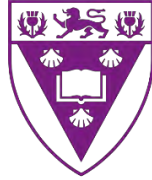


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**RHODES UNIVERSITY**

*Where leaders learn*

**Youth, Political Violence and ZANU-PF Politics in Zimbabwe, c.1950-2018**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of a**

**PhD in the Department of History,**

**Rhodes University.**

**Supervisor: Professor E. Msindo**

**2022**



“The Roots of Violence: Wealth without work, Pleasure without conscience, Knowledge without character, Commerce without morality, Science without humanity, Worship without sacrifice, Politics without principles.”

—Mahatma Gandhi—

**DEDICATION**

*For Mr & Mrs S. V. Mukwarami*

## ABSTRACT

*This study is a socio-political aspect of Zimbabwean history. It examines the development of youth political violence starting from the late 1950s when violent forms of African political mobilisation emerged to 2018 when the first election without Robert Mugabe was held. It explores how early nationalist parties such as the Salisbury City Youth League (SCYL), Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (SRANC), National Democratic Party (NDP), Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and later the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) mobilised and socialised youths into political violence to understand the roots of the violent political culture in Zimbabwe. This study shows that youths were an important part of the strategies of these political parties in countering the violence of the colonial state as well as mobilising mass support for the movements during the liberation struggle. It reveals that war collaborators (mujibhas and chimbwidos) were central role players in instigating political violence against innocent and defenceless people during the war. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Youth brigades and the ZANU-PF Youth League became a key constituent for state-socialist developmental goals but they were at times manipulated as a resource for political violence when Mugabe's power was challenged. The study shows that more grotesque violence occurred in the 2000s era when the National Youth Service (NYS) was introduced and state-sanctioned vigilante groups like Chipangano in Mbare emerged in response to the rise of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and diminishing of consensual power. This study argues that youth were not mere victims and perpetrators of political violence, but they were a collection of various interest sub-groups with diverse agendas and a sense of agency. Some joined violent groups for their social mobility, power, impunity and economic opportunities availed to the group members. Data for this study was drawn from Mbare and Highfields (in Harare Province) and Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe (in Mashonaland East Province).*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Special thanks go to my friend, the late Dr Ivo Mhike for his priceless help and support. We have known each other for a short time, but words are not enough to explain his impact on my life. He was a humble, intelligent, kind-hearted and approachable gentleman. May His Soul Rest in Peace.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AP</b>	Associated Press
<b>CCJPZ</b>	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe.
<b>CHRA</b>	Combined Harare Residents Association
<b>DCC</b>	District Coordinating Committee.
<b>GNU</b>	Government of National Unity.
<b>HCC</b>	Harare City Council.
<b>HRT</b>	Harare Residents Trust.
<b>HRW</b>	Human Rights Watch.
<b>LAA</b>	Land Apportionment Act.
<b>MDC</b>	Movement for Democratic Change.
<b>MDC-T</b>	Movement for Democratic Change - Tsvangirai.
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament.
<b>NAZ</b>	National Archives of Zimbabwe.
<b>NCA</b>	National Constitutional Assembly.
<b>NDP</b>	National Democratic Party.
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations.
<b>NLHA</b>	Native Land Husbandry Act.
<b>NYS</b>	National Youth Service.
<b>NYTC</b>	National Youth Training Centres.
<b>PCC</b>	People's Caretaker Council.
<b>PVs</b>	Protected Villages.
<b>RAF</b>	Rhodesian Air Force.
<b>RDC</b>	Rural District Council.
<b>RSF</b>	Rhodesian Security Forces.
<b>SCYL</b>	Salisbury City Youth League.
<b>SRANC</b>	Southern Rhodesia African National Congress.
<b>SS</b>	Selous Scouts.
<b>UMP</b>	Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe.

<b>UANC</b>	United African National Council
<b>YBM</b>	Youth Brigade Movement.
<b>ZANLA</b>	Zimbabwe National Liberation Army.
<b>ZANU-Ndonga</b>	Zimbabwe African National Union-Ndonga.
<b>ZANU-PF</b>	Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriot Front.
<b>ZAPU</b>	Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union.
<b>ZCTU</b>	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union.
<b>ZILIWACO</b>	Zimbabwe Liberation War Collaborators.
<b>ZIPRA</b>	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army.
<b>ZNA</b>	Zimbabwe National Army.
<b>ZNP</b>	Zimbabwe National Party.
<b>ZPP</b>	Zimbabwe Peace Project.
<b>ZRP</b>	Zimbabwe Republic Police.
<b>ZUM</b>	Zimbabwe Unity Movement.

## GLOSSARY

***Chimbwidos*** – errand girls.

***Chipangano*** – a pact or covenant.

***Dare reChimurenga*** – ZANU Council of War.

***Dumbuzenene*** – literally means sway bellies in reference to well-fed people. It refers to the groups of Shona youth caught by the Ngoni and trained in Mfecane fighting methods popular with the military personnel of Shaka the Zulu, thus becoming expert raiders.

***Ginya-nomics*** – a term coined by Tendai Biti (former Finance Minister in the Inclusive Government) when mocking the government's approach to arresting inflation.

***Gukurahundi*** – a Shona word that refers to the wind that separates chaff from grain. Politically, it was a blatant, intolerant and deliberate violent policy that targeted the opposition parties and their supporters.

***Harari*** – the name of Mbare during the colonial era. It was derived from the name of a local Shona chief who used to rule the place in the pre-colonial era.

***Komuredhi*** – a Shona name for comrade.

***Kungwavha-ngwavha*** – making things work in an informal economy.

***Madirativhange*** – a chaotic situation where people can do whatever they wish without any restrictions.

***Madiro*** – unrestrained behaviour

***Makonzati*** – concerts

***Mandimbandimba*** – enforcers or hatchet men, also known as rank marshals at Mbare bus terminal. Their main function was to collect protection fees from both long-distance buses and local transports.

***Mrewa*** – colonial spelling for Murewa. Uzumba Maramba-Pfungwe used to be part of Murewa District during the colonial era.

***Mugabeism*** – refers to the ZANU-PF ideology which entailed one-partyism, leadership cult, racism, xenophobia and anti-democracy.

***Mujibha*** – errand boys.

***Mumera mutete*** – a Shona metaphor that means the youths are not yet ripe for national politics.

***Mushika-shika*** – informal transport.

***Musika*** – a marketplace.

***Pungwe*** – were political gatherings convened by the guerrillas during the night to politicise and educate the masses during wartime.

***Sabhuku*** – headman

***The 21<sup>st</sup> February Movement*** – a movement intended to inculcate the ideas of ‘patriotism’ into Zimbabwean youths. It was launched ZANU-PF youth league on the 62nd birthday of Robert Mugabe in 1986.

***The Green Bombers*** – a name given to NYS militias owing to their uniforms (military fatigues).

***The Third Chimurenga*** – was a violent and retributive form of land reform initiated by the Mugabe government on 15 July 2000 to repossess land from white commercial farmers and redistribute it.

***Vakomana*** – boys.

***Vatengesesi*** – sell-outs/ traitors.

***Vigilante group*** – an organised extra-legal movement whose members takes over the roles of the state, in a particular area, especially its monopoly of violence with or without the blessings of the state.

***Zhanda*** – means destroying something into debris. It was the name of ZAPU vigilante groups that vandalised the infrastructure of the colonial government.

***Zhii*** – vigilante violence that occurred in Bulawayo in the 1960s under the influence of nationalist leaders like Micheal Mawema and Sketchley Samkange.

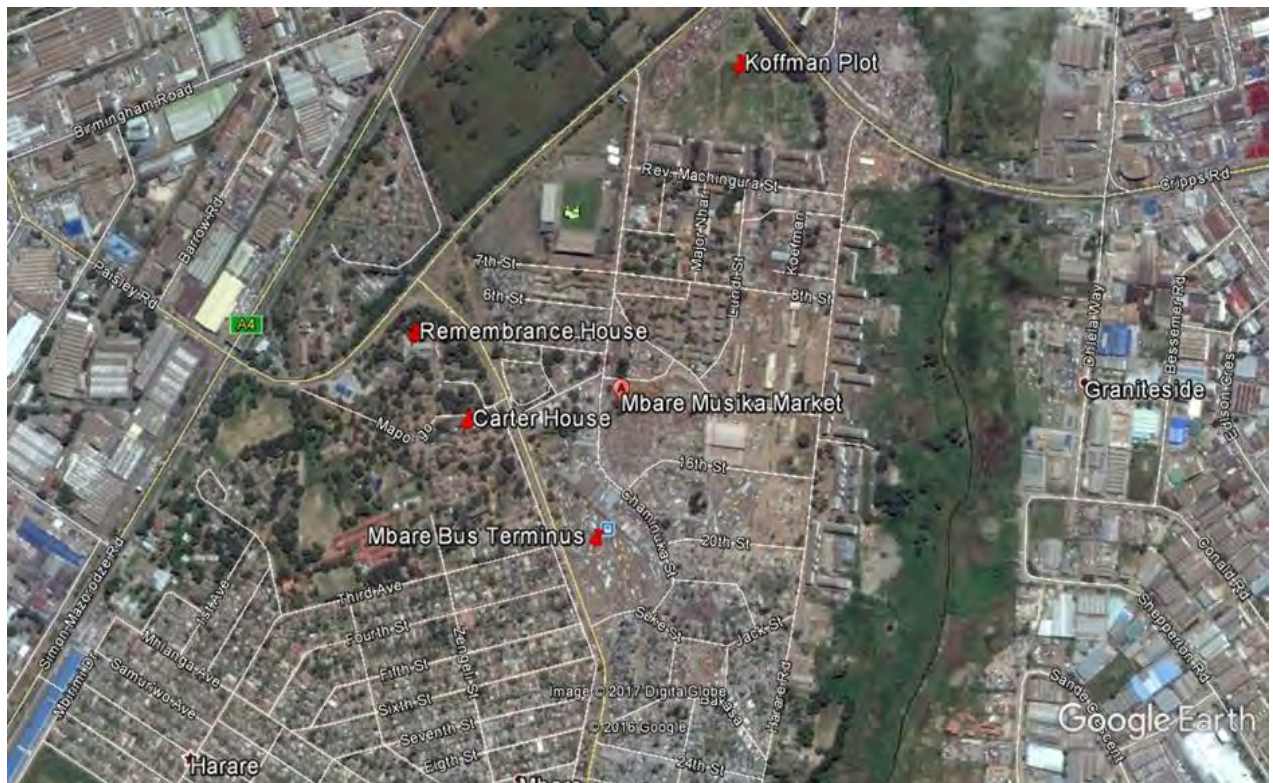
## MAPS

Figure 1: Map of Mbare District.



Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/@-17.8616333,31.0203737,14z/data=!4m2!10m1!1e1>

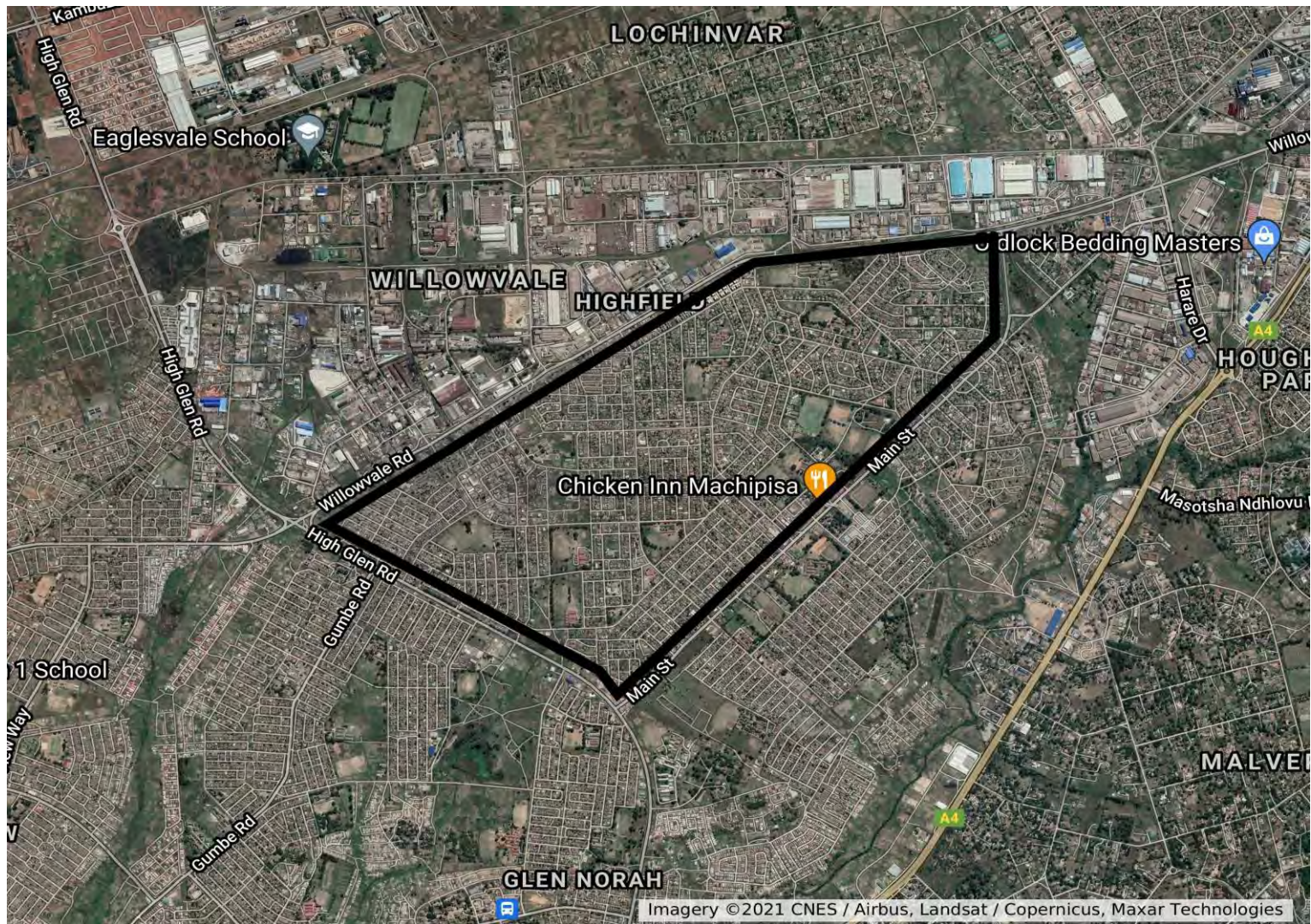
Figure 2: An Arial Map of Mbare District.



Source: [www.maphill.com/zimbabwe/harare/harare-urban/mbare/location-maps/physical-map](http://www.maphill.com/zimbabwe/harare/harare-urban/mbare/location-maps/physical-map)

Figure 3: Map of Highfield

📍 Highfield borders



Source: [https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1yGgfObtFy\\_HorhaDIqyJL8ODxnnhvyG&ll=-17.883442186598607%2C30.970129453613282&z=14](https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1yGgfObtFy_HorhaDIqyJL8ODxnnhvyG&ll=-17.883442186598607%2C30.970129453613282&z=14)

Figure 4: Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe (UMP) Maps.



Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/@-17.1114814,31.4378083,9z/data=!4m2!10m1!1e1>



Source: [https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/An-evaluation-of-the-vulnerability-of-Uzumba-\(UMP\)-Kwenda/57ab9e7a4ba79a2f1621e9ad65848671e3537fad/figure/4](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/An-evaluation-of-the-vulnerability-of-Uzumba-(UMP)-Kwenda/57ab9e7a4ba79a2f1621e9ad65848671e3537fad/figure/4)

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction: Context and Methodology

This study examines the development of political violence in Zimbabwe, starting from the late 1950s when violent forms of African political mobilisation emerged to 2018 when the first election without Robert Mugabe's name on the ballot was held.<sup>1</sup> It explores how the early nationalist parties such as the Salisbury City Youth League (SCYL), Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (SRANC), National Democratic Party (NDP), Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and later the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) mobilised and socialised youths into political violence. These youths became an important part of the strategies of these political parties in countering the violence of the colonial state as well as mobilising mass support for the movements during wartime. The ZANU Youth wing and war collaborators (*mujibhas*<sup>2</sup> and *chimbwidos*<sup>3</sup>) were central role players in instigating party violence and coordinating grassroots support. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Youth brigades and the ZANU-PF Youth League were key constituents for state-socialist developmental goals, but they were at times manipulated as a resource for political violence when Mugabe's power was challenged.<sup>4</sup> However, more grotesque violence was witnessed during the era of Zimbabwe's post-2000 Fast Track Land Reform when the National Youth Service (NYS) was introduced and state-sanctioned vigilante groups like Chipangano emerged in response to the rise of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and diminishing consensual power. This chapter consists of five sections. It starts by presenting the background of research districts. Second, it attempts to explain the concept of 'youth' and 'political violence'. Third, it explains youth political violence in the Zimbabwean context. Forth, it presents the research methods that were used to carry out this study. It ends by giving synopses of all chapters.

#### **Brief background of research districts**

This thesis examines the subject of youth political violence in Mbare, Highfields, and Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe (UMP). Mbare is the oldest African suburb in Harare, built

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<sup>1</sup> \*This thesis is the outcome of research conducted at the Rhodes University African Studies Centre, a Cluster Centre of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence at the University of Bayreuth, funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) under Germany's Excellence Strategy – EXC 2052/1 – 390713894.

<sup>2</sup> *Mujibhas* is a Shona term which refers to able-bodied boys who worked with the guerrilla's providing information, mobilising the masses, identifying the counterrevolutionaries and other errands.

<sup>3</sup> *Chimbwidos* worked as errands girls and they also helped the guerrillas with information, entertainment during the night vigils (*pungwes*) and providing concubines.

<sup>4</sup> N. Kriger, 'ZANU(PF) Strategies in General Elections, 1980-2000: Discourse and Coercion', *African Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 414, (2005), pp. 1-34; See also I. Mhike, 'Political Violence in Zimbabwe's National Youth Service, 2001-2007', *What Politics? Youth and Political Engagement in Africa*, (Boston: Brill, 2018), p.247.

around 1907 during the colonial regime.<sup>5</sup> It is located southwest of Harare's central business district, separated from the city centre by a railway line and wetland adjacent to the Mukuvisi River (see Figures 1 and 2 in the Maps section). It was formerly called Harari location and then later changed to Mbare after independence.<sup>6</sup> It consists of areas such as Magaba, Jo'burg lines, Matererini Flats, Mbare Flats, the main bus terminus, Mbare Musika, Rufaro Football Stadium and Siyaso Industrial Park. The hostels in Mbare were built to accommodate African employees of nearby companies such as Swift, Coca-Cola, tobacco firms and others.<sup>7</sup> The settlement developed in leaps and bounds providing some opportunities to people residing in rural areas closer to the town. It is said that women travelled from as far as Mahusekwa in Beatrice with their agricultural produces in ox-drawn carts to sell them at Mbare Musika. The district is famous for its aggressive and competitive business pursuits ranging from vending, drug dealing, and scrap metal trading, among others. The residents always joke saying '*Kuno hapana chaunoshaya, kana musoro wemunhu unomuwana*' – Here you can get whatever you want, even the human head.

Mbare was an important township during the liberation struggle with places like Mai Musodzi and Stoddart Hall being used for political gatherings before the ban of successive African political parties in the 1960s. After independence, the ZANU-PF government continued to use the Stoddart Hall for political and social occasions, and whenever it accords someone a national hero status his or her body passes through this hall before burial. Since 2000, the Mbare district became a stronghold of the opposition party, the MDC. This prompted the rise of Chipangano, a state-sanctioned vigilante group, which was intended to disrupt the activities of the MDC-controlled council in the district. Today, the inhabitants of Mbare can be perceived as a microcosm of Harare's poverty-stricken population as they are facing an avalanche of problems ranging from a shortage of shelter, competition for market stall space, unemployment, poor service delivery to meagre and poor formal state infrastructure.

