his own. In so far as subjectivity is concerned, it means it cannot be that which belongs to the individual self (Mugabe), but the larger part of the *exteriori* force. This can be argued to have changed as soon as Mugabe assumed power in 1980—that is, him not being the colonial subject and being immune from the colossal trappings of the colonial. The latter, though in a hidden form, puts Mugabe on the offensive, which then creates the impression that he is having anticolonial and anti-imperial subjectivity that he is not the colonial subject, whereas, in truth, he is.

To rail against the West is the subjectivity that is constrained as long as the colonial subject is still trapped in the colonial matrices of power and their global imperial designs. Zimbabwe, like all other African states, cannot claim to be a sovereign entity. Simply put, they are not part of the so-called international community—the latter that means Europe and North America only—the West who are in control of the world. Therefore, as long as Mugabe is still trapped in this colonial setting of the world system and world order, he cannot be a sovereign subject. What is affirmed as the subject of consciousness is that Mugabe’s subjectivity is not the

expression of identity, but the affirmation of himself as a political subject. This affirmation, however, seems to deny Mugabe equal standing with the compatriots in the West. Even though the standing of the Mugabe in the global stage is one with mixed results of being loved and hated, there seems to be more weight on the latter. Even so, this does not discount the fact that Mugabe mounts a challenge to the West, but on the contrary, without shaking its fixed infrastructure. The subjectivity of the colonial subject cannot reproduce and uphold itself if it is trapped in the colonial infrastructure.

### FLAG INDEPENDENCE AND THINGS COSMETIC

The coming to power of Mugabe was a typical colonial arrangement. On April 17, 1980, the new flag of Zimbabwe was raised under British supervision (Meredith 2002). To amplify this, Patel and Bhila (1988: 447) state that “Zimbabwe was declared an independent republic within the Commonwealth.” Even if the latter suspended Zimbabwe as the result of the postmillennial Zimbabwean phenomenon, that does not mean that Zimbabwe ceases to be a colonial state. It is what Fanon (1967a: 60) typically refers to as “flag independence,” which was realized through a peace agreement that is known as the Lancaster Agreement and a ballot box, the very means that saw him sworn in as a prime minister. As Fanon explained, flag independence means that Mugabe and his comrades were acted upon. It means what Mugabe became something he is not—that is, his coming to power was just a symbolic signification. It was not power in itself, but to be independent in order to be self-governing and to have the colonial administration replaced (More 2011).

The gesture of the colonialists was that of being nice to the colonized, a gesture “to promote the machine-animal-man to the supreme rank of *men*” (Fanon 1967: 171). Simply put, Mugabe assumed the reins of power that Ian Smith had and, as a case in point, he occupied the colonial state. The colonial state is the state, and even if it is led and administered by the colonized subject, it will never change in so far as it is not decolonized. Zimbabwe is a colonial state, and Mugabe’s dictum that “Zimbabwe will never be a colony again” misses the point of understanding the location of Zimbabwe in the colonial matrices of power, and it just being nothing but a colonial state. The changing of the name from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, having a new national anthem, coat of arms, and a flag among many other changes became what Fanon refers to as repetition without any difference. To be in power is something different if it means to be in power with power and to be in power without power. The latter is the plague of the colonial subject where being in power is just a fetish, and the manner in which such power is exercised is bound to reproduce the colonial virus because the state is simply what it is—the colonial state. What Mugabe is holding on to is not power, but the artifact. Fanon ([1952] 2008: 90) says “that victory played cat and mouse, it made a fool of me. As others put it, when I was present, it was not, when I was there, I was no longer.” Where does this put Mugabe if he is still holding on the artifact and nothing that is substantial or real? The power of the unreal is what Mugabe is holding on to, and he is caught in the yoke of colonialism. Flag independence is just a mask; it masquerades fundamental change while it is still in fact cosmetic change. Fundamentally, the political reality assumes the state of something that is incomplete, unreal, and resistant to change.

The arrangement of the colonial state—its apparatus and its logic of enforcement—visibilize power through dramatization, which means that there has never

been any change from what was colonial. The claim of power being at the helm of the natives and it being taken away from settlers cannot be realized if the state is still a colonial state. If the colonial state exists, it means that it is the state that works at the expense of the natives. Their existential suffering will still continue, no matter how cultural authenticity is evoked and dramatized.

Flag independence is freedom without freedom. It is an empty freedom that does not lead to any substantial change in the life of the dispossessed black people. The freedom of the colonial subject is not freedom since the colonial subject is the phenomenon that has been put outside the bounds of freedom, and for there to be the colonial subject qua freedom, it must be fought for by the colonial subject. The simple reason, as Fanon ([1961] 1990) puts it, is that everything depends on them. Otherwise, if the freedom that is claimed to exist does not match with the existential reality, it means that there is no freedom. Freedom is just a mere disguise and what is a guise cannot be reality, but its exact opposite. Flag independence cannot yield freedom simply because, as Fanon suggests, the oppressed has been acted upon by his or her master. This would mean the conditions through which this freedom comes do not reconcile with the interests of the colonized. How can the colonizer be the oppressor and then become the guarantor of freedom? The answer cannot be on the affirmative precisely because the colonizer has no interests of the colonized, except his or her own. The role of the colonizer has always been and continues to be that of the depriver of freedom. Therefore, the existence of the colonizer will mean the absence of freedom.

Colonial subjects as people have been ruled against their will, and if independence is something that does not bring their will to being, and also not having the practices of freedom, everything then is reduced to symbols, national anthems, anniversaries, empty rights, and liberal constitutions. That is to say, flag independence brings symbolic freedoms that are alienated from the lived experiences of the oppressed. If people do not have freedom, there cannot be people's freedom. People's freedom comes into being not through the elite pact that Mugabe and his comrades reached with their colonizers. There should be no negotiation of freedom, let alone the colonizers having to facilitate it; it must be taken at will and with necessity by the colonial subjects themselves. The idea of the people is the one that dominated Mugabe's subjectivity during the liberation struggle, and people were denied their will to freedom, and if they are still denied under Mugabe's regime, then everything is still colonial as it was.

The interesting thing about the freedom that Mugabe got, even though there has been a Chimurenga assault on Smith's Rhodesian settler colonialism, is that through the Lancaster Agreement, freedom has been deliberated, negotiated, and agreed upon. As such, freedom was given instead of it being taken (Fanon [1952] 2008). There is no paradox here, which therefore suggests that, if freedom was what dawned on Zimbabwe in 1980, it was just Europe conferring power to its colony. "The white man, in the capacity of master, said to the Negro, 'from now on you are free'" (172). Fanon had Mugabe in mind when he said these three decades before Zimbabwe's independence. The Fanonian dictum is articulated by Patel and Bhila (1988: 459) thus: "at the stroke of midnight on 17 April 1980 Prince Charles, representing the decoloni[s]ing power, handed the instruments of office to Robert Mugabe as Prime Minister." It is a form of giving without giving. So the act of giving is not genuine at all. That is what flag independence is all about; it is Europe

giving power without losing any of it, since the colonial state will operate through the colonial dictates and affirmations.

Flag independence as politics of replacement means that having political power cannot be something independent in its own right. Typically, since Zimbabwe is a former colonial-settler polity, if there is political change, it must happen symbolically (slowly if not at all). Change must happen in the minimalist form and its maximization will be something that will be frowned upon, thus proving a disaster. That is why the so-called decolonization of African colonial states was piecemeal constitutional reforms. Yet, what has been proven is the fact that no decolonization was forthcoming and that the terms and conditions were firmly entrenched in the interests of the colonizer and not the colonized. The change that happened was just cosmetic. Having a flag, the national anthem, the constitution, cabinet seats among others were the benefits. Flag independence means change for the elite and not the people.

There is no liberation where there is flag independence. There is no fundamental existential change. For there to be change, it has to filter to all forms of life in the polity, not in the foci of the elite who are only interested in inheriting the colonial state, but to inherit it and to get interpellated in its trappings of subjection. Mugabe's independence means that he assumed the place of the colonizer, and as such, continued with subjection of his own people, whom he was supposed to treat as citizens and not as subjects. The notion of peoplehood disappears because there is no place for such in the colonial state. Fanon (1967: 137) has Mugabe's Zimbabwean African National Union (Patriotic Front)—ZANU-PF—in mind when he says, "After independence, the party sinks into an extraordinary lethargy." This lethargy comes through the phenomenology of violence, which becomes justified, and as Mamdani (2012: 88) states "Opposition is [seen] as evidence of factionalism and betrayal." Violence was and is still seen as a tool to discipline those who want to roll back the gains of independence, and who are said not to be patriotic to Zimbabwe. Fanon [1961] 1990: 138) being exact on ZANU-PF writes: "The party, a true instrument of power in the hands of the bourgeoisie, reinforces the machine, and ensures that the people are hemmed in and immobiliz[ed]. The party helps the government to hold people down. It becomes more and more clearly anti-democratic, an implement of coercion."

## ON VIOLENCE

Mugabe is said to have descended from being a liberator to being a dictator. There also seems to be also the contradiction in that violence is seen as something that is just recent, and rigidified as a symptom. Colonialism is violence, and Mugabe was created by colonialism, and this is a violent creation. And yet, his attachment with violence is clearly pronounced, if not something that is identical with him, and it is condemned in loud choruses. Violence is a simple keyword that is synonymous with Mugabe. This is a problematic being engaged here and it is fundamental to depart from this simplistic signification of Mugabe, and at the same time not absolving him from the phenomenology of violence. The simplistic signification of Mugabe as violent is often most at times reductive in that it comes to being as the overshadowing phenomenon. It suggests that Mugabe qua the myth of liberation here was peaceful, and he later degenerated in into wanton violence that started in the postmillennium era.



What is important to point out though is that the phenomenology of violence seems to be dramatized in the postmillennium era simply because colonial settler interests were threatened, and that which is violence does not apply before then because their interests have always not been threatened. But then, the often footnoted narrative is that Mugabe has been a product of colonial violence, and he has been practicing it while he was the darling of the West. Thus, the myth of the hero idolized by the colonial power seems to have changed as he is no longer dancing to their tunes. This problematic narrative writes off the violence that occurred and affected the majority of the Zimbabweans, some of whom endure its effects even today but are simplistically branded as human rights victims.

Violence is located not in its symptomatic positionality, but in its genealogy and trajectory—thus tracing back its culminating effect as the colonial technology to discipline those who defy it—the restless natives. The colonial history of the nation of Zimbabwe has been marred by violence whose structural relation has been the colonial settler minority having full control and domination over black majority. By extension, during Mugabe's regime, it became politicized in terms of it being directed at those whom Mugabe saw as his enemies and therefore as enemies of the liberation struggle. The politics of belonging and nonbelonging are informed by violence and also the idea of the nation, and those who are dissidents of Mugabe are reduced to the positionality of nonbelonging, for Mugabe's regime has been plagued by violence from the beginning to date. The postcolonial leaders have deployed violence to crush legitimate opposition. This violence has been compounded by a terrible culture of impunity. Impunity has meant that those responsible for the use of violence have never been brought to book" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009: 222).

The politics of violence, which seem to be around Mugabe's subjectivity, are indeed traceable at the very moment he took power. As early as 1980, Mugabe dealt with opposition and dissent ruthlessly. His politics have been predicated on violence, and this violence has been a defining factor. The use of threats and inflammatory language that incite violence are not condemned and they assume the form of political language as something that is normal in the discourse. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012b) hastens to add that violence is an integral part of Zimbabwean politics. People who were suspected of being sellouts, collaborators, enemies of the state, and colonial stooges were severely punished and violence was legitimated on the grounds that these are people who deserve to be beaten, tortured, victimized, and, at worse, killed. The politics of violence were fueled by Mugabe giving license to the state apparatus to practice violence without fear of prosecution since this was part of executive lawlessness that had succeeded in destroying the judiciary arm of the state. This existence of violence and its practice meant the politics of utter impunity.

According to Blair (2002), violence has been normalized and became celebrated as virtue and heroism, and there were no means to condemn it. This means that violence was condoned, and that is why those who participated in it got presidential immunity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009). Mugabe's violence was also informed by ethnic politics with the Shona being the prime citizenry and the Ndebele being the anomie to the idea of nationhood. Therefore, the politics of exclusion have been structurally cemented and the very colonial logic of subjection reproduced itself in ethnic terms. The operation Gukuruhundi, which saw the elimination of more than 20,000 Ndebele in the 1980s serves as testimony to this.

There has never been so much evoking of human rights and democracy as if these were virtues in Rhodesia and to a lesser extent during the honeymoon period when Mugabe was the darling of the West.. The figure of the tyrant, black Hitler, and power monger was a label that was fixed to Mugabe as his excessive proportion of violence was said to violate human existence. But then, this governance through violence had started from 1980 when the Mugabe regime unleashed the Fifth Brigade on unarmed minority Ndebele-speaking peoples of the Midlands and Matebeleland. While this black-on-black violence was on course, the question of dealing with white privilege was shelved.

Interestingly, the complicity of the West, which elevated Mugabe to the status of a hero, did not see him as a despot, the very label that they have now attached to him. The signification of Mugabe pretends as if he needs to be saved and restored, as if he was saved and restored during the colonial honeymoon. The form of regime in Zimbabwe today falls neatly with what Achille Mbembe 2001 described as the 'postcolony.'. In this 'postcolony' violence is embraced as a form of governance. Opposition and dissent is not tolerated. The very postcolonial state becomes a leviathan. At the centre of the 'postcolony' is the complicity of postcolonial rulers with imperialists and Mugabe has not been an exception until dumped by the West when he embarked on land reform.

The fixation with violence can also be understood in relation to the maintenance of law and order, which is executed and enforced by the state apparatus (police and army), the sites that were not at all decolonized but were inherited from colonialism. The violence that is meted out from this site is the very form of colonial violence since the logic of law and order is the colonial form of regulation. The pious condemnation of violence from the West is sheer hypocrisy if it blinds itself to the fact that it is itself violence. The very Manichean creation of good and evil does not mean the West is the former and Mugabe is the latter. The West has nothing to do with the interests of Zimbabweans but cares about the interests of the colonial settler minority. The Western politicians who have been on the offensive with Mugabe (say George Bush and Tony Blair) have done so in the logic of violence. They retaliated violently through sanctions because the land was taken away from colonial settlers and not restored to the rightful owners.

What was passed to Mugabe was not an independent state, but a violent colonial state that Mugabe did not see the point of decolonizing. The colonial legacy is the baton that was passed to Mugabe and he nevertheless carried it through. That is why Mugabe's phenomenology of violence is predictable and is in the banality of things in the postcolony (Mbembe 2001). Violence is reproduced in the colonial mode of things; it is seen as something that is necessary to solve the political problems through disciplinary mechanisms. The change of Rhodesia to Zimbabwe is cosmetic in so far as the infrastructure of the colonial state is concerned. Only the name, and not the anatomy of the state, was changed and, by extension, its colonial infrastructure, which is the sum total of its political ontology. So, the colonial state, Zimbabwe being the case, will continue to encircle and to reproduce the colonial subject that is marred by violence and colonial subjectivity if a thorough decolonization process does not take place. The name change from Rhodesia of the colonial settler to Zimbabwe of the colonized natives is just a myth that is in need of decolonization simply because there cannot be a liberation hero where colonial violence is reproduced. A hero emerges from the sites of liberation, and there cannot be a hero who presides over the colonial state.

## POPULISM AND IMPERIAL DISCONTENTS

The direct attack of the West by Mugabe is clear and well known. It is opposed to the moderate and evasive criticism. It is typical of colonial subjects to rail against the West while internally they envy the very West they are criticizing. Mugabe is not an exception.

That is the subjectivity of Mugabe as the legitimate political subject in relation to where Africa stands and its directionality of struggling to decolonize itself from colonial tentacles. But this remains meaningless unless those who have historical questions like Mugabe rally against him, in this case, South Africa and Namibia as settler colonial regimes littered with the historical experience of brutal land dispossession. There cannot be true independence or the claiming of victory of the land question if this is done by one colonial state. If Mugabe is commended for fast-tracking land reform whereas some countries are not following the same route, the land question will never be addressed. Fanon (1967a : 117) thus warn that “the future will not have no pity for those men who, possessing the exceptional privilege of being able to speak world of truth to their oppressor, have taken refuge in an attitude of passivity, of mute indifference, and sometimes of cold complicity.”

For Mugabe, colonialism and imperialism are unjustified and they must be exorcised from Zimbabwe’s body politic. The subjectivity of Mugabe is both colonial and imperial criticism—utter condemnation—as if Zimbabwe is not trapped in both colonialism and imperialism. Mugabe’s stance both globally and nationally is said to be bordering on populism, which is seen as archaic, primitive, dangerous, and exotic. In this form, it is a phenomenon that assumes the level of the occult. Populism, according to Laclau (2005), is the way of constructing the political; and the type that Mugabe engages in is pejorative in the sense that it evokes concrete nationalist sentiments that appear to be “empty signifiers.” Why? The ideals, virtues, and dreams that are evoked in Mugabe’s speeches collapse in the face of reality, and they are a mere rhetoric, thus, having to evoke empty signifiers of the monolithic history and memory. These empty signifiers create what Laclau (1977) refers to as “theoretical nihilism,” which stems from the fact that populism is regarded “as pathological symptom of some social disease” (Canovan 2004: 241). Such a stance toward populism calls for it to be expunged because it is autochthonous, nativist, and occult. This means the kind of populism that evokes emotions that border on delivering of speeches devoid of content and bearing no relevance to bringing liberation to fruition (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007). This, therefore, suggests that populism does not have any other beneficial political essence. With regard to Mugabe, populism has degenerated as a term of abuse that is a weapon to silence those who are in opposition to its ideals (Cowen 1984). Theoretical nihilism toward populism created the impression that “assumed that nationalist politics did not raise any interesting theoretical questions” (Gavin 2004: 241). However, in redeeming the concept, contra Mugabe’s abuses, it is safe to maintain Laclau’s version that populism is the construction of the political and, of course, in positive terms. To amplify this, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007: 176) registers that “‘populism’ alludes to a kind of contradiction that only exists as an abstract moment of an ideological discourse.” Laclau (2005: 3) argues that “‘populism’ intends to grasp something crucially significant about the political and ideological realities to that it refers.”

