

REPRESENTATION OF ZIMBABWE'S WAR VETERANS SKIRMISHES AND DISILLUSIONMENT IN THE *HERALD* AND *DAILY NEWS*

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the skirmishes and disillusionment among Zimbabwe's war veterans as represented by *The Herald* and *Daily News* newspapers. We discuss the landmark physical and violent skirmishes between the war veterans and the ruling party, ZANU PF on the 18th of February 2016, a development that the paper suggests signalled a significant and unprecedented use of force against the war veterans with dire consequences for ZANU PF, the war veterans' patron and Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe and the nation at large. We suggest that these skirmishes and the subsequent disillusionment mark a new era in ZANU PF and the nation at large as the war veterans have been the bulwark of the ruling party. The war veterans have largely been used as willing tools by ZANU PF to maintain its dominant hegemony in Zimbabwe. At independence, war veterans were instrumental in the promotion of a one-party state in Zimbabwe and when the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) posed fierce opposition to ZANU PF, they readily aligned themselves with the ruling party. The skirmishes depict the various multi-layered and multi-factioned conflicts which found expression in intra-party conflicts which were extensively covered in the media between February and July, 2016. Using the survey method, the paper compares and analyses how two daily newspapers, *The Herald* and *Daily News* have represented the conflicts between and among the war veterans and the ruling party and state. Despite the limitation of only focusing on a five month period and the two dailies, the paper concludes that media framing of the events came to parallel the polarised political environment in Zimbabwe. *The Herald* was pro-war veterans aligned to Team Lacoste and anti-war veterans linked to Generation 40; while the *Daily News* was anti-war veterans and Anti-President Robert Mugabe.

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INTRODUCTION

On 12 February, 2016 the First Lady, Grace Mugabe held a rally at Kanyemba Secondary School in Chiweshe where she stunningly castigated the leadership of the war veterans for their purported ego and illusions of grandeur in the party. Prior to the rally, the war veterans under the leadership of Christopher Mutsvangwa had consistently and persistently reminded the party leadership and the nation that war veterans were not just an affiliate of ZANU PF but that they were the foundation upon which ZANU PF was built 53 years ago. They had added that as war veterans, they were the 'stockholders' of the party and that everyone else in the party constituted the 'stakeholders'. As 'stockholders' they considered themselves as the heart and soul of the party and it is against this background that the First Lady who is not a war veteran herself, chided the war veterans for their illusions of grandeur. Introducing herself as 'Mafirakureva' (one who tells the truth) she strongly

chided war veterans for moving around the country boasting about what they did during the liberation struggle (online edition of *The Herald*, 12 February, 2016).

In response to these verbal attacks from the First Lady, the leader of the war veterans, Christopher Mutsvangwa then called his followers to an emergency Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) meeting and instigated them to 'go to war' against G40 and the First Lady for not only side lining but also attacking them (*Newsday* of 16 February, 2016). It should be remembered that at this point in time, a vote of no confidence had been passed against Christopher Mutsvangwa and that at the rally addressed by the First Lady; Patrick Nyaruwata was introduced as the leadership of the war veterans. At the same venue, a section of the war veterans aligned to G40 and led by Mandi Chimene castigated war veterans who behaved as 'if they were operating with more than

one gun during the war' (*Herald* online edition of 12 February, 2016). Votes of no confidence had been passed against a number of people thought to be linked to the former Vice President, Joyce Mujuru. Passing a vote of no confidence had become the latest strategy used within ZANU PF to fight one another and/ or people perceived to be belonging to the 'other' faction. Although no one in ZANU PF publicly admits allegiance to any of the factions, there are two known factions within ZANU PF today, Team Lacoste and G40 (Mungwari and Vhutuza, 2016). Whereas a few prominent war veterans such as Mandi Chimene, the Manicaland Provincial Affairs Minister belong to G40, the bulk of the war veterans led by Christopher Mutsvangwa support Team Lacoste, a faction that is behind Vice President Emmerson Mnangangwa's ascendancy to the ZANU PF throne after President Robert Mugabe. Thus apart from a few war veterans such as Mandi Chimene, G40 is largely made up of people in ZANU PF who are not war veterans that include the First Lady, Professor Jonathan Moyo, Patrick Zhuwao and Saviour Kasukuwere who are all cabinet ministers.

Following the First Lady's rally on the 12th of February, 2016, the war veterans under the leadership of Mutsvangwa resolved to meet as a body in Harare at the City Sports Centre on the 18th of February 2016. This meeting was organised without seeking clearance from the authorities (*The Herald*, 20 February 2016). War veterans who had gathered outside the City Sports Centre were ordered to disperse by the police who informed them that the rally was supposed to be held at the ZANU PF Headquarters. The war veterans argued that the ZANU PF Youth League had been permitted to hold their rally at the same venue and so they deserved the same treatment. Following this confrontation between war veterans and the police, the situation turned ugly and violent as police fired teargas to disperse the gathering war veterans (*Daily News*, 20 February 2016). Cannons with chemical water were also used to disperse the war veterans who had gathered in Harare from across the country without informing their patron, President Robert Mugabe.

The humiliating water cannon and teargas attacks by police on war veterans on this day signalled a physically violent relationship between the war veterans and ZANU PF. Since 1980, war veterans had always been revered and somewhat untouchable (Zimbabwe Peace Project, 2016). The war veterans had been willing tools in the promotion of a one party state that was however thwarted when Edgar Tekere launched his own party, the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). In the 1990s, under the leadership of the late war veterans leader Chenjerai Hunzvi, there was a love-hate relationship between war veterans and ZANU PF but not to the extent of the scale witnessed in February, 2016. At the turn of the

millennium, the war veterans fronted by the late Army commander, General Vitalis Zvinashe infamously declared that the military establishment would not salute the MDC leader, Morgan Tsvangirai even if he had won the national presidential elections because he is not a war veteran.