Highfield is the second oldest suburb in Harare and it was built in 1930. It is commonly called *Fiyo*, in the local *patois*. It is situated in the south-western part of Harare; bordering

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<sup>5</sup> T. Yoshikuni, *Elizabeth Musodzi and the Birth of African Feminism in Early colonial Africa*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> T. Scarnecchia, *The Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940-1964*. (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008). It was named after Chief Mbari of the Kore-kore clan who occupied the area before the coming of the White settlers in Zimbabwe.

<sup>7</sup> 'Mbare: From pioneers to overpopulation', *The Zimbabwean*, 14 August 2012.

Southerton, Glen Norah, Willowvale and Waterfalls (as seen in Figure 3 in the Maps section). Highfield encompasses two main zones, namely Old Highfield and New Highfield. Old Highfield was built in the 1930s and it contains four areas, that is the Pounds, Five Pounds, Twelve Pounds and The Stands. New Highfield was built later in 1956 and it includes areas like Jerusalem, Canaan, Egypt, Cherima, Lusaka and Western Triangle. Highfields has been identified as the cradle for Zimbabwean nationalism as it was a launchpad for the establishment of all the main nationalist parties including ZAPU and ZANU. The township was home to many nationalists (for instance Robert Mugabe, Joshua Nkomo, Maurice Nyagumbo, Leopold Takawira and others) who led the liberation struggle. Major events like the 1979 raid on the Workington fuel reservoirs were plotted and launched from Highfields.<sup>8</sup> In the post-colonial era, Highfields continued to be a launchpad of political activities in Zimbabwe with ZANU-PF and later MDC using Zimbabwe Grounds for their political gatherings. For a very long time, until the rise of the MDC, Highfield was a ZANU political stronghold since the 1960s. The violent activities of ZANU youth militias were also rampant in this township since the decolonisation era.

Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe (UMP) - a district located in Mashonaland East Province, 164 km outside Harare - was the rural case study for this thesis. It encompasses the northern part of the pre-1969 larger Murewa District. The district is situated on the land between the Mazowe River and its tributary, Nyadire (see Figure 4 for details).<sup>9</sup> It is made of two legislative districts that are Uzumba (which comprises areas like Karimbika, Nyadiri, Muswe, Uzumba, and Nakiwa) and Maramba-Pfungwe (which constitutes areas like Borera, Kafura, Mutawatawa, Dindi and Chitsungo).<sup>10</sup> The inhabitants of this area are called the *Budja* Shona people. Most of the homesteads in UMP have grass-thatched cooking huts as they are a symbol of the Shona traditional homesteads. The *Mbende/Jerusarema*<sup>11</sup> dance, which is one of the most essential parts of the elusive culture of Zimbabwe, is central to their culture. The area is bucolic and undeveloped; inhabited by underprivileged peasant farmers who survive on subsistence farming. The district is heavily infested with a high level of poverty since

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<sup>8</sup> C. Charamba, 'Bombing their way to freedom', *The Herald*, 02 April 2015.

<sup>9</sup> UMP RDC Background, [ump.org.zw/background/](http://ump.org.zw/background/), Accessed on 25 September 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe, [https://www.pindula.co.zw/Uzumba\\_Maramba\\_Pfungwe](https://www.pindula.co.zw/Uzumba_Maramba_Pfungwe), Accessed: 04 February 2020.

<sup>11</sup> *Mbende/Jerusarema* is understood to have started as a distracting war tactic when the pre-colonial Shona warriors wanted to outmanoeuvre their adversaries. It is typified by gymnastic and sensual movements by women and men, driven by a polyrhythmic drummer accompanied by men playing woodblock clappers and by women handclapping, yodelling and blowing whistles.

some areas especially Maramba and Pfungwe usually experience serious dry spells during the rainy season and persistent periodic droughts.

Politically, UMP was a hotbed of the liberation struggle. It played an integral role in hosting the ZANLA guerrillas (it was part of the Takawira sector). It attracted guerrilla activities because of its savanna bushes and mountains. The area has many people who took part in the liberation struggle as guerrilla fighters. The UMP people have suffered from the viciousness and callousness of the colonial state. The area was an easy target of the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSFs) and the Selous Scouts (SS) whose headquarters was situated in Bindura (only 90 km from UMP). UMP had a higher proportion of people who were detained and some lost their properties and houses owing to the brunt of the war. Also, it was subjected to the Protected Village system (PVs) probably because Chief Nyajina Bere (then leader of the Uzumba clan) supported the guerrillas and he jealously fought for the land.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the war, UMP was used by the ZANLA guerrillas and recruits as a highway to Mozambique. Knowing that the area had many largely uninhabited areas, many ex-guerrillas came and settled in UMP after the end of the war. Most of the local headmen, as well as the community leaders, are war veterans with an indubitable allegiance to ZANU-PF and their children have been employed within the security services. The struggle, with its terror tales, carnage, tears and sweat left lifelong marks on the landscape and disquieting memories in the UMP district. However, it is these memories that influence people's political choices, 40 years later, after the attainment of independence. The area has turned into a vanguard to ZANU-PF's implacable domination in Mashonaland East Province.

### **Understanding the concepts 'youth' and 'political violence'**

The term 'youth' is a socio-political construct that is difficult to define. Some scholars define youth as a transitional phase (self-evident by rituals or bodily changes) in which a child develops into an adult. Along the same vein, Robert Curtin perceives 'youth' as a complex interplay of personal, institutional, and macroeconomic changes that most young people have to negotiate.<sup>13</sup> He went on to argue that the indicators of transition to adulthood include the ability to participate and contribute to the family's economic welfare.<sup>14</sup> Contrary, Alex De

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<sup>12</sup> M. Samanyanga, 'Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe (UMP) Dynasty', 16 February 2020, <https://www.blog.zimtribes.com/uzumba-maramba-pfungwe-ump-dynasty/>, Accessed on 23 June 2021.

<sup>13</sup> R. Curtin, 'Youth and employment: A public policy perspective', *Development Bulletin*, Vol. 55, No. 1, (2001), pp.7-11.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

Waal avers that youth is an intricate, ‘intermediary and ambivalent category, generally defined by what it is not: youth are not dependent children, nor are they independent and socially responsible adults.’<sup>15</sup> The functional definition is controversial, if not problematic, since the transition from childhood to adulthood is, especially in Zimbabwe, blocked or stretched out due to socio-economic difficulties that make the adulthood status unattainable.<sup>16</sup>

Scholars like Stephen Ellis delineated the term youth culturally *vis-à-vis* the roles of individuals in a particular social context.<sup>17</sup> In Africa, there are substantial cross-cultural dissimilarities as to when a person befits to be called an adult. In traditional societies, youth is inherently connected to rites of passage of some sort. Using West Africa as an example, Ellis argued that ‘secret societies’ were fundamental in the initiation of youths.<sup>18</sup> In modern-day societies, numerous symbolic steps are noticeable, like getting married, attaining the right to vote, procuring a driver’s licence or buying alcohol.<sup>19</sup> However, the cultural definition of youth cannot be universalised, since it is not applicable in some other contexts.

In some literature the term youth is understood in terms of the level of adulthood and marital status, others define it chronologically, circumscribing it to biological age (and they define youth as a person between childhood and adult age)<sup>20</sup> but there is no consensus regarding the age group being referred to.<sup>21</sup> For the United Nations, a youth is any person between the age of 15 and 24 years old.<sup>22</sup> For the African Union and the Government of Zimbabwe, it is anyone between 15 to 35 years old.<sup>23</sup> For the ZANU-PF, there is no agreement on what exactly a youth is. Some ZANU-PF members understood the concept in the context of Generation forty (G-40), meaning anyone who is below 49 years old falls under the generation of youths. On paper, a youth is between 15 and 35 years of age, but the reality is otherwise, for instance, the former Youth League leaders like the late Josiah Tungamirai was in his late 50s when he became a Politburo Secretary for Youth, Absolom Skhosana who

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<sup>15</sup> A. De Waal, ‘Realising Child Rights in Africa: Children, Young People and Leadership’, in De Waal/Argenti, *Young Africa: Realising the Rights of Children and Youth*. (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2002).

<sup>16</sup> Youth crisis refers to situation whereby the transition into adulthood has been blocked the youth remain in a limbo stage.

<sup>17</sup> S. Ellis, ‘Liberia 1989- 1994: A Study of Ethnic and Spiritual Violence’, *African Affairs*, 94, (1995), p.375.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, *The Mask of Anarchy*. (London: Hurst, 1999).

<sup>19</sup> S. Ellis, ‘Liberia 1989- 1994: A Study of Ethnic and Spiritual Violence’, *African Affairs*, 94, (1995), p.375.

<sup>20</sup> A. M. Honwana, *The Time of Youth: Work, Social Change, and Politics in Africa*. (Boulder: Kumarian Press, 2012); J. Abbink, *Being Young in Africa: The Politics of Despair and Renewal*. (Boston: Brill, 2005), p.6.

<sup>21</sup> O. Hodzi, ‘The Youth Factor in Zimbabwe’s 2013 Harmonised Elections’, *Journal of African Elections*, Vol. 13, No. 2, (2014), pp.48-70.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations, *Young People’s Transition to Adulthood: Progress and Challenges*. (New York: United Nations, 2007); see also World Bank *World Development Report: Development and the Next Generation*. (Washington DC: World Bank, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> African Union, *African Youth Charter*. (Addis Ababa: African Union, 2006).

succeeded him was above 60 years old and Pupurai Togarepi was 55 years old when he was dismissed from the Youth League. One can argue that in ZANU-PF, youth can be any person who is ready to do adolescent activities irrespective of age. It seems there is a tight competition for leadership at the higher echelons of the party, and for that reason, those who vie for power descend further down to the Youth League to contest there. The participation of youth in ZANU-PF politics is of little meaningfulness in the present scheme of things. The youths are considered as ‘*mumera mutete*’<sup>24</sup> and they are excluded from political posts outside the Youth League.

Although definitions based on age have a level of objectivity, they pay no heed to several important realities. Noteworthy is the fact that youth as a socially constructed concept has less to do with age than with behaviour and status. The meaning of the term youth, and how they are perceived by society, differ or change with time and space, and within societies too. In ZANU-PF politics, the term ‘youth’ has some political connotations as it entails mobilising for or against a political party.<sup>25</sup> This study perceives youth in Zimbabwe as both indifferent and politically active social shifters, a demographic dividend and a potentially dangerous youth bulge, victims (fragile populace which needs protection) and perpetrators (iniquitous and promiscuous).<sup>26</sup> This study defines ‘youth’ as a collection of various interest sub-groups (of young people between 15 and 35 years old) with diverse agendas, taking advantage of a weak state/ party that wants to use them for their ends and allowing them a latitude to go to certain extremes, so long they serve the greater interests of the state/ party. It is noteworthy to mention that youth can comprehend what is happening around them, make sense of it and define their agendas. They can exercise agency and their participation in political violence is often prompted by the need to access economic opportunities for survival and social mobility.

Political violence, like the term youth, is also difficult to succinctly define as it involves broad sets of political actions that can be perceived by an opponent as violent. Surveys of political violence show that incidents of violence have historically variable conceptualisations and theories that may not be trans-historical, but specific to particular historical epochs.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> A Shona metaphor which means the youths are not yet ripe for national politics.

<sup>25</sup> M. A. Oosterom, ‘Youth and social navigation in Zimbabwe’s informal economy: Don’t end up on the wrong side’, *African Affairs*, Vol. 118, No.472, (2019), pp.485–508. S. Wilkins, ‘Ndira's Wake: Politics, memory and mobility among the youth of Mabvuku-Tafara, Harare’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 39, No.4, (2013), pp.885-901.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> M. Shaw, ‘Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks for Organised Violence’, *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, Vol. 3 No. 1, (2009), pp. 97 – 106.

Scholars theorised political violence in varied ways: some discussed the phenomenon using the notion of instrumental justification for violent means found in Hannah Arendt's works.<sup>28</sup> Arendt's work titled *On Violence* critiques other approaches (by scholars like Frantz Fanon and George Sorel) that underscore the 'legitimacy' or intrinsic value of violence".<sup>29</sup> The problem with Arendt's work is that it neglects state violence leaving it to be presumed and untheorized. She focused much on dissenting action, particularly that of the Black Power movement in America, and thus her work tends to charge those who object to state violence with violating the peace. And so, any work that tries to define political violence using the Arendtian conception of violence is prone to replicate a definition that overlooks state-sponsored violence.

Others used Zartman and Rotberg's state collapse hypothesis which argues that violence can be the cause or consequence of the incapacity of the state to deliver services to the citizens.<sup>30</sup> In Rotberg's words, states are deemed collapsed 'when they are consumed by internal violence and cease to deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants.'<sup>31</sup> This hypothesis will be reviewed in detail in Chapter 2. Some adopted the Fanonian thesis of violence of a 'colonised man' who changed from being a victim to a perpetrator.<sup>32</sup> This section endeavours to spell out how the concept is applied in the Zimbabwean context. Moser and Clark believe that political violence refers to 'the commission of violent acts motivated by a desire, conscious or unconscious, to obtain or maintain political power'.<sup>33</sup> This implies that at the core of this notion there is the pursuit of political objectives.<sup>34</sup> In this milieu, political violence occurs in the collective sphere and violence is perpetrated by a mob or group of people aligned to one political party against people from another party, mainly because the targeted individuals happen to belong to that political party.

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<sup>28</sup> H. Arendt, *On Violence*. (New York: Harcourt, 1970)

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> K. Eylem Özkaya Lassalle, 'State Failure and the Political Violence Phenomenon: A Comparative Analysis of Iraq and Syria Cases', *European Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, (2016), pp.168-175.

<sup>31</sup> R. I. Rotberg, 'Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators', 2003, [https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2016/07/statefailureandstateweaknessinatimeofterror\\_chapter.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2016/07/statefailureandstateweaknessinatimeofterror_chapter.pdf), Accessed on 23 December 2020.

<sup>32</sup> F. C. Aghamelu and E. C. Ejike, 'Understanding Fanon's Theory of Violence and Its relevance to Contemporary Violence in Africa', *An African Journal of Arts and Humanities*, Vol. 3, No. 4, (2017), pp.22-45; M. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and Genocide in Rwanda*. (Princeton, University Press, Princeton, 2001).

<sup>33</sup> C. Moser and F. Clark, *Victims, perpetrators, or actors? Gendered armed conflict and political violence*. (New York: St Martin Press, 2001), p.36.

<sup>34</sup> D. A. Hibbs, *Mass political violence: a cross-national causal analysis*. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973).

Some scholars (like Nzungu-Ntalaja, Ayang-Nyongo and Diouf) posited that the definition of political violence is characteristically reliant on the typology that isolates political violence from other types of violence such as economic violence and social violence.<sup>35</sup> Political violence usually involves intimidation, murder, abductions, assaults, rape and torture. On the other hand, economic violence is typified by a person or group relentlessly chasing business opportunities by violent means or threats of violence. Social violence can be delineated as the empowerment of one person over another.<sup>36</sup> However, many scholars conceded that political violence must not be analytically disjointed from economic and social violence since all these categories of violence are interconnected.<sup>37</sup> During the field research, I discerned that in Zimbabwe political violence happens *apropos* political competition, but again, it is a notion with strong socio-economic underpinnings that may be the reason why violence has become a political culture in the country. Political violence in Zimbabwe is primarily state-sanctioned, involving ZANU-PF politicians who intend to further their political agendas. The ZANU-PF party-state manipulates the state security structures (the police, military and CIO) and the youths to cow the citizens into submission. This study will explore the kinds of political subcultures that this violent political culture tends to create, wittingly or unwittingly.

Noteworthy, there are some forms of violence depicted essentially as apolitical whilst in actuality are primarily political. For instance, the *Operation Murambatsvina* (Operation Clean up) of 2005, which resulted in the displacement of more than 700 000 people from Harare and other cities after the government destroyed the shanty towns, was justified by the ZANU-PF government as the enforcement of the city by-laws, yet it was a political ploy to punish the MDC supporters. Furthermore, other forms of socio-economic violence committed by state-sanctioned groups such as Al-Shabab, Chipangano and MaShurugwi gangs are rebutted by the state as rogue violence by apolitical youths. This shows how the incentive to commit political violence can be motivated by desires to attain personal objectives or economic opportunities, thus, there are some difficulties to have a clear-cut differentiation between political, economic and social violence.<sup>38</sup> The view that political violence involves

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted in J. O. Osamba, 'Violence and the Dynamics of Transition: State, Ethnicity and Governance in Kenya', *Africa Development*, Vol. 26, No. 1/2 (2001), pp. 37-54.

<sup>36</sup> C. Moser and F. Clark, *Victims, perpetrators, or actors? Gendered armed conflict and political violence*. (New York: St Martin Press, 2001), p.36.

<sup>37</sup> C. D. L. Rios, 'Understanding political violence', [http://www.umbc.edu/llc/llcreview/2004/Understanding\\_Political\\_Violence.pdf](http://www.umbc.edu/llc/llcreview/2004/Understanding_Political_Violence.pdf), pp. 30–32, Accessed: 12 May 2020.

<sup>38</sup> L. Waldorf, 'Mass justice for mass atrocity: rethinking local justice as transitional justice', *Temple Law Review*, Vol. 79, No.1, (2006), pp.30–32.

violent acts carried out primarily to achieve political power and generally it is a collective action involving a group of people is fundamental for this thesis. However, various scholars have asserted that political violence is a relative notion contingent on the context in which it is used.<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, for violence to be considered political, there should be some intent to change the political process. In this way, the state may feel threatened and recourses to violence to defend itself; giving rise to state violence (a variant of political violence).<sup>40</sup> Fashina and Garver concurred that political violence refers to the use of force (physical or non-physical force) with the intent to damage or eradicate humans or non-human targets to preserve or alter political systems, institutions or policies.<sup>41</sup> In Zimbabwe, the state ceased to be a means of effecting the will of the general public, it has become a representative of narrow and selfish interests and unavoidably, its support base has withered. The Zimbabwean state is repressive to its citizens as it undermines their needs and aspirations and, more importantly, uses violence to disallow them to practice their democratic rights. Given the sentiments discussed above, this study views political violence as a coercive strategy to consolidate power and suppress dissenting voices. It views youth violence as a part of the deep-seated political culture in ZANU-PF which emerged since the foundation of the party in 1963. In other words, violence was endemic in nationalist movements and their political parties. These movements did not reform themselves when they constituted the new governments in the post-independence era.

### **Youth and Political Violence in Zimbabwean Context**

The contemporary culture of violence among the youths in Zimbabwe is an outcome of four historic phases, namely the pre-colonial phase, the nationalism phase, the liberation struggle, and the ZANU-PF regime. Karl Marx validated this many years ago when he asserted that, ‘the tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living’<sup>42</sup> All the aforementioned phases that nurtured the culture of youth political violence were against competitive politics and, thus they were immersed with youth violence intended to

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<sup>39</sup> F. N. Aolín, ‘Political violence and gender during times of transition’, *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*, Vol. 15, No. 3, (2006), pp.829–849; C. Moser and F. Clark, *Victims, perpetrators, or actors? Gendered armed conflict and political violence*. (New York: St Martin Press, 2001), p.36.