Mugabe's contradictory stand in the political, will be considered in two dimensions: the global and the national. In these two spaces, the phenomenon of Mugabe is not only binary, but complex in the sense of being contradictory. Mugabe at the global level is anticolonial and anti-imperialism, which constitutes denouncing the West. In his speech at the sixty-eighth United National General Assembly, September 26, 2013, he attacked the colonial political form, his famous dictum being "shame, shame, shame to Britain and its allies." Making noise in the UN General Assembly does not help as this international organization does not have Africa's interests at heart, except for a paternalistic attitude toward the African nations. While the body embodies the ideals of justice and equality, the power politics that are embodied in its structures benefit Western powers and try by all means to successfully manipulate weak states (Adebajo 2010). It has facilitated decolonization efforts and fashioned peace as a result of liberation struggle wars, but it has not done anything to end the colonial state. Thus, the reach of flag independence is something that is a milestone achievement for the United Nations, especially for the General Assembly, where Mugabe gets a voice.

Mugabe even has faith in it, to the point of believing in its principle, even though he knows that it is a toothless international body controlled by the West. Mugabe seems not to have heeded Fanon's (1967b: 194) warning when he writes, "It was wrong to appeal to the UN." The dependence on the United Nations and its mode of intervention is something that Fanon marks as a grave mistake. Fanon writes: "The UN has never been capable of validly settling a single one of the problems raise before the conscience of man by colonialism, and every time it has intervened, it was in order to concretely to the rescue of the colonialist power of the oppressing country" (194). The United Nations chose not to rule fiercely against colonialism, except to grant the birth of the sovereign state, which came into being as an independent state but without ending the infrastructure and logic of the colonial state.

Mugabe is justifying his political practices on the basis of the principle of sovereignty. The point of contention has been the removal of sanctions that Mugabe regards as filthy and as being the mode of violence perpetrated by the West against Zimbabwe. According to Mugabe, it was a "ruthless persecution" against Zimbabweans. In exposing the hypocrisy of the West, the latter being pious with their rhetoric of democracy and human rights, this is in relational terms. These virtues are not, without any irony, put into practice anyway. Mugabe's sharp rebuke always reiterates that "Zimbabwe will never be a colony again." His stance is that Zimbabwe is for Zimbabweans, and they should be left in peace as sovereign subjects. This even points to the stance that decries the West's and their asymmetrical power relations where powerful nations bully small nations into submission through force and also through consent. The exercise of power through regime change is still informed by imperial reason and also the ideology of war wherein the lives of colonial subjects can be rendered indispensable and not accounted for. Therefore, the regimes that the West hates can be punished at will and without any form of justification. The logic that informs the West is only to control and dominate the world at large and to further its interests at the expense of other nations. The mere fact that the US delegate walked out while Mugabe was delivering a speech serves as testimony to the fact that Mugabe was telling the truth.

The anti-imperialist stance of Mugabe often earns him many admirers and detractors, but what stands out is his courage to tell it like it is. On the international

stage, Mugabe takes the opportunity to tell the West what they really are. Indeed, Mugabe's actions are often followed by thunderbolts of applause, ovations, and cheering. Mugabe's denouncing of the West in the General Assembly does not effect any change except that the tongue lashing sets tongues wagging and leaves a bitter taste in the mouths of his detractors.

On the home front in Zimbabwe, Mugabe is faced by a legitimacy crisis. The colonial state has not been dismantled, it is the very site of extraction through which Mugabe presides over, and he also distributes and deprives. Fanon (1967b: 105) has warned that "liberation is the total destruction of the colonial system" and the colonial subject should not mimic "the images of the colonialist." For Mugabe to criticize the West as if the colonial ties have been broken is a pathological lie, and Fanon even goes further to state that it is a ruse.

The lighting of the postcolonial bulb did not result in liberation but in the continuity of the existential scandal. Mugabe's call for transparency in the global arena is not matched by transparency in his own country. This contradiction betrays the very form of critique. The rhetoric of Mugabe is not matched by reality. The gains of liberation that Mugabe will lament about will not materialize if there is no fundamental change, and that change can only happen if the colonial state is destroyed. The very act of indigenizing the Zimbabwean state is still the reproduction of the colonial state, and the distance between the elite and the people still remains intact. There cannot be an indigenized state if it is not people centric. But then, it is important to point out that "nationalist were seldom willing democrats" (Mamdani 2012:8 8).

### LIBERATION: THE END OF THE COLONIAL STATE

Under Ian Smith, the then Rhodesia was a colonial state. Althusser (1971: 137) remarks correctly that "the State is explicitly conceived as a repressive machine." Zimbabwe continues to be ruled under this machine, the very shadow of Rhodesia, where domination of the people continues to be the political practice. The Rhodesian state was racist and ontologically corrupt. It is the state that thrived on deprivation, exploitation, dehumanization, and even death of Zimbabweans. There seems to nothing wrong when the colonial settlers complain of tyranny, violence, and plunder as if these were not the very features of Ian Smith's Rhodesia regime. There is no chorus of moral condemnation and there has never been except for the plague of utter complicity. It is even sheer hypocrisy of Ian Smith and the coterie of colonial settler to complain as if things were much better under their regime.

The colonial state is the embodiment of subjection that is institutionalized, naturalized, and normalized by the state apparatus (the judiciary, army, police, politicians, political party, etc.) and that being Rhodesia, so is Zimbabwe under Mugabe. "The colonial situation is first of all a military conquest continued and reinforced by a civil and police administration" (Fanon 1967b: 81). The existence of the colonial state means the existence of the colonial situation. For the mere fact that the birth of Zimbabwe, after the end of Rhodesia, is only a cosmetic change since both are the same archetype—the colonial state but now in a different race—the colonial logic of subjection has been the same and it being meted out by the civil and police administration. The civil and police administration "ensure *subjection to the ruling ideology* or the mastery of its 'practice'" (Althusser 1971: 133). Althusser clearly

shows that the colonial state is ruled through violence to maintain repression by the elites who are colonial subjects.

They have come to power in the name of a narrow nationalism and representing a race; they will prove themselves incapable of triumphantly putting into practice a programme with even a minimum human content, in spite of fine-sounding declarations which are devoid of meaning since the speakers bandy about irresponsible fashion phrases that come straight out of European treatises on morals and political philosophy. (Fanon [1961]1990: 131)

There is still a need for liberation and that will be the end of the colonial state. Zimbabwe is not yet the people's state, and it is simply illogical to expect the colonial state to be the people's state. As Zimbabwe stands, it is the state that is captured by colonial matrices of power and elite capture. Fanon ([1961] 1990) forewarned about what he refers to as a "repetition without difference" and the colonial state being the phenomenon of elite capture and it failing to create new forms of lives, but the coterie of elite mimicking their colonial masters. The mantra of this coterie of elite is that "it is our turn to eat!" What stems out is the fact that there is no willingness to end the colonial state from both the West and the nationalist elite. The latter have inherited the colonial state, and they know that the very fact of dismantling it is the very end of the politics of power and accumulation. "The failure of nationalism was also indicated by the use of colonial repressive laws as a mode of postcolonial governance" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009a: 220). "While the *ideological* construction of the revolutionary state was not visible in the language of the central state—particularly in the army and the single party—the *institutional* reproduction of the colonial state was clearest in the administrative reorgani[s]ation of the local state" (Mamdani 2001b: 143 emphasis original).

The colonial state means that power is not shared and evenly distributed, but it is concentrated in its upper echelons. It, therefore, means the end of the colonial state will not be as Mugabe and company deed, not even the factional opposition parties, but the people themselves. The task, then, is to imagine political trajectories as opposed to alternatives as the latter falls short by wanting to change the colonial state. Thus, what is an alternative is something that is devoid of political imagination precisely because alternatives want to change, rather to do what Fanon ([1961]1990) has referred to as starting all over again. There has never been an alternative to the colonial state, except for the fact that it is the state that must come to an end. That end is not something that will come automatically. Fanon makes it clear that there should not be the expectation that colonialism will resort to suicide. It will continue to defend itself at all costs.

The creation of the peoples state is the one that will come through an encounter where, as Hardt and Negri (2009: 236) state, "the coloni[s]ed faces of against the coloni[s]er, the citizen against the state" and it will be "the resistance to power, the expression of freedom against the violence of power of the colonial state." What Hardt and Negri suggest is that this move will bring to fruition the parallel revolutionary struggle of "insurrectional intersection" in order to end the colonial state and give birth to the liberated state. Hardt and Negri refer to insurrectional intersection as "a revolutionary event that composes the singularities into a multitude" (349). This should not only be the struggle in Zimbabwe because the nationalist focus to solutions will not solve the national problems for the mere fact of losing

sight of the colonial matrices of power. If the struggle is nationalist, the contradiction that it will produce will be of being plagued by internal conflicts and misunderstandings, and thus, the colonial state will wave the carrot among the warring factions in order to co-opt them and render them complicit. “Thus human reality in-itself-for-itself can be achieved only through conflict and through the risk that conflict implies. This risk means that I go beyond life toward a supreme good that is the transformation of subjective certainty of my own worth into a universally objective truth” (Fanon [1952] 2008: 170).

The charting of the route to liberation qua ending the colonial state is a difficult task in that such political subjectivities should not only be informed by the *telos* of liberation, but the permanent political activity of dealing with challenges that such a political formation faces.

Fanon clearly notes that before independence, the leader generally embodies the aspirations of the people for independence, political liberty, and human dignity—the restoration of their being after being dehumanized—the hope of things changing being amid the people. But as soon as independence is declared, there seems to be a delay in the promises of liberation. According to Fanon (1967b: 122), “the people want things really to change and right away.” They cannot wait anymore. Thus, the oppressive conditions that people find themselves in make them react as they can no longer fall for the empty promises of liberation that still remain elusive. The oppressed people know today that national liberation is a part of the process of historic development but they also know that this liberation must be the work of the oppressed people. It is the colonial people’s who must liberate themselves from colonialist domination” (105).

There is no escaping the fact that, as Fanon (1967a) clearly exposes, Zimbabwe has never been a people-centered state and there has never been the liberation of the people simply because there has not been the nonexistence of the colonial state. The colonial state’s infrastructure has been cemented by the elite pact, and this is the pact that excludes people who are supposed to benefit from liberation and reduces them to wretchedness. What the elite pact ensured was that “the actual rights of the occupant were then peacefully identified” (121). The Lancaster Agreement made sure that the possession of land and property, and solidification of colonial settler privilege remained untouched and the concessions that were made did not have any dire consequences for the colonial settlers. According to Fanon ([1961] 1990), “before negotiations have been set on foot, the majority of nationalist parties confine themselves for the most part to explaining and excusing this ‘savagery.’” Fanon is on the mark with regard to Zimbabwe when he notes: “The politician who make speeches and who write in the nationalist newspapers make the people dream dreams. They avoid the actual overthrowing of the State, but in fact they introduce into their readers ‘or hearers’ consciousness the terrible ferment of subversion” (53).

Mugabe and the Zimbabwean elite who took power from the colonial regime (Rhodesia) have continued to behave like colonialists. This means that they think the replacement of the colonial regime is something of an advantage. They are, as Fanon ([1961] 1990: 120) indicts, “carnali[s]ed into activities of the intermediary type.” In their maintenance of the colonial state qua wilful narcissism, Fanon continues to indict that they will fall in the existential condition that will put them to deplorable stagnation. If they are caught in these conditions, they will fail to deliver the promises of liberation to the people who were hopeful that it is *uburu*

(*freedom*). Having realized their failure, the elite will oppress the very same people they are supposed to serve and protect. But because the people will begin to make the demands of liberation that they have been deprived of, becoming impatient and expressing dissent, they will be perceived and labeled as enemies of the state.

The leader, because he refuses to break up the national bourgeoisie, ask the people to fall back into the past and to become drunk on the remembrance of the epoch which led up to independence... During the struggle for liberation the leader awakened the people and promised them a forward march, heroic and unmitigated. Today, he uses every means to put them to sleep, and three or four times a year asks them to remember the colonial period and to look back on the long way they have come since then. (Fanon 1967a: 136)

The dramatization of power and the carnivalesque of independence day commemoration are the platforms through which Mugabe reminds Zimbabweans of how far they have come, and the platforms where there are celebrations of the gains of independence, even if they are just dreamed of, are celebrated nonetheless. The manner in which power dramatizes itself is of course at the level of excess and for it to have the lasting impact. A regime of images is defined by Mbembe (2001) as the means through which power is practiced in a form of simulacrum. The regime of images suggests the ways in which Mugabe wants to be seen.

It remains emphasized in the regime of images that Zimbabwe is synonymous with Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF. Even though Mugabe can be commended for having made a leap in the land question, the paradox is that it was delayed. This is mainly because the land question cannot be addressed in the colonial state. This is the state that Mugabe inherited, and it is the state that no longer considered the land question as important, only to address it after 20 years.

“To educate the masses politically does not mean, cannot mean making a political speech” (Fanon 1990: 159). This has been the means through which Mugabe’s subjectivity has been expressed. Thus, his speeches do not leave the West out of sight, and hence he lays emphasis on problems like colonialism and imperialism. The gains of liberation are about what the party ZANU-PF has done and continues to do, and this bolsters its historical record. What is even affirmed in most of these speeches is how the gains of liberation should be defended.

What is clear is that the existence of the colonial subject and the colonial state essentially means that there is no end to colonialism and there is no beginning of liberation. The frontiers of liberation will only dawn when the beginning is the end of the colonial infrastructure (the state and the subject). Also, the politics of life will have to feature because those who are dehumanized are expelled from life and the life of the colonial subject is the indispensable life that can be eliminated at will and not accounted for. At present, there is no politics of life in Mugabe’s regime just like it was during Smith’s era—Zimbabweans are still at the receiving end of the colonial settler assault that is now managed by Mugabe and his coterie of elite. The end and beginning need no populist demagogy, neither the West as saviors because they are colonialists and imperialists par excellence, nor political parties as they are the machinery of the colonial state. The beginning is ultimately the end of the politics as we know them, and that is ultimately the end of the colonial state, which is not the African state at all.



## OF DEATH AND LUSH FUNERALS

The other interesting dimension of death is funerals and more so in Zimbabwe's politics. It is a given that when someone dies, there will be a funeral. Lush funerals are at the epicenter of Mugabe's political discourse in that they are used as a political platform. These are the funerals that are granted to those who Mugabe regards as liberation heroes. Even though there are individuals who made a huge contribution during the liberation, it is still Mugabe who decides whether they are heroes or not. Those who still remain in Mugabe's favor are heroes.

The symbolism that is at the lush funerals is having liberation heroes buried at Heroes Acre. Only prominent figures are buried at this site. But those who have fallen out of favor with Mugabe's will not be buried at this site (Meredith 2002a). Mugabe has assumed in his circle the mantle of being the father of liberation, and as the number one hero Mugabe is absolutely in charge of the funerals of the liberation heroes. His presence at the funerals of liberation heroes make him the absolute political figure—anticolonial, anti-imperialist, and patriotic speeches will be reverberated saluting the fallen heroes—and lush funerals are synonymous with political rallies, parades, and fashion shows. All lush funerals are Mugabe's political platform and having such a funeral emphasizes the rhetoric of liberation struggle. Moreover, his sworn enemies are not left off the hook; they get attacked. The lush funerals with their absolute excess also demonstrate the power of Mugabe. The West is the neurosis of Mugabe, and they will not be left out in the eulogy of the lush funeral.

On the contentious significations is Mugabe's death. Those who defy this logic of Mugabe's death argue that his health has nothing to do with anybody and it is not something that can bring the world to a halt. The prevailing sentiment is that most of them are infuriated by those who wish Mugabe dead. What does the death of Mugabe mean? This question seems to speak to the conception of fear and can be speculated thus: that ZANU-PF will implode; there is the question of who the successor will be and of Zimbabwe's rolling back the gains of the liberation struggle. Therefore, the livelihood of Zimbabwe depends on the life of Mugabe. It means that Mugabe must always be on guard since there is no one who can guard. This is tied to the slogan "Zimbabwe will never be a colony again!" This explains his utterances and his warning the West not to interfere and not to repeat the colonial encounter of 1894.

Death is inevitable and to live is to encounter its *telos*—death. This is an end of the subject as the living body, but this is not the end of subjectivity, which is a transcendental phenomenon. What is interesting around the subject, which is Mugabe, is to wish him dead, even to the point of declaring him dead while he is alive. It remains clear that Mugabe's obituary is written and pejoratively eulogized while he is still alive. The colonial gaze is upon Mugabe and it is being operated by those who are both in the empire and in the colony. The life of Mugabe is constantly under surveillance and the colonial gaze does not permit him to live. To subject Mugabe to surveillance is to seem dead. The hope of Mugabe's death is just wishful thinking as those who hold on to it seem to be disappointed by Mugabe being alive and well, despite his chronic illness—prostate cancer. It is said that the death of Mugabe, by those who wish it, will bring something new, but the problems that free Zimbabwe are indeed perennial and they are structural, and what only needs to happen is to end the colonial state as it is. This cannot be realized by the death

of Mugabe. To wish the death of someone is evil and is the same as having the will to kill the very same individual.

Mugabe fell prey to death hoaxes several times; these claimed that he was dead and the news spread like wildfire while he was still alive. The last hoax was on April 20, 2014, and the next day Mugabe appeared publicly. It is not the first among many others that occurred before, but the interesting thing is that he appeared in public the day after the hoax went wild. Mugabe has been defiant to death. The latest April 2014 hoax came through a Facebook page and the post was simply “R.I.P Robert Mugabe” and that attracted over a million “likes” and many comments, and even Twitter had a plethora of messages. To end the rumors that he is dead, Mugabe appears in public and leaving those wishing for death bitter. The death wish of the West and his detractors at large come into being through making a vow that he will die in office, that is, he will still be a president of Zimbabwe while he dies.