The war veterans have been the bulwark of the ruling party and through intimidation, manipulation and suppression of dissenting voices have ensured controversial landslide victories at election times (Kriger, 2003; Raftopolous, 2009). Today, with the war veterans' body divided and weakened by doubt, mistrust and a sense of betrayal following their attacks by the First Lady, the Youth League and state machinery, the conflicts now openly play out in the public arena for everyone to witness. Never before had the nation seen the revered war veterans mobilise angrily against the President and their patron as witnessed on the 18th of February, 2016 when they boarded buses in their numbers headed for the capital city, the supreme seat of political power.

These confrontations are significant as they emanate from the antagonism among the three distinct groupings in ZANU PF – the Gamatox that sympathised with and followed former Vice President Joice Mujuru into forming her own party, the Zimbabwe People First (ZimPF), Generation 40 (G40) which is believed to be backing the First Lady as a possible successor to her husband at the exclusion of Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who himself is backed by Team Lacoste, the third faction. While Gamatox broke away from ZANU PF to form their own political outfit; G40 and Team Lacoste are fiercely battling it out within the belly of the ruling party, thereby significantly upsetting the very anatomy of the party. The war veterans' skirmishes spanning the February to July, 2016 period depict the various multi-layered and multi-factioned conflicts which found expression in intra-party conflicts which were extensively covered in the media.

This paper examines how the state-controlled *Herald* and the privately owned *Daily News* covered the war veterans' skirmishes and disillusionment. The paper also interrogates how the two newspapers framed the incident when war veterans were cannon water sprayed and teargas attacked by the police. It further examines press representation of President Mugabe's address of war veterans and the subsequent reactions from the war veterans. Finally, this paper explores journalists' perceptions regarding the usual polarised framing of events by the two newspapers, particularly within the context of intra-party conflict and ever-escalating divisions within the ruling party.

Background to Zimbabwe War Veterans

Zimbabwe's post-colonial history has become the subject of many interpretations (Muzondidya, 2007). This section attempts to examine the participation of former liberation struggle fighters in various activities from 1980 to 2016. The main themes addressed are land reform, election and campaigns; finally internal fighting leading to loss of favour by their patron, President Robert Mugabe. A number of scholars who have written about post-independence Zimbabwe politics have pointed to the continuity of authoritarian governance from the Rhodesian Front to ZANU PF. They have traced the increasingly repressive nature of ZANU PF after independence, whether it was dealing with the official opposition, striking workers and students, or civil society (Raftopoulos, 2009).

We argue that there has always been a 'culture of political intolerance' in Zimbabwe which badly affected ZANU PF's practice of the democratic ideals it espoused (Kriger, 2003). Although multi-party elections were held regularly throughout the 1980s and 1990s, their organisation betrayed ZANU PF's lack of tolerance of political diversity and commitment to democratic politics. It is not possible to separate ZANU PF and government as the ruling party virtually dictates everything. Muzondidya (2007) argues that ZANU PF approached elections as 'battles' and viewed its political opponents as enemies to be annihilated rather than as political competitors. Its electoral dominance was partly achieved through its Gukurahundi strategy, which entailed 'an undisguised, intolerant, commandist and deliberately violent policy towards the opposition' (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997:133). In this paper we argue that war veterans were used to perpetuate violence and intimidation to the electorate, particularly in rural areas. Violence and coercion remained integral to Zimbabwe's electoral politics throughout the first decade of independence. ZANU PF was widely accused of political intimidation in 1980, especially in the areas where its guerrillas had operated during the war. Its supporters perpetrated widespread violence against the opposition in the 1985 and 1990 elections (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997). This paper concurs with Kriger (2003) who argues that throughout 2000, 2002, 2005, 2007/8 and 2013 elections; war veterans perpetrated the worst intimidation and violence to the electorate and opposition candidates. War veterans were deployed in areas they operated during liberation war where they established base camps for months threatening people if they voted for opposition parties, especially, the MDC (Kriger, *ibid*).

Despite its sustained attempts, ZANU PF never managed to establish total political hegemony. There continued to be strong voices of dissent throughout the 1980s, 1990s and the new millennium to the

present day but war veterans and state institution such as the army, police, intelligence service, and public radio and television as well as state owned newspapers commandeer support during elections to ensure electoral hegemony (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997; Moyo, 1999). To consolidate its rule and hold over the population, the government intensified its control over the law, the media and the security services. President Mugabe turned increasingly to the security services, especially the army, for protection against indications of discontent. Through his patronage system, he managed to keep the army leadership close to himself. This could be the reason why later, the war veterans were also incorporated into the army to make sure no one stopped supporting the ruling party. From the mid-1990s, the Mugabe-led government also turned to the war veterans to deal with growing opposition from inside and outside the party. Since the 1970s war of liberation, the party-military nexus has always been strong in both PF ZAPU and ZANU PF, and the military has always had a significant say in party politics (Kriger, 1988).

Kriger (2003) argues that war veterans and ZANU PF not only relied heavily on violence and appeals to a liberation-war discourse to establish their power and legitimacy but also colluded with and manipulated each other to build power and privilege in the army, the police, the bureaucracy and among other workers. We argue that the relationship between war veterans and ZANU PF continues to exist although the former are weakened due to intra-party infighting and conflict; as well as open confrontation with factions within ruling party. This has been compounded by the insults from the First Lady and the ZANU PF Youth League especially under the leadership of Kudzai Chipanga. In *The Herald* of the 18th of February, 2016 in an article titled 'Chipanga threatens *The Herald*' Chipanga is reported to have said:

Who are (Christopher) Mutsvangwa (war veterans leader) and (Victor) Matemadanda (war veterans' Secretary-General). They are not going to do anything, we will give them a 100 metre race and they will fail to run. They are sick with sugar (diabetes) (sic)