<sup>40</sup> O. Fashina, ‘Frantz Fanon and the Ethical Justification of Anti-Colonial Violence’, *Social Theory and Practice*, Vol. 15 No. 2, (1989), pp. 179-212.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> K. Marx, ‘The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity’, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/580>, Accessed: 4 February 2020.

eradicate perceived political foes. Although there were some instances of coercion, many youths voluntarily participated in violence and they were prompted by their self-interests, especially to acquire wealth, power or cattle for bride price. In the polities like Mutapa and Rozvi, political violence was mostly aroused by the struggle for land, resources and chieftainship, with the youth at the centre serving as spies, mercenaries, or para-militias.<sup>43</sup> Factionalism was also a causative factor of youth violence as Headmen, Kraal heads and sub-chiefs recruited youths to fight their rivals in the struggle for preferences and recognition from the central government.<sup>44</sup> Also, the activities of the *Dumbuseya*<sup>45</sup> groups who solely survived on raiding<sup>46</sup>, the *Chikunda* in the lower Zambezi valley who once served as a Portuguese militia<sup>47</sup> and Ndebele warriors who institutionalised violence to enforce the dictates of the state; display the youth roles in political violence. These groups were parallel to the modern-day youth para-militias and vigilante groups.

### **The nationalist parties and youth violence, c.1950s-1962**

During the colonial period, youth political violence became more pronounced in the late 1950s with episodes of black-on-black violence, which at times reached barbaric proportions.<sup>48</sup> The rape of women at the Carter girls' hostel in Harari township during the 1956 Salisbury bus boycott by the supporters of the Salisbury City Youth League (SCYL), was one of the various ghastly pointers to escalating youth violence.<sup>49</sup> Shamuyarira also mentioned violent acts such as the 'burning of food stalls, wrecking of bus-shelters, looting, stoning, widespread rioting.'<sup>50</sup> Since 1956, violence became a tool for resolving political differences and chastising 'sell-outs'.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Research & Advocacy Unit (RAU), Politically Motivated Violence against Women in Zimbabwe 2000-2010. A review of the public domain literature, Report produced by the Women's Programme, August 2011.

<sup>44</sup> O. Dodo and K. Ngwaru, 'Change of Power-Block and Youths' Power: Evidence from Zimbabwe', *Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (2021), p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> Also known as *Dumbuzenene* which literally means sway bellies in reference to well fed people. It refers to the groups of Shona youth caught by the Ngoni and trained in Mfecane fighting methods popular with the military personnel of Shaka the Zulu, thus became expert raiders. These groups emerged around 1820s and 1830s.

<sup>46</sup> O. Vengayi, *Aluta Continua Biblical Hermeneutics for Liberation: Interpreting Biblical texts on slavery for liberation of Zimbabwean underclasses*. (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2013), p.180.

<sup>47</sup> A. F. Isaacman and B. Isaacman, *The Tradition of Resistance in Mozambique: The Zambesi Valley, 1850-1921*. (California: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 22, 27-28.

<sup>48</sup> T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe 1940-1964*. (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>50</sup> N. Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia*. (London: Heinemann, 1965); Also see M. Nyagumbo, *With the people: An autobiography from the Zimbabwe struggle*. (Salisbury: Graham Publishing House, 1980).

<sup>51</sup> T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe 1940-1964*. (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008).

The National Democratic Party (NDP), which was launched in 1960, mobilised youths with the help of Robert Mugabe (its Secretary for Publicity with obligations towards the youths) who strongly believed in the use of violence through the Youth Wing as a key strategy to widen the party's support base and to fight the dissenters and colonial state.<sup>52</sup> In June 1961, the party used its youths to violently block the launching of Michael Mavima and Patrick Matimba's Zimbabwe National Party (ZNP), a splinter party from NDP. The violent repression exercised by the NDP to counter the launch of ZNP inaugurated a chilling precedent and presaged the ZAPU-ZANU split which occurred two years later and many of the ZNP cadres joined ZANU.

The disbandment of the NDP led to the formation of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). During this time, to have a doubted political loyalty was equivalent to committing suicide and treason.<sup>53</sup> For instance, Rueben Jamela, the leader of the Southern Rhodesia Trade Union Congress (SRTUC), was assailed by ZAPU youths for refusing to surrender the independence of his trade union by merging with the nationalist movement.<sup>54</sup> In this regard, Bhebe and Ranger asserted that the nationalist movements and their political parties were somewhat negative schools of authoritarianism, despotism and violence.<sup>55</sup> This shows that the quasi-military legacy of the nationalist movement has entrenched fanaticism, intolerance of opposition and a culture of violence in Zimbabwean politics.<sup>56</sup>

### **The fracture of African nationalism and youth violence, 1963-1964**

In 1963, ZANU was formed by leaders who left the then banned ZAPU which temporarily operated as the People's Caretaker Council (PCC). With two parties competing for support, youths from both parties played a role in inter-party violence in African townships.<sup>57</sup> Between 1963 and 1964, ZAPU and ZANU intensely fought each other as the former could not welcome the emergence of the latter as an independent nationalist movement.<sup>58</sup> Maurice Nyagumbo, a ZANU leader, was one of the victims whose house and the property were burnt

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> B. Raftopoulos and T. Yoshikuni (eds.), *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe's Urban History*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 1999), pp.141-142.

<sup>55</sup> N. Bhebe and T. Ranger, (eds.) *The historical dimensions of democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe: pre-colonial and colonial legacies*. (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications. 2003), p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> S. Gatsheni- Ndlovu, *Do Zimbabweans exist? Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in a Postcolonial State*. (Pieter Len Peter Lang Publishing Group, 2009).

<sup>57</sup> L. M. Sachikonye, *Zimbabwe's Lost Decade Politics, Development and Society*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2012).

<sup>58</sup> F. Nehwati, 'The Social and Communal Background to 'zhii' the African Riots in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia in 1960', *African Affairs*, Vol. 69, Issue 276, (1970), pp.250-266.

down in 1964 by ZAPU youths.<sup>59</sup> These youths were also present in the countryside, in areas like Murewa where they demanded money for ‘*Umdala*’ (a reference to their leader Joshua Nkomo).<sup>60</sup> Those who failed to pay were labelled sell-outs and were violated.

### **Youth violence during the Liberation struggle, 1966-1979**

More grotesque violence was witnessed during the liberation struggle. This study shows that ZANU unleashed youth violence to coerce the African population to accept its rallying call for unity and to support the liberation war. This, to a greater extent, established and entrenched a culture of conformity, fear and absolute support for the party in areas like UMP. The youths were socialised into violence by the nationalist leaders who glorified violence and the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) guerrillas who operated in a brutal and undemocratic fashion. The liberation war was compounded with factionalism, witch-hunting, frictions, violent purges, intimidation, and assassinations; and youths were in the midst of these events as instruments of violence. Violence intensified in the late 1970s when ZANLA started to recruit young boys into the army to meet the increasing demand for men at the battlefield. Most of the recruits during this time received brief military training in Mozambique before they were deployed to the war front. Consequently, this led to the death of the Maoist guerrilla code of conduct, (*nzira dzemasoja*) which emphasised self-restraint and respect, and the increase in youth violence. Oral accounts show that heinous crimes such as murders, intimidations and rapes of civilians by war collaborators and young guerrillas proliferated. Nevertheless, ZANLA was not the only military outfit recruiting the youths, other military groups such as the Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), RSFs, *Pfumo Revanhu* (The Spear of the People), among others, were also recruiting youths for the war, and in a violent fashion.

The activities of the youths in the military camps in exile display that they were able to exercise agency and they were not docile conformers. Youths were at the centre of mutinies that rocked their military camps in exile, for instance, the 1971 mutiny in ZIPRA (in Zambia), the 1974-75 Nhari mutiny in ZANLA (in Zambia), and the 1976 Vashandi rebellion in ZANLA (in Mozambique).<sup>61</sup> The 11 March 1971 revolt in the ZIPRA camp was a consequence of harsh training and living conditions in the camp and infighting and selfish

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<sup>59</sup> L. M. Sachikonye, *Zimbabwe’s Lost Decade Politics, Development and Society*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2012), p.183.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> B. Tendi, *Transnationalism, Contingency and Loyalty in African Liberation Armies: The Case of ZANU’s 1974–75 Nhari Mutiny*

politics among the ZAPU leaders.<sup>62</sup> The ZIPRA recruits decried that they were idle for nearly a year because of ethnic disputes among the political leaders.<sup>63</sup> The Nhari mutiny (led by Thomas Nhari, Dakarai Badza and Ceasar Molife) in ZANLA happened because of the commanders had travelled to China and Romania for diplomatic engagement. The Nhari mutineers exploited this transnational travel to stage a revolt.<sup>64</sup> As for the Vashandi group (led by Wilfred Mhanda and Sam Geza), their rebellion was meant to take over the ZANU leadership.<sup>65</sup> Tendi argues that ‘varying levels of education and or ideological differences and generational fissures, facilitated by an influx of younger cadres in camps, were general issues for dispute.’<sup>66</sup> In general, the young cadres felt dissatisfied because they perceived the older generation as elitist, immoral, dictatorial and abusers of women.

As a Maoist party that drew support from the peasants, ZANU employed the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* to mobilise support in the countryside. These youths spied and monitored the movements of the people in the communities, organised *pungwes* (night vigils), recorded attendances and delivered the names of the perceived traitors to the ZANLA guerrillas.<sup>67</sup> These youths were both perpetrators and victims of violence. In 1979, ZANU declared the year as *gore regukurahundi* (the year of the storm) to mean that there would be a revolutionary storm that would ultimately obliterate the colonial regime, the internal settlement puppets and finally the capitalist system.<sup>68</sup> During this phase, the ZANLA guerrillas and ZANU youth were active participants in mobilising and intimidating people just before the 1980 watershed election. This study argues that the liberation struggle augmented some negative propensities of the nationalist movement which was already hegemonic and intolerant of criticism and dissensions

### **Youth and ZANU-PF Socialist politics in the 1980s and 1990s**

The post-colonial state continued to witness the involvement of youth in ZANU-PF’s hegemonic struggles. This started with Operation Gukurahundi (in which the youths and the

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<sup>62</sup> B. Tendi, ‘Transnationalism, Contingency and Loyalty in African Liberation Armies: The Case of ZANU’s 1974–75 Nhari Mutiny,’ pp.143-159.

<sup>63</sup> E.M. Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People’s Union, 1961–87: A Political History of Insurgency in Southern Rhodesia* (Trenton, Africa World Press, 2005), p. 146–147

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> F. Chung, *Reliving the Second Chimurenga, Memories from the Liberation Struggle in Zimbabwe*. Harare: Weaver Press, p.127.

<sup>66</sup> B. Tendi, ‘Transnationalism, Contingency and Loyalty in African Liberation Armies: The Case of ZANU’s 1974–75 Nhari Mutiny,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 43, (2017), p.146.

<sup>67</sup> ZANLA was ZANU’s military wing during the Liberation struggle.

<sup>68</sup> M. Sithole and J. Makumbe, ‘Elections in Zimbabwe: The ZANU- PF Hegemony and its Incipient Decline’, *African Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 2, No. 1, (1997), pp.122-139.

state security structures were the tools of violence) which targeted the so-called ZAPU dissidents.<sup>69</sup> The 1985 General election was also tainted with violence perpetrated by the Youth Brigades<sup>70</sup> and Youth League against ZAPU and its supporters.<sup>71</sup> They were involved in mob beatings, property burning and murders in urban areas mainly targeting Ndebele speakers.<sup>72</sup> All the opposition parties which emerged in the 1990s and, later the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 suffered at the hands of the ZANU-PF youths. This study reveals that this intolerance of political opposition was entrenched in the African nationalism and the liberation struggle, where differences were solved through violence; and this has continued up to this day. This phase has also witnessed the rise of student activism, a reflection that youth ceased to be the priority of the government. Youths were increasingly becoming victims of political, social and economic marginalisation as the ZANU-PF government became fixated on preserving its power grip.

### **Youth political violence in the 2000s**

In the post-2000 era, the MDC posed a tenacious challenge to ZANU-PF's political dominion, especially in the urban areas where the incumbent lost the support of workers and youths.<sup>73</sup> In a bid to control the hungry and jobless youth, the state launched the National Youth Service (NYS). The NYS was a programme meant to capture and inscribed 'Mugabism' on the minds of the youth under the facade of inculcating patriotism and punishing opposition supporters.<sup>74</sup> Most of the NYS graduates (dubbed as the 'Green Bombers') formed or joined vigilantes in their communities due to incessant unemployment; and, thus the flourishing of youth vigilante groups such as Chipangano in Mbare, Upfumi Kuvadiki in Epworth, Jambanja in UMP and others. These groups operated with the tacit approval of the state. Thus, youth political violence has unceasingly continued to affect present-day Zimbabwe and new groups like MaShurugwi were emerging, murdering people all over the country. The operations of the abovementioned groups pushed the MDC to adopt youth

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<sup>69</sup> CCJPZ, *Breaking the Silence Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1980 to 1988*. (Harare: CCJPZ, 1997).

<sup>70</sup> The ZANU-PF Youth brigades were intended to promote socialist developmental goals. However, they were involved in coercing people into buying ZANU-PF cards, forcing people to attend ZANU-PF rallies and beating perceived oppositions.

<sup>71</sup> CCJPZ, *Breaking the Silence Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1980 to 1988*. (Harare: CCJPZ, 1997), p.62.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> P. Bond and M. Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's Plunge: Exhausted nationalism, neoliberalism and the search for social justice*. (Scottsville: University of Natal Press and Harare: Weaver Press, 2002).

<sup>74</sup> The Solidarity Peace Trust, National youth service training - "Shaping youths in a truly Zimbabwean manner" An overview of youth militia training and activities in Zimbabwe, October 2000 – August 2003, 5 September 2003.

violence, which later became part of its culture. This is evident in the formation of the Democratic Resistance Committees or the Vanguard, the MDC youth militia. These youths were involved in both inter-party and intra-party violence. This youth vanguard was responsible for the violence which rocked MDC when it splintered in 2005, 2014 and 2018.<sup>75</sup> This study perceives youths as both perpetrators and victims of violence and ZANU-PF politics.

## **Research Methods**

This study utilises both oral interviews and archival sources to examine youth political violence in Mbare, Highfields and UMP. It used a three-tier triangulation process which comprises methodological triangulation, data triangulation and theoretical triangulation. Methodological triangulation involves the use of various research methods or data collection techniques.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, data triangulation encompasses the use of many information sources and respondents to determine the veracity of information claimed by the different sources.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, theoretical triangulation involves the use of alternative disciplinary or substantive theoretical lenses to analyse research findings.<sup>78</sup> This approach increases the analytical depth and helps to obtain reliable data as it cross-checks the validity of data and captures different dimensions of the same phenomenon.

Since the topic is politically sensitive, this study used snowball sampling because I was working with a population (that is highly polarised) that was not easily identified or accessed. It was difficult to identify who was and who was not a ZANU-PF. Even for those who were identifiable, I needed a way of getting referrals from the people whom they trusted, lest they become inaccessible. Snowball sampling was important as it ensured the safety of both the researcher and research informants. It involved building a sample through referrals and it began by identifying someone from the targeted population who was willing to participate in the study. In UMP, I identified a key person, a teacher at Chidodo secondary school, who referred me to more than 15 participants and also referred me to other participants. He warned me not to go to any person (especially the headmen and councillors) to whom I was

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<sup>75</sup> F. Makonye, 'The Inherent Resort to Violence in Opposition Politics: A Synthesis of the Post-2005 Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Formations in Zimbabwe,' *African Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1, (2021), pp.77-99.

<sup>76</sup> T. Farmer, 'Developing and Implementing a Triangulation Protocol for Qualitative Health Research,' *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol.16, No. 3, (2006), p.379.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

not introduced because it was dangerous. He also told me that I should not become too visible in the community and that interviews were supposed to be conducted in secluded places during the night. In UMP, I conducted thirty-one out of thirty-four scheduled interviews. Attempts to reschedule the meetings with the remainder were not successful as the informants claimed to be busy always since it was during the rainy season. Also, in Mbare and Highfields, I identified a key person who connected me with many participants. I interviewed fifty-four participants from both Mbare and Highfields. About half of the interviews with Mbare and Highfield participants were done through phone calls and social networks (especially WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook) due to the outbreak of Coronavirus disease. In total, I conducted 85 interviews and most of the people who contributed to this study were between the age of 18 and 84 years.

Snowball sampling had its shortcomings and these comprised interviewing a network of friends, some interviewees failing to provide the next participant(s) and there was no guarantee of the representativeness of the sample. To overcome these limitations, I asked the participants to encourage others to contribute to avoid what is called ‘cold-calling.’ This proved to be effective as most participants were full of zeal and enthusiasm to contribute to this study.

This study utilised in-depth interviews targeting individuals who participated in the Second *Chimurenga* as ZANLA forces, ZIPRA forces, *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos*, and those who were politically active since the 1960s. I also conducted interviews with former members of ZANU-PF, the Youth League, NYS, Chipangano group, the Al-Shabab group, the members of ZAPU and civic organisations. This research made use of semi-structured interviews which involved a series of open-ended questions based on the topic areas the researcher wanted to cover.<sup>79</sup> Kvale argued that good interview questions should thematically contribute to knowledge production.<sup>80</sup> I designed and aligned my interview questions to the main goal and secondary goals of the study. These enabled the gathering of what is called in the research literature ‘thick description’.<sup>81</sup> This type of interview allowed me to prepare questions for each respondent and pursue them in more depth, particularly in areas that the respondent happened to be more acquainted with. Hence it gave me the freedom to vary the sequence of the questions and probe others in greater depth. These interview questions were

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<sup>79</sup> B. Hancock, E. Ockleford and K. Windridge, *An introduction to qualitative research*. (Nottingham: Trent Focus Group, 1998).

<sup>80</sup> S. Kvale, *Doing Interviews*. (Wiltshire: SAGE, 2008).

<sup>81</sup> M. Q. Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. (London: SAGE Publications, 2001).

handed to the participants prior the interviews for them to familiarise with the topic and prepare their answers.

Using the qualitative techniques, according to Liamputtong *et al*, enabled me to discover the experiences and interpretations attached to youth political violence from the viewpoint of my contemporaries (the *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos*, former members of ZANU-PF, the NYS graduates, Chipangano youths and victims of violence).<sup>82</sup> Strauss argued that qualitative methods enable an interpretive and contextualised approach and a sustained focus on the complex creation and maintenance of meaning.<sup>83</sup> One-on-one conversations with the interviewees enabled me to observe some non-verbal cues such as gestures, emotions, facial expressions and body posture. Non-verbal cues simultaneously detailed the spoken narrative or express some ideas that are not easily verbalised. For example, continuous sounds like 'nxa-a' (an expression of sorrows, anger and frustration), phrases like *aiwa zvakaoma* (which means the situation was tough) and head-shaking which punctuated Mr. Takawira's interview session, gave an elaborate picture of the horrific situation faced by the people. Hence, a qualitative approach provided a pellucid explanation of youth political violence in UMP, Mbare and Highfield through its oral history sources.

Carrying out research is as challenging as the questions one poses; and so, the subjectivity of both the researcher and participants shape the whole research process.<sup>84</sup> Interviewing many youths and other people who were politically active as ZANU-PF, ZAPU and MDC members helped to attenuate the issues of subjectivity. It is difficult to carry out political research in Zimbabwe, especially in Mbare where ZANU-PF has strategically erected offices and planted its youth vigilantes everywhere to control the socio-economic opportunities in the district. As a person who lived in Mbare at one point, it was not too difficult for the participants to connect with me compared to the manner they would have related to an outsider, worse a non-Zimbabwean. I was able to gain entry to Mbare because I was once a resident there and, at the same time, I had already established connections with many participants when I was doing my research for my Master's project. In UMP, as well as Highfield, I had the advantage of friends who were residing there and they helped me to connect with the right

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<sup>82</sup> P. Liamputtong, *Researching the Vulnerable: A Guide to Sensitive Research Methods*. (London: Sage Publications, 2006); See also D. E. Lorey, and W. H. Beezley, *Genocide, Collective violence and popular Memory: The Politics of Remembrance in 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. (Wilmington: Library of Congress, 2002).