What has been a major problematic factor is that Zimbabwe is Mugabe and Mugabe is Zimbabwe, and this even extends to the ruling party, ZANU-PF, of which Mugabe is the president. The end of Mugabe’s life will be the end of his rule and the end of the rule in general because Mugabe sees himself as the only ruler and he has been ruling Zimbabwe for over three decades now. As long as Mugabe is alive, he will continue to rule Zimbabwe. This clearly shows that Zimbabwe is still haunted by the specter of its president. The president is the omnipotent figure, and his presence in the political means the exercise of power as the life of the president. This means that the exercise of power is something that is personalized and the will of the people is not something that determines how the president should rule.

The subject of death is important to engage in two registers. The first one is that Mugabe is the colonial subject of both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. He confronted death from the colonial settler regime and engaged in a protracted war for liberation, the Second Chimurenga. It means that possibility death was always present. The struggle for liberation is the will to live and to ultimately reach the *telos* of liberation. In the second register of death, Mugabe is a president who claims to be a sovereign subject as opposed to being the colonial subject. The confrontation with death is different in that there is no war to fight and having being easily exposed to death, but the matter of having to deal with old age, which supposes the nearness to death. By the very fact of aging, there are things that Mugabe will not be able to do physically, his health condition not being the same as before. What preoccupies even Mugabe is his coming closer to death. The very fact of Mugabe’s illness is something that is considered a “state secret,” and it is a censored subject—the public is not supposed to know the health condition of the president, but what they must know is that the president is alive and well.

The death of Mugabe is often a discourse that is a subject of sheer speculation. The life of Mugabe has always been the subject of secrecy and probably those around him do not know what he is suffering from, because prostate cancer is a speculation. But this does not deny the fact that Mugabe has some chronic illness that is cancer related as he always goes to the Gleneagles Hospital in Singapore, which is known to offer the best cancer treatment in the world. What is of interest is that when Mugabe is rumored to be ill, this fuels speculation. Having undergone admission in several therapy sessions due to his chronic illness, Mugabe disappears from the public eye. Mugabe’s absence and silence is something that sets speculation wild.

The colonial gaze is upon Mugabe. Its desire is to see his body parting ways with the soul. This means Mugabe’s death is a necessity, and the impression that is left

is that Mugabe's death will not be mourned but celebrated. Indeed, the colonial gaze is upon Mugabe who is now reduced to a fallen man, the figure of evil and what Fanon ([1952] 2008: 34) calls "the symbol of sin." Mugabe is now cast as "the principle of evil *who deserves to die mainly because he possesses* the darker side of the soul" (146; emphasis added).

In Europe, whether concretely or symbolically, the black man stands for the bad side of character. As long as one cannot understand this fact, one is doomed to talk in circles about the "black problem." Blackness, darkness, shadow, shades, night, the labyrinth of the earth, abysmal depths, blacken someone's reputation; and, on the other side, the bright look of innocence, the white dove of peace, magical, heavily light. (146)

Fanon's confrontation with the question of death is to engage in meditation on the politics of life. The struggle to live is the will to live and Fanon did not romanticize the politics of death. To put Mugabe next to death is a polarized discourse that is firmly entrenched in the view that Mugabe must die. It has been the colonial intention to always put to death the colonial subjects who resist the colonial reason, orders, and laws. To wish for the subject to die is to advocate the politics of death, and the colonial subject is a being that will be better off dead than alive. The ontological dispossession of the colonial subject is something that informs colonial subjectivity and reduces the colonial subject to what Fanon refers to as "crushed objecthood." It is clear from Fanon's thinking that he is preoccupied by the politics of life and no colonial subject should be frozen by the colonial gaze and to be pressed to exist in the shadow of death. Therefore, what emerges is that Fanon and death are incompatible.

If the colonial justification fails to kill its subject physically, it evokes natural death, and in the case of Mugabe, he has been made to die many times. What informs this justification is to expel Mugabe from the realm of life. The idea of death in relation to the colonial justification seems to be a paradox when it comes to Mugabe and Nelson Mandela who died at the age of 95 on December 5, 2013. The death wish of Mandela has been absent, and his illness, which saw him in and out of hospital in 2013, caused dread and he was showered with well wishes throughout. The colonial justification also galvanized itself to make sure that Mandela does not die, and this means that he was regarded as immortal.

What is put forth as a solution by the colonial justification is the death of Mugabe. Juxtaposing the idea of death in relation to Mugabe and Mandela, the extreme difference is a smack of colonial hypocrisy. This hypocrisy manifests itself through the ways in which politics of morality are manipulated. If there was a death wish for Mandela, there would be brouhaha that this is immoral. The idea of Mandela's death has been a subject of contestation in terms of burial rites, and also his death as a form of profiteering and it being what Nuttall and Mbembe (2014: 45) refer to as "private revenue" and Mandela's "symbolic capital." When Mandla Mandela, his grandson, sold his funeral rights for three million to the South African Broadcasting Corporation, he was regarded as immoral and was accused of burying Mandela while he was alive. But when it comes to Mugabe, his death wish is well justified and, of course, there is no moral charge. This is the very thing that creates the axis of good (Mandela) and axis of evil (Mugabe). The death of Mugabe is the end of signification of evil; it means that Zimbabwe will

be a democratic state and will be saved from the implosion that has plunged it into a crisis. On the extreme end, the death of Mandela was perceived as the condition that would plunge South Africa into implosion since he was the figure keeping South Africa together. Without Mandela, it was perceived wrongly then that there will be no South Africa. In relation to Mugabe, without him, there will be another Zimbabwe. The idea of death is nothing but a form of signification that borders on colonial hypocrisy. Since Zimbabwe is a colonial state, it will continue to reproduce the very same problems because the colonial state is far from being dismantled.

It is important to register the fact that the idea of death is embedded in the rhetoric of regime change. Regime change is not an innocent political concept. It has come into being through literally killing those whom the West signifies as standing in the axis of evil. It is informed by the very idea that for democracy to emerge (through import of course), people whom the West vile must die. Regime change is the Western mission to eliminate those whom it signifies as evil, and the executions of Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi are clear testimony to this. The death of Hussein and Gaddafi happened in a dehumanizing manner. They were humiliated in the face of the public, and that humiliation was not only about them as individuals, but about the whole fraternity of colonial subjects. It still remains the fact that the colonial subject is not human in the eyes of the West and its rhetoric of regime change simply means that they will decide what form of regime should be imposed, even though that has been disastrous. The rhetoric of regime change has been just a euphemism and deceit at best, and nothing really changed in the countries where regime change was imported. Misery and the idea of death being the defining factor of everyday life are what remain. Thus, the idea of death qua regime change carries empty promises just like the myth of the flag independence, and it is clear that it was meant to structurally maintain the colonial state.

## CONCLUSION

It is clear that the signification of Mugabe goes beyond the dominant registers of the liberal and nationalist significations. The signification of Mugabe through Fanon's critique clearly shows that Mugabe is the colonial subject. This is despite the fact that he does not regard himself as subject but as a sovereign subject, the latter being an oxymoron. Mugabe as the colonial subject has been inimical to the effort of dismantling the colonial state, which has been the state that is in fierce opposition to the liberation of the people. Zimbabwe cannot be claimed to be the sovereign state because the problem that it faces is the colonial one. The grave mistake has been that of inheriting the colonial state and thinking that this state will be changed. Zimbabwe, even today, is in need of a thorough decolonization. It is still trapped in the colonial infrastructure of yesteryear and this is even reproduced in the contemporary by Mugabe and the state apparatus.

The Lancaster Agreement cannot be the point of departure that can be regarded as the starting point of Zimbabwe's decolonization; there has never been such a phenomenon in Zimbabwean history and what was inaugurated has been the scandal of "flag independence" with false freedoms. The discourse of impossibility of liberation will only be broken when the colonial state will be dismantled, including the Zimbabwean coterie of elites who continue to maintain power through subjection. The elite pact is the exclusion of the people, and these are the major important component of liberation that will even break the colonial mode of impossibility to

fiercely chart a terrain for the beginning of history. The only way for this beginning of history will be the making of the people fueled by the new political imagination that is not contaminated by colonial and nativist subjectivities, but by decolonial subjectivities that boldly claim that another world is possible outside these colonial borders. The liberation of Zimbabwe will not be an achievement unless the whole of Africa is liberated as the continent needs to break free from the colonial shackles that still continue to fasten it. Another world is possible!

# African Leadership in the Age of Euro-North American-Centric Modernity: A Decolonial Critique of Robert Mugabe

*MorganN dlovu*

## INTRODUCTION

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe is currently one of the longest-serving leaders of a postcolonial nation-state in Africa. Thus, since the demise of colonial rule in Zimbabwe in April 1980, Robert Mugabe has remained the only head of state for a period of more than three decades. This lengthy historical period at the helm of a postcolonial nation-state in Africa makes the leadership of President Robert Mugabe an appropriate case to examine with a view to understanding why and how African leaders in general have so far failed to bring about progressive development to the continent of Africa. Thus, in spite of the advent of the age dubbed “postcolonial” in Africa, many of the African nation-states are still languishing in abject poverty, violence, and diseases, all of which makes the present spatiohistorical temporality resemble many of the features of the colonial past—a development that cast some doubts over the idea of the advent of postcolonial order.

This chapter is a retrospective decolonial epistemic perspective on the leadership of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe. It deploys the conceptual tools of structure and agency to examine why and how African leadership in general has so far failed to bring about positive development in Africa. The chapter argues that, in spite of the challenge of exercising leadership within the constraining structural environment of coloniality after the demise of the “formal” juridical administrative colonialism in Africa, the leadership of African continent can be apportioned a fair share of blame for failing to outmaneuver the enduring snares of the colonial matrices of power.

## STRUCTURE AND AGENCY IN AFRICAN LEADERSHIP

The performance of African leadership in bringing about positive development within the continent in the era dubbed “postcolonial” cannot be understood outside the question of structure and agency. This is simply because African leaders are, in

general, a product of the very colonially rooted structures that they must outmaneuver in order to bring about a realization of the promises of the anticolonial struggles. Thus, the question that becomes important in the quest to understand why and how, in spite of the demise of juridical-administrative colonialism, African leadership is failing to bring about a truly decolonized postcolonial order is that of whether it is possible for the offspring of coloniality to bring about diachrony to the very system that produced them. This question is quite important because it is common for those who are produced by a particular system to inadvertently reproduce it as they attempt to transform and change it. In the case of the postcolonial African leadership, this means that many of the leaders that were produced by the colonial system often reproduce the same system even in the absence of juridical-administrative colonialism.

This chapter is a decolonial critique of the leadership of President Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe. The rationale of focusing on the leadership of Robert Mugabe among other African leaders is that he is currently the longest-serving leader in Africa. Thus, apart from the fact that Mugabe's lengthy leadership record provides a perfect opportunity for a retrospective study on why and how he has failed to bring about significant positive development to the peoples of Zimbabwe and Africa at large, Robert Mugabe has been one of the most active leaders of a postcolonial nation-state in Africa, and hence his behavior can highlight some of the challenges and/or opportunities that confront the leadership of Africa today.

By and large, one of the major concerns with deploying the conceptual dyad of structure and agency in understanding a social phenomenon such as that of the performance of the postcolonial African leadership pertains to the question of whether structure and agency can be treated as exclusive alternatives. This is an important question because, in practice, it is difficult to separate the two as they reproduce one another. Thus, according to Sahlins (1985), there is no binary contrast between structure and agency in as much as there is no dichotomy between history and culture. This is simply because "culture is historically ordered and history is culturally ordered" (vii), and hence there is no radical binary contrast between them.

Indeed, the theoretical underpinning of culture and history as a substitute of structure and agency is quite important because the question that confronts African leadership today is whether they have the capacity to bring about change to the colonial cultures that they inherited from their colonial masters in the past or if they simply model their behavior around the already existing patterns of behavior that were left behind by the colonizers. This question needs urgent attention because the fact that the postcolonial leadership in Africa is itself an offspring of colonialism, particularly colonial ways of knowing, imagining, and seeing, means that this leadership is bound to reproduce colonial behavior during the course of attempting to bring about change. Thus, in his articulation of how, in practice, structure and agency reproduce one other, Abrams (1982: xii–xv) argued that

the problem of agency is the problem of finding a way of accounting for human experience which recognizes simultaneously and in equal measure that history and society are made by constant and more or less purposeful individual action *and* that individual action, however purposeful, is made by history and society. How do we, as active subjects, make a world of objects which then, as it were, become subjects making us their objects? It is the problem of individual and society, consciousness and being, action and structure... People make their own history—but only under definite circumstances and conditions: we act through a

world of rules which our action creates, breaks and renews—we are creatures of rules, the rules are our creations: we make our own world—the world confronts us as an implacable and autonomous system of social facts.

What can be understood from Sahlins's (1985) and Abrams's (1982) characterization of the relation between structure and agency is that culture becomes history synchronically and history becomes culture diachronically. This is what Thompson (1978: 280) referred to as "the crucial ambivalence of our human presence in our own history, part subjects, part objects, the voluntary agents of our own involuntary determinations." This means that to adequately explain a social phenomenon such as the failure by African leadership to exercise their agency in bringing about positive change, it is imperative that we account for both the influence of structure of coloniality and the intentionality of the African leadership agency as it is possible that the two can construct one another in such a way that they cannot be treated as exclusive alternatives.

In his emphasis on the relationship between an event and structure—an event being a historical act executed by a social agent, and structure being a particular cultural order within which the actions of the social agency occur—Sahlins (1985: xiv) characterizes this situation as the "structure of the conjecture." What this means is that an event can be nothing other than a relation between a particular happening and a structure either to merely conform to that cultural order or transform the order in action so as to produce a "system-change." Thus, in light of the earlier articulation of the relationship between structure and agency, the critical question that confronts the leadership of Africa today is that why they find it easy to choose conformity than "system-change" when faced with the un-progressive structure that was left behind by the colonizer. This question is important to examine because its answer can reveal whether the failure of African leadership is largely a result of the power of the structure within which they operate or a result of the pursuit of self-interests by the African leadership.

While the underlining motif is that structure and agency, in general, reproduce one another, the manner in which this relationship unravels in practice varies from place to place and time to time in accordance with changing context. This means that some structures are more open than others in ways that some facilitate social action while others constrain agency. Sahlins (1985: xi–xii) makes a distinction between prescriptive and performative structures to show how different cultural orders are differentially "open" to action. According to Sahlins, performative orders tend to assimilate themselves to contingent circumstances, whereas the prescriptive rather assimilate circumstances to themselves by denying their contingent character. In such different scenarios, it is clear that in the case of performative structures, the social order is susceptible to change, rearrangement, and reconstruction through the behavioral social agents, whereas in a prescriptive structure, the cultural order is more likely to reproduce itself and sometimes projects its existing order in and as change.

What this means is that in explaining the nature of a given social phenomenon such the performance of African leaders, the choice of what to privilege between structure and agency in the explanation is not something that can be taken for granted, but needs to be based on what is dominant between the two at a particular moment in time. What is even more important to note is that in certain circumstances, a combination of performative and prescriptive structures can be found in the same space and historical moment. The question, therefore, that needs to be



answered in the context of understanding the performance of African leadership is that of whether the postcolonial neocolonial structural order within which they exercise their leadership is prescriptive or performative. This question has a bearing on whether African leaders can be blamed for the continent's state of development because their performance can only be evaluated against the broader environment within which they operate as leaders.

The question of what is significant between structure and agency in explaining social phenomena has also attracted the attention of scholars such as Anthony Giddens. According to Giddens (1982), there are circumstances where structure determines actions and circumstances where it fails to do so thereby letting social agents take the lead in constructing social phenomena. Thus, Giddens argues that it is wrong to reduce structure to everything and agency to nothing because structure is not always a constraint upon action but can also be something that facilitates action (534–535). The double presence of structure as both a constraint and a facilitator of action do not imply that agency is fully determined by the structure, but as Giddens puts it, actors are capable of resisting the determining power of the structure through their “knowledgeability” and their capacity of evaluating their actions in relation to structural constraints. This means that in contrast to the reading of structural determination as something that reduces agents to mere bearers of the structure (Althusser 1979: 180), there are circumstances where actors have a certain degree of autonomy and manipulative control over the structural conditions for their actions.

Therefore, the question that confronts the leadership of Africa is that of whether the nature of the structure within which they operate allows them a certain degree of autonomy, and if so, to what extent have they exercised their initiative to outmaneuver the trappings of the retrogressive structure of coloniality to bring about positive change. Thus, in his emphasis that actors are capable and sometimes not capable of resisting structural pressures, Torfing (1999: 147) argues that social agents are neither dupes nor absolute choosers, but strategically thinking actors who, through their epistemological capacities, are capable of maneuvering with certain efficiency within the limits set by the structure of the social system. What this means is that in the case of the quest to understand the performance of African leaders, the manner in which they exercise their leadership can neither be by absolute choice of the actors nor by the absolute determination of the structure but most probably by both. It is therefore important not to privilege either the role of the enduring power structure of colonial or agency of African leaders in accounting for the performance of African leadership without basing such a judgment on what is visibly dominant between the two.

In contrast to the idea that social action can be entirely determined by structure, the interaction of structure and agency can be understood by making sense of the structuration process. According to Giddens (1982: 66), structuration refers to the way in which a social system and its structural properties are produced and reproduced through the interaction of actors who apply different generative rule and resources while acting in a context of unacknowledged condition and unintended consequences. What this entails is that structures are not pre-given but a product of actions of agency. In the case of African leadership, both structural determinants and actions of the agency account for the nature of progress in the continent.