The above passage captures the kind of attack that the war veterans also suffered from the Youth League, another important stakeholder of ZANU PF. However, the turmoil within the war veterans' body did not start in February, 2016. It has been simmering underneath for a very long time. In fact, it can be traced to the liberation war to incidents such as the 1974 Badza/ Nhari rebellion and the Vashandi crisis in 1977 (Moore 1988; Sithole, 1999; Chung, 2006). It should be noted that since 1980, war veterans' interests often conflicted with those of the politicians and Chung (*ibid*) has argued that many in government feared the power of a united and

organised veterans group. Muzondidya (2007) concurs with Chung (ibid) and argues that government only grudgingly allowed war veterans to form a representative organisation, the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) in April 1989. This was "a reactive initiative taken by ex-combatants when it had become clear that government had failed to assist them" (Musemwa, 1995:40). Even so, the government tried to keep the war veterans in line by imposing a politically loyal leadership over them until the emergence of the vibrant and radical Chenjerai Hunzvi in 1997.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, there was therefore tension between a radical war veterans' agenda, which sought redistribution of land and other resources to the poor and the ZANU PF politicians' agenda, which sought to act within the confines of the Lancaster House constitution and viewed indigenisation in terms of self-aggrandisement and personal accumulation (Muzondidya, 2007). Although many veterans remained disgruntled over land, unemployment, neglect and corruption in government throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the government was not too concerned about them, as long as its authority was not seriously challenged from other sources (Barnes, 1995). It was only from the mid-1990s, when ZANU PF was reeling under increasing pressure from the MDC that it decided to turn to war veterans to help consolidate its power. The relationship between war veterans and the ruling party is synonymous to that of the dog and hunter, where the hunter only wants to 'use' the dog for catching game after which the dog is forgotten until another hunting expedition.

After initially ignoring the ZNLWVA the government negotiated with it regarding the war veterans' administration Bill (1991), the war veterans Act (No, 4 of 1992) and the war victims' compensation Act (1993). The new partnership was sealed in 1997 when the government agreed to pay unbudgeted gratuities of Z\$50,000 (then about US\$4,500) and monthly pensions of Z\$2000 after disgruntled war veterans, led by the volatile leader Chenjerai, who had besieged president Mugabe in his party office (Muzondidya, 2009). The rejection of the government's constitution in 2000 marked the first major political defeat of the ruling party, against a political and civic opposition that made a national impression in a short period of time. As a multi-class, cross-ratio alliance, the MDC and its alliance confronted the state with a language of democratisation, discourse that resonated in large sections of the population turned the constitutional referendum into a plebiscite on ZANU-PF's rule since 1980 (Raftopoulos, 2009).

In response to the referendum defeat, a series of land occupations led by the war veterans ensued a few weeks later that radically transformed the political and economic landscape of the country, following a loss at the voting response of the population and drawing on a long-post-colonial relationship of collaboration and conflict between the state and the war veterans, the later embarked on a violent process of land occupations (Raftopoulos, 2009). This move represented a decisive shift of power relations within ZANU PF as Mugabe faced with a strong political opposition from without and the explosive pressure from war veterans within his own party, the move decisively towards a stronger alliance with the war veterans. While there were certainly continuities in terms of long-standing grievances on the land question and while the leadership of the war veterans was prominent, the organisational, logistical and coercive support provided by ZANU PF and the state were crucial distinguishing features of the post 2000 occupations.

The ruling party embarked on a dramatic reorganisation of the state structures. The judiciary was reformed to ensure that its decisions complied with the dictates of ZANU PF. In this process the integrity of the legal system was compromised through a combination of pressure on independent judges in the High Court and Supreme Court to resign, repeated refusals by the state to comply with court judgements on the land and other issues, and the issuing of amnesties to people who had carried out acts of violence on behalf of the ruling party (Feltoe, 2001). President Robert Mugabe appointed war veterans to replace High Court and Supreme Court judges. In the civil service, particularly in rural districts, teachers, health workers and local government officials considered to be opposition supporters were dismissed by war veterans committees. Thus, the war veteran leadership took over the implementation of the Fast Track resettlement program, side lining local developments structures (McGregor, 2002).

The state turned to an increasing reliance on violence during elections, within the contexts of growing militarisation of state structures, as attested by scores of human rights reports produced during this period (Raftopoulos, 2009). During the 2000 general and 2002 presidential elections campaigns the MDC and its supporters were subjected to widespread violence, murder, attempted murder, torture, rape, disappearances and death threats - march of it carried out by the ruling party's youth militia group and war veterans. Moreover, the violence and irregularities of the elections were implemented by the state whose key positions- ranging from the election directorate and Attorney General's Office to the heads of the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), Zimbabwe Electricity Supply (ZESA), National Railways of

Zimbabwe (NRZ) and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) were manned by war veterans and/ or personnel with a military background (Rupiya, 1995).

We argue that the 2008 Presidential run-off election was the most violent in the history of the country. It was characterised by violence, leading to murder, disappearances, torture, rape and manipulation at the hands of war veterans, youth militia, state security agents and police. The unresolved elections in 2008 led to the Government of National Unity which ended in 2013 when ZANU PF won in both the parliamentary and presidential elections. However, ZANU PF's 2013 election victory was short-lived as it was immediately followed by intra-party conflicts that led to factional fights and divisions in the ruling party. This gave birth to war veterans' disillusionment too as they fought amongst themselves because one faction aligned to Mnangagwa while the other rallied and continues to rally behind G40.

War Veterans: Past and Present alliance with ZANU PF and PF ZAPU.

The emerging conventional wisdom is that war veterans' power was first visible in their violent 1997 protest against the ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU PF). Led by Chenjerai Hunzvi the war veterans demanded to be compensated for their efforts and in some cases for injuries suffered during the war. Their subsequent extraction of sizeable lump-sum payments and monthly war service pensions is portrayed as the birth of a new alliance between the ruling party and veterans (Kriger 2003). This came to play a pivotal role in the parliamentary and presidential electoral campaigns between 2000 and 2002 (Alexander and McGregor, 2001; Meredith, 2002 and Kriger 2003). It can be argued that war veterans have been used by the ruling party in all campaigns in elections in 2005, 2008 and 2013. A central argument of Kriger (*ibid*) is that war veterans and the ruling party were both collaborators and antagonists, often simultaneously. Each sought to build power and privilege through mutual manipulation of the other, through the use of violence and intimidation, and through legitimating appeals to their participation in the liberation war.