<sup>83</sup> A. Strauss, *Basic Considerations in Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. (California: Sage, 1990).

<sup>84</sup> M. Tankink and M. Vysma, 'The intersubjective as analytic tool,' *Medical Anthropology*, (2006), pp. 249 – 265.

people with immense knowledge on the subject under study. Nevertheless, in all cases, it was not comfortable and trouble-free to discuss political issues in open spaces.

Since this research examines political violence perpetrated by the war collaborators, the Youth Wing, war veterans, Border Gezi youths and youth vigilante groups within the ZANU-PF party and against other parties, people were fearful to speak against ZANU-PF politicians because of harassment and purges of those alleged to be opposition adherents. In UMP, one could feel that ZANU-PF has successfully pervaded the area with an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Thus, some interview accounts, for instance, Mr. Mazanhi's account, completely ignore the fact that ZANU and ZANLA abused and brutalised the youths into acquiescence. Although their accounts cannot be undermined, their prejudiced depiction of ZANU as a benevolent party distinctly displays the effect of fear, propaganda and indoctrination on peoples' reasoning capacities. They purposely overlooked the flaws of the ZANU and were quick to blame the Rhodesian Security Forces (during the liberation struggle) and the opposition parties (after the independence) for any mishap that occurred to them.

Yet another challenge I confronted was that of nonalignment; in some cases, I was not anticipated to be nonaligned in terms of my political affiliation. I was expected to show my standpoint not as a researcher but as a card-carrying member of ZANU-PF. Before I went to UMP, one of the participants instructed me to take along a ZANU-PF membership card because failure to produce anything that identifies me with ZANU-PF would make one be labelled an MDC supporter, and opposition supporters are unwanted in UMP. Also, I had to quickly read and learn the cultural techniques of deliberating the political issues in a way that make the interviewees feel comfortable. So, we sometimes used *chibhende* -that is a language incomprehensible to people who do not know the Shona culture.

Scores of participants in Mbare and UMP forewarned me to be cautious and vigilant not only for my sake but for all the people contributing to the study. If I was going to be identified as an opposition enthusiast, all the people who associated with me during the research process were going to carry the same label. In effect, this affected the researcher's flexibility as some of the participants had to position themselves and I had to be seen as one of them.<sup>85</sup> The participants in Mbare and UMP advised me not to interview prominent ZANU-PF officials as

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<sup>85</sup> E. V. Daniel, *Charred Lullabies: Chapters in an Anthropography of Violence*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996).

they could find ways to disrupt the whole research process. In this realm, Hubbell argued that authoritarian regimes perceive researchers as spies, thus, sometimes they are detained or injured.<sup>86</sup> However, It should be noted that I also interviewed some open-minded ZANU-PF officials in the Youth League and supporters who happened to feature on the chain of interviewees, they might have hoisted a red flag if my research was a menace to their party, nonetheless given that it had nothing to do with rallying citizens against the ruling party, it was not vetted like a serious threat.

In both Mbare and UMP, there are allegations that the state's eavesdrops were planted everywhere<sup>87</sup> and this affected social trust and distorted our language of communication (as the researcher, sometimes, had to use concealed language). It effected silence and conformity since people feared being chastened. The ZANU-PF government created a counter-intelligence state which relies on formal and informal secret agents. The rumours that some people have been punished by undercover agents in both Mbare and UMP make people think that they are under surveillance even if there is no one spying on them. The state's authority and dominance are sensed among the grassroots as people suffered from the violence of all sorts, engrained in language, experience and memory. In some interviews, I avoided asking some questions that seemed to be politically sensitive in order not to distress the participants or to be suspected or embattled as an MDC enthusiast. In some instances, I asked such questions in obscured ways and patiently wait for the answers. In this regard, Hubbell avers that "in partially free or un-free circumstances, participants share their experiences with extreme caution."<sup>88</sup> To surmount participants' discomfort and edginess needed what Plummer and Britten stated as empathetic and responsive gestures to motivate, support and make the participants feel comfortable to speak with confidence.<sup>89</sup> My ethnographic encounter was moulded by continuous negotiations with the participants. The reason is that the community, especially UMP would receive one for research if they believe that the research is a part of the ruling party.

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<sup>86</sup> L. D. Hubbell, 'False starts, suspicious interviewees: Some reflections on the difficulty of conducting field research abroad', *The Qualitative Report*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (2003), pp.195-209. <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR8-2/hubbell.pdf>, Accessed: 03 March 2020.

<sup>87</sup> The ZANU-PF officials always say "*Takaisa makamera edu kwese kwese*" meaning we have our informers everywhere.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> K. Plummer, *Documents of Life 2: An Invitation to a Critical Humanism*. (London: Sage, 2001); N. Britten, 'Qualitative interviews in medical research', (2008), [www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/311/6999/251](http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/311/6999/251), Accessed: 03 March 2020.

As mentioned above, some of the data for this study was collected using social media platforms (such as WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook) since the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions made it difficult to conduct face-to-face interviews. Social media-based interviews played a significant role in reducing itinerant costs and labour for data transcription. All the problems associated with data recording were evaded. These interviews provided flexibility for participants as they responded to the interview questions when it was a convenient time for them. This removed the need to organise specific interview dates, times and venues. The use of virtual interviews was convenient to the participants who were coy, timid and reticent to talk in personal interactions and found social media-based interviews more liberating. This is in line with Rheingold's opinion that many people who are not good in verbal conversations but turn out to have worthwhile contributions to make, find writing their views more authentic than speaking them in personal interviews.<sup>90</sup>

However, the use of real-time social networks in interviewing the research participants came with some challenges and missed opportunities. Non-verbal cues, so crucial in physical interviews, were generally missing in virtual communication. It was difficult, for instance, to utilize intervals of silence to inspire participants to elaborate on interesting points. Also, it was impossible to persuade participants to speak using gestures, nods, body posture, or smiles. To deal with this, I made the probes and silences livelier and verbal through direct questioning. This enabled the participants to communicate their stories with little difficulty.

Moreover, I observed that some participants had fears over their privacy and lack of control over the usage of personal data (that includes images, audio and videos), and this affected their openness in some of the interviews. It is noteworthy to mention that the success of virtual interviews was reliant on the level of motivation and interest of the participants.<sup>91</sup> They had to use their communication devices (computer or phone), buy data bundles to access the internet and engage in a draining interview involving reading, thinking, typing and maintaining a lucid thread of answering questions. To have an effective and fruitful virtual interview, both the interviewer and the participants were expected to be techno-savvy.

This study utilised the narrative or story-telling method to get a picture of how the youth such as the *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos*, Youth Brigades, the NYS youths and vigilante groups

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<sup>90</sup> H. Rheingold, *Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000, pp.23-24.

<sup>91</sup> P. Chen and S.M. Hinton, 'Realtime Interviewing Using the World Wide Web,' *Sociology Research Online*, (1999).

operated in Zimbabwe. This technique allowed the respondents to recount their experiences of youth violence. According to Connelly and Clandinin, “humans are story-telling organisms who individually and collectively lead storied lives.”<sup>92</sup> The study of individual meanings attached to politically organised violence derives some meaning from and unavoidably compels one to locate it within the biographical, historical and social context.<sup>93</sup> To acquire sufficient data for this study, there was a need for a methodological approach that sits at the crossroads of biography, history and society. Taking a cue from Andrews, this technique allowed me to acquire both event-centred narratives (biographies) and experience-centred narratives (history and society) of the victims of youth violence.<sup>94</sup> The narrative method was fundamental because it unravelled individual experiences and the realities of youth violence and ZANU politics in UMP, Mbare and Highfield. Young observed that the narratives of the first-person experience are valuable for their power to refute and demystify collective historical narratives which often homogenise and subordinate individual perspectives and experiences.<sup>95</sup>

Moreover, the use of a story-telling or narrative approach was instrumental in disclosing how people remember and interpret the roles and positions of the youths in ZANU-PF politics. Like in-depth interviews, the narrative approach contains an interpretive inclination and this helped the researcher to have a brighter picture of youth violence in both rural areas and urban areas. Non-verbal cues make stories a rich source of interpretation. Noteworthy is the fact that the narrative method clarifies ambiguous issues as it draws explanations from parallel present situations. In Halbwachs’ words, it lends itself to a presentist approach where past experiences are reconstructed in the context of the present. Besides, some participants could become so emotional to the extent that they could cry; making it difficult to listen to their political experiences. Thus, at times, some participants who seemed to have been severely traumatised by youth political violence were referred to trained social workers for counselling. Since there is no apparent rule concerning emotional engagement with participant dilemmas during the research,<sup>96</sup> I had to face such predicaments but reiterated to the participants the rationales of my investigation.

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<sup>92</sup> F. M. Connelly and J. D. Clandinin, ‘Narrative and Story in Practice and Research’, *Educational Researcher*. Vol.19, No.5, (1990), pp.2-14.

<sup>93</sup> B. Hamber and R. A. Wilson, ‘Symbolic closure through memory, reparation and revenge in post-conflict societies’, *Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 1, No.1, (2002), pp.35-53.

<sup>94</sup> M. Andrews, C. Squire and M. Tamboukou (eds.), *Doing Narrative Research*. (London: SAGE, 2008).

<sup>95</sup> J. E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*. (Yale: Yale University Press, 1993).

<sup>96</sup> D. Silverman, *Evaluating qualitative research*. (Warsaw: PWN Lee, 2007).

The researcher successfully conducted many of the interviews using the interviewee's local language (Chishona) while those conducted in English were as per the interviewee's discretion. The advantage of using the local language was that the interviewees were more articulate, eloquent and comfortable revealing their experiences, hence they were able to give detailed and context-specific stories. I conducted an average of two or three interviews per day due to many variables such as the delays caused by public transport, the respondents decided on the time to conduct the interview and some of them had to take time off to rush to their *Musika* (vending) businesses. In UMP, it was during the rainy season so people were preoccupied with their farming activities and some of the interviews were conducted at the grazing fields.

Almost half of the interviews were recorded and this was done after reaching a consensus with the interviewees as per my Ethical Clearance documents. Recording enabled me to capture the exact interview content perfectly during the data analysis phase. These interviews were transcribed to ensure easy accessibility and reference when analysing data. All the interviews conducted using the vernacular language were translated into English during the transcribing phase.

The researcher used various case studies undertaken in other African countries. Taking a cue from Zainal, the case of youth violence in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Nigeria and South Africa helped me to closely examine the phenomenon of youth violence within a specific context.<sup>97</sup> A comparative analysis of youth violence in Zimbabwe with other case studies in Africa broadened and enlightened my study, hence my findings were not mere generalisations.

This study also used primary documents, especially reports from the Ministry of Youth, councils and newspapers. The research also used data accessed from video records, magazines and pictures. These were accessed from the Archives such as the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ), SW Radio Africa, SAPES Trust, Kubatana Archives and Sokwanele. These sources deepened my understanding of youth violence and ZANU-PF politics. Noteworthy is the fact that the original documents from ZAPU are not accessible as they were destroyed during the political violence of the 1980s that affected the Matabeleland and Midlands regions. Most of the documents on ZANU and ZAPU deposited at NAZ are

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<sup>97</sup> Z. Zainal, 'Case study as a research method', *Jurnal Kermanusiaan*, bil 9, (2007); See also R. K. Yin, *Case study research: Design and methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). (Calif: SAGE Publications, 1984).

fragmental and there are some disappeared documents. I could not gain access to ZANU-PF documents at the ZANU-PF headquarters as that was a painstaking process and the topic itself was politically sensitive for me to even try and access their archives. However, Reports and videos were used to complement interview narratives, hence this helped to prove the objectivity or subjectivity of oral sources. Newspapers provided dated information and many occasions of youth violence. Other useful sources such as journals and NGO reports were also used and they helped to shape my observations and analyses. The fusion of primary documents and other methods strengthened this study.

To analyse the collected data, I employed three methods namely narrative analysis, thematic analysis and discourse analysis. Narrative analysis was used to analyse all the data which was collected through a narrative or story-telling approach. Relevant information from transcribed interviews and interview notes were identified and re-transcribed. This was attained by playing the audios repeatedly, and identifying how the respondents narrated their stories.<sup>98</sup> To strengthen the narrative analysis, I employed the Labovian approach. Narratives were extracted from the interviews and parsed into numbered clauses.<sup>99</sup> The Labovian approach is a six-part model (abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution and coda) and each clause was assigned each component of the model. The abstract component analysed the subject or main idea of the story while orientation was part of the story that provides background or context of the events (what, who, when). The complication component analysed part of the narrative with events that are focal to the plot. At the evaluation stage, the researcher analysed the impact of youth political violence on the youths themselves and the population affected. Resolution occurred after evaluation; this was the stage the researcher wanted to see what finally happened in the story. The resolution stage was important as it gives the story a sense of completion.<sup>100</sup>

This study used thematic analysis which is a grounded theory type of analysis.<sup>101</sup> The researcher meticulously reviewed the interview notes and interview transcripts several times to identify relevant themes infused in these texts. Inductive or open coding was then used to organise data into various themes. Pile-sorting was also used to generate or yield broader

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<sup>98</sup> C. K. Riessman, *Narrative Analysis Vol. 30*. (London: SAGE, 1993).

<sup>99</sup> W. Patterson, 'Narratives of Events: Labovian Narrative analysis and its Limitation', in M. Andrews, C. Squire and M. Tamboukou (eds.), *Doing Narrative Research*. (London: SAGE, 2008), pp. 28-40.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> J. A. Gliner and G. A. Morgan, *Research Methods in Applied Settings: An integrated approach to design and analysis*. (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc, Publishers, 2000).

themes from the interviews. This also involved finding useful quotes which represent the themes. The divergences and complementarities of themes were noted and this helped me to come up with coherent theories. The discourse analysis complemented thematic analysis. Discourse analysis enabled me to deconstruct texts to find underlying discourses and ideologies. Discourse analysis was used to locate complementarities, tensions and contradictions within the field notes and interview transcripts. Using these methods, I was able to analyse the text with respect to the original interview.

This study abided by the principles of informed consent, anonymity, safety and confidentiality in line with the Ethical Standards required for this research. As I mentioned earlier, the issue of youth political violence was politically sensitive thus there was a need to uphold the non-maleficence principle to secure the safety of the participants from persecution or state agents at any stage of the research.<sup>102</sup> Participants were guaranteed to be indemnified against any physical and emotional harm.<sup>103</sup> I ensured that participants were not subjected to any undue physical and psychological harm by conducting interviews at each participant's homestead.<sup>104</sup> I promised to assist the participants by any means possible if anything to the contrary had occurred during the interviews. Again, I did not seek any official permission from the traditional leaders, Uzumba Rural District Council, Harare City Council or Mbare police to carry out the research. It is common knowledge that some of the traditional leaders, council officials and Mbare police officers were involved in violent operations of the youths. I guaranteed the protection of the participants through the use of a pseudonym (which they chose for themselves) except for the few particularly NGO officials, MDC politicians, and activists who opted to use their real names. All information acquired during the interviews was used only for this investigation. Audiotapes used were deleted so that no one could use the data for anything else outside this research.

## **Chapter Synopsis**

This thesis comprises seven chapters and a conclusion.

**Chapter 1** is an introductory chapter of this thesis. It is an overview of youth, political violence and ZANU-PF politics in Zimbabwe from the late 1950s to 2018. It speaks to the

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<sup>102</sup> J. F. Gubrium and J. A. Holstein, *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*. (California: Sage Publications, 2002).

<sup>103</sup> C. Welman, F. Kruger, B. Mitchell and G. K. Huysamen, *Research Methodology*. (Cape Town, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 201.

<sup>104</sup> P.D. Leedy and J.E. Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. (New Jersey: Upper Saddle River, Merrill Prentice Hall, 2005). p. 103.

objectives of the research, the background of the research districts, the definition and contextualisation of youth and political violence and methodology.

**Chapter 2** examines the various theoretical perspectives on youth and political violence. The chapter explores various debates around youth political violence in Africa to have comparative insights and a deeper understanding of youth political participation elsewhere in Africa. It reviews the historiography of youth, political violence and ZANU-PF politics in Zimbabwe to understand how scholars documented these issues since the decolonisation era. It ends by contextualising the Gramscian theory of hegemony and domination since this study aimed at developing this theory through examining youth violence which occurred when ZANU was a counter-hegemonic party (before the attainment of independence in 1980) and when it became the 'state' after 1980.

**Chapter 3:** examines the emergence and development of youth political violence before the formation of ZANU in 1963. It serves as the background and foundation of this thesis as it helps us to understand why youth violence has become part of ZANU politics. It is imperative to analyse the nature and character of the youths and the nationalists in Southern Rhodesia before the formation of ZANU to understand why youth violence proliferated and became a political culture since 1963. The chapter explores the ideologies of the political parties, such as the SCYL, SRANC, NDP and ZAPU to fathom their stance on youth violence. It discusses how these political parties mobilised the youths for their political agendas. The chapter seeks to understand the nature of the relationship between youths and nationalist movements and their roles in nationalist politics. It also examines the role of youths in the fracture of African nationalism for instance in the NDP-ZNP split and the ZAPU-ZANU split. This helps to substantiate the core argument of this thesis that youth violence and ZANU's fascist politics have roots in African nationalism and the liberation struggle.

**Chapter 4:** examines how ZANU and ZANLA guerrillas mobilised, recruited and indoctrinated the youths towards the war efforts. The chapter will analyse the roles of the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* during the guerrilla war as both perpetrators and victims of violence. It shows that the war collaborators were the architects of political violence and at the same time, they bore the brunt of the war since they were 'the men in the middle' of war who suffered from the scourge of both guerrilla and RSFs violence. This chapter reveals how

the civilians suffered from the scourges of the violence perpetrated by the war collaborators and the guerrillas. It also reveals that the war collaborators were the main participants in the *gukurahundi* politics of the late 1970s and the electoral violence which occurred before the 1980 watershed election.

**Chapter 5:** examines the roles of youth in ZANU-PF politics during the first two decades of independence. It starts by discussing the emergence of the Youth Brigade Movement, a youth programme meant to achieve the state's socialist development goals, to understand its purpose, operations and impact on the lives of the youths and other citizens. This chapter shows how youth gradually became a tool of coercion in ZANU-PF's authoritarian and hegemonic struggles. These youths perpetrated electoral violence with impunity. As Norma Kriger observed, the culture of impunity or 'catch and release' that we see in present-day Zimbabwe started during this period. I will also analyse the relationship between economic problems and youth political violence. The period between 1980 and 1999 was immersed with corruption, policy missteps and inconsistencies, student activism and youth marginalisation. This chapter will attempt to answer the question of why youths ceased to be the state's priority in the post-independence era.

**Chapter 6:** examines the emergence and operations of the National Youth Service (NYS) graduates/ Border Gezi youths in Zimbabwe. This chapter seeks to understand why the NYS programme was introduced, how youths were recruited, what kind of training did they receive, and how the programme benefited the youths. The study shows that this programme was meant to capture the youths under the façade of patriotism. It was a political gambit to subdue the MDC enthusiasts, especially the whites, thus the Border Gezi youths were at the centre of the land invasions *-hondo yeminda* and electoral violence. I will discuss how the NYS graduates have become ZANU-PF's coercive apparatus to maintain power since its launch in 2001. I will also interrogate how these youths colluded with the security structures (especially the police) in committing heinous political crimes. This chapter will also establish whether these youths were able to exercise agency when participating in political violence. It will reveal whether these youths were perceived as important contributors in ZANU politics or they were just political tools only remembered when the party's hegemony is under threat. The chapter will end by examining the legacies of the NYS programme in Zimbabwe.