While the theorization of the interplay between structure and agency is quite convincing to the extent that the notion of structure cannot be entirely discarded in understanding social phenomena, Torfing (1999: 148) argues that the main

shortcoming remains the lack of a precise account of what exactly it is that deprives the structure of its determining capacity. According to Laclau (1990), what really undermines the determining capacity of the structure is *dislocation* and by dislocation, Laclau refers to the emergence of an event, or a set of events, triggered by social agents that cannot be represented, symbolized, or in other ways domesticated by the structure—which therefore leads to its disruption. This dislocation is a permanent phenomenon in as much as there is always something that resists symbolization and domestication, and thereby reveals the limit, incapacity, and contingency of the structure. Dislocation therefore continuously prevents the full structuration of the structure as the traumatic events of “chaos” and “crisis” ensure the incompleteness of the structure. In the context of examining the performance of African leadership in terms of bringing about positive change through outmaneuvering the trappings of colonial structures, the question that becomes critical is that of whether the advent of a postcolonial order brought about a dislocation to the colonial structure or the same structure remained intact, albeit in an invisible way.

### ENDURING SYNCHRONIC STRUCTURE OF COLONIALITY

The question of how and why the African leadership has failed to bring about positive development to the continent after the demise of juridical administrative colonialism cannot be fully answered without an understanding of how the architecture of the modern world system constrains the performance of “postcolonial” leaders in the non-Western world in general. This is simply because the advent of the modern world system predicated on Western-centered modernity brought about a synchronic structure of coloniality that made the indigenous peoples of non-Western world to lose their freedom of self-determination thereby becoming perpetual objects of a structure that they did not construct. However, to articulate how the architecture of the modern world system negatively affects the performance of African leaders in the age dubbed “postcolonial,” it is crucial to begin by mapping-out the genealogy and phenomenology of coloniality as global power structure of the modern world system and how the presence of this structure today renders the idea of a postcolonial era a myth.

By and large, the origins of the modern world system predicated on Western-centered modernity and its underside—coloniality—cannot be understood outside the history of the spread of European civilization and its usurpation of the histories of the peoples of the non-Western world (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013b). Thus, the triumph of Western civilization over the histories of the peoples of non-Western world gave birth to Western-centered modernity—a structural arrangement that has ever since the “voyages of discovery” by figures such as Christopher Columbus in 1492 constrained the non-Western subject from determination of his/her destiny. As Mignolo (2011) and Grosfoguel (2007) have argued, ever since the advent of Western-centered modernity or Euro-North American-centered modernity in the fifteenth century, the peoples of the non-Western world have been made by their European conquerors to occupy the darker side of modernity, which represents coloniality—a term that captures different colonial situations that have affected and continue to affect the being and becoming of the non-Western subject.

Perhaps, one of the most problematic aspects about the nature of structure of the present modern world system predicated on the dominance of Western-centered modernity pertains to the relationship between the Western subject that is located

on its brighter side of modernity and the non-Western subject that occupies its darker side. This is important to understand because in Fanonian terms, the brighter side of Western-centered modernity represents the “zone of being” where the Western subject lives while the darker side or coloniality is a “zone of non-being” or nonhuman occupied by the non-Western subject. Thus, the most challenging question with regard to assessing the performance of the African leadership is that of whether leaders on the zone of nonbeing can possibly exert their agency over issues that affect the development of the continent while operating with the condition where their humanity is negated. This question is, indeed, quite important to the discourse of leadership in Africa because it compels not only the relationship between the zone of being and zone of nonbeing within the structure of the modern world system but also the characteristics of the two zones so as to understand why leaders within a non-Western world context cannot exert their agency in the same manner as those who are located in the zone of being in the West.

By and large, one of the key difference between the zones of being and of non-being is that while those in the zone of being systematically reap the fruits of Western-centered modernity—from the sixteenth-century “rights of people” to the eighteenth-century “rights of man” and the late-twentieth-century “human rights”—those in the zone of nonbeing are denied the same benefits by the virtue of being located on the side of coloniality within the structure of the modern world system. Thus, in his description of how coloniality negates the humanity of those in the zone of nonbeing, Grosfoguel (2007: 214) argues that “we went from the sixteenth century characterization of ‘people without writing’ to the eighteenth and nineteenth century characterization of ‘people without history,’ to the twentieth century characterization of ‘people without development’ and more recently, to the early twenty first century of ‘people without democracy.’”

The characterization of people on the dominated side of colonial difference as “lacking” is quite important to understand within the context of examining the performance of the African leadership because the question is whether it is possible for African leaders to succeed in their leadership roles while being subjected to negative characterization by the Western subject. This is an important question when taking into consideration the fact that the negation of the humanity of the non-Western subject has often been accompanied by the meddling of the Western subject in the internal affairs of the non-Western world nations thereby practically taking away the agency of non-Western leaders in determining their own destinies.

In general terms, what is important to know about the structure of the modern world system predicated on a Western-centered modernity is not only that coloniality constitutes its darker side but also that coloniality is a power structure of multiple forms of colonialism that survive what Grosfoguel (2007) referred to as “classical colonialism” or juridical-administrative colonialism. Thus, as Maldonado-Torres (2007: 243) has put it:

Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such a nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to a long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many

other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and every day.

What we can understand from Maldonado-Torres's articulation of coloniality is that the idea of a postcolonial world serves to hide those colonial situations that cannot be seen with the naked eyes, especially after the demise of juridical administrative colonialism. Thus, to Spivak (1990: 166), the postcolonial world order is just but "post-colonial neo-colonialized world." This means that the demise of juridical administrative colonialism, which was a visible form of colonialism, led to perpetuation of the myth of decolonization, and hence Grosfoguel (2007: 219) argues that

one of the most powerful myths of the twentieth century was the notion that the elimination of colonial administrations amounted to the decolonization of the world. This led to the myth of a "postcolonial" world. The heterogeneous and multiple global structures put in place over a period of 450 years did not evaporate with the juridical-political decolonization of the periphery over past 50 years. We continue to live under the same "colonial power matrix." With juridical administrative decolonization we moved from a period of "global colonialism" to the current period of "global coloniality." Although "colonialism administrations" have been entirely eradicated and the majority of the periphery is politically organized into independent states, non-European people are still living under crude European exploitation and domination. The old colonial hierarchies of European versus non-Europeans remain in place and are entangled with the "international division of labour" and accumulation of capital at a world-scale.

This articulation of coloniality simply means that the celebration of the removal of juridical administrative colonialism tends to obscure the continuity between the colonial past and vast other invisible "colonialisms" in the present. These include the "colonization of imagination" (Quijano 2007), "colonization of the mind" (Dascal 2009), and colonization of knowledge and power.

Indeed, the idea that the structure of coloniality endure beyond the demise of juridical-administrative colonialism cannot be understood without distinguishing world order from a world system. Thus, through understanding the difference between a world-order and a world-system, it can be concluded that the modern world system that came into being in 1492 has been characterized by different orders that do not mean a diachrony or change in the system but merely serve as strategy of reforming it when it is faced with antisystemic behaviors. What this means is that the world orders that have come to characterize the modern world system have always been permeated by a single hierarchical power structure of coloniality, and hence these orders have merely served to reform the system of coloniality. In the face of the antisystemic behaviors by anticolonial struggles that intended to entirely dismantle colonial domination, the modern world system invented a false "post-colonial world order" while maintaining its logic of coloniality in other spheres of life outside the juridical administrative form of colonialism. What can, therefore, be deduced from this understanding is that the advent of the idea of a postcolonial world order makes nonexplicit forms of colonialisms even more invisible.

Perhaps one of the most powerful weapons of coloniality is its ability to colonize ways of knowing, seeing, and imagination. This is simply because it is through coloniality's ability to affect the mind and imagination that influence the peoples who are on the oppressed side of colonial difference to behave as though they are

on the dominant side of the structure. Thus, through the false notion of objectivity and truthful universal in the politics of knowledge production, the epistemic location of the subject that speaks is decoupled from his/her social location. While the effect of this strategy works well for the colonizing subject, it does not help the colonized subject break from the bondage of coloniality. Instead, the idea of objectivity and truthful universal entrenches coloniality on the colonized subject by making him/her participate in the colonial project that is meant to oppress him/her. This makes it easy to see the idea of objectivity in knowledge production as serving to hoodwink the colonized subject into accepting, consenting, and partaking in the colonial project that oppresses him/her. Scholars such as Castro-Gomez (2003) have characterized the idea of objectivity as a “point-zero” strategy or a “god-eye view” that not only pretends to be neutral but also pretends to be without a point of view, yet in reality it is a provincialized point of view that pretends to universality.

### ROBERT MUGABE: A DECOLONIAL LIBERATOR OR A COLONIAL VILLAIN?

On April 17, 1980, a victorious Robert Mugabe declared:

The wrong of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten. If ever we look into the past, let us do so for the lesson the past has taught us, namely that oppression and racism are inequalities that must never find scope in our political and social system. It could never be a correct justification that because the white oppressed us yesterday when they had power, the blacks must oppress them today because they have power. An evil remains evil whether practised by white against black or black against white. (Meredith 2008: 15)

This speech by the then Zimbabwe’s prime minister, on the eve of Zimbabwe’s celebration of its independence day on April 18, 1980, appeared to inaugurate a spirit of inclusive nationhood and a politics of peaceful coexistence among the subjects who were to become Zimbabweans in contrast to the leadership of his predecessor, Ian Douglas Smith, which was evidently racist and divisive. Thus, the speech represented a rhetoric that signaled an intention to transform the structure of a colonial culture of intolerance within a nation-state that ever since the arrival of white-settlers never experienced peaceful coexistence and common belonging.

However, in spite of his conciliatory rhetoric and gesture toward a politics of peace as opposed to the previous one of violence, Robert Mugabe quickly gained a reputation for deploying violence and divisive language in the settling of political scores with those who opposed him. Thus, as early as 1982, just a period of less than two years in power, Robert Mugabe unleashed a North Korean-trained military brigade to commit genocide against the supporters of the then opposition party, ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People Union) led by Joshua Nkomo. In this military campaign, Mugabe’s crack force known as the Gukurahundi—meaning “a wind that sweeps away rubbish”—massacred more than 20,000 Ndebele-speaking civilians within a period of no less than five years hence projecting him as far much brutal than his colonial predecessors.

That Mugabe’s violence against the black people of Zimbabwe exceeded the brutality of colonial regime before him was expressed by an Ndebele village headman

in Lupane who survived the Gukurahundi military campaign that ended with the signing of the Unity Accord between ZANU and ZAPU in 1987, culminating in the achievement of one-party state. Thus, according to the village headman: “This wound is huge and deep. The liberation war was painful, but it had a purpose, it was planned, face to face. The war [genocide by Mugabe’s Gukurahundi force] that followed was much worse. It was fearful, unforgettable and unacknowledged” (Meredith 2008: 73).

The postliberation wound inflicted by Mugabe on the Ndebele-speaking population of Zimbabwe has been deepened further by his refusal to apologize. Indeed, Mugabe’s failure to apologize for this massacre clearly shows that Mugabe is like the colonizer who does not have respect for the bodies of black people.

Robert Mugabe, like his erstwhile colonizers before him, has a tendency of deploying rhetoric pregnant of animal metaphors when dealing with his black opponents ever since he assumed the leadership of Zimbabwe. Thus, apart from referring to the opposition ZAPU supporters in the 1980s as “rubbish” worth sweeping away during the Gukurahundi massacre of the Ndebele-speaking people in the 1980s, he further referred to the opposition leader, Dr. Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo, as a “cobra in the house” whose head deserve to be crushed (Meredith 2008: 63). Animal metaphors were known to be used by white colonialists and colonizers to justify their racial prejudice against the oppressed subjects and, as such, for Mugabe to embrace the discourse of the colonizer that does not acknowledge the humanity of black people means that his worldview of blackness is on the same paradigm with that of the white racists. Animal metaphors are often used by the colonizers to clear their conscience when conducting their inhumane activities against the oppressed.

Mugabe can further be characterized as white man in black man’s skin. This is mainly because his behavior indicates his deep admiration of how the Western subject conducts politics of violence. Thus, for instance, in 2003, Mugabe had to justify the use of state violence against his opponents by unequivocally stating that “if that is Hitler, then let me be a Hitler tenfold. That is what we stand for” (Meredith 2008: 18). It is his use of violence as a political ideology that makes Mugabe more of a conformist of coloniality than a radical decolonizer in the broader scheme of the colonial power structure.

While President Robert Mugabe is well-known for being an icon of the anti-colonial and liberation struggle in Africa, a retrospective review of his leadership track record in Zimbabwe since 1980 reveals that he is also a colonial subject par excellence. This is simply because since he assumed the leadership of Zimbabwe about 34 years ago, President Robert Mugabe has failed to bring about any visible diachronic effect to the structure of coloniality that was left in place by the colonial regime after its defeat by the liberation forces in April 1980. Thus, instead of bringing about change to many of the structural orders of coloniality that were left behind by the colonial-settler regime, Robert Mugabe has so far opted to use the same structural orders either to gain the support of the Western powers or to oppress the people of Zimbabwe.

In terms of violence, Robert Mugabe has since the 1980s used it as an ideological instrument of maintaining his grip on power. This has characterized him as a leader who, like the colonizer, naturalizes violence as a way of life than as a way of fighting for life. Thus, Robert Mugabe’s postcolonial violence is different from that of the violence of the native during the liberation struggle against colonial violence, which, according to Mbembe (2012: 23), was “purely responsive” and “ad

hoc” and not ideological. This means that Robert Mugabe’s postcolonial violence is no longer the counterviolence of the native that was aimed at bringing about change to the structure of coloniality but is now similar to the settler violence that is aimed at maintaining coloniality along the lines of what Maldonado-Torres (2013) in his groundbreaking book, *Against War*, referred to it as the “paradigm of war.” Thus, in the postcolonial paradigm of war in Zimbabwe, it can be noted that the values of the liberation struggle such “freedom” and “peace” are increasingly being replaced by oppressive tendencies to the extent that Mugabe himself boasted of having “degrees in violence.”

Among many of the colonial structures that Robert Mugabe failed to change since he took over the leadership of Zimbabwe is the colonial idea of national-belonging, which tends to conflate statehood with nationhood. Thus, ever since he became the head of state in Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe has not attempted to bring about changes to the Rhodesian national project that did not recognize the preexisting indigenous notions of belonging but simply continued with the same project, albeit under the name Zimbabwe. Indeed, what is problematic about Robert Mugabe’s uncritical adoption of the colonial notions of nationhood and national belonging is not only that it has denied the indigenous peoples of the Zimbabwean plateau who are supposed to be Zimbabweans their right to cultural diversity but also that it has ensured that the Zimbabwean national project remains an expensive but failing project. Thus, in spite of its costs in terms of the loss of human life that always accompany the process of force-marching indigenous communities to the colonially rooted Zimbabwean national project, questions are still asked on whether Zimbabweans exist (see Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008) several years after the demise of juridical administrative colonialism—a development that not only indicates the failure of the Zimbabwean national project under the leadership of Robert Mugabe but also that it is a colonially rooted agenda that is bound to be resisted.

By and large, the uncritical adoption of the colonially rooted nation-building projects by postcolonial governments in Africa in general has strengthened than weakened the structure of coloniality at global and local levels in the age dubbed “postcolonial.” This is simply because the colonially rooted imaginations of nationhood in the postcolonial era in Africa has led to prevalence of intrastate and interstate conflicts whose effects are not only “non-revolutionary” (Mamdani 2001a) but are also a preoccupation that both obstructs the struggle against coloniality and prevents the much-needed concerted effort that is necessary to bring about diachrony to the structure of coloniality. Thus, in the case of Zimbabwe under the leadership of Robert Mugabe, this preoccupation with nonrevolutionary violence has seen the peoples of Zimbabwe experience the worst forms of violence in the name of crafting a homogenous Zimbabwean nationhood.

What is even more interesting about Robert Mugabe’s leadership in Zimbabwe is that while he has a tendency of ranting anticolonial rhetoric such as “So, Blair keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe,” he has, at the same time, deployed colonial legislations to oppress the native people of Zimbabwe. Thus, among the colonially rooted legislations that Mugabe has used to oppress the people of Zimbabwe are laws such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and the Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), all of which render the idea of a postcolonial state a myth. In other words, the behavior of Robert Mugabe indicates that he is a subject who has mastered the colonizer’s art of hypocrisy as it is common in the language of the colonial powers to utter positive rhetoric such as

human rights, democracy, and development while in practice engaging in human rights violation, dictatorship, and underdevelopment.

Despite the fact that Mugabe inherited a racist state from the colonial regime of Ian Smith, he simply rearticulated it into a tribal one with the dominance of Shona over other minority ethnic groups such as the Ndebele and Kalanga, among many others. Thus, from the onset, Mugabe used ethnic cleansing as his ideology toward constructing a homogenous Zimbabwean nation-state. This ideology was made clear as early as the 1980s where in his deployment of Gukurahundi against the people of Matebeleland, he made sure that this military outfit was exclusively Shona while the victims were broadly Ndebele. This was followed by a process that even today ensures the marginalization of Ndebele people and their language in all sectors of the Zimbabwean society. In general, the non-Shona people of Zimbabwe have since the birth of independent Zimbabwe in 1980 experienced both genocide and epistemicide of extreme proportions under Mugabe's autocratic rule. Through this behavior, Robert Mugabe has sustained and transformed coloniality as global power structure within and outside Zimbabwe.

Having observed how the leadership of Robert Mugabe has reinforced the synchrony of the structure of coloniality at local and global levels, the question that becomes critical is that of the extent to which he is a conscious agent who is aware of the effect of his behavior in the broader "scheme of things" and is an unwitting victim of coloniality whose imaginative vision is limited by the very experience of being an offspring of the system. This question is quite important to the idea of appraising the performance of the postcolonial leadership in Africa because it informs the basis on which a decision to apportion blame can be undertaken. In his own words, Mugabe reveals his awareness of both the hidden colonial matrices of power and the limits of exercising agency over them. Thus, when commenting on his teaching career during the colonial past, Mugabe stated that 'I was completely hostile to the system but of course I came back to teach within it' (Meredith 2008: 28). This clearly shows that as early as before the advent of a postcolonial Zimbabwe, Mugabe understood the reality of operating within a system that one is opposed to.