Kriger (2003:140) argues that "... just as the ruling party used Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA) veterans to win electoral power among the rural majority in 1980 and then to build power in the army" the politicians from the ZIPRA camp also used war veterans (ex- ZIPRA [Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army] alongside the youth to try to preserve their own power among the people. As in the first seven years after independence, in the past – 2000 campaign period, war veterans often had their own agendas, distinct from the party's as they sought

power and privilege, both of which were threatened by a change of regime. Whereas ZANLA veterans and the ruling party targeted the opposition party, Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) and its former ZIPRA guerrillas from 1980 to 1987, in the post- 2000 campaign period, the party and war veterans colluded against the new political opposition the MDC. Across both time periods, war veterans and the party relied on liberation war appeals, violence and intimidation to attain their distinct and overlapping objectives (Kriger, *Ibid*).

We argue in the paper that war veterans in the post-2013 period have conflicts among themselves, with the G40 faction and the First Lady and to some extent against their patron- President Robert Mugabe. The conflicts are multi-layered and complex as war veterans are divided amongst themselves along factions as alluded to earlier on in this paper. It is imperative to trace war veterans' participation in ZANU PF's strategies to maintain hegemony in the post-2000 era. In the campaign for the parliamentary elections between February and June 2000, ZANU PF and the war veterans colluded in an organised campaign of violence and intimidation in the rural areas against suspected MDC supporters and especially African farm workers on white-owned commercial farms (ZHR NGO Forum, July 2001 cited in Kriger, 2003). Both party leaders and war veterans claimed they were fighting a third chimurenga (liberation war) to consolidate and defend the war of liberation violence against MDC supporters and/ or MDC electoral victory.

In order to win the Army's loyalty at independence, the ruling party joined together ZIPRA and ZANLA guerrillas in order to build power over the Rhodesian forces. The army was a critical resource in the party's strategy for retaining power after 2000. Both of the armies' top leaders (themselves liberation war veterans) as well as many other veterans in the army, had vested interests in the party remaining in power (Kriger, 1988). In the early years of independence, the ruling party pressed and persuaded the white-dominated private sector in the bureaucracy, which were both seen to be pro-Smith and pro-Muzorewa bastions to employ demobilised guerrillas and in particular those belonging to ZANLA in order to build a power base (Kriger, *ibid*). In February 1981, the ruling party engendered the creation of a politically subservient federation of trade unions, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU). Veterans, most of whom were unskilled workers, sought and obtained positions in the committees in order to enhance their power in the work place. Some workers tended to refer to their liberation war credentials to gain power over others (Schiphorst, 2001). They also wanted to see other liberation war veterans in management positions and resented to

working under African managers who had served the former regime (Kriger, 2003).

War Veterans and the ruling party colluded in at least two ways. Though the party was chiefly concerned with establishing control over the urban workforce, its leaders frequently proclaimed a commitment to grand schemes to transform the society and empower workers through workers' participation. This rhetoric encouraged the militant aspirations of the unskilled ex-combatants on the committees. The party also became involved in solving workplace disputes when ex-combatants on workers' committees marched the managers against whom they had grievances, to party headquarters. The militancy of workers and the party intimidated management who had to learn to deal with the new power structure and its socialist petition. The entire exercise was infused with intimidation and occasional violence. Ultimately, the party withdrew support for veterans' activities in the workplace when it no longer deemed them expedient, leaving veterans with a sense of betrayal (Kriger, 2003; Schiphorst, 2001; Dean, 2001).

According to Kriger (2003) the ruling party's privileged recruitment and promotion of demobilised ZANLA veterans over ZIPRA veterans at independence and better-educated civilians was intended to provide patronage and ensure loyal cadres. The central government also instructed urban councils to hire veterans on their staff. Government and party officials portrayed demobilised ex-combatants who joined the cooperative movements in the early 1980s as a revolutionary vanguard whose war credentials were well suited to collective enterprises.

According to official rhetoric, cooperatives were a step towards either economic modernisation or a socialist transformation, a goal of liberation struggle (AKwadi-Ameyaw, 1997; Mumbengegwi, 1984; 1987). The party's disinterest in the development of ex-combatant cooperatives is evident from the minuscule provision of government resources to an allegedly high profile development program. Moreover, the party's partisan interests prevailed over any commitment to the development of cooperatives. From outset, the ruling party was hostile to ZIPRA cooperatives and their NGO supporters and the security organs intimidated, harassed, and often attacked ZIPRA cooperatives (Hoffman, 1990; Kriger, 2003). The ex-combatants had little interests in cooperative other than as a source of income. Those who were advanced their demobilisation funds to form cooperatives- they had to purchase their own means of production-often abused their funds. It should be pointed out that ZIPRA veterans were more educated than ZANLA veterans on how they used demobilisation funds. Ex-combatants on state cooperatives, where the state

owned the means of production, formed elite who used their party links and credentials to gain privileged access to government resources and dominate their fellow co-operators. (AKwadi-Ameyaw, 1997). The cooperative movement was a high profile and symbolic regime campaign. At the same time it was an opportunity to incorporate ex-combatants as party patrons and to build party power (Kriger, 2003).

Framing Analysis

This paper draws inspiration from Tuchman's 1978 view that news is a social construct dependent on the ideology of those who produce it and the framing theory which argues that people do not only acquire factual information about events from the news, but also how much value to attach to those events (Chari, 2010). Entman (1993:52) contends that:

To frame is to [select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral education and/or treatment recommendation] for the item described.

Melkote (2009:549) defines framing as 'the way which news media organise, treat and present issues, events and news objects as news objects as news makers'. Framing may involve ignoring or down playing certain aspects of an issue, creating an artificial balance in coverage, media and journalists, speaking with the voice of the government, exaggeration and lack of analysis of events and use of a narrow selection of experts (Melkote, *ibid.*549). Framing influences how audiences think about issues by invoking certain interpretation of information. Parenti (1993:200) views "framing as a technique..." Frame is achieved in the way in which news is packaged the amount of exposure, the one of the presentation, the amount of exposure, the one of the presentation, the accompanying headlines and visual effects, and the labelling and vocabulary. This paper examines the representation of war veterans' skirmishes agenda and disillusionment in two daily newspapers in order to understand the manner in which the two newspapers framed the issues and events on war veterans. The paper attempts to address the following research questions. Firstly, how the two daily newspapers represented war veterans' issues and events during the period under review and secondly, why they represent succession struggles and factionalism in the manner that they did and the implication of such representation for the ruling party ZANU PF.