**Chapter 7:** examines the rise and development of youth vigilantism in Zimbabwe since 2000. This chapter mainly focuses on the Chipangano group in Mbare. It explores the dynamics behind the emergence of youth vigilantism in Zimbabwe. It shows how these vigilantes operated, their relationship with security structures (the police, CIO and the military) and Harare City Council; and their role in ZANU-PF politics. In the course of this chapter, I will also discuss the development of political clientelism,<sup>105</sup> patronage politics and the involvement of youths in ZANU-PF factional wars. This chapter will attempt to answer questions like: Was the emergence of vigilantism in Zimbabwe a result of state failure or it was an instrumentalization of the disorder by ZANU-PF politicians and vigilantes?

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<sup>105</sup> Political clientelism refers to a system based on the relation of the client to the patron with the client (youths) organising political support for their patron (as in the form of votes) in exchange for some special privilege or benefits.

## CHAPTER 2

### Theoretical Perspectives on Youth and Political Violence in Zimbabwe

#### Introduction

There is a growing focus on the study of youth political participation in Africa, particularly on youth violence. Various scholars have examined this phenomenon in diverse ways. This chapter analyses various debates around youth and political violence to elicit some insights on the involvement of youth in political violence. It reviews the historiography of youth political violence in Zimbabwe to show how the phenomenon was documented by various scholars. It also analyses the Gramscian theory of hegemony and domination since the theory will be used throughout this study to theorise and make sense of youth political violence in Zimbabwe. This chapter consists of three main sections: the first section focuses on youth political violence in Africa. The second section focuses on the contextual literature from Zimbabwe. The last section is an analysis of Gramsci's theory of hegemony and domination.

#### Youth political violence in Africa

Recently, the role and contribution of youths have come under the academic spotlight in Africa, particularly in armed and resource-based conflicts<sup>1</sup> and in the struggle for democratisation.<sup>2</sup> Youths are perceived as significant players whose demands and influences affect their localities as well as national development. The African past shows many instances of the contributions made by youth in either inaugurating or deposing political structures, ranging from the youth political participation that resulted in the foundation of the Pan-African Movement, the momentous Manchester Conference in 1945 to liberation struggles on the continent.<sup>3</sup> The majority of nationalist movements started as youth movements and

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<sup>1</sup> P. Richards, *Fighting for the Rainforest: war, youth & resources in Sierra Leone*. (Oxford: James Currey, 1996); I. Abdullah, Y. Bangura, C. Blake, L. Gberie, L. Johnson, K. Kallon, S. Kemokai, P. K. Muana, I. Rashid and A. Zack-Williams Lumpen Culture and Political Violence: The Sierra Leone Civil War, *Africa Development*, Vol. 22, No. 3/4, (1997), pp. 171-215; Vigh, Henrik, *Navigating Terrains of War: Youth and Soldiering in Guinea-Bissau*. New York & Oxford: Berghahn. 2006; Honwana, A. 2006. *Child Soldiers in Africa*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> J. Seekings, 'Heroes or villains? Youth politics in the 1980s', In Everett, D. (Co-ord), *Putting youth on the national agenda*. (Johannesburg: Joint Enrichment Project/Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 1993), pp. 32-40; C. Glaser, *Bo-Tsotsi: The Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1935-1976*, Social History of Africa Series (London: Heinemann, James Currey, David Philip, 2000); M. Marks, *Young warriors: youth politics, identity and violence in South Africa*. (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press. 2001), p.171.

<sup>3</sup> S. Amadu, African Governance Systems in the Pre- and Post-Independence Periods: Enduring Lessons and Opportunities for youth in Africa, Discussion Paper for The Mandela Institute for Development Studies, Johannesburg, 2014.

changed into political parties and liberation movements. For this reason, African governments are suspicious of young activists and youth movements since they were the mainstays of the liberation struggles. They, therefore, try to control and regulate youth activism. In post-independence Africa, youths have become catalysts as well as agents of political violence, for instance, Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana Young Pioneers (GYP) and Kamuzu Banda's Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) operated as paramilitary wings for the ruling parties.<sup>4</sup> In countries like Nigeria, Kenya, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Burkina Faso, among others, youth political violence has surfaced under the façade of ethnic contention, religious differences, elections and the quest for change in an overdue and corrupt government.<sup>5</sup> There has been growth in instances of youth movements, manifesting in the form of vigilantism, banditry, and gangsterism, among others.

Much of the literature on youth and political violence analysed the rationale behind the youth's involvement in violence. This evokes many questions like: do youth indulge in political violence simply because they are active, forceful and young? Does having a large part of the youth population in society, in and of itself, spell possibilities for trouble in the future? Do youth engage in political violence for their aspirations, or they are mobilised and manipulated by those in power? What is the relationship between the state, political parties and the youth? What are the main grievances of the youth? Many scholars have attempted to answer these questions and their explanations will be reviewed below.

### **Demography and youth political violence**

The first body of researchers focused on demography. Samuel Huntington, one of the proponents of this hypothesis, argued that a "youth bulge", an incongruous number of youths to the total population, may threaten the security of the country making it vulnerable to conflict.<sup>6</sup> Along the same vein, Fuller and Goldstone attested that third-world countries experiencing 'demographic transition' (now having low death rates and high fertility rates)

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<sup>4</sup> C. Nicolas, 'Connected bodies: The Ghana Young Pioneers, the figurehead of the globalization of Nkrumahism (1960-1966)', *Politique Africaine*, Vol. 147, Issue 3, (2017), pp.87-107; R. Chirambo, 'Operation Bwezani: The Army Political; Change and Dr. Banda's Hegemony in Malawi', *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, (2004), pp.146-163.

<sup>5</sup> U. Ukeje and A. Iwilade, 'A Farewell to Innocence? African Youth and Violence in the Twenty-First Century', *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, Vol. 6, No. 2, (2012), pp.338-50.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Samuel P. Huntington by Michael Steinberger, *The Observer*, Sunday October 21, 2001.<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/islam/story/0,,577982,00>, Accessed: 18 November 2019.

are susceptible to youth political violence.<sup>7</sup> It is argued that a large percentage of youths or the rapid rise in the economically active age of the population aggravates the unemployment rate, lengthens dependence on parents, lower self-esteem and stimulates discontent. Collier added that the presence of a higher proportion of youth in the country makes the recruitment of youths into para-militias and vigilante groups easier.<sup>8</sup> Goldstone supports that the rising youth bulges combined with rapid urbanization are significant causative factors of political violence, especially in the context of poverty and unemployment.<sup>9</sup>

Some scholars have stated that the French revolution of 1789 was closely interlinked, though other factors played a role, with the increase of the dissatisfied youth population.<sup>10</sup> Urdal argued that the growth of the youth population increased the demand for food, caused incessant inflation, diminished the buying power of many citizens, and generated discontent in the country.<sup>11</sup> Others attributed the First and Second World Wars to the existence of a higher percentage of youth -especially in the Balkans around 1914.<sup>12</sup> Some further suggested that the annexation of China in the 1930s by the Japanese can be, to some extent, explicated by its large proportion of youth, whereas others ascribe communist insurgencies in Latin America between the 1970s and 1980s to the bulging population of the area's unwaged youth (the insurrections were ended with the diminishing of the number of youths).<sup>13</sup> The youth bulge theory became more developed and stronger after September 11, 2001. The theory has become a widely accepted explanation for the mobilisation of youth into terrorist organisations. In this regard, Zakaria maintains that the resurgence of Islam in the Arabic world was underpinned by youth bulges together with some socio-economic change.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> G. A. Fuller and R. P. Forrest, 'Youth cohorts and political unrest in South Korea', *Political Geography Quarterly*, 9, 1990, pp.9-22; J. A. Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

<sup>8</sup> P. Collier, 'Doing Well Out of War: An Economic Perspective', in Mats Berdal and David M. Malone (eds.), *Greed & Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000), pp.91-111.

<sup>9</sup> J. A. Goldstone, 'Demography, Environment, and Security', In P. F. Diehl and N. P. Gleditsch (eds.), *Environmental Conflict*, (Boulder: Westview, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> See Urdal, Henrik, The devil in the demographics: the effect of youth bulges on domestic armed conflict, 1950-2000). Social development papers. Conflict prevention and reconstruction series; no. CPR 14. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/794881468762939913/The-devil-in-the-demographics-the-effect-of-youth-bulges-on-domestic-armed-conflict-1950-2000>, Accessed: 01 December 2019.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

Robert Kaplan, in his vision of impending anarchy, came up with the most tremendous expressions, yet highly contested, of the demographic explanation of youth political violence. Kaplan saw state security menace openly linked to the emergence of an enormous number of jobless and discontented youths. He used West Africa to illustrate his argument, attaching youth bulge to other factors such as resource exhaustion and social degeneration. He argued,

In cities in West African countries, I saw ... young men everywhere – hordes of them. They were like loose molecules in a very unstable social fluid, a fluid that was clearly on the verge of igniting.<sup>15</sup>

Kaplan perceives youth in West Africa as a symbol of withdrawal from modernity into a Hobbesian state of nature.<sup>16</sup> Besides, Urdal, using his rigorous statistical analysis, averred that per every percentage increase in the youth population as a share of the adult population, the risk of violent conflict rises by more than four percent.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, he maintains that “when youth make up more than thirty-five percent of the adult population, which they do in many developing countries, the risk of violence is one-hundred and fifty percent higher than in countries with an age structure similar to most developed countries.”<sup>18</sup> Urdal argued that having a large population of youth dwindles employment opportunities and youth may resort to violence for social mobility.<sup>19</sup> This means youth bulge on its own is not the key factor that promotes youth violence, instead, it is the absence of vital elements for social mobility, especially employment.

Nevertheless, the demographic explanation of youth violence is not sufficient to explain youth violence in Zimbabwe, nor can it be generalised as an explanation. Most of the debates on youth bulge orbit around pessimistic and extreme scenarios, for instance, the involvement of dissatisfied and jobless youth in founding the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone<sup>20</sup> and the genocidal Interahamwe in Rwanda.<sup>21</sup> The youth bulge theory perceives youth as a menace to stability and security and not as potential victims. Some of the expressions and hypotheses generated in the youth bulge literature stigmatise youth, overlooking the fact

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<sup>15</sup> R. D. Kaplan, ‘The Coming Anarchy How scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism, and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet’, *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994.

<sup>16</sup> I. Olawale, *Youth Culture and State Collapse in Sierra Leone: Between Causality and Casualty Theses*, Paper Presented at the UNU-WIDER Conference, Helsinki, 3-6 June 2004, p.4.

<sup>17</sup> H. Urdal, ‘A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence’, *International Studies Quarterly* 50, 3, (2006), pp.607-629.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> See P. Richards, *Fighting for the Rainforest: war, youth & resources in Sierra Leone*. (Oxford: James Currey, 1996);

<sup>21</sup> See P. Roessler, ‘Donor-Induced Democratization and the Privatization of State Violence in Kenya and Rwanda’. *Comparative Politics*, Vol 37, No. 2, (2005), pp.207–27.

that a greater number of youths do not participate in political violence. Additionally, the theory is based on statistical analyses (in Urdal's work) of the correlation between high relative youth populations and risk of conflicts to determine which countries are prone to a higher risk of political violence.<sup>22</sup> It can be argued that the statistical relationship is insufficient to forecast the occurrence of political violence with certainty either at a local or national level. Noteworthy is the fact that there are several countries with youth bulges, but they have not experienced violent conflicts and there is inadequate data on regions or countries with high relative youth populations which suffered political violence. In the case of Zimbabwe, the youth bulge theory is insufficient to explain issues of youth political violence since it was to a greater extent orchestrated by the state. This study views youth political violence in Zimbabwe as a culture with roots traceable to the era of African nationalism. This study perceives youths not only as victims and perpetrators of violence but as a collection of various interest sub-groups with diverse agendas and a sense of agency. The next section discusses the 'coerced youth model.'

### **Compulsion and youth political violence**

Some scholars such as Honwana, Murphy, Bandura, and Abdullahi, among others, alternatively used the 'coerced youth model' to explain how youths found themselves enmeshed in political violence. This thesis upholds that one way or the other, youths are forced to partake in political violence – sometimes through physical abduction, or unavailability of opportunities for survival. In effect, youths cannot be reproached for their choice to involve in political violence, and they are, in most cases, rather victims than perpetrators. This model is mainly dominant in the growing literature on child soldiers, generated mostly by civic organisations, based on eyewitness accounts of former child soldiers.<sup>23</sup> They reveal that young people find themselves embroiled in violence because of the hopeless and disadvantaged status they occupy within the present-day African political landscape. Honwana posits that an array of factors such as coercion, patronage or poverty turn youths into killers before they become aware of the fundamentals of morality.<sup>24</sup> This implies that politicians socialise youths into violence, radicalising them and making them an easily accessible apparatus of violence. Political elites take advantage of the youth demographic dominance to champion their narrow interests with no or little response to the

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<sup>22</sup> K. Eylem Özkaya Lassalle, 'State Failure and the Political Violence Phenomenon: A Comparative Analysis of Iraq and Syria Cases', *European Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, (2016), pp.170-177.

<sup>23</sup> See Human Rights Watch reports on Liberia, Uganda, Angola, Human Rights Watch, 2002, 2003, 2004.

<sup>24</sup> A. Honwana, *Child Soldiers in Africa*, (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

predicaments faced by youths.<sup>25</sup> However, youths see electoral violence as a last resort to create their own spaces within the political arena. Most importantly, Honwana inferred that youths were an appropriate tool and they occupied an interstitial position between victim and perpetrator.<sup>26</sup>

Critics reiterated that the ‘coercion youth model’ has little significance to the political violence enigma in Africa, nonetheless, it is commonly used to explain youth involvement in civil wars and other conflict in which youths are captured, turned into soldiers and compelled to perpetrate horrendous acts like murder, pillaging and so on.<sup>27</sup> Scholars of this theory portray youths as victims, and this, in effect, diverts attention from many aspects of the problem. This makes youth political violence be perceived as a “soft” humanitarian concern, isolated from political and socio-economic issues and other actualities.<sup>28</sup> Besides, this explanation is partial since it draws from narratives of the youths who, in most cases do not want to take responsibility for their violent actions.

Contemporary researches reveal that there is a significant aspect of voluntarism that should not be overlooked when examining youth political violence. According to Rachel Brett, some youths willingly join the war, para-militias and vigilante groups without being coerced.<sup>29</sup> She maintains that to such youths, political conflict is an opportunity to run away from repressive families or embarrassment at school, to get employment or adventure.<sup>30</sup> Peter and Richards conducted interviews to comprehend why youths joined militias and many participants (some under 18) recognised themselves as adults arguing that they made adult decisions and they could fend for themselves.<sup>31</sup> While some instances of coercion cannot be discounted, this study perceives youth participation in political violence as deliberate. Youths can exercise agency and those who participate in violence are, in most cases, prompted by self-interests to enhance their economic opportunities. Youths join criminal gangs, vigilante groups or

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<sup>25</sup> M. Mugisha, D. Ojok, Y. Kiranda and B. B. Kabasa. ‘Youth participation in political processes in Uganda: Exploring opportunities and constrain’, *Journal on Perspectives on Democracy and Development in Africa*. UNIFOG, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> A. Honwana, *Child Soldiers in Africa*, (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

<sup>27</sup> W. Murphy, ‘Military patrimonialism and child soldier clientelism in the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars’, *African Studies Review*, Vol. 46, No. 2, (2003), pp.61–87; D. Ojoka and T. Acol, ‘Connecting the Dots: Youth Political Participation and Electoral Violence in Africa’, *Journal of African Democracy and Development*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, (2017), pp.94-108.

<sup>28</sup> UNDP, *Youth and Violent Conflict: Society and Development in Crisis?* (New York: UNDP, 2006).

<sup>29</sup> R. Brett, Why do adolescents volunteer for armed forces or armed groups? Paper presented at the Spanish Red Cross Conference, Valencia, Spain, 2003, pp.5-7; B. Sprecht, *Young Soldiers: Why They Choose to Fight*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2004).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> P. Richards, ‘Why we fight voices of youth combatants in Sierra Leone’, *Africa/International African Institute*, Vol. 68, No. 2, 1998.

patronage relationships out of choice rather than coercion.<sup>32</sup> In Zimbabwe, some youths who joined for instance the liberations struggle and vigilante groups like Chipangano did it out of their own volition to have access to economic opportunities and power that comes with participation. The following section concentrates on youth crisis and political exclusions as an explanation of violence.

### **‘Youth crisis’, political exclusions and violence**

Another strand of literature explained youth political violence using youth grievances. In the literature on youth crisis, two dissimilar meanings of the concept “youth crisis”<sup>33</sup> can be observed. First, it is perceived as a societal crisis affecting youths, causing a generally felt uneasiness when faced with societal constraints and changes. Second, a crisis instigated by the youth affects society on the whole. These two meanings are, in most cases, confused or used interchangeably. In Sub-Saharan Africa, youth is increasingly perceived as the source of societal crisis. Immediately after attaining independence, African youths were perceived and presented in exceptionally positive terms, as the agents of change and represented the promises of restored identities on the continent.<sup>34</sup> The nationalist project in post-independence Africa placed youth at the core of its policies for national liberation and economic development. Youths were greatly affected by state policies especially, the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). These economic reforms entailed extreme cutbacks in public expenditures. Due to the pressure of decreasing deficits and cutting back public expenditure, African governments were incapable of keeping the promises they made to the youths. The youths did not only lose the prestigious status that nationalism conferred to them in its rising stages, but they ceased to be the national priority. The elimination of the youths from the arenas of power and lack of structural fundamentals such as education, leisure and employment, pushed them to the margins of society and they exist as either victims and active agents of political violence.<sup>35</sup> In this regard, it can be argued that when the

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<sup>32</sup> U. Ujeke and A. Iwilade, ‘A Farewell to Innocence? African Youth and Violence in the Twenty-First Century’, *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, Vol. 6, No. 2, (2012), pp.338–50.

<sup>33</sup> Youth crisis can be understood as a situation where this transition is impassable and stretched out due to failure to attain the economic and social statuses required for adulthood.

<sup>34</sup> I. Olawale, ‘What is in a Job? The Social Context of Youth Employment Issues in Africa’, *Journal of African Economies*, Vol. 25 No. 1, (2016): pp.37-60.