While one can understand Mugabe's logic of working for the system that he is opposed to during the colonial period in Zimbabwe, the advent of an independent Zimbabwe could have been a point of rupture and dislocation that offered a limited opportunity to exercise critical agency to cause diachrony to the structure of coloniality, albeit at a localized scale. Thus, in order to reach a conclusive decision of the performance of a leader such as Robert Mugabe, it is important to judge his level of complicity with the structure of coloniality while also appreciating the implications of opposing it at different historical times. Thus, the major problem with Mugabe is that from the onset of his leadership he was bent on retaining the colonial structure in order to preserve himself at the helm of Zimbabwe politics. Thus, for instance, he did not attempt to transform the capitalist structure of Zimbabwean economy by stating, "We recognise that the economic structure of this country is based on capitalism, and that whatever ideas we have, we must build on that" (Meredith 2008: 48). This clearly shows that Mugabe did not have in mind an alternative imagination of the economics of Zimbabwe after assuming leadership.

Robert Mugabe is both a victim and villain of the structure of coloniality. This is simply because even though he can be forgiven for being a product of a colonial culture that indoctrinated him with a colonial way of seeing and knowing, he remains condemnable for being a coward who consciously opted for an easy way out when



faced with the difficult option of self-sacrifice. Thus, Robert Mugabe's crime is that he has always been aware of the presence of the colonial power matrix beyond the demise of the juridical administrative form of colonialism but has chosen not to confront the structure solely in order to maintain his grip on power. This is quite evident in the manner in which he has used the question of land to prolong his stay in power. For instance, after assuming power in 1980 Robert Mugabe delayed the redistribution of land to the landless masses so as to appease the Western powers who had the leverage to instigate his removal from power and when faced with internal opposition in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) after almost 20 years of independence, he redistributed the land to appease the masses who were increasingly becoming impatient with his leadership. All this shows that Robert Mugabe, unlike many other postcolonial African leaders who could not be even aware of the presence of coloniality in the absence of juridical administrative, is a cunning leader whose interests are self-serving at the expense of the decolonization process. Thus, Robert Mugabe is a character whose rhetoric against coloniality is very eloquent—a clear indication that his failure as a leader is not an accident but a result of the greed that accompanies the trappings of the colonial office.

Again, Mugabe has failed to decolonially handle the question of land redistribution. Thus, instead of redistributing land in such a way that benefits the majority of all Zimbabwean citizens, he allowed elite from mostly his ruling party to retain a bigger share of resource. This kind of land reform cannot be characterized as decolonization of the economy but as a mere deracialization. Deracialization cannot be equated to decolonization, which consists of the agenda to affirm the humanity of all human beings. In addition to the failure to achieve equitable land redistribution, Mugabe's behavior of violently taking land from white farmers attracted economic sanctions that strengthened the hand of coloniality over Zimbabwe. Thus, apart from leading to the emigrations of skilled Zimbabwean to the Western countries, sanctions led to hyperinflation that could only be contained through adopting a multicurrency regime. Today, Zimbabwe is using the US dollar as its medium of exchange—a development that means that the Zimbabwean state sovereignty is in worse situation than before. This is a result of Mugabe's failure to anchor his anti-Western modernity resistance with a countermodernity project that enables the imagination of another world outside the purview of the Western one. Thus, “whereas anti-modernity is reactive against modernity, counter-modernity is generously responsive” in that it offers radical alternatives and options outside the trappings of coloniality (Rose 2004: 7). It is these options and alternatives that Mugabe failed to imagine before he engaged in the process of attempting to transform the structure of the Zimbabwean economy.

To conclude, it needs to be emphasized the being a leader in a spatiohistorical temporality such as that of postcolonial nation-state in Africa is quite challenging because the presence of the preexisting synchronic structure of coloniality means there is always a constraint upon different imaginations of the future. However, in spite of the difficulties in outmaneuvering the colonial matrices of power, the performance of postcolonial African leaders still needs to be judged according to how much agency they have exercised in transformin the structure. This, of course, requires self-sacrifice, and hence those who choose the easy way out or who got co-opted by the colonial power matrix to sustain its synchrony must cease to be icons of the revolution.

## Mugabe and the Military Alliance: Zimbabwe's Prospects of Democratic Transition

*Kudzai M atereke a nd N iveen E IM oghazy*

### INTRODUCTION

Analyses of the complex relations between the military, on one hand, and politicians or civil authorities, on the other, have contributed to the burgeoning corpus of literature about civil-military relations. In this chapter, we navigate through some of the issues raised in this literature, and review how they are important in unraveling the conundrums about the person of Mugabe, his rule within both Zimbabwe and his party, Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), and also the styles that he has employed in sustaining his authority over the military. We will illustrate this by examining how Mugabe's persistent leadership in Zimbabwe can be better understood by drawing on the lessons and experiences of Mubarak in Egypt. By casting the debate to another African postcolonial context, we seek to highlight how Zimbabwe's civil-military relations, despite some historical dissimilarities, are not *sui generis*. In undertaking a comparative analysis of Mugabe and Mubarak, we also hope to shed more light on one dimension of the character of Mugabe and how he epitomizes the key issues confronting African postcolonial transitions to more democratic forms of politics.

Accordingly, we will attempt to answer some key questions that inform the debate including: How should we understand the history of Zimbabwe's military? How is the person of Mugabe implicated in this history? What insights can we draw from Egypt and Mubarak that can shed more light on Zimbabwe's context? What are the structure, ethos, and styles of operation of the military, and how have the two leaders been able to use these elements in their rule? What public image does the military deploy, and how does it define the postcolonial political terrain? These questions will be addressed by advancing the contention that understanding Mugabe's (and similarly Mubarak's) complex entwinement with, and also his place and role within, the institution of the military matters in the attempts to decipher not only his personal survival but also that of his regime. Our choice to compare

Mugabe's Zimbabwe with Mubarak's Egypt stems from the similar developments that are unfolding in the two societies.

In both contexts, the military is heavily insulated from the rest of society: budget expenditure on the military is very high, and the military personnel have increasingly had high-stakes on the economy, and military impunity characterizes national politics. Further, debates over democratization in both contexts have highlighted that the military is either a contender or has the function of power broker, thus illustrating the important role it has taken in determining the nature of politics in both societies. In this vein, we critically discuss how the military creates, regulates, and shapes the identity, character, behavior, and strategies of authoritarian leaders, and subsequently how this very institution is also affected by the latter. At the core of this discussion is an attempt to add our voice to the debate over the phenomenon of civil-military alliance and how it has impacted on African postcolonial democratization.

What lends justification to a project of this nature is that Africa's quest for democratic transition is heavily premised on the question of how to transform the complex nature of civil-military relations so that the military evolves into a "professional body" that stands outside politics and civil society. This question emerges from a developing trend in African postcolonial politics wherein political authorities have heavily relied on civil-military alliances as a strategy to stabilize and legitimate their rule. Despite being elected civil authorities, and their claims to abide by principles of democracy and rule of law, postcolonial leaders, like their colonial predecessors, continue to court military henchman. Thus, they have cast themselves as enlightened leaders of a bureaucratic system whose political authority is underwritten by a military oligarchy.

## UNDERSTANDING MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS

According to Adedeji Ebo, civil-military relations refer to "the web of relations between the military and the society within which it operates, and of which it is necessarily a part" and such relations incorporate "all aspects of the role of the military (as a professional, political, social, and economic institution) in the entire gambit of national life" (Ebo 2005: 2). Our entry point into the debate over questions about civil-military relations is from two vantage points. The first is the military's self-understanding: How does the military view and understand its relationship with, and roles in, society? What limits and possibilities does society place on the military's perceived roles? The second is civilian society's self-understanding in the light of the role of the military's role and function: What limits and capabilities does the military place on civilian interests and aspirations? What role should the military have in civil society's work of pushing the agenda of democratization? This last question is a normative one that is animated by the widely acknowledged principle of political neutrality of the military as an essential component of a modern democratic political system (Janowitz 1977: 177).

The principle of neutrality requires further qualification as talk of "political neutrality" can be used to disguise obstruction to the guiding principles of democracy. Hence, we need to understand that the political neutrality of the military should relate to how the military must remain nonpartisan in domestic politics; how it must display a political orientation consistent with the democratic citizenry at large, thus enabling it to act within the broad consensus of the polity (Janowitz 1977:

178). The issue of nonpartisanship is critical in the ways it functions for the military's deployment of a professional image that also sustains democratic citizenship. A nonpartisan and principled military has the social responsibility to reassure citizens that their freedom and equality are protected from both internal and external threats. Looked at this way, we concur with Ebo's (2005: 2) contention that "civil-military relations involve issues of the attitude of the military towards the civilian society, the civilian society's perception of, and attitudes to the military, and the role of the armed forces in relation to the state."

Following John Keane's (2010: 461) definition of civil society as that realm of social life distinct from state institutions; a realm that both constrains and enhances citizens to pursue their lives in market exchanges, charitable groups, clubs and voluntary associations, we argue that civil-military relations significantly influence the ways citizens relate to the state and its concomitant institutions. As a concept, civil society "both describes and anticipates a complex and dynamic ensemble of legally protected non-governmental institutions that tend to be non-violent, self-organising, self-reflexive, and permanently in tension, both with each other and with the governmental institutions that 'frame,' construct and enable their activities" (461). Hence, civil society remains pivotal for democratic citizenship in the way it allows citizens to keep both the state and its institutions (including the military) under check. By the same token, civil society can help to prevent the alienation of citizens from defense-related issues just as it also improves the military's integration into the society (Molnár 2006: 112). The institutional separation of self-reflexive, autonomous, and voluntary organizations from state institutions is a major step for citizens to freely express their social, cultural, and political identities within the bounds of the law. The exercise of autonomy, freedom, and equality thus guarantees cohesion in the polity. So debates about civic-military relations should analyze the extent to which the operations of the military leave enough space or foreclose the possibility for citizens to freely and autonomously engage within their voluntary associations and thus provide them the context and voice to influence the ways in which they are governed.

There are strong implications of the attitudes of the military toward citizens in the postcolonial quest for transition to democratic pluralism and liberal citizenship. Under the Westphalian model, the state has the right to claim monopoly of the legitimate use of physical violence within its borders. However, under this model, since physical force is partly exercised by the military organ, there emerges the question of how the state (or its various arms and office bearers) controls this coercive instrument. This invokes the question of the legitimacy of the state as the political system that has control over an organ whose primary objective is the dispensation of violence. After all, the practices of such an organ rely on the ability to take away the rights and freedoms of citizens. Further, such ability also nurtures a culture of clientelism whereby the military becomes an institution of patronage and corruption, which also guarantees its officials impunity.

Civil-military relations highlight the complex nature of the relationship between the state and the military establishment, on one hand, and the quest for democratization, on the other. The point we mentioned earlier about political neutrality touches on the core issue of how the military and democratic political society form divergence and convergence. The legitimacy of a democratic state rests on public justification. That is, a democratic political order exercises coercive powers considered as legitimate if citizens give their consent, and such consent should be publicly justified rather than derived from narrow ideological persuasion or sectarian

beliefs. Hence, a state that relies on military apparatuses to gain the consent of the citizenry cannot nurture a democratic ethos.

Indeed, in the civil-military relations literature, scholars have underscored that the military often provides the backbone and power base of authoritarian regimes. A frequently used concept in this case is the *praetorian state*, a term coined by Amos Perlmutter (cited in Lutterbeck 2012: 30), which he defined as one “in which the military tends to intervene in the government and has the potential to dominate the executive.” The political leadership of such a state either comes directly from the army, or from groups close to it, and the military institution in this context plays a dominant role in all key political institutions (30).

Nevertheless, the degree of the military’s intervention in politics can be different from one context to another. Although the influence of military institutions in the domestic politics of states is difficult to measure, especially as it is frequently concealed from the public, some have suggested a typology of the intensity of the military involvement. Eric Nordlinger (1977) has famously proposed different versions of praetorianism. He argued that army officers can act as either “moderators” when they possess veto powers without directly controlling the government themselves; or as “guardians” when they overthrow the government and rule the country for a few years to correct errors of outgoing incumbents; or as “rulers” when they not only take control of the government and remain in power for a long period of time, but also dominate large portions of the political, economic, and social environment (21–27). Perlmutter has suggested a similar typology of the political interference of the military. He however presented a simple dichotomy by classifying armies as either rulers or arbitrators with the second type merging Nordlinger’s first and second category (Harb 2003: 270).

Despite the authoritarian nature of the Mugabe and the Mubarak regimes, it is difficult to classify the military institution in both countries explicitly as “rulers” since most areas of policymaking have been conducted by civilianized institutions like parliaments and courts of justice even though former military leaders often occupy positions of authority in these institutions. Despite that, the military continues to play an influential background role in the political system of both countries. As recently witnessed in Egypt, when the military perceives that its core interests are endangered, it is likely to take hold of the reins of power and directly control political decision-making. The dynamics of military intervention that have contributed to Mugabe and Mubarak’s prolonged existence in power will be the focus of our discussion throughout the remainder of this chapter. The next section will make an assessment of the emergence of the military in Zimbabwe.

## THE “ZIMBABWEAN MILITARY” IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The beguilingly simple question of what the “Zimbabwean military” consists of points to the convoluted nature of its origins. There are, however, two standpoints from which the issue of origins can be analyzed. The first conceives the Zimbabwean military as an inheritance of colonial modernity. Prior to the British South African Company’s (BSAC) colonization of the disparate sociopolitical and cultural groups that inhabited the Zimbabwe plateau, including the Ndebele people who arrived and settled there in the 1840s, there were no standing armies but just fighters mobilized from among the civilian population for specific military assignments

(Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009d: 105). Therefore, a standing “professional” armed force was only created during initial colonization and the subsequent establishment of colonial authority. This army was strengthened and further enlarged in the intermittent wars fought for the British crown and against armed African nationalist struggle.

The second perspective conceives the Zimbabwean military not as an inheritance of colonial modernity but as a force that struggled against it. Whereas the first standpoint considers the contemporary military establishment as not only contiguous to but also continuous with the colonial project, the second standpoint conceives the military as a phenomenon whose current status and mission is discontinuous with the colonial or imperial project. Thus, the Zimbabwean military is an anticolonial force that emerged in response to what has been described as an “inhospitable colonial modernity and its corrosive effects” (Zhuwarara 2001: 50). The analysis we undertake in this section will attempt to address how the military of the postcolonial state meets both descriptions. We will also show how the latter standpoint has been hospitable to the person of Robert Mugabe and has also served well the interests of the current political establishment under his control.

The British South Africa Police (BSAP) is Rhodesia’s first standing paramilitary force responsible for colonial occupation and territorial defense, and it steadily evolved into a regular and professional military organization that enforced colonial law and maintained internal order. Like any other police and military force of the colonial system, it was totally dependent on the colonizer’s political agenda (Harris 1996: 268). After crushing the Chimurenga/Umvukela rebellions of 1896–1897, the British South African Company (BSAC) administration intensified its recruitment of personnel to build stronger and larger police and armed force. The lack of sufficient European personnel and the fear of employing insubordinate locals who had participated in the uprising were circumvented by enlisting African natives from other colonial territories (Stapleton 2011: 4).

A regular army that relieved the BSAP of the duties and responsibilities for the colony’s territorial defense was established through the formation of the Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR). The RAR was a regiment whose roots dated back to the creation in 1916 of Rhodesian Native Regiment, which fought in World War I for the British in East Africa (Binda 2007; Stewart 1998: 3). The regiment was revived and deployed in World War II, Egyptian crisis (1954), and also in 1956–1958 Malayan insurgency (Stapleton 2011: 9; Stewart 1998: 3). With the break-up of the federation in 1963, the RAR was recalled to Southern Rhodesia from its deployment in what now became Zambia and Malawi. Thus, the establishment of the Rhodesian Army anticipated a force that would be used against the postfederation revolutionary movements.

Indeed, another competing dimension is that the Zimbabwean military is traceable to anticolonial movements that the colonial state sought to stamp out. To understand how African nationalists got involved in military activity requires an account of how nationalist parties evolved from mere protest movements that sought to achieve political change through negotiation to becoming revolutionary organizations with clearly developed ideological orientation and a military hierarchy to command a war against alienation caused by colonial modernity. Here we attempt to give a brief account of how this military outlook unfolded, how it politically contested the militarized colonial regime, and also how it continues to shape the politics of contemporary society. Zimbabwe’s struggle against colonial rule stretches back to colonial occupation. However, it was from the late 1930s

through to the 1950s when major changes to land tenure saw the creation of tribal lands or “native reserves” to which Africans were moved that new ways of clearly articulating a nationalist ideology emerged. With industrialization, Africans were absorbed into capitalist economy. Further, World War II drastically changed the political outlook of the Africans as it formed in them new forms of political consciousness (Mlambo 2014). In short, experiences of colonialism created a new unity among Africans. It was in the 1950s in the urban centers that important transitions in the history of Zimbabwean nationalism occurred (Msindo 2007).

## MUGABE: FROM POLITICAL ACTIVIST TO MILITARY LEADER

Questions about how Zimbabwean nationalism became entangled with the figure of Mugabe, and also how the historicization of the nation’s armed struggle became implicated with, and began to negotiate, the civil-military conundrums can be approached through a differentiation and categorization of events of the Zimbabwean nationalist narrative in which Mugabe features prominently. The narratives can be divided into three main phases: from the late 1950s to 1974; from 1975 to 1977; then from 1977 to independence. Obviously, these phases are overlapping; with preceding events heavily influencing latter ones. However, a closer look at each phase helps us to establish the position occupied by the person of Mugabe. One characteristic feature of the first phase was the creation of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1957 under Joshua Nkomo. ANC was banned in 1959 only to reemerge in 1960 as the National Democratic Party (NDP), which was subsequently banned a year later. Mugabe, who had been working as a teacher in Ghana, held the post of publicity secretary in the parties. In 1961, Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) was formed again under Nkomo. Mugabe had the post of secretary general. In December 1962, Winston Field, new leader of the Rhodesian Front (RF), declared ZAPU a banned organization. Nkomo and many of the party’s leaders were either imprisoned or put under restriction or went into exile. The party circumvented the ban by forming the People’s Caretaker Council (PCC), which managed its affairs in the absence of its leaders.