METHODOLOGY

This paper analyses the representation of war veterans' skirmishes and disillusionment in the state owned *The Herald* and the privately owned *Daily News* between February and July 2016. A number of

considerations influenced the selection of the two newspapers. Firstly, being daily newspapers they were able to report events and issues as they obtained on a daily basis despite time constraints. Secondly, the choice of the papers emanates from the sharp editorial differences of the two newspapers. *The Herald* has a left leaning and is generally pro-war veterans aligned to the Mnangagwa faction Team Lacoste, while the *Daily News* proclaims a liberal approach – playing a ‘watch dog’ role of the press. It is hoped that comparison of representation of war veterans’ skirmishes and disillusionment in the newspapers will help us understand better the succession struggles and factionalism in ruling ZANU PF party. Selected news articles, hard news articles, editorials and opinion articles published between 12 February and July 2016 were subjected to qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis.

Framing of Succession Struggles

Although Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa does not openly tell President Mugabe that he wants to succeed him, his actions speak volumes about his ambitions. *The Herald* and *Daily news* have covered the ever escalating succession power struggles during the period under review. Hurungwe East Member of Parliament, Sarah Mahoka on 10 February, 2016 at a Zanu PF meeting held at its Headquarters openly challenged Emmerson Mnangagwa to openly declare his presidential ambition to succeed Robert Mugabe, an incident which shocked the entire nation (*The Herald* 11 February 2016). At the same venue, just before a Politburo meeting was held on the 27th of July, 2016 Mandi Chimene, the Manicaland Provincial Affairs Minister again assertively exposed VP Mnangagwa, with all temerity and audacity, telling the VP to come open on his presidential ambitions; and metaphorically dismissing him to ‘stay in water’ as the ‘crocodile’ (*The Herald*, 28 July 2016).

Mandi Chimene publicly denies any links with G40 but she belongs to that faction. She has publicly declared her disdain of Christopher Mutsvangwa, who is known to support the ascendancy of Mnanganwa as the next ZANU PF and Zimbabwe’s president. Ironically, in both separate incidents; Mnangagwa did not immediately respond but took another platform to dismiss Mandi Chimene’s attack on him as a waste of time. We argue that both Sarah Mahoka and Mandi Chimene’s open challenge and attack of the VP can only be done with the tacit blessing of the First Family. At both fora, the First Family was there but neither of the two immediately rebuked Mahoka or Chimene save for President Mugabe’s usual discourse and rhetoric on the need for ‘unity’. The reality is that there is no unity in the ruling party as evidenced by the never ending power and succession struggles which have badly affected the party and Zimbabwe’s economy.

In an attempt to discredit Emmerson Mnangagwa and his Team Lacoste faction, the First Lady Grace Mugabe launched country-wide rallies reminiscent of 2014 – 2015 rallies she held that eventually led to the name calling and purge of former Vice President Joice Mujuru. The *Daily News* covered the First Lady’s rally at Kanyemba Secondary School in Chiweshe on 12 February, 2016. ‘Grace mauls Mnangagwa’ was the headline that appeared in the *Daily News* of 13 February, 2016. The newspaper’s anti-Team Lacoste was clear in that it suggested the ‘embattled Vice President was finished’ and that his political career in ZANU PF was ‘hanging’ in the balance. *Daily News*’ support for G40 is depicted in its report as:

The powerful First Lady ominously accused Mnangagwa – among a litany of other deadly charges – of deception, faking love for Robert Mugabe and in fact working feverishly to topple the long-ruling nonagenarian from power.

In the *Daily News* of 13 February, 2016 an article titled ‘Mutsvangwa kicked out’ (p.1) reported that the then War Veterans Minister and a key ally of embattled Vice President Mnangagwa was booted out as chairperson of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA). On 12 February, 2016 after First Lady’s rally in Chiweshe the newspaper reported the story as:

The move, long reported as pending by the Daily News not only leaves the faction rallying behind Mnangagwa severely weakened in ZANU PF’s brutal factional and succession wars, but it puts his future both in the ruling party and in government in serious jeopardy.

Of interest to note was that Mutsvangwa had already been expelled from ZANU PF Mashonaland West Structures. ZNLWVA members who met in Chiweshe on 12 February, 2016 led by the war veterans’ council of elders chairperson Patrick Nyaruwata and the association’s national spokesperson Mandi Chimene - passed a unanimous vote of no confidence against Mutsvangwa and his leadership team of Secretary-General Victor Matemadanda and Headman Moyo as well as Mutsvangwa’s wife, Monica. Contrary to the *Daily News* representation, *The Herald* projected Mutsvangwa as supported by war veterans who openly showed their unwavering allegiance to him. In an article with a headline ‘War Veterans breathe fire...rally behind Mutsvangwa...accuse G40 of fronting regime change,’ the chief reporter showed his undisguised allegiance to Team Lacoste and war veterans yet anti-G40 stance. The newspaper said: *ZNLWVA rallied behind its national chairman Cde Christopher Mutsvangwa and dismissed the vote of no confidence passed against him and three others last week is null and void accusing the protagonists of being agents of regime change...they all pledged*

solidarity with Cde Mutsvangwa, his wife Monica, vice chairman Headman Moyo and secretary general Victor Matemadanda, who were purportedly ousted last Friday by some war veterans headed by Cde Mandy Chimene. This solidarity message was punctuated with the slogan 'Pasi ne G40...' (Down with G40). (This slogan is reminiscent of what was used during liberation struggle which possibly meant the killing of targeted individuals).