<sup>35</sup> M. Diouf, ‘Engaging Postcolonial Cultures: African Youth and Public Space’, *African Studies Review*, vol. 46, no. 2, (2003), pp. 1-12.

youths feel marginalised, they became (due to many compelling circumstances) a source of despair and a threat to their societies.<sup>36</sup>

It is imperative to note that the change in the states' stance on youth was mostly exogenous—these were issues to do with the state's capacity to act on youth demands. Benvenuti confirmed that “inequality and impoverishment together with the incapacity of states to address poverty and exclusion in the distribution of economic, political and social resources, account for the main reasons for the proliferation of youth delinquency”.<sup>37</sup> Thus, Charlotte Spinks averred:

For many African countries, “youth” is no longer a transitional phase to established social status, but is an enduring limbo. This is a source of tremendous frustration. Instead of leaving youth behind and entering adulthood by marrying and establishing independent households, many youths... are unable to attain any social status.<sup>38</sup>

Benvenuti argued that there is a link between youth violence and economic inequality. The economic crisis faced by African states affects youths' ability to realise their aspirations and act on the anticipations placed upon them and thus weakening their abilities for the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Peters and Richards perceived youth crisis and marginalisation as the causative factors of violence in Sierra Leone. They underscored:

...youths, as a category, seem to be highly unsatisfied with their lives. They feel deprived of adequate education and employment opportunities. They barely identify, if at all, with the political thinking and behaviour of their parents. They feel let down and marginalised by society. In short, they are in crisis.<sup>39</sup>

Richards contends that youth in Africa (and Sierra Leone in particular) participate in violence in reaction to politics of exclusion and state failure to maintain its monopoly of violence.<sup>40</sup> In this regard, Keen avers that youth violence is an effect of a scarcity of employment prospects

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<sup>36</sup> D. Cruise O'Brien, 'A Lost Generation? Youth Identity and State Decay in West Africa', in Werbner, R and Ranger, T, (eds.), *Postcolonial Identities in Africa*. (London: Zed Books, 1996), pp. 55-74.

<sup>37</sup> P. Benvenuti, *Youth Violence and Delinquency in the Latin America Region*, Thesis, London School of Economics, 2003.

<sup>38</sup> C. Spinks, 'Pentecostal Christianity and Young Africans', in De Waal/Argenti (eds.), *Young Africa: Realising the Rights of Children and Youth*, (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2002), p.193.

<sup>39</sup> K. Peters and P. Richards, 'Why We Fight': Voices of Youth Combatants in Sierra Leone, *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 68, No. 2, 1998, pp. 183-210.

<sup>40</sup> P. Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth & Resources in Sierra Leone*. (Oxford: James Currey, 1996).

and the alienation of youth due to failures in the educational system and participating in political violence is ‘a plea for attention from those who felt they have been forgotten’.<sup>41</sup>

Some scholars like Ibrahim Abdullah and Yusuf Bandura expanded this issue in their study of youth in the Sierra Leone conflict. Their argument was grounded on the criticality of a subaltern, “lumpen” youth culture that is anti-social and anti-establishment in orientation – a youth “in search of a radical alternative”.<sup>42</sup> ‘Lumpens’ refers to unemployable and unemployed youth, usually male, who are reliant on their abilities for survival and are also involved in the underground or informal economy. These youths are susceptible to felonious behaviours such as gross indiscipline, drug trafficking, theft, and alcoholism.<sup>43</sup> In Nigeria, youth groups like the Area boys are products of youth marginalisation. Area boys are loosely organised youths, composed of educated and uneducated males, and they are mainly found in the major cities in Nigeria like Lagos, Onitsha, and Akure among others.<sup>44</sup> They roam around the streets extorting money from taxi drivers, travellers and pedestrians -forcing them to pay for fictitious services. They are involved in petty crimes and drug dealings.<sup>45</sup> They are, sometimes, hired by politicians as instruments of violence during the time of elections. The Area boys share some similarities with some youth groups in Zimbabwe (like Chipangano) but they differ in that the groups in Zimbabwe were state-sanctioned groups that enjoyed the blessings of the state.

In South Africa, Clive Glaser has significantly contributed to this area of study. He argued that socio-economic deprivations elicited youth aggression and in effect paved a way for a culture of violence.<sup>46</sup> Glaser connected youth criminalism with youth culture, lack of education, family fragmentation and joblessness, and concluded that youth gangsterism was a direct outcome of socio-economic deprivations in Apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, gangsterism was an attempt by the youths to establish a favourable world in which they may

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<sup>41</sup> R. Keen, R. L. Carrico, M. R. Sylvia, N. E. Berthier, ‘How infants use perceptual information to guide action’, *Developmental Science*, Vol. 6, Issue 2, (2003), pp.221-231.

<sup>42</sup> I. Abdullah, ‘Bush path to destruction: The origin and character of the Revolutionary United Front/Sierra Leone’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2, (1998), p.204.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*; A. Bandura, *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. (New York: Freeman, 1997).

<sup>44</sup> S. Heap, ‘Their day are spent in gambling and loafing, pimping for prostitutes and picking pockets’: Male juvenile delinquents on Legos Island, Nigeria, 1920s-1960s’, *Journal of Family History*, Vol 35, Issue 1, (2010), pp.48-70.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>46</sup> C. Glaser, ‘Swine, Hazels and the Dirty Dozen: Masculinities, Territoriality and the Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1960-1976’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 24, No.4, Special Issue on Masculinities in Southern Africa, December (1998), pp.719-736; ‘Managing the Sexuality of Urban Youth: Johannesburg, 1920s-1960s’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, (2005). p.133; C. Glaser, *Bo-Tsotsi, The Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1935-1976*, (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), pp.21-41.

perhaps create a 'respectable' identity, sphere of influence and financial opportunities.<sup>47</sup> Glaser also analysed the sophistication of the structure of youth gangs from the 1930s to the 1976 student revolts and how these youths were recruited into nationalist politics and, simultaneously, remained independent. In his analysis of youths, Glaser shows the difference between the *tsotsi* township gangs and student organisations since these groups had different sets of values. Whereas the *tsotsi* gang values revolved around fighting skills and physicality, the students prioritised educational achievement, sports and debating.<sup>48</sup> Given these values, students happen to be the leaders of political movements. Glaser's analysis is important for this thesis because both educated and uneducated youths were also mobilised into ZANU-PF hegemonic politics since 1963. Comparative analyses will be drawn throughout the thesis using the case of South Africa.

Compared to other explanations that merely concentrate on demography or coercion, the youth crisis explanation generated a multifaceted and more complicated dimension. It was predominantly used to analyse the participation of youth in armed conflicts, crime and violence, especially in urban areas. However, the explanation provokes questions like: how can we separate teenage existential angst and youth crisis which possibly generate violence? Why do some youth resort to violence while others remain peaceful, in the same country or city? And why do youths victimise other youths? What are the differences between those who get mobilized into violence and those who stay put on the sidelines? Is the crisis not affecting them? Are they dealing with this crisis in a different way? Youth crises do not necessarily prompt youths to invariably take the violence option. This thesis will attempt to address these questions in every chapter. Many youths encountered exclusion, socio-economic challenges and manipulation but they do not join criminal groups or vigilante groups. Youths can come up with survival strategies that open socio-economic opportunities, facilitate their social mobility and change their social status. It should be noted that it is only a small proportion of youth that decides to participate in violence. The following section focuses on state failure as an explanation of political violence.

### **State failure and youth political violence**

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<sup>47</sup> J. Seekings, 'The Lost Generation': South Africa's 'Youth Problem' in the early-1990s', *Transformation*, 29, (1996), pp.103-125.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, pp.4-5.

According to Rotberg, state failure occurs when the state loses its legitimacy before its citizens and becomes incapacitated to provide positive public goods.<sup>49</sup> Rotberg avers that “a failed state is a polity that is no longer able or willing to perform the fundamental responsibilities of a nation-state in the modern world.”<sup>50</sup> He stated the three indicators of state failure to provide a clear delineation of the phenomenon. The economic indicators include income cutbacks and deterioration of living standards, escalation of corruption, plummeting of GDP, withering of foreign and domestic investment and scarcities of food. The political indicators include the subversion of democratic norms, prohibition of participatory processes, enslavement of bureaucracy, end of judicial neutrality, blocking of civil society and subordination of security forces. The emergence of these indicators (in aggregation not separately) is in most cases accompanied by the proliferation of the levels of violence and the deterioration of human security.<sup>51</sup> Also, states with such indicators tend to have anemic institutions and are afflicted by ineffective governance, rendering them unable to meet their people’s basic needs for food, sanitation, health care, and education. Weak governments are often unable to adequately control some areas and they allow predatory actors like vigilante groups and para-militias to take over these areas and control them. Umar argued that in weak and emerging societies, politicians often play a subversive role in engineering youth violence to realise their selfish agendas.<sup>52</sup> Weak states can explode into violence or total collapse and subject their citizens to the violence of all sorts.

Nonetheless, in the debates on the definition of state failure and its indicators, political violence is at the core of these discussions, though issues like the level, type and intensity of political violence have been ignored by many scholars. Also, much of the literature did not clarify whether political violence is the cause or the consequence of state failure.<sup>53</sup> It should be noted that the state failure hypothesis does not convincingly explain youth political violence in Zimbabwe. Although Zimbabwe is perceived to be one of the failed states, youth

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<sup>49</sup> R. Rotberg, ‘Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators’, in R. Rotberg (ed.) *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, (Washington DC, World Peace Foundation/Brookings Institution, 2003).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>52</sup> M. B. Umar, ‘Political Violence Amongst Youth Groups in Africa's Budding Democracies - An Explorative Studies of Concepts, Issues and Experiences’, *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 6, No. 17, (2016), Accessed on 12 December 2020.

<sup>53</sup> J. D. John, ‘The Concept, Causes and Consequences of Failed States: A Critical Review of the Literature and Agenda for Research with Specific Reference to Sub-Saharan Africa’, *European Journal of Development Research*, vol. 22, no 1, (2010), pp. 15.

political violence in Zimbabwe is an outcome of political choice rather than state collapse.<sup>54</sup> The state collapse explanation applies to the cases of Sierra Leone, Uganda's Teso region, South Sudan's former Western Equatorial State, and Nigeria's north-eastern region where youth militias and vigilantes groups were used to tackle insurgents in areas where state control was weak.<sup>55</sup> In these countries, especially Nigeria, there are some urban centres where state security has completely lost its monopoly on violence, and these areas are incessantly becoming breeding grounds for youth political violence.<sup>56</sup> The Zimbabwean police and the military still have the capabilities of curbing youth violence in the state, but they cannot do it when these groups are backed by ZANU-PF top officials. It can be argued that in states like Zimbabwe, youth violence can only emerge with the blessings of the state. Thus, this study perceives youth political violence in Zimbabwe as more of a symptom rather than a consequence of state failure.

The above explanations of youth political violence reveal the inconsistencies and contradictions in the portrayal of youth in Africa's political history. Most of the literature is awash with negative depictions of youths and references to a 'youth crisis', with the label 'lost generation'.<sup>57</sup> Some scholars perceive 'youth' as a synonym for brutal thugs and terrifying malcontents<sup>58</sup> and others see it as synonymous with marginalisation and vulnerability.<sup>59</sup> In this literature, there is a poor understanding of the agency of youths who participate in political violence and those who do not. This study perceives youth as a collection of various interest sub-groups with diverse agendas, taking advantage of the weak state that wants to use them for its ends and allowing them latitude to go to certain extremes, so long they serve the greater interests of the state. Although there are some instances of coercion, youth exercise agency when participating in political violence and most of those

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<sup>54</sup> T. Munyarari, Chipangano, Vigilantism and Community Responses in Mbare District, Zimbabwe, c.2000-2013, Master's Thesis, Grahamstown: Department of History, Grahamstown: Rhodes University, 2018.

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/10/a-double-edged-sword-the-role-of-vigilantes-in-Africa>, Accessed: 20 January 2020.

<sup>56</sup> A. A. Abdullahi and M. Issah, 'Theorizing youth violence in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Nigeria', *Perspective on Global Development and Technology*, 15, (2016), pp.363-390.

<sup>57</sup> P. Richards, 'Rebellion in Liberia and Sierra Leone: A Crisis of Youth?' in Furley, O.(ed.). *Conflict in Africa*. (London: Taurus Academy Studies, 1995); M. Ebata, V. Izzi, A. Lendon, E. Ngjela, P. Sampson and J. Lowicki-Zucca, *Youth and Violent Conflict: Society and Development in Crisis*. (New York: Bureau of Crisis Prevention, UNDP, 2005); S. Ginwright and T. James, 'From Assets to Agents of Change: Social Justice, Organizing and Youth Development', *New Directions for Youth Development*, Vol. 96, No. 1, (2002), pp.30-41.

<sup>58</sup> H. Dawson, 'Youth Politics: Waiting and Envy in a South African Informal Settlement', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 4, (2014) pp. 861-82; M. D. Gavin, M.D. (2007) 'Africa's Restless Youth', in Princeton Lyman and Patricia Dorff (eds.) *Beyond Humanitarianism*. (New York: Brookings Institute Press, 2007), pp.69-85.

<sup>59</sup> C. Gore and D. Pratten, 'The politics of plunder: the rhetoric of order and disorder in southern Nigeria', *African Affairs*, Vol. 102, No. 407, (2003), pp. 211-240.

who are involved in violence do it out of their volition. Youths are conscious of the circumstances around them and they can define their agendas. It should be noted that it is only a small number of youths who engage in violence and most of them do it for their upward social mobility.<sup>60</sup> This study perceives youth political violence in Zimbabwe as a deep-seated political culture that was endemic in the nationalist movements and their parties, advanced during the liberation struggle, and normalised in the post-colonial era. The following section examines the historiography of youth political violence in Zimbabwe.

### **Historiography of youth and ZANU-PF politics in Zimbabwe**

There is a dearth of scholarship documenting the involvement of the youth in ZANU's hegemonic struggles since 1960. The extant literature on youth and ZANU politics is found in fragments as many scholars did not historicise the phenomenon, they focused on specific events. Thus, this study covers a longer period, tracing the involvement of youth in political violence to the late 1950s to understand how violence becomes a political culture in Zimbabwe. This section consists of two parts: the first part reviews the literature on youth and ZANU politics during the liberation struggle. The second part analyses the literature on youth and ZANU-PF politics in the post-colonial era.

#### **Youth and ZANU politics during the liberation struggle**

A considerable number of scholars researched Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, but only a few focused on youth and political violence during wartime as an area of specialty that requires inquiry. The roles of youths, especially the *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos*, in the war of liberation remained scantily documented since many historians focused on the guerrillas, urban youths and the leaders of the liberation movements. Some historians superficially examined the phenomenon in the context of urban violence, nationalism and democracy.<sup>61</sup> They analysed the phenomenon from an elitist perspective, overlooking the roles played by ordinary youths, especially war collaborators.<sup>62</sup> This study joins the debate on the liberation struggle through the analysis of the roles of the *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos* in the struggle.

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<sup>60</sup> M. Feseha, 'The nexus between 'youth bulge' and armed conflict,' *Africa Portal* <https://www.africaportal.org/features/nexus-between-youth-bulge-and-armed-conflict/>, Accessed: 30 July 2020.

<sup>61</sup> T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe 1940–1964*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008).

<sup>62</sup> F. Chung, *Re-living the Second Chimurenga Memories from the Liberation Struggle in Zimbabwe*. (Harare: The Nordic Africa Institute and Weaver Press, 2006).

Various scholars overlooked youth political violence which affected civilians during wartime.<sup>63</sup> Some scholars who attempted to research the phenomenon of violence, especially David Kaulemu, were influenced by the Fanonian paradigm which explains violence in terms of the colonised overturning the racial patterns of colonial violence. Kaulemu established that ‘the methods of violence were developed during the colonial era and wartime have spread through our society and violence has become part of our socio-political language.’<sup>64</sup> According to Muchemwa and Muponde, the Fanonian thesis of violence is problematic because it ‘reads like taming and sanitising of black-on-black violence.’<sup>65</sup> They inferred that an element of determinism in the Fanonian thesis of violence takes ‘away moral agency and blame from perpetrators.’<sup>66</sup> Given this, there is a paucity of literature examining how youth violence became a component of the political culture in Zimbabwe and there is no informed theoretical explanation of this culture of violence.

Timothy Scarnecchia examined urban violence in colonial Zimbabwe using a democratic perspective. He published his work in 2008 at a time when youth political violence was rampant and threatening to stop the process of democratisation. Scarnecchia’s work reveals that the roots of political violence in Zimbabwe can be traced to the era of African nationalism when the nationalist leaders and their parties used youth violence as a potent tool for their political mobilisations. The violence of the 1960s and the 2000s share some similarities in the use of concepts like reactionaries, sell-outs, puppets and stooges, used by nationalist leaders to rationalise the use of violence against other political leaders and their supporters.<sup>67</sup> Violence was considered as part of chastising sell-outs and it was typified by petrol-bombings of houses and cars and beatings of those labelled as traitors.<sup>68</sup> My study builds on Scarnecchia’s account of political violence which reflects that violence was a systematic component of the foundation of ZANU politics. Although Scarnecchia did not specifically focus on youth violence and violence which occurred in rural areas, his book is

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<sup>63</sup> K. D. Manungo, ‘The Role Peasants Played in the Zimbabwe War of Liberation with Special Emphasis on the Chiweshe District,’ Unpublished PhD thesis, Ohio University, 1991. K. D. Manungo, ‘Peasantry in Zimbabwe: A Vehicle for Change,’ in P. Kaarsholm (ed.), *Cultural Struggle and Development in Southern Africa*, (London: James Currey, 1991). T. O. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988); D. Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988).

<sup>64</sup> D. Kaulemu, ‘The Culture of Party Politics and the Concept of the State,’ in D. Harold-Barry (ed.), *Zimbabwe: The Past Is the Future*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2004), p. 81.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> T. Scarnecchia, *The Roots of Urban Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940-1964*. (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

significant as it is a living dictionary that unravels many aspects and magnitudes of political violence through different stages of the development of the Zimbabwean state. Also, the violence that surfaced in urban areas or the particularities of township livelihood and the extremism connected with Zimbabwean nationalism laid a foundation for the contemporary forms of political violence faced by the state.

Scholars of Zimbabwean nationalism such as Enocent Msindo, Ngwabi Bhebe, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, among others, concur that political violence and intra-fights within the Zimbabwean nationalist movements were a by-product of politics of hatred between ZAPU/ZIPRA and ZANU/ZANLA.<sup>69</sup> Bhebe established that the post-colonial violence has its roots in the evolution and fossilisation of African nationalism, which was characterised by black-on-black violence since the ZAPU-ZANU split in 1963.<sup>70</sup> In tandem with this, Msindo argued Zimbabwean ‘nationalism was synonymous with the violent liberation struggle.’<sup>71</sup> Although these works examine political violence in the context of nationalism and not necessarily youth violence, they are integral to this study as they help me understand how political violence and the culture of impunity were institutionalised and how it could be tackled within the broader historical context.

Norma Kriger was the first researcher to dispute the notions of popular nationalist mobilisation that peasants were motivated to support the liberation struggle out of their own free will.<sup>72</sup> She raised an important question saying: ‘when does the mobilisation of people to fight colonialism turn into commandism, militarism, the culture of violence, racism, nativism and xenophobia?’<sup>73</sup> Kriger’s work provides fundamental theoretical lenses that are central when analysing youth violence that occurred during wartime. Although Kriger was primarily focusing on guerrilla violence and peasant consciousness, her work contains some useful information that may be valuable for my study of youth violence. The guerrillas who later became fierce war veterans in post-colonial Zimbabwe played a key role in recruiting and socialising the youths into violence. Most of the youths learned their violent behaviour from

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<sup>69</sup> E. Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe: Transformations in Kalanga and Ndebele Societies, 1860-1990*, (Rochester: Rochester University Press, 2012), pp. 211-228; N. M. Bhebe, ‘The Golden Age of Zimbabwe’s Historiography and Its Decline from 1967 to the Present’, *The Dyke*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2004, p. 15.; S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni Do ‘Zimbabweans’ Exist? Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in a Postcolonial State, Africa in Development vol 3, (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

<sup>70</sup> N. M. Bhebe, ‘The Golden Age of Zimbabwe’s Historiography and its decline from 1967 to the present’, *The Dyke*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2004), p.15.

<sup>71</sup> E. Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe: Transformations in Kalanga and Ndebele Societies, 1860-1990*, (Rochester: Rochester University Press, 2012), pp. 211-228.