The differences among ZAPU’s nationalist leaders precipitated the formation of Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) in 1963 with Ndabaningi Sithole as its president and Mugabe its secretary general. The election of Ian Smith as prime minister in April 1964 was characterized by heightened white Rhodesian intransigence and strong desire to maintain a hard-line stance against African nationalism. ZANU and PCC were banned in August 1964 through a declaration of a State of Emergency. Sithole and Mugabe were arrested and imprisoned. They were moved from one prison to the other but later on transferred to Sikombela Restriction Area where they joined their fellow nationalist leaders who included Leopold Takawira, Basoppo-Moyo, Enos Nkala, Simon Muzenda, Moton Malianga, Eddison Zvobgo, George Mudukuti, and Edgar Tekere. They remained under arrest until 1974. With Sithole and Mugabe now at Sikombela, the full complement of ZANU leaders had been confined in detention (Tekere 2007). The minority white government had severely hampered the prosecution of the nationalist struggle by creating a leadership crisis within the party.

During this period, within the British political establishment, some envisaged the “political fact” that there was a “growth of national consciousness” and thus felt

obliged to push for extensive political reforms and adopt national policies in order to quell “wind of change blowing through [the African] continent” (Macmillan 1966). Among other developments, this insight prompted the move to grant dissolution of the Federation. Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia seceded and became independent. Southern Rhodesia continued as a self-governing British colony. Political agitation intensified for Southern Rhodesia to institute political reforms and allow black majority rule. As Harold Wilson (former British prime minister) argued, political reforms were a necessary strategy for the Cold War as they served to divest communist influence on African nationalist parties as the Soviet bloc was “busy in seeking to win clients among African countries” (Wilson 1971: 181). Contrary to this, the RF saw British support for the dissolution of the federation as exposing Southern Rhodesia’s northern frontier to the threat of communism.

Thus, the colonial establishment manipulated the political development during this time to insist that Southern Rhodesia was under siege. The Commonwealth Office resolved that Rhodesia’s demands for national independence should hinge on its commitment to end racial segregation and eventually establish majority rule. The RF sidelined Britain’s demands as it saw its national survival premised on both intensified militancy against local nationalist uprising and closer ties with South Africa’s apartheid regime to stifle militarization in neighboring countries. It is also interesting to note that RF politicians used the anticommunist rhetoric and propaganda “to undercut the democratic space of the liberal element of the white community” (Onslow 2009: 14). The RF’s rhetoric culminated in Ian Smith’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence on November 11, 1965. He proceeded to declare legal independence and to announce the birth of Republic of Rhodesia in 1970, thus severing ties with Britain.

On the side of nationalist politics, a very significant development that had occurred in 1965 was the “Sikombela Declaration” by detained nationalist leaders. Their isolation created in political leaders a feeling of being politically ineffectual. They circumvented this by ordering their fellows in exile to establish a Revolutionary Council (popularly known as *Dare reChimurenga*) that would oversee coordination and prosecution of military insurgence. This council would be chaired by Herbert Chitepo. The declaration gave an impetus to the militancy, albeit sporadic, which had begun since ZANU’s first Gwelo congress in May 1964. Two points are in order here. First, the declaration demonstrated that leaders’ still had firm control of the party despite their isolation. Their success to avert a leadership crisis signaled a major development to direct the revolution’s future course. Second, by crafting such a document, ZANU leadership now had a military wing, Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), under its control. In short, the nationalist leaders now claimed not only ideological authority over and among its members, but also assumed control over a military structure by which to spread and instill its ideological outlook on members.

The second point is pivotal in the Mugabe/ZANU-PF narrative and it has been repackaged to justify the claim that ZANU-PF is the party that not only initiated the armed struggle, but carried the bulk of the burden. As our analysis will show, it is in the declaration that current civil/political-military relations and configurations of power within ZANU-PF are constituted. Our analysis emphasizes that an argument that presents the Sikombela Declaration and its architects (including Mugabe) as the most significant development in the Zimbabwean nationalist narrative risks overstating this event at the expense of sidelining other equally important



events and figures. Therefore, we argue for the need to treat with caution such a narrative as it carries a number of flaws. We will highlight two of them.

First, it gives pride of place to ZANU and ZANLA's role in national liberation at the expense of Nkomo's ZAPU and Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) forces. This flaw is easily discernible in Fay Chung's autobiographical account whose analysis of the nationalist liberation movement is unashamedly selective insofar as it accords Mugabe, ZANU, and ZANLA much adulation while it "does not give much attention" to and also casts deep distrust in Nkomo's leadership and ZIPRA's contributions to the struggle (Kaarsholm 2006: 14).

The flaw has given rise to the idolization of the "Chinhoyi battle" of April 28, 1966, as marking the first day of the revolutionary war. On the contrary, Nkomo's ZAPU had organized Chinese military training for its cadres as early as 1962, and with the Soviet Union in 1963 (Shubin 2008). Dabengwa (1995: 25), former head of ZIPRA military intelligence, argues that ZAPU's armed struggle started even earlier in 1965. There are also substantiated reports of ZAPU insurgents who embarked on a joint operation with cadres of South Africa's African National Congress and entered Rhodesia from Zambian training bases through the Zambezi frontier between 1967 and 1968 (Sadomba 2011: 10; Sibanda 2005). Despite the futility of these military engagements in the hands of a stronger and well-resourced Rhodesian Army, the examples expose how the dominant narrative of early nationalist insurgency is skewed in the interests Mugabe, ZANU and ZANLA.

Second, a narrative that elevates the 1965 declaration negates some prior revolutionary moments achieved by ZANU itself. For example, at ZANU's first congress in 1964 in Gwelo, having realized how political change through constitutional and nonviolent means was being continuously frustrated, members committed themselves to pursue nationalist politics through military confrontation. This led to sporadic operations by nationalists including that of July 1964 when William Ndongana and the "Crocodile Gang" undertook operations in the Melster district of Manicaland in which a white farmer, Petrus Oberholtzer, was killed (Ranger 1997; Tekere 2007; Tauyanago 2013). The Chinhoyi battle "now occupies pride of place in the nationalist hagiography" (Moorcraft and McLaughlin 2008: 29) in ways that foreshadow other preceding events. It is to Sithole's credit, who, as leader of ZANU at the time, was responsible for initiating and directing the militant operations.<sup>1</sup> Hence the celebration of the Sikombela Declaration, as opposed to the militant operations prior to it, can only be understood as serving the political agenda of pedestalling not just the ZANU party but also Mugabe and his inner circle.

The period from 1975 to 1977, which is the second phase of the nationalist narrative, is marked by the event of the release in December 1974 of the nationalist leaders, including Mugabe, Nkomo, and Sithole. The release was precipitated by a host of events including a coup in Lisbon in April 1974, which subsequently led to the liquidation of Portugal's colonial empire in 1975. Mozambique became independent under Samora Machel's Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO). In March 1975, Chitepo was assassinated in Zambia prompting the Zambian leader, Kaunda, to hold leaders of ZANU's Dare on suspicion that they were responsible for murdering their leader. Sithole supported Kaunda's action, thereby undermining his own position as leader of ZANU. Mugabe—little known to most fighters in exile—arrived in Mozambique in April 1975 with the view to gain access to ZANU military camps. Machel's belief that a genuine leader should emerge from

the guerilla ranks like what he had done within FRELIMO led him to distrust Mugabe, who he thought to be a political elite who sought power over a military movement, and hence the decision to have him arrested for several months in Quelimane, a place away from the camps (Compagnon 2011: 12).

There is need to clarify Machel's attitude and treatment of Mugabe not least because the treatment strikes a chord with the dominant feeling in ZANU's military camps at that time, but more importantly because it has a bearing on contemporary debates over the role of elites or intellectuals in civil-military relations. From the onset of the struggle, nationalist parties were hierarchical organizations comprising of "political leaders" and "militarists" (Kaarsholm 2006: 15). The former were learned intellectuals who churned out ideology and specialized in political engagement and negotiation. Militarists executed military strategy for the guerrilla warfare. During the struggle and even at present, these two factions have been in constant struggle, which has given rise to dynamic relations of both antagonism and collaboration (Kriger 2003a, b). That some militarists espoused Machel's distrust of political elites is not surprising given that many young fighters who had joined the struggle in the late 1960s had turned ZANU and ZAPU into intellectual hubs for radical Marxism. For example, there was the Vashandi, a group of young left-wing militarists who confessed Marxism, most of whom were former university lecturers and students (Chung 2006: 175). Their commitment to socialist ideals made them less sympathetic to political leaders as they feared that elites could possibly hijack the revolution into a project that served bourgeoisie interests (Mhanda 2011; Moore 1990). The young radicals felt as one of the old nationalists, Mugabe had no socialist credentials and was inclined to become a fascist dictator (Chung 2006: 174). Another cause of distrust was that politicians who had no military training made dangerous decisions that cost lives as the administration of war under very difficult political circumstances and scarce resources "demanded ingenuity and the ability to balance political and military demands, seizing opportunities when they arose and developing sustainable and effective strategies" (Sadomba 2011: 19). So far, few political leaders had demonstrated those qualities.

Mugabe's release happened when Sithole's authority within ZANU was fast waning. While in prison, Mugabe and fellow detainees had toppled Sithole as leader, with Mugabe emerging as new leader (Ranger 1985: xiv). The reason for Sithole's fall was because in his response to the allegation that he had plotted to assassinate Ian Smith, he had publicly renounced violence, thus angering his political associates and undermining the armed struggle already under way, which as the president of ZANU he was supposed to champion (Mlambo 2014: xxviii). The events of internal fighting within both ZAPU and ZANU, the Nhari rebellion against ZANLA's Dare, and also the Chitepo's assassination heightened tensions, which threatened the nationalist struggle with collapse. During the same time, there were diplomatic efforts by international forces for a combined nationalist front to negotiate a political settlement with the RF. After his release from prison, Sithole's support further plummeted for two other reasons. First, his support for Zambia's incarceration of over 1,000 ZANLA fighters including members of the Dare at Mboroma camp on the suspicion that they had conspired in Chitepo's assassination and his refusal to attend the funerals of the dead marked the end of Sithole's leadership (Chung 2006: 112). Second, his intent to settle for a détente with Smith's regime when members of the Dare were still imprisoned virtually discredited him as leader. Thus, to many, he had become a traitor or sellout of the struggle. In order to reclaim

his position, he ran a media propaganda and formed his own military command, Zimbabwe Liberation Council (ZLC), to rival the Dare leadership. Sithole's intentions were leveraged by Smith who saw in him a more moderate leader amenable to the détente, hence Smith's aim to have other moderates like Abel Muzorewa and Chief Chirau in the fold.

As the Vashandi group was demanding for renewal of strategy and overhaul of the command structure, there was also simmering anxiety and frustration among the Front Line States (FLS) leaders deeply concerned with the fragility of the nationalist movements. Significant developments emerged from these events. Fighters in the Tanzanian camp of Mgagao issued a declaration in October 1975. This declaration was addressed to the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) Liberation Committee. In it, the fighters expressed dissatisfaction with nationalist leaders (including Sithole) who they feared were unscrupulous. The declaration condemned negotiation with the Smith regime and also expressed its sympathy for Mugabe as an "outstanding" leader, a quality he demonstrated "by defying the rigors of guerrilla life in the jungles of Mozambique" and they respected him as "the only person who can act as a middleman" in their communication with the nationalist leaders (Chung 2006: 343; Sadomba 2008: 44). The Mgagao fighters also sought the formation of a united armed force of both ZANLA and ZIPRA. So determined were the fighters to depose Sithole as leader and commander in chief that in November 1975 they denied him entry into ZANLA military training camps in Tanzania.

With the declaration endorsed by other ZANLA camps, the FLS, especially Nyerere of Tanzania and Machel, realized there was a power vacuum. They proceeded to support the fighter's requests for a united armed force. For the FLS leaders, a combined military force would quell the lack of coherence between ZANU and ZAPU that they thought had forestalled negotiations for national settlement between Smith's RF and nationalist parties. Cooperation among the nationalist movements would also ameliorate the leadership crisis that had not only caused disharmony within ZANU but also hampered military progress. So in November 1975, Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA) was formed, headed by an eighteen-member committee with nine from each party—Rex Nhongo (whose real name is Solomon Mujuru and late husband of Joice Mujuru) of ZANLA as the commander and ZIPRA's Alfred "Nikita" Mangena as political commissar (Sellström 2002b: 186). Mhanda was responsible for war strategy and tactics. Coinciding with Mozambican independence, which opened up the eastern frontier and also allowed a high movement of young people from Rhodesia into the training camps in Mozambique, ZIPA's phase saw intensified military recruitment and political mobilization (Sadomba 2011; Chung 2006). Support from foreign allies was boosted.

Wampoa Ideological College was established to train fighters. Discipline was instilled and military offensive intensified. One key feature of the declaration was its attempt to redefine the qualities of civil or political leadership as commitment to the nationalist struggle. The Mgagao Declaration lent voice to a young generation of educated members who displayed "political clarity necessary to underwrite effective guerilla struggle" (Saul 1979: 112). ZIPA's educational programs insisted on a code of conduct for fighters and supporters, and thus set a new ethos and standards of conduct and discipline for both fighters and leaders. One of its features was the need for cadres to be prepared to denounce corrupt political leaders. As Sadomba (2011: 21) argues, the declaration challenged the myth of omnipotence of civil

leaders, and hence ZIPA forbade any slogans that praised an individual, unless if the individual died fighting for national liberation.

How then did Mugabe, nominated only as “a middleman” between the ZANLA militarists and nationalist leaders, ascend to the position of a glorified military leader? What does his ascension tell us about his ability to negotiate the intricacies of civil-military alliance? How has such an alliance redefined contemporary politics? An attempt to address these questions takes us to the third phase of the nationalist narrative—the phase of Mugabe’s leadership of the party and guerrilla army. With ZANU leadership in disarray, and with the disharmony between ZANU and ZAPU, the FLS leaders felt the need to bring a semblance of order within the revolutionary movements. How Mugabe gained access to, and met fighters at, ZANLA’s camps in Mozambique is contested. Some reports say Mhanda and Nhongo “spirited” him from Quilimane detention to the ZANLA camps to meet the guerrillas without Machel’s knowledge (Nyarota 2006: 106). Others like Sadomba argue that Machel’s FRELIMO had “to escort and impose” Mugabe on the fighters (Sadomba 2011: 34). Without delving into the veracity of the divergent reports, it can be argued that Nhongo played a crucial role for Mugabe’s ascendancy to the helm of ZANLA. Hence, his alliance with and support for Mugabe was acknowledged and rewarded through the appointment of his wife, Joice Mujuru, to the post vice president almost two decades later.

At the time, Mugabe was allowed access into ZANLA bases, the Dare detainees had been relocated to Mozambique under the auspices of the host nation, Tanzania, and ZIPA (Sellström 2002b: 186). Hence reports that point to Machel’s influence in Mugabe’s ascendancy to ZANLA leadership suggest how “the young commanders were induced to choose him [Mugabe] by the imprisoned *Dare reChimurenga* members (including Tongogara),” something that Machel was agreeable to despite his own preference for Tongogara (Compagnon 2011: 12). Machel’s involvement would not surprise much given how at this point he felt the war had become costly to Mozambique and he wanted it to end. When Mugabe was released, he traveled to Tanzania to meet the fighters and also embarked on negotiations with FLS, thus gaining official recognition as only ZANU leader, and not ZANLA’s commander in chief yet. During this time, some young fighters observed his ambiguous character was “both attentive and receptive” but also had a “secretive, stubborn and uncompromising” personality; and once he “takes a dislike to someone, he becomes vindictive and never changes his mind” (Nyarota 2006: 106). Thus, Mugabe had already cast a dark shadow over some of the young ZIPA fighters and also those in the Vashandi group.

With arrangements for a constitutional conference among nationalist parties and the RF in Geneva already under way, Mugabe demanded for the release of the Dare members as a precondition for his attendance. This paved way for Tongogara, who, leading the ZANU leaders released from detention, formed an alliance with Rex Nhongo (Solomon Mujuru) as leader of ZIPA and Machel to impose Mugabe, the most senior of the “old guard,” as commander in chief of ZANLA. This was a marked shift of Machel, who for a long time supported the Vashandi elements in ZIPA and shared their deep suspicion for Mugabe’s political elitism. This shift saw the gradual displacement of ZIPA as executor of the struggle and its disbandment as an autonomous military organ. When news of this spread around the various Mozambican camps, there was resistance from fighters who felt ZIPA and Vashandi should continue. Mugabe and party took them as sellouts bent on insubordination.

Hence 1976 was characterized by the party's need to consolidate power over the military through purge of insubordinate Marxist soldiers (Tendi 2013: 836). This was carried out through purging the Vashandi on the grounds that it was "counter-revolutionary" (Mugabe 1977). The initial refusal by Mhanda and his group to attend the 1976 Geneva conference was taken as an act of dissidence. They feared that attending the conference alongside Mugabe would give credence to his claims that he had the military under his latch. The FLS supporters wanted the nationalist movements to present themselves as a united front so as to speed up the settlement. This explains the formation of the Patriotic Front (PF) between ZANU and ZAPU in October 1976, barely a month before the Geneva conference. In a joint statement, the two parties saw the formation of the PF as "presenting a common and solid approach to national matters," and thus they were determined that their "different political identities shall not be a barrier to cooperation in promoting the revolutionary process in Zimbabwe" (Sellström 2002: 188). The PF was "essentially a tactical alliance" as it "did not involve the merging of political or military structures" (Preston 2004: 128). Mugabe's determination to have total control over the ZANLA guerrillas was against a background of his fear that a ZANLA/ZIPRA merger would lend Nkomo an upper hand.