The tone and choice of vocabulary by *The Herald* reporter depict the newspapers' position- aligning with one faction of the ruling party (Team Lacoste) and at the same time expressing vitriol towards another ZANU PF faction G40. In another *Herald* headline 'Shut up, President tells G40, Lacoste' 20 February 2016, positioning of the G40 then Lacoste is deliberate. Mugabe is reported to have attacked those fanning tribalism and factionalism- the newspaper is silent on direct attack of Team Lacoste but indirectly accuse Vice President Mphoko's sentiments of ethnicity at Chiweshe rally, where he said the President will not hail from Karanga people. It would appear the two Vice Presidents have been testing each other's powers from the time they were appointed, with Mnangagwa giving an impression that he is the more senior while Mphoko asserts that they are equal.

In another article of *The Herald* 20 February, 2016 titled '(President)... apologies to war veterans' the newspaper's senior reporter wrote:

President Mugabe yesterday apologised to war veterans who were harassed by the police on Thursday in Harare, but said their chairman Cde Christopher Mutsvangwa was to blame for organising a meeting without seeking clearance from the authorities. The president said he was not aware of the meeting and other ministers in the security sector- Ministers Sydney Sekeramayi, Kembo Muhadi, Ignatius Chombo were also not briefed about the war veterans' meetings. Cde Mutsvangwa should answer on whatever happened during their skirmishes between the police and the war veterans. (p1)

What comes out clear according to the party is that Mutsvangwa acted in an irresponsible manner which brings the name of the party and the government into dispute. 'ZANU PF Youth League respects war veterans', 'War Vets take Chipanga, ZRP to court,' the two articles were juxtaposed in *The Herald* of 20 February 2016. On the 21st February movement celebrations held in Masvingo at the Great Zimbabwe monuments, the ZANU PF Youth Secretary Pupurai Togarepi, a Mnangagwa ally seemed favoured by the first family only to be thrown away later. *The Herald* quoted him saying '*The Herald* must continue to do work and must continue to do that without fear...' (p16). On the same page, the newspaper

vilifies the deputy youth leader Kudzanai Chipanga who was later appointed to lead the Youth League - a new favourite of the First Family. This only shows that there are neither permanent friends nor enemies in politics; only permanent interests - implying; I scratch your back and you scratch mine. Contrary to *The Herald's* positive framing of Mutsvangwa and war veterans aligned to Mnangagwa faction, the *Daily News* represents Mutsvangwa in a desperate situation because of his unrepentant and unremorseful outspoken conduct.

'Mugabe belts Mutsvangwa ...and signals end of Minister's ZANU PF, Govt career' headline of *Daily News* of 20 February, 2016 projects a tone that spells doom for the flamboyant war veteran. *Daily News'* chief reporter wrote:

An angry President Robert Mugabe thoroughly fed up with his ruling ZANU PF's undisciplined and warring underlings - savaged ousted war veterans leader Christopher Mutsvangwa last night, virtually signalling the end of his career both in the former liberation movement and in government.

The representation is at complete variance with *The Herald* which projected war veterans in solidarity with Mutsvangwa, something ignored by *Daily News*. Instead, the *Daily News* depicted Mutsvangwa as verbose and 'an alleged Kingpin of the party faction loyal to Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa....' Also of interest is the contrasting description given to the two VPs on the photograph caption as: *The long willing nonagenarian was flanked by both his two deputies as he made his unusual address - with a decidedly surly- looking Mnangagwa to his right and a comparatively relaxed co - VP Phelekezela Mphoko to his left.*

The *Daily News* of 20 February, 2016 also carried a story titled 'War vets reduced to street kids' which was accompanied by a photograph whose caption read: 'Anti-riot police disperse war veterans in Harare on Thursday.' The lead paragraph portrays a picture that there are two distinct camps of war veterans reported as:

Hundreds of war veterans aligned to vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa were on Thursday reduced to 'street kids' after spending the night in the open, as they were left stranded when police thwarted their demonstration to push President Robert Mugabe to reinstate the suspended ZNLWVA's executive.

This article chronicles war veteran's disillusionment as they expressed their plight, arguing that their children were suffering. The war veterans also attacked G40 and Grace Mugabe. Among a litany of charges levelled against Mutsvangwa and his colleagues including his wife Monica, was the allegation of disrespecting President Robert Mugabe and his wife Grace and making press statements

using abusive language directed at other party and government officials. The *Daily News* quoted a section of distraught war veterans who said:

We are being victimised by the police, they forget we brought that freedom they are enjoying today. The police are refusing to grant us permission of holding a meeting as war veterans, we don't support anyone, and we want to have a meeting to discuss our welfare as war veterans. We fought for this country and are now treated like fools. We don't want to sit back and relax while some politicians are mocking us. We are now a laughing stock, we are being treated like foreigners in our own land, this must stop... We fought for this country so we deserve to be respected... This so called G40 group should stop saying bad things about us...

The discourse and rhetoric of war veterans that they are more important than any other citizen can be noted – demanding public sympathy. The impression we get is that war veterans feel they lost their precious prime years of their lives in the bush fighting for Mugabe to rule as an ungrateful black man, whose power and authority they have assured and protected, but which he has abused from the first day of Zimbabwe's independence and now sending war veterans to prison. They have lost a further 36 years fighting his personal wars in the party and country in general. Mugabe has mastered the art of using arbitrary arrests, detentions, abuse of State machinery against his perceived enemies to retain power despite growing resistance from citizens and war veterans.

In a fashion reminiscent to what usually happens each time opposition political parties gather, the war veterans were dispersed using water cannons and tear gas after they camped at the City Sports Centre, Harare. This was a humiliating incident to ex-combatants and it was unprecedented.

The *Daily News* of 22 February, 2016 published an article with the headline 'VP dumps Mutsvangwa'. The newspaper reported that party insiders opposed to Mnangagwa succeeding Mugabe told the *Daily News* that they also knew when it came to the crunch that the VP would not protect his allies who are on the receiving end of a savage and unrelenting factional mauling in ZANU PF. Mnangagwa dumped Mutsvangwa and war veterans just as he did to many in 2004 after the so called Tsholotsho Declaration; this has since alienated and caused bad blood between VP Mnangagwa and Professor Jonathan Moyo.