<sup>72</sup> N. J. Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

guerrillas during the liberation struggle and war veterans after independence. For instance, in the National Youth Training Centres, the youths were taught radical politics and indoctrinated to hate people with different political views by the war veterans. Given this, youth political violence and the activities of the guerrillas and war veterans cannot be separated. However, Kriger's work can be too problematic to rely on as she tried to make broad generalisations from the episodes of guerrilla violence which happened in one area.

Writing about her experiences during the liberation struggle, Fay Chung argued that war collaborators formed an important transport and communication network which transmitted food, information and other necessities to the guerrillas.<sup>74</sup> The Rhodesian Security Forces (RSFs) were aware of their roles in the war and they were sometimes tracked down, captured and punished. So far, historians have not adequately documented the roles and experiences of the war collaborators. Their history is yet to be written as the extant literature provides superficial abstracts of the events. Their stories have remained on the peripheries of history. Their role in the struggle has been overshadowed by that of the guerrillas as many historians were mainly interested in studying the experiences of the guerrillas rather than the war collaborators. My study shows that the war collaborators were both perpetrators and victims of political violence. I will examine how youths were recruited into war collaboration, their role in the struggle, their involvement in political violence and how they suffered from the scourges of the RSFs and guerrilla violence.

Terence Ranger and Norma Kriger examined issues of generational conflict during the liberation war between the youthful guerrillas and war collaborators *versus* the authority of their parents and traditional leaders.<sup>75</sup> As the war intensified, in the late 1970s, the armies were conscripting young boys, at times from schools, to meet the requirements for men at the war front. This propagated a situation of institutional waning and an increase in youth political violence in the countryside. During this period most of the recruits were trained for a short time in Mozambique training bases and sent back to fight. It seems this is the phase when the guerrilla principle of self-discipline and respect disappeared due to the young guerrillas taking over.<sup>76</sup> Acts of violence such as murder, rape and beatings heightened. Nonetheless, this phase did not obtain academic analysis in the context of youth political

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<sup>74</sup> F. Chung, *Re-living the Second Chimurenga Memories from the Liberation Struggle in Zimbabwe*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2006).

<sup>75</sup> T. O. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988).

<sup>76</sup> G. C. Mazarire, Discipline and Punishment in ZANLA: 1964–1979, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 37, Issue 3, (2011), pp.571-591.

violence. Kriger and Ranger only portray the *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos* as perpetrators of violence forgetting that they were also victims of guerrilla violence. However, their works are important as they give perspective on how youth-guerrilla violence occurred in the late 1970s.

A recent doctorate thesis by Christopher Ngwenya examined the role played by Bulilima youths in the liberation struggle during the period between 1960 and 1980.<sup>77</sup> This study displays that youths played an instrumental role in helping the ZIPRA forces to execute their war campaigns in Bulilima. It proffers comparisons of ideologies, war tactics and recruitment strategies used by ZIPRA and ZANLA guerrillas. The study also reveals the nature of relationships that the ZIPRA and ZANLA guerrillas had with the peasants in their zones of operation. Ngwenya argued that the ZIPRA guerrillas (who followed the Soviet Union type of conventional warfare) had less contact with the masses compared to the ZANLA guerrillas (who followed the Maoism guerrilla warfare) and thus the RSFs responses to ZIPRA and ZANLA campaigns differed.<sup>78</sup> He argued that the way peasants in ZANLA zones of operation felt and experienced the liberation war differed from the way peasants in ZIPRA areas experienced the same phenomenon.<sup>79</sup> For instance, in ZANLA areas, the Rhodesian government established Protected Villages to cut the connection between the peasants and the guerrillas. This study provides significant information that I can use to draw comparative insights when examining the role played by the *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos* during the liberation struggle.

The literature above reveals that youth political violence during wartime was inadequately examined. Issues like how youth were recruited into war collaboration, the involvement of youth in political violence and the plight of war collaborators were not of interest to many scholars. Those who focused on the operations of the ZANLA guerrillas failed to adequately examine how the violent behaviours of the guerrillas affected the war collaborators. This study is intended to examine the aforementioned issues. The ensuing section presents the literature on youth political violence in the post-colonial era.

### **Youth and political violence in the post-colonial era**

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<sup>77</sup> C. Ngwenya, *The role of youths in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle: A case study of Bulilima District, 1960 – 1980*. PhD Thesis, Department of History, Thohoyandou: University of Venda, 2017, p. vii.

<sup>78</sup> C. Ngwenya and R. R. Molapo, *The politics and history of the armed struggle in Zimbabwe: The case of Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) in Zaka and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) in the Bulilima District*, *Journal for Contemporary History*, Vol. 43, No.1, 2018, pp.70-90.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

Unlike the violence of the decolonisation era which was easier to explain, many scholars struggled to theorise and make sense of the post-colonial violence. Of note is the fact that the post-colonial violence had its origins in the development and fossilisation of African nationalism in a bifurcated way which resulted in the ZAPU-ZANU split in 1963.<sup>80</sup> The interparty conflict between ZAPU and ZANU shaped the ruling party's politics negatively. ZANU did not tolerate any form of opposition. Given this, coercion was discovered to be a useful means to invite the opposition supporters into ZANU politics. In parallel with this, Nzongola-Ntalaja postulated:

The Zimbabwean nationalist struggle was anticipated to establish a 'people's state' and a people's government and replace the violent colonial state. This anticipation remained a dream as the post-colonial state turned out to be a 'regulator' or 'social gendarme' which retained the very contradictions of which it is a product, to maintain social order and cohesion.<sup>81</sup>

The problem with the literature on post-colonial violence in Zimbabwe is that it mainly focuses on issues like military violence, electoral violence and the impact of violence on democracy and very little attention was paid to the role played by the youth in political violence. This study endeavours to understand how youths become tools of state coercion, their relationship with the security structures and their ability to exercise agency when participating in violence.

Terence Ranger researched the roots of post-colonial state authoritarianism and violence. He expounded that authoritarianism was an outcome of commandism that typified the liberation war - which was against pluralism of ideas.<sup>82</sup> Ranger added that 'it was difficult to escape the legacies of such a war.'<sup>83</sup> In support of this, Gatsheni-Ndlovu argued that the adoption of socialist (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist) ideologies resulted in the application of 'democratic centralism' that is absolutely against the plurality of ideas and public criticism of the state once a decision has been made.<sup>84</sup> The ZANU-PF authoritarian culture resulted in the intolerance of pluralism and subordination of churches, trade unions and other influential

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<sup>80</sup> S. Gatsheni- Ndlovu, *Do Zimbabweans Exist? Trajectories of nationalism, national identity formation and crisis in a postcolonial state*. (Pieterlen: Verlag Peter Lang, 2009).

<sup>81</sup> G. Nzongola-Ntalaja, *Revolution and Counter Revolution in Africa: Essays in Contemporary Politics*, (London: ZED Books, 1987), pp. 74-77.

<sup>82</sup> T. Ranger, 'Introduction to Volume Two', in T. Ranger (ed.), *The Historical Dimensions of Democracy and Human Rights in Zimbabwe: Volume Two: Nationalism, Democracy and Human Rights*, (Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2003), pp. 1-2.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> S. Gatsheni- Ndlovu, *Do Zimbabweans Exist? Trajectories of nationalism, national identity formation and crisis in a postcolonial state*. (Pieterlen: Verlag Peter Lang, 2009).

organisations to its imperatives through youth violence.<sup>85</sup> The ZANU-PF youths were synonymous with Mao Zedong's Red Guard which was used during the Cultural Revolution (Mao's hegemonic struggle), to wipe out all signs of opposition and capitalism.<sup>86</sup> The ZANU-PF youths, especially the Youth brigades and NYS graduates, were taught undemocratic politics, intolerance, racism and to regard political opposition with open hostility.<sup>87</sup>

Madondo discussed the problem of the youths in Zimbabwe and underscored that youth violence, patronage and state efforts at indoctrinating youths and institutionalising violence were perceivable in the 1980s and intensified in the post-2000 era.<sup>88</sup> The post-independence elections have seen varying degrees of youth political violence. The ZANU-PF regime anticipated unquestionable loyalty, allegiance and strict compliance to its directives. The party enforced the loyalty of youths through politics of patronage. Government loans and other empowerment programmes served as remunerations for loyalty and commitment to the party.<sup>89</sup> Owing to economic hardships and cyclical poverty, many youths joined the ZANU-PF militias for their upward mobility. However, Madondo was not interested in examining how youths were indoctrinated and socialised into violence. His work doesn't explain clearly whether youths exercised agency in perpetrating violence or not. The operations of ZANU-PF youth groups such as the Youth brigades, the NYS graduates and vigilante groups were not part of the scope of his study. This study will attempt to address this lacuna.

Norma Kriger argued that state-sanctioned violence and terrorisation of the oppositions during elections has been a persistent stratagem of ZANU-PF since 1980.<sup>90</sup> She examined the relationship between youths, ZANU-PF and state structures and argued that the collusion of the state in electoral violence is lucidly attested by the granting of acquittals and pardons to murderers.<sup>91</sup> She convincingly claimed that the state youth programmes such as the Youth Brigade Movement of the 1980s and later the NYS were instituted by ZANU-PF with the intent to institutionalize and regulate the aspirations of euphoric and conceivably dangerous

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<sup>85</sup> T. Ranger, 'Introduction to Volume Two,' in T. Ranger (ed.), *The Historical Dimensions of Democracy and Human Rights in Zimbabwe: Volume Two: Nationalism, Democracy and Human Rights*, (Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2003), pp. 1-2.

<sup>86</sup> A. Fox, 'Explaining the Red Guard Movement During the Cultural Revolution', Writing Excellence Award Winners, Paper 33, (2012). [http://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/writing\\_awards/33](http://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/writing_awards/33), Accessed 24 January 2020.

<sup>87</sup> R. Mugabe, Interview with Blaffour, in *New African*, Summer 2007.

<sup>88</sup> O. Madondo, "The problem of youth in Mugabe's Zimbabwe." *Africanfiles: Zimbabwe* page. [www.africanfiles.org/zimbabwe.asp.2008](http://www.africanfiles.org/zimbabwe.asp.2008), Accessed: 4 September 2014.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> N. J. Kriger, 'ZANU (PF) Strategies in General Elections, 1980-2000: Discourse and Coercion', *African Affairs*, vol. 104, no. 414, 2005, pp.1-34.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

youths after the end of the war.<sup>92</sup> These youths were tasked to organise ZANU-PF meetings, mobilise support and they committed heinous acts of violence during elections with impunity. Kriger's research demonstrated the recurrency of election-related violence from 1980 to 2002. Her work will be possibly important when analysing youth political violence which occurred during the aforementioned period. It also provides insights into the operations of the Youth brigades and the NYS youths.

Many scholars (Such as Coltart, Southall, Alexander and McGregor, and Bratton) agreed that the prevalence of violence in Zimbabwe is synonymous with an incurable disease.<sup>93</sup> In ZANU politics, those who perpetrate violence have higher chances of acquiring high political positions. People like the late Perence Shiri, the late Border Gezi, Jim Kunaka, the late Tendai Savanhu, Saviour Kasukuwere, Owen Mudha Ncube and many others who committed violence, saw their political profiles rising. Amid this political terrain where violence against the opposition is rewarded, it is not surprising that violence has become deeply embedded in the national psyche taking the normative character.<sup>94</sup> These studies reveal that some youths were involved in political violence owing to the privileges that were attached to participation in violence. They will help me to theorise this study and make youth political violence more comprehensible.

Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros examined violence using class analysis to understand state violence and its function.<sup>95</sup> They argued that the violent events ranging from the *gukurahundi*, Fast Track Land Reform to electoral violence were caused by the petty-bourgeoisie and political elites in ZANU-PF protecting their narrow elite class interests.<sup>96</sup> The political elites manipulated youths, security forces and war veterans turning them into storm-troopers, political thugs and dogmatists for their political aggrandizement.<sup>97</sup> The elites socialised youths into violence through their speeches that celebrated violence as a sign of

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> D. Coltart, *The Struggle Continues: 50 Years of Tyranny in Zimbabwe*, (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2016); M. Bratton, *Power Politics in Zimbabwe*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2014); R. Southall, Review Article: History, Tyranny, and Democracy in Zimbabwe, *Africa Spectrum*, Vol. 51, No. 2, (2016), pp.117–130.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> S. Moyo and P. Yeros, 'Zimbabwe Ten Years On: Results and Prospects', in *Pambazuka News*, 419 (2009); S. Moyo and P. Yeros, 'Intervention: The Zimbabwe Question and the Two Lefts,' *Historical Materialism*, 15, (2007), pp. 199-200; P. Yeros, 'Zimbabwe and the Dilemmas of the Left', *Historical Materialism*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (2002), p. 12.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> I. Mhike, 'Political Violence in Zimbabwe's National Youth Service, 2001–2007', in E. Oinas, H. Onodera, L. Suurpää, *What Politics? Youth and Political Engagement in Africa*. (Boston: Brill, 2018), pp.246-264.

heroism rather than condemning it.<sup>98</sup> Even the president, Mugabe himself, had the liberty to proclaim that he had ‘degrees in violence.’<sup>99</sup> The work of Moyo and Yeros will be helpful when analysing why and how youth has become an abused political resource in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Many scholars have neglected the phenomenon of youth political violence in Zimbabwe’s opposition parties. Only a few scholars like Adrienne LeBas, Charles Moyo, the newspapers, and some civic society organisations especially the Zimbabwe Peace Project, Heal Zimbabwe Trust, and Human Rights Watch have at times called attention to episodes of inter-party and intra-party violence perpetrated by MDC youths.<sup>100</sup> The dominant narrative is that political violence is mainly a monopoly of the state and the governing party, ZANU-PF.<sup>101</sup> There is a tendency to press forward a ‘single narrative’ mainly concentrating on violence perpetrated by ZANU-PF and its surrogates. Nonetheless, contemporary events show that the MDC has also slipped into the abyss of political violence.<sup>102</sup> The MDC’s vigilantes groups known as the Democratic Resistance Committees or the ‘Vanguard’ have often displayed violent tendencies. This study hearkens Adichie’s caution on ‘the danger of a single story.’<sup>103</sup> It attempts to bring a ‘balanced’ story of youth political violence in Zimbabwe. While the main focus of this study is not to examine the youth political violence in the opposition parties, neglecting this phenomenon is depriving the literature on political violence of an essential perspective.

Youth political violence in Zimbabwe can be cogently explained through Francis Nyamnjoh’s concept of incompleteness and conviviality. The ZANU-PF elites were dependent on violence because they were unsure of the effectiveness of their consensual strategies for maintaining their hegemony. They had a deep-seated paranoia that power can easily slip away. Nyamnjoh termed this as a sense of ‘incompleteness.’<sup>104</sup> It is this

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<sup>98</sup> S. Gatsheni- Ndlovu, *Do Zimbabweans Exist? Trajectories of nationalism, national identity formation and crisis in a postcolonial state*. (Pieterlen: Verlag Peter Lang, 2009).

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> A. LeBas, ‘Polarisation as Craft: Party Formation and State Violence in Zimbabwe,’ *Comparative Politics*, 38, 8, 419; C. Moyo, ‘Party Foot-Soldiers, Quasi-Militias, Vigilantes and the Spectre of Violence in Zimbabwe’s Opposition Politics,’ *Modern Africa: Politics, History and Society*, Vol. 8, Issue 1, (2020) pp.65-103.

<sup>101</sup> C. Moyo, ‘Party Foot-Soldiers, Quasi-Militias, Vigilantes and the Spectre of Violence in Zimbabwe’s Opposition Politics,’ *Modern Africa: Politics, History and Society*, Vol. 8, Issue 1, (2020) pp.65-103.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> C. N. Adichie, The Danger of a Single Story. [Video]. *YouTube*, 7 October 2009. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>, Accessed 15 January 2022.

<sup>104</sup> F. B. Nyamnjoh, ‘Incompleteness: Frontier Africa and the Currency of Conviviality’, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, (2015), pp.1-18.

incompleteness that made the ZANU-PF regime establish the Youth Brigade Movement in the 1980s and the NYS in the 2000s -to have reliable and inexpensive paramilitary wings that maintain the party's grip on power. Incompleteness also resulted in the emergence of vigilante groups like Chipangano that appropriate the police and Harare City Council duties in Mbare. Nyamnjoh argued that 'conviviality is negotiated on the edge of conflict, imposed by necessity.'<sup>105</sup> While ZANU-PF politicians required youths to intimidate and violate the public for their political mileage, the youths also needed material benefits from these politicians. Thus, they ended up having a patron-client relationship. Both the patrons and the youths were in a precarious situation and they both needed each other to survive and realise their ambitions. In this case, youths were able to exercise agency as they capitalised on the 'incompleteness' of their patrons. For instance, in Mbare the ZANU-PF patrons (Amos Midzi and Tendai Savanhu) had to pursue their agendas acknowledging and respecting the incompleteness of Chipangano youths who were important in their political games. The ZANU-PF patrons were like Nigerian political godfathers who maintain armies of thugs to terrorise their political foes, disturb the electoral process and help to manipulate the election result.<sup>106</sup> Nyamnjoh's work will help me to widen my theoretical lenses especially when examining political violence that occurred in the 2000s.

Also, Patrick Chabal's thesis on the instrumentalisation of disorder clearly explains the situation in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Zimbabwe. Chabal averred that politicians are often facilitators in the 'business of violence' as they are responsible for the emergence of vigilante groups, militias and other criminal gangs which prey on the public resources and terrorise people.<sup>107</sup> Analogously, Shleifer observed that African governments have a 'grabbing hand' rather than the normative 'helping hand' as they use their informal networks to plunder public resources.<sup>108</sup> Political violence is used as a mechanism for creating disorder and the presence of disorder generates a favourable environment that provides opportunities to the extortionist and criminal groups to manipulate to their advantage.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, the groups that emerge

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<sup>105</sup> F. B. Nyamnjoh and I. Brudvig, 'Conviviality and negotiations with belonging in urban Africa.' In: E.F. Isin and P. Nyers (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Global Citizenship Studies*. (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp.217–229.

<sup>106</sup> O. Samuel, 'Youth Involvement in Political Violence/Thuggery: A Counter Weight to Democratic Development in Africa', *Journal of Pol Science and Public Affairs* 5, (2017), p.280.

<sup>107</sup> P. Chabal and J. Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Oxford and Bloomington: James Currey and Indiana University Press, 1999)

<sup>108</sup> A. Shleifer, and R. W. Vishny, *The Grabbing Hand: Government Pathologies and Their Cures*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>109</sup> P. Chabal and J. Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Oxford and Bloomington: James Curry and Indiana University Press, 1999), p.xix.

out of political disorder turn out to be highly exclusionary, serving the interests of the few.<sup>110</sup> They capitalise on their collusion with the state to usurp public resources and terrorise citizens. Chabal's work is fundamental in explaining the operation of state-sanctioned vigilante groups like Chipangano.

In Zimbabwe violence has been 'normalized', and the state has become a spawning ground for youth violence of all sorts,<sup>111</sup> thus, creating space for the existence of youth organizations like Upfumi Kuvadiki (in Epworth), Al-Shabaab (in Kwekwe) and MaShurugwi.<sup>112</sup> The ZANU-PF regime allowed the youth militias to use its name when perpetrating violence to evade prosecution. The youth groups take advantage of this immunity and engage in criminality, extortion, exclusivism and corruption. The subsequent section discusses the Gramscian theory of hegemony and domination.