After Machel forced ZIPA's radical elements to attend, Mugabe used the occasion of the conference to assert ZANU's authority over the military. Mugabe argued that ZIPA was neither to be consulted nor to be allowed to make submissions as a separate or autonomous a military organ. Rather, he insisted, the body "is synonymous now with ZANLA"; it "is a ZANU wing so it must be under ZANU leadership" (Astrow 1983: 106). Hence, it was at Geneva that Mugabe sealed the fate of the military just as the old guard thought they constituted the military through the Sikombela declaration.

The purge of the left-wing Vashandi group proceeded beyond 1976 when he lamented how the party was in a dire situation where "people without ideology at all pretended that they can lead the revolution" (Ranger 1980: 83). As leader, Mugabe felt it within his power to instill some "ideological orientation." After the Geneva talks, Machel and Nyerere had some members of Vashandi imprisoned. In the camps, many members of ZIPA were either brutally killed or badly treated. The political syllabi of Wampoa College was banned, its "graduates were rounded up, jailed, tortured, with some becoming deranged, women aborting and others dying" (Sadomba 2011: 37). Mugabe's language remained vitriolic and it smacked not just the desire to stamp authority over the party and military, but also to stamp out any dissenting voice. In his address to the Central Committee in 1977, his attention was on "sellouts" and "rebels" who he said "arduously strive in any direction that militates against the Party line" and sternly warned that "the ZANU axe must continue to fall upon the necks of rebels when we find it no longer possible to persuade them into the harmony that binds us all" (Mugabe 1983: 37). Hence, there was another purge in 1978 when some cadres (including Dzinashé Machingura, Augustine Chihuri, Happison Muchechetere, Henry Hamadziripi, and Rugare Gumbo) from various training camps in Mozambique and Tanzania voiced their disapproval of Mugabe's rise to leadership over ZANLA in March 1977. Some of the dissenters were camp commanders who refused the new leadership access to the camps. In particular, they were disgruntled by how newcomers, some of whom had either defected from ZANU earlier and had now been allowed back into the party, or had been studying or working abroad, and given high-ranking positions.<sup>2</sup>

Mugabe's control over the militarists through the organ of the party finds justification in the Sikombela declaration that authorized the launch of the armed struggle. The swift move to quell military dissent in 1976 and 1978 demonstrated that political leadership's authority to discipline the military. As Nkala argues, the party's control over the military served the lesson that "the gun had no right to command the party" (Tendi 2013: 836). If the "post-Geneva events would include brutal suppression of the Vashandi group" (Chung 2006: 150), which signaled the control of the political elites over the military, then the aftermath of the liberation war marked the party's ascendancy over the state and its institutions. The party's ascendancy set in motion what has been termed the phenomenon of a "politicized party-state" (Bratton and Masunungure 2008: 44). This is whereby the "party and state structures at all levels are conflated" or are "fused"; and the formal organs of the state like the police, military, and security services "are closely linked to the party without being officially integrated into it" with the party remaining "supreme over the state" (Masunungure 2009: 82). Further, this phase also saw the metamorphosing of the personality cult of Mugabe as his name and image became emblazoned in party slogans, war songs, and party pamphlets and regalia. This culminated into a "democratic centralism" sponsored by the adherents' support for the party to adopt a Marxist-Leninist overcentralized, top-down, and commandist organizational structure.<sup>3</sup> A personality cult created around Mugabe turned upside-down the code of conduct of the ZIPA era, which discouraged hero worship.

The first decade of independence saw the implementation of a demobilization, demilitarization, and reintegration program whereby former ZANLA and ZIPRA guerrillas, and also RF soldiers were absorbed into various government departments, the national army, police force, and prison and security services.<sup>4</sup> The program took place against the backdrop of machinations of Mugabe to assert ZANU and ZIPRA guerrillas as "the base of the nation and state," and "the belittling of ZIPRA through attacks on its leader and its inferior war contribution, and calls for its demobilization and disarmament and ZAPU's elimination" (Kriger 2003a: 74). Mugabe and ZANU-PF's militarization of Zimbabwe's political field since independence continued with several appointments of former guerrilla fighters to senior and influential roles in government departments and parastatals. For example, the appointment of Augustine Chihuri to the position of Police Commissioner and Happpison Muchecheterere to head the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation is a clear indication of how he manipulates to his own advantage the bonds that stretch from the guerilla struggle. With such developments as the military intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the ZANU-PF senior leaders and military henchman clinched lucrative mining concessions (Lemarchand 2009). Further, the military-style operations in which the security forces secured Zimbabwe's diamond fields of Chiadzwa in 2007 "have cemented the Zimbabwe military's role as the dominant class in Zimbabwe's business community" (Chitiyo 2009: 7). These developments point to the wider process of militarization of economic and political life that, besides blurring the distinctions between state, party, and military, have also produced a class of citizens that both controls the levers of coercive power and also wields private wealth, thus sustaining informal and personal networks of patronage (Alexander 2013). The unabated social and economic problems that dominated before the Government of National Unity of 2009 benefited this military elite who aimed to retain Mugabe and maintain the prevailing "disorder"

and “disruption” as beneficial to their economic and political interests.<sup>5</sup> Hence, it can be said that Mugabe has used militarization to his advantage. By surrounding himself with military henchmen who draw social, economic, and political benefits from his rule, he has managed to secure his rule. The expulsion in December 2014 of Joice Mujuru from government and Rugare Gumbo from both government and the party have shown that his allies are expendable and if they fail to toe his line (which is easily represented as the party line), they are excluded not only from the party but also from the economic benefits that come with the allegiance. Now we turn our analysis to how Egypt’s civil-military relations have defined Mubarak’s rule.

### HISTORIC DIMENSIONS OF EGYPT’S CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

Unlike in the case of Mugabe, the circumstances that caused the emergence of Mubarak as a military leader and later as the ruler of Egypt for three decades have been different owing to the distinct histories of the military establishment in both countries. In Egypt, scholars typically focus on the ascendancy of army officers in Egyptian political life after the monarchy was ousted and following the expulsion of the British in 1952 (Abul-Maged 2013). However, the influential role of the military in Egyptian politics was arguably consolidated much earlier, specifically since the early nineteenth century when Muhammad Ali, an ambitious Albanian soldier from the Ottoman army, emerged as the semi-independent ruler of Egypt. His goal to expand his new fiefdom into a military and regional power independent from the Ottoman Sultan in Istanbul<sup>6</sup> required the establishment of a loyal and dependable military institution. Six years from taking power he massacred the leadership of the Mamluks in 1811. The Mamluks were the traditional military establishment that had for centuries governed the Ottoman province of Egypt.<sup>7</sup> Historians interpret this as the foundational moment of the modern Egyptian state (Jung 2011). Under Ali’s rule, Egypt was converted into the strongest military power in the Middle East region.

Yet this robust military was not dominated by Egyptians. Military ranks were categorized along racial lines: senior ranks consisted of Turco-Circassians; the middle and technical ranks were foreign Western officers, while “native” Egyptians occupied middle and junior ranks (Hashim 2011a: 64). However, given the fact that Muhammad Ali’s strength and territorial ambitions had threatened great powers at the time, he was forced to shrink the size of his armed forces. The military institution became small and incompetent and dominated by the minority race, the Turco-Circassians, who had close ties to the monarchy (Tignor 2013; Hashim 2011a). His successors Abbas I (1848–1854), Said (1854–1863), and Ismail (1863–1879) were unable to enlarge the military due to resistance from Turco-Circassian officers who did not want their influence within the institution to diminish. The result was that Egyptian natives or Arabs, the majority race, found it extremely difficult to get promoted from the ranks into officer corps while those who were already officers found it impossible to enter the ranks above colonel (Hashim 2011a).

The declining strength of the military institution seems to have been correlated with the opening of the economy and the growing European commercial interests in the country. As Egypt began accumulating significant debts to European

creditors and as Western interference in the country became blatant, there was considerable disgruntlement among not only the general Egyptian populace, but also within the middle ranks of officer corps who developed a secretive organization led by Colonel Ahmad Urabi<sup>8</sup> (Hashim 2011a). This organization particularly resented the humiliation of the country by external powers, the weakness of the monarchy, and the dominance of the Turco-Circassians and Albanians in the military. Under pressure, a nationalist government was instituted and Mahmud Sami al-Barudi (a close ally of Urabi) was named prime minister. Urabi became a war minister who among other measures had eliminated the top 40 Turco-Circassian officers and promoted 400 native Egyptians (Hashim 2011a).

Consequently, while the Egyptian nationalist movement in the nineteenth century was arguably anti-Turkish before it became anti-European, the military-dominated nationalistic government also threatened Anglo-French strategic and commercial interests in Egypt particularly in terms of free access to the Suez Canal (Chamberlain 2013: 33). The result was that Britain invaded Egypt in 1882 marking the start of the colonial occupation. The Egyptian army was then disbanded and Urabi was exiled (Louis 2006; Cook 2012; Hashim 2011a). The British maintained their troops throughout the country but their presence gradually diminished from populated cities and became mainly concentrated in the Suez Canal region (Gadalla 1998: 63).

As a result of growing nationalism, Britain unilaterally declared the independence of Egypt in 1922 and a constitutional monarchy was established headed by King Fuad (1922–1936), and later by his son King Farouq (1936–1952) (Jankowski 2002: 11). Nevertheless, the British still continued to considerably influence and dictate the Egyptian political environment even after granting it sovereignty (US Department of State 2011). For example, Britain had reserved its right to govern the defense of Egypt, the Suez Canal, and the status of the Sudan and British troops were still stationed in the country (Jankowski 2002: 11).

Accordingly, nationalist protests persisted and enlarged as British domination over Egypt continued and as the prestige and power of the monarchy began to dwindle due to the defeat of Arab forces in the first Arab-Israeli War in 1948, the weakness of the military and rampant corruption within the ranks of senior officers among other reasons (Hashim 2011a; Jankowski 2002). In the late 1940s, a secretive group, the “Free Officers,” developed and was largely comprised of mid-level rank officers who all had nationalistic orientation and who all greatly despised the monarchy (Hashim 2011a). Gamal Abdel Nasser emerged as the leader of the new republic when the Free Officers overthrew King Farouk in 1952, thus terminating the brief presidency of General Mohamed Naguib and disbanding all political parties and most political institutions of the pre-coup era. Under Nasser’s rule, the military became the strongest institution within Egypt’s political system and was the primary supplier of the key members of the ruling elite (Springborg 1987).

Of course, a comprehensive discussion of the history of the military in Egypt is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it is worth noting that this historical context has considerably contributed to the distinctive features of civil-military relations during Mubarak’s regime. Indeed, since Muhammad Ali’s nineteenth century, the military has clearly proclaimed itself the patron of Egyptian nationalism and it is through this conviction that its intervention in Egypt’s political, economic, and social life has been justified throughout the years. In the section that follows, we discuss some of the specific elements of Egypt’s civil-military relations.



## EGYPT'S CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS UNDER MUBARAK

Mubarak became president following a tumultuous period of civil-military conflicts and Sadat's assassination at a military parade in 1981. Mubarak's elevation occurred within a context of intense apprehension over Egypt's future. The hurried manner in which Mubarak took power provided immediate assurance of the country's stability for both Egyptians and Western leaders seeking a reliable Arab ally (Hashim 2011b). Similar to his predecessors, Mubarak was a military man. He joined the military academy, then trained in Moscow, and later became an Air Force officer (Günay 2011). He was appointed vice president because of his performance as Air Force commander during the 1973 war with Israel, which is considered Egypt's first military victory since the 1952 revolution (Satloff 1988).

In this war, the Egyptian army, reinforced by the Air Force under Mubarak's leadership, heroically crossed the Suez Canal, regained the Sinai Peninsula in 1967 from the Israelis, and revamped the status of army within Egyptian society. According to the narrative perpetuated by the ruling regime, it was Mubarak's air strikes that had prompted the victory in the 1973 war (El Shahed 2012). Thus, as another trusted son of the army albeit lacking the charisma of his two predecessors, Mubarak drew his political legitimacy from his personal wartime achievements and his extended relationship with the military establishment over the years.

Given his status as the supreme commander of the Armed Forces, Mubarak was incessantly depicted on state television attending graduation ceremonies of military and police colleges as well as watching artistic performances organized to commemorate the 1973 war among other events. By propagating certain images and overstating his performance in the army, Mubarak had sought to portray himself in conjunction with the military institution under his command as a patron of the country's stability whose absence would entail downright anarchy in Egypt. Unlike his predecessor who tried to intentionally demilitarize the state (in turn creating distrust between him and the military), Mubarak's efforts to ensure his longevity in power had primarily rested on inviting the military back into politics, restoring its privileged position in society, and embracing the army as a partner to his regime (Mumtaz 2011; Ryan 2001; Springborg 1987).

Indeed, there were many instances when the Egyptian military had illustrated that it plays a pivotal role as the guardian of the state and the ultimate guarantor of the Mubarak regime in case of crisis. In terms of the direct involvement in political life, both the military and the police apparatus were considered paramount for monitoring and subduing political activities. Similar to Nasser and Sadat, Mubarak resorted to the military to suppress mass protests as in 1986 when the army was famously called upon to quell the riots of Central Security Force (CSF), the Egyptian paramilitary force affiliated to the national police and whose soldiers were traditionally used against demonstrators challenging Mubarak's regime (Kassem 2004). This event is perceived by many to be quite significant in underscoring the fact that the military, not the interior ministry, was the actual protector of the regime (Springborg 1987; Satloff 1988).

Like what has been observed in the Zimbabwean case, in Egypt it is difficult to make a well-defined distinction between the army and other security forms as often-times their relationship was and still is quite intricate. In Mubarak's regime, military officers occupied a considerable number of positions in the Interior Ministry and the General Intelligence Directorate (Sayigh 2011: 6). Thus, despite the visible

role of the military, riots by police conscripts were certainly not the only incident that illustrates Mubarak's reliance on the army for survival. In addition to the importance of the mentioned security apparatuses in restraining political activities and repressing street demonstrations, military courts were other worthwhile tools for Mubarak's endurance in power. These special courts were notoriously used not only to try Islamist militants before a military judge but also to suppress nonviolent political opposition. In fact between 1992 and 2000 researchers estimate that a total of 1,033 civilians were tried in military courts and during the same period, 92 were given death sentences and 644 were imprisoned (Kassem 2004: 40).

Yet beyond the military's role in repressing actual or potential challengers of Mubarak's regime and the status quo, army officers were quite immersed in the general civilian sphere and specifically in relation to the economy. According to Mubarak, the military did not represent a part of Egypt's predicaments but was regarded as an engine for economic growth and development (Gotowicki 1999; Satloff 1988). Indeed, there was (and still is) a widespread belief among Egyptians that the organizational characteristics of the military enable it to be best placed to contribute to economic growth. Compared to other institutions and existing public and private enterprises, the military enjoys comparative economic advantages such as low salaries, which when exploited can stimulate economic growth. Yet, perhaps the most advantageous feature of the Egyptian military is that it enjoys the presence of army retirees within the Egyptian administrative system and due to this, it is thus able to "get things done" as it can easily traverse through the intricacy of the bureaucratic maze (Sayigh 2011: 22). Thus the argument during Mubarak's regime has been that the army's economic role can help resolve the country's daunting unemployment challenge on the one hand and engage the considerable number of soldiers in worthwhile activities during low defense periods on the other (Gotowicki 1999: 111).

In this light, while Mubarak curtailed the military's direct and overt political role especially considering the fact that army personnel were banned from voting or engaging in political parties, he provided them with guarantees that would ensure their privileged position. Indeed, both the military and the police have had their own vested interests in preserving the political status quo during Mubarak's extended reign over Egypt. Materially, their exclusion from explicit political life were compensated by government-funded study abroad programs for officers, subsidized housing, cars, electrical facilities, medical care, groceries and even leisure activities (Kassem 2004: 40). Mubarak had also preserved the tradition that started with Nasser to appoint military officers and retired police as provincial governors, who reported directly to the president and who acted as a parallel security arm in Mubarak's battle against Islamists (Kassem 2004; Sayigh 2011).

Moreover, the military remained an instrument of regime survival through its entrenched bureaucratic penetration of the Egyptian state. Indeed, well-connected and presumably loyal military retirees were frequently incorporated into the civilian bureaucracy or state-owned commercial companies for lucrative salaries after and sometimes even during their active service in the army (Sayigh 2011: 4–5). Presidential appointments with regards to the military expanded further due to the implementation of Law 32 of 1979. This law led to the establishment of the Civil Service Authority (CSA) whose main role is to implement projects typically operated by civilians (Kassem 2004: 42). The activities of CSA have dramatically intensified during Mubarak's tenure particularly in terms of infrastructural projects

as well as other large business-related endeavors such as hotels, tourist resorts and various military-industrial complexes (42).

Interestingly, however, it is worth noting that the increased involvement of the army in the Egyptian economy under Mubarak's reign did not involve directly embedding itself in the nonmilitary ministries as in the Nasser era; rather it entailed expanding the economic activities of the military's own branches. In other words, instead of having military men occupy civilian posts as in the 1960s, military personnel throughout the Mubarak regime filled civilian positions within the very military institution (Satloff 1988: 12). These positions were parallel to civilian ministries that have become largely incompetent in delivering basic social services such as food distribution and health care to the public (12). At the same time, the army's commercial enterprises have greatly intensified under Mubarak's tenure in such a way that they often compete and even overpower their civilian equivalents from the private sector considering that the former neither have to pay taxes nor have to deal with bureaucratic red-tape (Roll 2013; Hashim 2011b).