The *Herald* of 2 and 3 March, 2016 carried articles titled: 'War Veterans' meeting hangs in balance' and 'War Veterans meeting barred' respectively. The projection is that police clearance was not given because war veterans could not meet certain

requirements according to police- all this was to further frustrate them. The *Daily News* of 24 March, 2016 published an article titled 'Fresh ZANU PF Split imminent'. The representation was that Team Lacoste was escalating the setting up of its own structures while war veterans stepped up pressure on Mugabe for an explosive meeting between the President and restive war veterans on 7 April, 2016. The framing confirms the view that ZANU PF and war veterans' agendas have always been different. This suggestion is supported by another passage in the *Daily News* that captured the disunity in the war veterans' body. 'G40 war veterans defy service chiefs' was one of the headlines in the *Daily News* of 25 March, 2016. The article depicted divisions among the ex-combatants along factional lines. The newspaper reported:

...They have dismissed the meeting that took place in Harare... in preparation for the planned get together between war veterans and President Robert Mugabe scheduled for April 7. This comes after service chiefs officially recognised former war veterans Minister...Mutsvangwa as the legitimate ZNLWVA chairperson...ordered the Mandi Chimene-led war veterans ... to stop causing confusion.

We suggest that service chiefs back Mnangagwa to succeed President Mugabe hence their support for Mutsvangwa. President Mugabe it seems lacks firm control of securocrats. Mugabe secretly fears service chiefs as he cannot directly challenge them to stop interfering with active politics. These have ensured he remains in power to protect their interests and wealth.

In another related article on war veterans, the *Daily News* of 29 March, 2016 carried a story with a headline 'Team Lacoste courts Mujuru...as restless war veterans prepare to meet Mugabe.' The newspaper significantly paid more attention to the ugly factional and succession wars devouring President Robert Mugabe's ZANU PF, projecting that the party faction rallying behind Mnangagwa's mooted presidential aspiration was stepping up efforts to woo supporters of former Vice President Joice Mujuru. It was in this light that war veterans aligned to the faction were agitating for ex-combatants in Mujuru's corner including former war veterans leader Jabulani Sibanda who was supposed to be part of the planned make or break meeting with President Robert Mugabe on 7 April, 2016.

It is significant to point out that President Mugabe cunningly schemed to scuttle and frustrate the war veterans' agenda on succession by engaging pre-planned committee meetings which came up with thematic items opposed to war veterans' expectations. On the much anticipated meeting on 7 April, 2016 no room was given to discuss the ZANU PF succession plan – leaving ex-combatants more

disillusioned. President Mugabe has never wanted the issue of succession to be openly debated because he is obsessed with holding onto power forever (Raftopolous, 2009). His own wife has also suggested that the President will rule Zimbabwe from the wheelchair in his old age.

The Herald of 8 April, 2016 published a headline 'President lays law 'Unity, discipline, respect' (p.11) and another article on the same date titled 'War vets in historic meeting' (p.2). The newspaper's representation of the meeting was to project Mugabe's desperate efforts to talk about what has become a cliché - discipline, unity and respect in the midst of the ever widening rift in the ruling party due to factional and succession battles. The argument we raise is that President Robert Mugabe allowed factionalism because he has failed to hand over power for a long time.

On the Million– Man March held on the 25th of May, 2016 the President Mugabe reiterated that 'Factionalism was treasonous' (*The Herald*, 26 March 2016) (p4). The newspaper quoted President Mugabe saying it was up to the ordinary people to elect the leadership that they want, adding that it was unnecessary for party officials to then challenge that appointment. This further showed President Mugabe's wish to rule as long as people vote him into power. He is expected to run for presidency on a ZANU PF ticket in 2018 when Zimbabwe holds another round of local, parliamentary and presidential elections. The President had this to say: "*The party was never founded on no other principles other than principles of unity... togetherness and ...harmony*" (*The Herald*, 26 March 2016).

President Mugabe was silent and deliberately chose to down play the critical role played by the late Army General Solomon Mujuru for war veterans to acknowledge Mugabe as their new leader after the mysterious death of Josiah Tongogara. Mugabe said it was the late Josiah Tungamirai who helped unite the party. We agree with Willems (2004) and Chari (2010) who argue on selection and silence and salient and silence respectively in media representation of issues and personalities. *The Herald* senior reporter, Lloyd Gumbo wrote:

He[President Robert Mugabe]also spoke about how other leaders during the liberation struggle, among them the late Vice President Simon Muzenda and the late national hero and Air Chief Marshall Josiah Tungamirai who implored him to take up leadership of the party to give it direction after their leader Rev Ndabaningi Sithole left...(The Herald of 26 March,2016 p.4).

The deliberate omission of the late General Solomon Mujuru is shocking (President Mugabe and ZANU PF always believe Solomon Mujuru engineered the

formation of MDC). We agree with Willems (2004) who argues about selection and silence. News is always a selection of events that are taking place in the real world at a particular moment in time. News is therefore not simply that what happened but that which can be presented as news worthy. Whereas some events will be highlighted, others will be ignored. Therefore, *The Herald's* representation of key personalities who played a critical role in the liberation struggle can be understood by its *downplaying agenda* (Our emphasis).

Also significant to reckon is the fact that the Million– Man March was organised by the Youth League, where the ruling party's Deputy Secretary for the Youth League Kudzai Chipanga played a key role. War Veterans who thought they could participate in organizing the march was not given any chance thereby leaving them distraught and isolated. It is unfortunate that unemployed ZANU PF youths are now largely used by the ruling party in solidarity events and other situations like election campaigns. The war veterans are no longer as willing as they were a few years back. Thus, in their place, the ruling party now relies on the Youths. This has further isolated the war veterans and also added to their disillusionment. This suggestion is supported by what happened during the Million- Man March. The War Veterans snubbed at the Million –Man March and in their place the Youths and Women's League headed by the First Lady hogged the limelight.