Meanwhile for Mubarak, the military's role in the economy had implicit political purposes as well. Throughout his regime, Mubarak had been consistently hostile to political Islamist groups particularly the Muslim Brotherhood. Coupled with his quest to repress them through coercion, he also tried to limit the importance of these groups for the poor masses. Accordingly, the economic activities of the military was considered one way of curbing the increasingly significant role of private Islamic charitable institutions, and in turn essential for containing the popularity of Islamist opposition groups among the most economically deprived segments of Egyptian society (Satloff 1988: 14).

Despite its presumed significance for Mubarak's survival, the exact contribution of the military to the economy has been (and still is) unknown considering the fact the economic activities undertaken by the army are immune from civilian oversight and have been considered one of the most secretive, impenetrable, and taboo subjects in Egypt. Pundits have estimated that economic interests of the military ranges from 10 to 40 percent of the GDP (El Houdaiby 2014: 4). Profits from military enterprises are considered "national secrets" and are returned into the army's own accounts with virtually no civilian monitoring (Transparency International 2012). Indeed, any type of reporting or public discussion in relation to the army was outright prohibited during the reign of Mubarak (Transparency International 2012). Thus, unsurprisingly, according to Transparency International's Defense Anti-Corruption Index, which measures how the government prevents and minimizes corruption in the defense sector, Egypt is among the lowest-ranking countries considering that it lacks the basic instruments to allow for accountability and anticorruption mechanisms in the defense sector (Government Defense Anti-Corruption Index 2013). This is actually worse than the case of Zimbabwe, which is ranked in a slightly better position.

While the aforementioned Mubarak-military arrangement worked well for the most part, it was clear that the status quo was beginning to transform gradually after the first decade of Mubarak's rule. The neoliberal reforms initiated by the Mubarak regime in the 1990s had several implications for the military establishment, the most important of which was the emergence of a new group of business elites seeking to share power and even compete with Egypt's army officers (El Houdaiby 2014). The rise of a new capitalist elite group belonging to the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), their increasing economic and political strength

throughout the 2000s, the corrupt business networks they forged, and the emergence of the president's son as a rumored heir had created a new political reality for the military. For the first time in Egypt's modern history, the business elite, and not the army, was playing a significant role in the question of who will lead Egypt after Mubarak.

With this in mind, the military used various approaches to protect its political and economic interests toward the end of Mubarak's rule. While the neoliberal economic reforms had introduced other powerful economic players who threatened to overpower the influence of the army as mentioned, this does not suggest that the military officers did not try to engage with the emerging crony capitalist regime by seizing the new opportunities to acquire and accumulate wealth. In addition to installing retired army officers as heads in the emergent private sector and the then newly privatized state-owned companies, the army continued to safeguard its economic independence, maintain its dominance over the local government, control oversight institutions (such as the Administrative Monitoring Authority, which is mandated to combat corruption through the entire state apparatus except in the army), and keep its presence in government via its retired officers in the presidential palace and key ministries (El Houdaiby 2014).

The military establishment was also clearly aware of the strategic objective that had been instated since 1952 of preserving the link between itself and the people. Particularly during the last few years of Mubarak's rule, the military had started to seemingly detach itself from the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) and to depict an interest in ameliorating the negative social outcomes caused by the neoliberal economic reforms of the 1990s (El Houdaiby 2014). As already mentioned, this involved its attempt to perform some of the government's previous duties, including among others, providing subsidized bread for citizens and implementing construction and infrastructural projects. Furthermore, the army had often granted "gifts to the people of Egypt" when it constructed bridges, highways, and ring roads as well as bakeries and butcheries in poor suburbs (Sayigh 2011: 21). Moreover, the apparently altruistic economic contribution of the military was also presented in the form of military hospitals and other numerous social service facilities accessible to the public at subsidized prices.

Thus as Egyptian people despised the existing crony capitalist regime and as their grievances began accumulating over the years, the army had positioned itself in a comfortable distance from President Mubarak and the small circle of elite surrounding him whose legitimacy was clearly dissipating in the years leading up to the January 2011 uprising. For many Egyptians, the prospect that the president's son was the likely successor made them feel discouraged about the potential for change in the country. Yet as they witnessed the uprising in Tunisia, it became clear that regime ouster is conceivable. Eventually, when massive social mobilization placed inexorable pressure on the regime, the military ostensibly backed the demands of the people on the streets and forced Mubarak out of power.

### STRIVING TO SURVIVE: INSIGHTS FROM MUBARAK'S DEMISE

Comparable to the situation in Zimbabwe, the longevity of Mubarak's regime is striking. Yet the revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya have transmitted a significant message that civil-military relations and the endurance of authoritarianism

cannot be taken for granted. These uprisings did not only threaten to weaken African dictatorial regimes that had benefited from financial and military assistance from seemingly “everlasting” dictators like Libya’s Gaddafi, but also challenged to inspire other Africans to organize and depose their rulers in a similar fashion. Following Mubarak’s resignation, many African commentators had quickly reacted by relating the events in North Africa to other African contexts with some intrepidly asking: “So, if Mubarak’s gone, why not Gbagbo and Mugabe too?” (Dickinson 2011). There is no doubt that authoritarian regimes throughout the continent, including Mugabe’s, became increasingly apprehensive about the growing North African prodemocracy opposition movements, their emphasis on the need for a paradigm shift in the existing model of governance, and their possible influence. In Zimbabwe, the anxiety was depicted in several measures including government’s censorship of the Egyptian protests (CBS News 2011; Keita 2011). Students were also detained for watching Al Jazeera and BBC videos showing the downfall of Egypt’s Mubarak and Tunisia’s Ben Ali. Further several human rights campaigners were arrested in the same year for discussing the North African revolutions (The Christian Science Monitor 2011).

In addition to expelling the Libyan ambassador to Zimbabwe and refusing to recognize the National Transitional Council, Mugabe expressed sympathy with the falling autocrats and actively attempted to curb this perceived threat to his long-standing regime by using nationalist sentiments in Zimbabwe to tarnish the revolutions and by framing the Arab Spring as “machinations of the imperialists” (CNN 2011; Smith 2011). Employing the habitual anticolonial-inspired rhetoric, Mugabe strived to convince his people that these revolutions were not about the grievances of Arab populations but were primarily instigated by Western hunger for Africa’s natural resources (Smith 2011). Moreover, the ruling ZANU-PF-controlled state media frequently echoed and supported this discourse by accusing the United States of interfering in Egypt’s “rebellion” (Keita 2011).

This trepidation in Zimbabwe is understandable and can be perhaps explained by the possibility that Mugabe was and still is clearly aware of the similarity between his regime and the presumably unassailable dictatorships in North Africa. Indeed, it is not difficult to draw parallels between Mugabe and Mubarak in particular. The two men are roughly the same age and before Mubarak was ousted, they had spent approximately the same time in office. They were both enduring dictators with a military background. Arguably, one central commonality relates to the role of the military in determining the durability of their regimes. Throughout the years, Mubarak had thoroughly understood that maintaining the military’s loyalty and a firmly entrenched control over the institution was essential for consolidating regime strength. It is through this civil/political-military alliance that Mubarak’s regime had perpetuated throughout the 30 years before the 2011 revolution. This apparently stable situation had caused many pundits to assume that there is an indissoluble and long-lasting relationship between dictators and armies; and it is due to this supposition that most Middle East experts had failed to predict the Arab Spring (Gause 2011).

Since Zimbabwe’s independence, there were various reforms in both ZANU-PF party and government, which strengthened Mugabe’s position. For example, in August 1984 at its national congress, ZANU-PF introduced the Politburo and standing committees of a Central Committee with a mandate to supervise and administer ministries and secure party authority over the government (Weitzer

1990: 140). In this way, the party structures became entangled in state structures, thus moving a step toward ZANU-PF's aim "to replicate the ideology and structure of the party-state"; evolving the party to such an extent that it becomes "part of the state resource-allocation process" (Sachikonye 2011: 36). A 1987 constitutional amendment introduced an executive presidency that combined the functions of head of government, head of state, and commander in chief of the defense force. In 2000, Mugabe also created the Joint Operations Command (JOC), which, like the colonial state's combined operations of the security forces, comprised of the Zimbabwe Defense Forces' two main wings the Zimbabwe National Army and the Air Force of Zimbabwe (AFZ), the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), the Zimbabwe Prison Services (ZPS), and the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), and also representatives of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZLWVA). The creation of JOC was accompanied by internal reorganization of the military "along the lines of operational zones to control the growth and development of the opposition of ZANU-PF," thus marking the security apparatus' provision of logistical support to the war veterans and youth militia to target the opposition (Masunungure and Shumba 2012: 138).

In order to provide an insightful account of Mugabe's success in surviving the serious opposition and successfully stifling internal dissent within ZANU-PF, we have to understand that he inherited a very powerful colonial state bureaucracy that he fused with a legacy of nationalist liberation history in order to maximally exploit the capacity to sustain his control over state institutions and the party. Some commentators have pointed to JOC's intervention in preventing Mugabe to concede defeat in the March 2008 presidential ballot as evidence that the military wields power, and to argue that JOC had mounted a "military coup by stealth" thus reducing Mugabe's to a mere figurehead (Blair 2008). Even Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), contends that Mugabe was pressured by JOC to withhold the result while JOC and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) worked out the ballot to ensure no contender got a majority thus allowing for Mugabe to win with a majority in a runoff (Tsvangirai 2011). Is JOC's involvement and open castigation of the opposition indication that Mugabe has lost power and control and is now subservient to the military? Tendi's recent intervention highlights the view that it is misleading and inaccurate that Mugabe is a mere figurehead and that the military junta wields power over him. For Tendi, this view fails to show how the civil-military "partnership actually works" as the military elites have "unstable ideological commitment to ZANU-PF" and they owe unflinching allegiance to Mugabe because of his preeminence in the party's 1970s nationalist hierarchy and also Mugabe's use of prebends to maintain loyalty (Tendi 2013: 831). As we have shown in the discussion about "militarization," Zimbabwe's political transitions since independence highlight how state institutions are run by the "securocrats," that is, bureaucrats affiliated to the security services. Taking this seriously allows us to realize how Mugabe entrenches his power through support of the military. We have alluded to how the top brass of military and paramilitary units and government departments, strategic commercial entities, and parastatals are headed by members of the ZLWVA who owe allegiance to Mugabe and ZANU-PF (Rupiya 2013; Alexander 2013; Masunungure and Shumba 2012; Sachikonye 2011).

Unlike in the Egyptian crisis where the military positioned itself in a comfortable distance from President Mubarak and the small circle of elite surrounding him

(whose legitimacy clearly dissipated in the years leading up to the January 2011 uprising), the Zimbabwean political meltdown in 2008 was characterized by the military's open show of allegiance and support to Mugabe's regime. This invokes the question about how Mugabe has managed to secure stronger and more lasting support at the height of crisis. In Egypt, it was only after two weeks of intensifying street unrest that the Egyptian army perceived that its vested interests no longer rests on sustaining Mubarak's leadership and the status quo. Yet beyond only withdrawing regime support by not using violence against protestors, many of the most memorable images from the Egyptian revolution were those that portrayed the army even ostensibly backing the Tahir Square uprising and Egypt's democratic transition (Martini and Taylor 2011). We contend that like in Zimbabwe, the Egyptian military had unstable ideological commitment to Mubarak. However, unlike in Zimbabwe, the Egyptian military's affiliation to Mubarak shifted when they realized that they could still sustain their interests even in a post-Mubarak era. The fact that a post-Mugabe dispensation may fail to sustain the interests of the military under Joice Mujuru explains why Emmerson Mnangagwa, who many think to be a hardliner who is not keen to change the status quo, stands a favored successor of Mugabe. Hence, despite variations, both cases epitomize the significant contribution of the military to regime stability, and substantiate the contention that the military institution is among the most essential forces that underpin an autocrat's longevity in power.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have explored an essential dimension of the person of Mugabe related to his emergence as a military man, his contribution to the country's nationalist struggle against colonialism, his relationship with the Zimbabwean military, and the manner in which he has managed to sustain his authority over the institution throughout the years. By citing the lessons and experiences of another post-colonial African context, we have contended that civil-military relations were (and still are) a crucial determinant of authoritarian regimes' durability in power. To the extent that political authorities in Africa heavily depended on civil-military alliances as a strategy to legitimate and prolong their rule, the case of Zimbabwe is no different. As discussed, both Mugabe and Mubarak were military men and both had perpetuated a strong narrative that had overstated their significance in the struggle against foreign domination. It is from this narrative that they were able to draw their political legitimacy within society, on the one hand, and to maintain a solid relationship with the military institution in their respective countries, on the other. Yet the uprisings in North African countries in general and particularly in Egypt demonstrate that the ostensibly stable civil-military relations have transformed as mutual interests and ideologies between politicians and their armed forces have gradually diverged and as their ties have eventually dissipated. Consequently, the dynamic nature and varying level of strength of the relationship between the autocrat and the military establishment have significantly differed in Zimbabwe compared to Egypt. This difference is perhaps attributed to the foundational basis of the civil-military relations in Zimbabwe and the premises of military intervention in politics that have contributed to Mugabe and Mubarak's prolonged existence in power. Given the relatively recent nature of the colonial experience in Zimbabwe compared to Egypt, Mugabe has been able to employ a stronger nationalist narrative

that accentuates his personal achievements during the nationalist struggle more effectively. Further, he has so inserted the military establishment into the social, political, and economic structures of power that they cannot imagine being sustainable without him or a person of his clout, thus rendering him indispensable, unlike in the case of Mubarak. The persistent and guaranteed loyalty of the army to the person of Mugabe for what he symbolizes within the history of the country's struggle against colonial rule continues to uniquely characterize the political environment of Zimbabwe today.

ZANU-PF and other revolutionary movements of Southern Africa have had a lasting impact on the politics of the region not least because the parties formed national governments upon independence, but more because their violent history formed a legacy that persists and continues to inform national politics. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, for example, argues how within the Southern African context the affiliations and allegiances among anticolonial and nationalist movements have taken transnational dimensions with movements maintaining and reinvigorating their ties thus deferring transitions toward democracy (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2011a). For this reason, Melber (2003: 5) argues that the victory of liberation movements "came at a price" as the "anticolonial wars were hardly a suitable environment for instilling, cultivating, internalizing and implementing democratic values and norms." Hence, it can be argued that the liberation struggle left a significant mark on the political culture of the nations that it bequeathed (Sithole 1988: 248).

In the light of this development, we follow Levitsky and Way's who, in their analysis of how party-based authoritarian regimes manage to endure during crises, argue that the allegiances, identities, norms, and organizational structures that were forged during periods of sustained, violent, and ideologically driven conflict are a critical source of cohesion and likely to be durable because they heighten the cost of defection and also provide leaders with extra nonmaterial resources critical to instill and maintain unity and discipline in the face of crisis that threatens the party's hold on power (Levitsky and Way 2012). Mugabe's survival hinges mainly on his ability to sustain the allegiances and identities forged during the internecine moments of the armed struggle to define the organizational norms and ethos of both the party and the state institutions. Unlike in Mubarak's case, it is evident that allegiances and identities formed during Zimbabwe's anticolonial struggle have contributed to Mugabe's survival, and these affiliations continue to redefine the political landscape. Hence we are tempted to adopt the "guiding assumption that politicians govern principally by the methods that they first used to ascend to power" (Bratton and Masunungure 2008: 339). For these two scholars, contemporary postcolonial politics in Zimbabwe can be fully grasped by tracing "ZANU-PF's formative years," which set precedents for postcolonial rule and laid down the guerrilla war (339). The ZANU-PF propaganda machinery has successfully produced a narrative of "patriotic history" to strengthen those identities where they had weakened, and to forge new allegiances where none had existed, thus justifying violence on those who are antithetical to the identities and allegiances.

#### NOTES

1. In his ZANU inaugural address on May 13, 1964, President Ndabaningi Sithole underscored the use of violent confrontation and the adoption of radical politics since the path of nonviolence had failed to yield national independence. At



this congress, ZANU adopted from Sithole's (1979) address, among others, the slogans "we are our own liberators and our own saviours" and "we are the people who must die for this country", thus starting off militant confrontations (Ranger 1997).

2. The period of 1977 and beyond (the "Mugabe phase") became a period when Mugabe consolidated his leadership by restructuring the ZANU party and enabling its overall control over ZANLA. He oversaw the return and ascendancy of old faces, and the incorporation of new ones, within both the structure of the party and the direct execution of guerrilla strategy. Among these were Emmerson Mnangangwa, Eddison Zvobgo, Witness Mangwende, Herbert Ushewokunze, Sydney Sekeramayi, and Nathan Shamuyarira who began to occupy very high positions of the party all to the chagrin of some of the cadres who had military training and had served at the military front. For a debate of the recruitment, see Chung (2008: 188) and Sadomba (2011: 43).
3. According to Heidi Holland (2008: 49), "democratic centralism," which is at the core of Mugabe's personality cult, is an approach whereby after a leader consults the views and sentiments of the generality of the people, "what matters finally is only the view of the leader." For a more nuanced discussion of the implications of democratic centralism in Zimbabwe's postcolonial politics, see Mazarire (2013) and Sadomba (2011).
4. For detailed analyses of the program, its successes and challenges, see, for example, Rupiah (1995) and Musemwa (1995).
5. The debate over Zimbabwe's militarization of political and economic life highlights the importance of a burgeoning corpus of studies in African politics that explains how African political systems rely on political action that is largely "informal, uncodified and unpoliced" (Chabal and Daloz 1999: xix). Similarly, Zimbabwe's form of politics has been described as "politics of disruption" (McGregor 2002).
6. Muhammad Ali reigned from 1805 to 1849 (Gadalla 1998: 63).
7. While Egypt was occupied by the Ottoman Turks in 1517, it had always maintained some degree of autonomy (see Chamberlain, 2013: 33).
8. Urabi was among the only four "native" Egyptian colonels in the army at the time (Hashim, 2011b).

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