Feeling let down by the First Family, the war veterans have increasingly come out in the open about their preferred Mugabe successor. The *Daily News* of 10 June, 2016 carried the headline 'Angry Mugabe mauls War Vets'. This came after the war veterans declared 'President Mnangagwa or bloodshed...' where they argued that he was the 'only candidate for succession' and any attempt to block his takeover would 'cause bloodshed in the country.' The former fighters have never been coy about their succession preference, a choice that has provoked the wrath of President Robert Mugabe's wife Grace and her allies in the G40 faction of the ruling party. The *Daily News* quoted President Mugabe addressing a ZANU PF Central Committee meeting saying:

ZNLWVA was formed to cater for the welfare of our veterans and not to champion the struggle for political change... Do we see another rise of dissident activity?...it's not your business to talk a lot on who shall be the president...

Unfortunately, the discourse of Gukurahundi – the dark era of the early 1980s when the government unleashed the North Korean trained 5th Brigade that massacred an estimated 20 000 innocent civilians in Matabeleland and the Midlands sent a chill down the spines of most of the gathered ZANU PF big wigs, let

alone re-opening the wounds of the Ndebele people. This is an insult to efforts made through national healing and reconciliation, as any insensitive and callous utterances, especially from a President reminds citizens of genocidal intentions.

“VP Mnangagwa’ begs for mercy....and throws Mutsvangwa, war vets to the dogs’ was the *Daily News* headline of 11 June, 2016. Another article on the same date was “Storm over Gukurahundi threats” (p.1). The newspaper’s chief writer reported: *Sensing danger, VP Mnangagwa was apparently forced to beg for his political life in the warring Zanu PF... disowning restless war veterans and other senior ruling party officials in the process who have been agitating for him to succeed President Robert Mugabe. The VP had allegedly taken the humiliating decision of begging Mugabe for mercy publicly [during the Zanu PF Central Committee meeting] saying he had nothing to do with the dissenting former freedom fighters and the campaigning of other senior party officials who are operating in his name...*

Consequently, the outspoken Mutsvangwa was expelled from the ruling party leaving the war veterans more disillusioned. Arrogance, unremorseful and unrepentance sealed his political career both in the party and government. Mutsvangwa has since been recalled from Parliament on 19 July, 2016. Subsequently, many other war veterans and youths were expelled from ZANU PF following the damning Communique they issued announcing the divorce from ZANU PF and most importantly President Robert Mugabe. This only goes to show that as Kriger (2003) posits, President Mugabe’s relationship with the former freedom fighters has always been tenuous and a lot more of this unfinished business is yet to play out in the public sphere.

CONCLUSION

Generally, there is a common form of representation of War Veterans by the state owned press *The Herald*, which is characterized by positive and sympathetic perception of them, especially war veterans aligned to Mnangagwa and by extension VP Mnanganwa and Team Lacoste. On the contrary, the privately owned *Daily News* tends to depict negative stereotypes on ex-combatants. *The Herald* previously projected War Veterans positively but now seems to adopt a selection in which War Veterans rallying behind G40 are maligned while those aligned to Team Lacoste are glorified. The argument is that state owned newspapers currently toe the line of the Mnangagwa faction which is in control of the government media. The *Daily News* on the other hand portrays War Veterans aligned to Team Lacoste at the receiving end and in a dilemma. The dilemma facing reporters and the press as far as such negative representations are concerned, is related to

epistemological issues on the nature of journalism and the ideologies that inform the practice (Ogenga, 2010). A good example of this dilemma is simply to define what constitutes news or identifying the value criteria for news selection such as time, objectivity, fairness, prominence, novelty, proximity and extensity. The application of these criteria puts journalists under pressure, which results in sensationalism, superficiality and distortion of news. The notion of time for example, forces journalists to take a fresh angle in every story even if there are no major new developments as what we witnessed in both *The Herald* and *Daily News*.

Both newspapers covered events and issues on war veterans but differed in their representations. All *Daily News* reports emphasised succession and factional struggles which escalated divisions in ZANU PF. The newspaper underscored the point that the ever increasing factional wars were a result of President Robert Mugabe’s unwillingness to hand over power despite his old age. On the other hand, *The Herald* projected that President Mugabe is ‘here to stay’ as evidenced by its extensive quotes of First Lady Grace Mugabe, Mugabe himself, Youth and Women’ League voices at different forums such as the Million-Man March held on 25 May 2016. Grace actually reiterated that Mugabe will rule from a wheel-chair and be declared the President from the grave.

This study has found out that the local newspapers are polarised along their peculiar ideological and ownership leanings. *Daily News* reports used expressions like ‘mauls’, ‘finished’, ‘hanging in the balance’, among others to create an impression that Mnangagwa’s lofty ambition to succeed Mugabe was thwarted. The newspaper also used metaphors that were meant to disparage Mutsvangwa like ‘kicked out’, ‘signals the end of’ etc which depicted a sense of loathing to the outspoken former war veterans’ chairman. On the contrary, *The Herald* reports repeatedly used phrases which projected support for Mutsvangwa and war veterans such as ‘ZNLWVA rallied behind...’, ‘null and void’, ‘...all pledged solidarity’, ‘...apologised to war veterans’, etc.

News reports analysed in this study were found to inform readers that war veterans were aligned to three distinct factions; Team Lacoste (Mnangagwa camp), G40 (Young Turks rallying behind Grace Mugabe), war veterans who went away with Joice Mujuru (now President of Zimbabwe People First). Phrases such as ‘VP war vets’, ‘G40 war veterans...’ and ‘ZimPF war vets’ were used to describe three camps of war veterans. The paper also found out that President Robert Mugabe’s relationship with war veterans is tenuous and in serious conflict as the ex-combatants remain defiant to their patron. The climax was the expulsion of

Christopher Mutsvangwa (resulting in him being recalled from Parliament) and other key war veterans such as Victor Matemadanda, Headman Moyo, Francis Nhando and Douglass Mahiya from ZANU PF. The four war veterans were victims of the fall-out that followed the release of the stinging statement in the 'mysterious' communique that called on Mugabe to resign.

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