### **Contextualising the Gramscian theory of hegemony and domination**

Antonio Gramsci's<sup>113</sup> works offer possibilities for understanding political violence over the years in Zimbabwe. Albeit the tendencies in some popular interpretations of equating Gramsci's notion of hegemony to a politics of consent, the *Prison Notes* reveals his profound interest in the 'armour of coercion'. Gramsci perceives the state as a "hegemony protected by the armour of coercion."<sup>114</sup> He also underscored that "every political struggle... always has a militaristic substratum."<sup>115</sup> Given this, in his analyses of Niccolò Machiavelli's Centaur, Gramsci viewed him as a representative of a binary perspective – half-animal, half-human. For Gramsci, therefore, violence co-exists with politics of consent and political thought should elaborate on the dialectical relations between violence (coercion) and consent. However, this provokes a multiplicity of concerns for reflection: how do repressive governments use violence and coercion to maintain power? Are Gramsci's thoughts on

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<sup>110</sup>A. Portes, 'Social capital: Its origins and applications in modern sociology', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, (1998), pp.1–24; R. D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

<sup>111</sup>A. Hammar, 'The making and unmaking of local government in Zimbabwe' in A. Hammar, B. Raftopoulos, and S. Jensen (eds.), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), p.122.

<sup>112</sup>A group of youths who are using machetes to kill people especially in mining areas like as Kwekwe, Mazowe and so on. It is believed that they have the support of Midlands Godfathers that is July Moyo and Owen Ncube

<sup>113</sup>Antonio Gramsci was a Marxist philosopher and politician from Italy, who can be regarded as an unadulterated illustration of the fusion of a politician and theoretician. Apart from being a thinker who revised and developed Marxism, and wrote quite a lot of socialist journals in Italy, he was also a political active militant. He was imprisoned by the fascist government of Benito Mussolini in the period between 1926 and 1937.

<sup>114</sup>Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*

violence, power and domination relevant to the Zimbabwean context? Yes, Gramsci's views are very insightful and germane to the Zimbabwean context since ZANU-PF used a combination of coercion and consent in the establishment and maintenance of its hegemony.

Gramsci opined that counterhegemonic movements involve the *war of position* (which encompasses the use of propaganda, political myth, utopia or intimidatory speeches) to mobilise mass support in the society or *war of maneuver* (which entails the use of violence or democratic means) to overthrow the existing hegemony.<sup>116</sup> With its youth wing and war collaborators, ZANU engaged in both *war of position* and *war of manoeuvre* in its hegemonic struggle before independence. In most cases, counter-revolutionaries have only force in their weaponry as their revolutionary strategy. He argued that for them to obtain decisive influence in society they must shift from the *war of manoeuvre* to the *war of position*. This study (in Chapter 3) will reveal the mobilisation strategies used by ZANU/ ZANLA to organise support during the liberation struggle. It seeks to understand: to what extent did the party rely on the armour of coercion (youth violence) during this phase.

This study will employ Gramsci's theory of hegemony and domination to examine how ZANU-PF used youth violence in the post-independence era. Gramsci argued that when ideological and cultural means fail to keep the population in line, authoritarian regimes employ repressive state apparatus to repress, extort and subjugate the citizens.<sup>117</sup> In the context of Zimbabwe, coercion outstripped consent in the processes of building African nationalism and the post-colonial state. Tom Nairn maintained that when the people were to be invited into the historical chronicles, 'the invitation card had to be written in a language they understood.'<sup>118</sup> In this case, violence orchestrated by the youths was the main language used to invite people into history. To this effect, the study perceives youth political violence as an assertion of the agency since the youths were trapped, captured, underclass and reduced to become 'an armour of coercion'.

Antonio Gramsci used the two words, hegemony and domination, to examine the nature of the bourgeois states in his contemporary Europe. Gramsci borrowed the word hegemony

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<sup>116</sup> D. Forgacs (ed.), *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935*, (New York: New York University Press, 2000), p.267; See also N. Pratt, 'Bringing politics back in: examining the link between globalisation and democratisation', *Review of International Political Economy* [Online], Vol. 11, No. 2, pp.331-33, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/41775500>, Accessed: 12 July 2020.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* Gramsci also argued that a state can only obtain habitual submission to its authority or rule by consent through coercive power. Domination is instituted through force and sustained through coercion.

<sup>118</sup> T. Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*, (London: New Left Books, 1977), p. 340.

from classical Marxist writings, and he analytically adjusted it. He understood hegemony as a process by which the state maintains its power through the use of coercive institutions (like the judiciary, army and police) and non-coercive structures (such as education, religion, publication, and trade unions, among others) to formalise power, indoctrinate the populace and suppress opposition.<sup>119</sup> The word ‘domination’ refers to a regime founded using force and buttressed by the state structures such as the judiciary, finance, military and political systems.<sup>120</sup> Roger Simon understands Gramsci’s conception of hegemony as “a relation not of domination by force, but consent using political and ideological leadership. It is the organization of consent.”<sup>121</sup> While the hegemony of the state hinges on decisive coercive power, the frequency of force is lessened if it ought to be continuously applied. A state that rules by consent, endeavours to acquire habitual compliance to its authority. However, Adamson observed that Gramsci failed to see what is between coercion and consent.<sup>122</sup> This observation is also important for this study since ZANU used a combination of persuasion and coercion to mobilise people against the Smith government and to establish a hegemonic monopoly in the post-colonial era.<sup>123</sup>

Gramsci presents hegemony as a system or process which establishes certain ways of perceiving the world, making them incontestable and normal for the citizens and the presence of any other alternative or even the necessity to create an alternative will be implausible or insensible.<sup>124</sup> Narrowing down Lenin’s views on hegemony, Gramsci construes that the group struggling to establish hegemony must subject the citizens to its worldview and hegemonic supporting apparatus or ideological structures should be put in place to determine methods of consciousness and recognition.<sup>125</sup> He additionally maintained that to establish or maintain hegemony, a political party should change itself starting from the organisation principles and it should be more universal, coercive and attractive.<sup>126</sup> This raises the question as to how the ruling party allures or imposes its worldview on the ruled. Gatsheni-Ndlovu argued that from its formative years, ZANU adopted Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideologies which resulted in the

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<sup>119</sup> Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971). p.360

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> R. Simon, *Gramsci’s Political Thought: An Introduction*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1982), p. 21.

<sup>122</sup> W. L. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci’s Political and Cultural Theory*. (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1980.

<sup>123</sup> Mugabeism is an anti-democratic ideology which does not respect of the rule of law and human rights.

<sup>124</sup> Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

application of ‘democratic centralism’, which was against the plurality of ideas and public criticism of those in leadership, and it expected everyone to submit to its authority.<sup>127</sup> During wartime, many people perished at the hands of the ZANLA guerrillas and youths upon being suspected to be sell-outs. After independence, the regime used the discourse of defending national sovereignty to unleash violence against political oppositions such as PF-ZAPU, ZUM, ZANU-Ndonga and later the MDC, to maintain power. People were forced to internalize the ZANU-PF Ideology (Mugabeism)<sup>128</sup> and it became a defining motif of their daily life, it appeared as ‘common sense.’<sup>129</sup>

Neo-Gramscian scholars like Raymond Williams posited that hegemony bids to defuse opposition. In his actual phrasing, “the decisive hegemonic function is to control or transform, infiltrate or even incorporate (alternatives and opposition).”<sup>130</sup> Williams added that hegemony is dynamic, “it does not just passively exist as a form of dominance, it has to be renewed, recreated, defended and modified continuously and it is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not all its own.”<sup>131</sup> In the same vein, Hall submits that “it is crucial to understand that hegemony is not a ‘given’ and permanent state of affairs, but it has to be actively won and secured; it can also be lost.”<sup>132</sup> Lonsdale also argued that power is a scarce resource.<sup>133</sup> Since the demands of the citizens constantly change, the authoritarian ZANU-PF maintained and reproduced its authority by applying coercive and persuasive forms of power in a complementary fashion. The diminishing of the consensual power in the late 1990s made the ZANU-PF politicians become megalomaniacs who survived on naked violence.

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<sup>127</sup> S. Gatsheni-Ndlovu, *Do ‘Zimbabweans’ Exist? Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in a Postcolonial State*, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012).

<sup>128</sup> Mugabeism is an anti-democratic ideology that does not respect rule of law and human rights. This ideology that entailed dictatorship, kleptocracy, corruption, violence, intolerance, extortion and lawlessness. During the time of Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe was the most dangerous country in Southern Africa where people could get murdered for supporting the opposition party.

<sup>129</sup> See Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971). p.133.

<sup>130</sup> W. Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1977), p.113.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> S. Hall, ‘Culture, media, and the “ideological effect”, In J. Curran, M. Gurevitch, and Woollacott (eds.), *Mass Communication and Society*. (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), p.333.

<sup>133</sup> J. Lonsdale, ‘Have tropical Africa's nationalisms continued imperialism's world revolution by other means?’, *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 21, No. 4, (2015).

Gramsci avers that civic organisation (such as trade unions, families and churches) are significant apparatuses for the maintenance of authority.<sup>134</sup> He further submitted that the efficacy of the regime is contingent on its ability to rub out the differences between political power and daily life.<sup>135</sup> It can be argued that the political authorities with the ability to depoliticize everyday life have the potential of becoming stronger and dominant. However, the ZANU-PF regime was doing the opposite, it politicised people every day by its daily self-profiling in the media, acts of coercion by its vigilante groups, posturing and surprise roadblocks by the army and police and so on. In this way, it was difficult for citizens to become politically conscious in a certain direction. The ruling party believes that hegemony can only be sustainable if political oppositions are thwarted and civic society advocating for democracy and respect for human rights are silenced and submerged. The youth civil societies (such as the Zimbabwe Youth Council and Student Unions) are captured, silenced or subjected to state violence if they criticise the ZANU-PF government. Thus, Gramsci argued that '*war of manoeuvre*' may be effective in underdeveloped countries where civil societies are not so strong. The ZANU-PF regime thwarts activities of the civil societies to halt the emergence of what Gramsci called a *historic bloc* (coming together of intellectuals, elites, youths and lower-class citizens against an authoritarian regime). Gill maintains that a historic bloc is a process that is induced by a conscious force that intends to establish a new hegemony.<sup>136</sup>

Gramsci asserts that a political party can only establish its hegemony and prolong its stay in power when the participation of the 'mass takes the form of discipline and loyalty and there should be someone to discipline, centralise and organise them.'<sup>137</sup> He also opines that a dictatorial party 'ceases to exist when coercive elements are no longer there' and 'when the classes, or the certain class of which the party is an expression, no longer exist since every party is only the nomenclature for a class.'<sup>138</sup> Gramsci's argument can be summed up as a dictatorial party that lacks the coercive element will not prevail. Authoritarian governments like ZANU-PF understand that the masses have the potential to join or support a party if they are coerced to do so. Thus, from its foundation, ZANU was a 'regulator' or 'social gendarme'

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<sup>134</sup> Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> S. R. Gill and D. Law, 'Global Hegemony and the Structural Power of Capital', *International Studies Quarterly* vol. 33, no. 4 (1989), pp. 475-499.

<sup>137</sup> Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

and its principal role was to moderate and subdue opposition and critics to maintain order and social cohesion.<sup>139</sup>

Moreover, political elites, in an authoritarian state, enforce their authority over powerless groups either by explicit coercion or more intellectual methods of realising domination.<sup>140</sup> In this regard, Laitin delineated hegemony as a political forging (through coercion or elite bargaining) and institutionalization of a pattern of group activity in the state, and the concurrent idealization of that scheme into a dominant symbolic framework that reigns as common sense.<sup>141</sup> Since its establishment, ZANU has been relying on its youth wing and supporters to maintain its support base, thus political violence has been shrewdly institutionalised and it became the normal way of re-establishing and maintaining hegemony in Zimbabwe. Noteworthy is the fact that hegemony conveys such notions as influence, patronage or leadership. In this realm, Gatsheni-Ndlovu observed that throughout the years, membership and support for ZANU-PF had translated into access to resources, employment, and authority.<sup>142</sup> The party abused public resources and apportion them to its clients and cronies in an openly partisan and extremely devastating primitive accumulation manner.<sup>143</sup> For these resources, youths volunteer themselves to become agents of violence in ZANU-PF politics.

Gramsci posited that power relations are determined by holders of high status, high income, superior education and a specific measure of power with the ability to control the means of consumption and compulsion.<sup>144</sup> The ZANU-PF government is made up of intellectuals and unscrupulous rich business people who use their status to recruit, capture and abuse youths for political purposes. Gramsci feels that in less developed societies where the level of consciousness is low, people are ruled by apathy and fear. ZANU-PF is made of many

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<sup>139</sup> G. Nzongola-Ntalaja, *Revolution and Counter Revolution in Africa: Essays in Contemporary Politics*, (London: Zed Books, 1987), pp.74-77.

<sup>140</sup> Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

<sup>141</sup> D. Laitin, 'Hegemony and Religious Conflict: British Imperial Control and Political Changes in Yorubaland', In Peter Evans, *Bringing the state Back*, 1985; D. Laitin, *Capitalism and Hegemony: Yorubaland and the International Economy*. International Organisation. vol. 36, no. 4: pp. 678-713.

<sup>142</sup> S. Gatsheni-Ndlovu, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist? Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in a Postcolonial State*, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012).

<sup>143</sup> A Discussion Document: The Mbeki-Mugabe Papers, p. 18

<sup>144</sup> R. Sklar, 'The Nature of Class Domination in Africa', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 17 no. 4, (1979), pp.531-552.

intellectuals and businesspeople who celebrate and boast of their party's violent acts and some of them are patrons of vigilante groups and para-militias.<sup>145</sup>

Also, a neo-Gramscian theorist, Giovanni Arrighi perceived that;

Domination essentially relies on coercion and the leadership that defines hegemony rests on the capacity of the dominant group to present itself, and be perceived, as the bearer of general interest. Hegemony is ... the additional power that accrues to a dominant group owing to its capacity to lead society in a direction that serves the interests of not only the dominant group but also of the subordinate groups".<sup>146</sup>

In this case, Arrighi was probably referring to benevolent dictatorship or what Gramsci dubbed as ethico-political leadership or moral leadership. However, this is contrary to the malevolent dictatorship which the ZANU-PF regime exercised. The ZANU-PF politicians are selfish and they only think of the youths when political violence becomes a necessity. After attaining their political agendas, youths are forgotten and relegated to the political peripheries.

Dufour believes that hegemony hangs on the ability to enunciate and orientate common sense at the local and national levels through powerful (in)formal institutions and material capabilities.<sup>147</sup> This also depends on coercion and consent. In Gramsci's terms, authoritarian governments normalised ideology through the use of *war of position* (which encompasses the use of propaganda or intimidatory speeches) to de-campaign oppositions and *war of maneuver* (which entails the use of violence, extortion and economic disempowerment) to punish perceived supporters of the opposition.<sup>148</sup> The ZANU-PF regime created a counterintelligence state with its youth vigilante groups, such as Chipangano, Al-Shabab, among others, together with the CIO penetrating and permeating every part of societal institutions. These party vigilantes superintend their constituencies and make sure that the

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<sup>145</sup> A clear example is found in Nathan Shamuyarira quoted in Meredith, *Robert Mugabe, Plunder and Tyranny in Zimbabwe*, p.225.

<sup>146</sup> G. Arrighi, *Hegemonic and Anti-systemic movement*, [http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/files/arrighi\\_reggen%202003.pdf](http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/files/arrighi_reggen%202003.pdf), Accessed: 03 July 2020.

<sup>147</sup> P. Dufour, 'Globalization and Political Change in the Women's Movement: The Politics of Scale and Political Empowerment in the World March of Women', *Social Science Quarterly*, vol. 88, no. 5, (2007), pp.1152-1173.

<sup>148</sup> Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

socio-economic benefits meant for all the citizens are given to those who showed loyalty to ZANU-PF.<sup>149</sup>

The political situation in Zimbabwe since 2000 can be encapsulated in Gramsci's phraseology that the old is dying and the new will take time to be born and the state will plunge into a vicious crisis.' The rise and development of state-sanctioned vigilante groups and militias are one of the ghastly symptoms that the state is on the cusp of a hegemonic crisis. Saul and Saunders argued that youth violence embodied a myriad of problems such as a hegemonic crisis, an arrested transition and an unkind moment in Zimbabwe.<sup>150</sup> The radicalisation of the ZANU-PF and the prevalence of youth violence can be construed as a 'leftist, quasi-Gramscian gambit to recapture the lost hegemony, especially in urban areas.<sup>151</sup> The ZANU-PF-aligned youth groups took advantage of the privileges availed by the dysfunctional state to protect their interest. They formed extractive groups like Chipangano and Al-Shabab which exploited the gaps in state provisions and regulation services. They plundered the local state resources, extorted money from the public, and raped and murdered with impunity.

## **Conclusion**

What is apparent from the literature examined above is that throughout the long historical continuum, from the emergence of Zimbabwean nationalism and its political parties up to the present time, the youths have been both perpetrators and victims of violence that was meant to discipline the perceived political foes. This inference can only be realised after grappling with a lot of scholarly works on political violence which mostly focus on specific episodes of violence since many scholars were not interested in historicising youth political violence. The Zimbabwean nationalism scholarship revealed that the state has remained entrapped in African nationalism with an appalling history of its parties which used the youths to eradicate all those who raise dissent voices. The post-colonial era exhibits the same prowling ghost of violence that resurfaced immediately after independence, with the *Gukurahundi* in the 1980s and it incessantly devoured the lives of innocent people thus far. The liberation struggle created a culture of violence and impunity and over the years the ZANU-PF youths have been committing violence with the tacit approval of the state -in the exercise of its hegemonic

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<sup>149</sup> T. Munyarari, *Chipangano, Vigilantism and Community Responses in Mbare District, Zimbabwe, 2000-2013*, Master's Thesis, Department of History, Grahamstown, Rhodes University, 2018.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> J. S. Saul and R. Saunders, 'Mugabe, Gramsci, and Zimbabwe at 25', *International Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, Vol. 60, No. 4, (2005), pp.953-975.

politics. However, youths are also agents that have self-interests, they are not solely victims of a coercive state, they engage in political violence for socio-economic benefits, power and impunity that comes with participation. The next chapter examines the roots of youth political violence in Zimbabwe.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Roots of Youth Political Violence in Zimbabwe, c.1950s-1964

#### Introduction

In the late 1950s, Zimbabwe witnessed a transition from the hegemonic multi-racialism in black politics to a militant style of politics. This period saw the development of the ‘violent logic of “sell-out” politics’<sup>1</sup> into the dominant form of political discourse and practise with youths as instruments of violence. This chapter examines how the SCYL, SRANC, NDP, ZAPU and ZANU recruited and socialised youth into political violence during the era of anti-colonial struggle. It shows that youth political violence emerged with the formation of the SCYL, became more developed during the phase of the NDP and by the time ZAPU and ZANU splintered, it was already endemic. This chapter helps us to understand the longer trajectory of youth violence and ZANU politics and it substantiates the core argument of this thesis that youth violence and ZANU’s fascistic politics have roots in African nationalism and the liberation struggle. The first part of this chapter analyses the context of nationalist mobilisations to understand the nature and character of the youths of that time and the issues which prompted them to join nationalist politics. The second part examines how the SCYL, SRANC and NDP mobilised and utilised youths in their nationalist politics. The last part of the chapter examines the mobilisation and participation of youths in ZAPU’s nationalist agenda. It goes on to analyse the roles of the youths in the fracture of African nationalism, the ZAPU-ZANU split. In the course of the chapter, I will analyse the ideologies of the abovementioned nationalist parties to understand their stance on youth violence.

#### The colonial African youth and nationalist mobilisations: An Appraisal

The conduct of the African youths during the colonial era was delineated and regulated by a synergy of state power, racial relationship, colonial capital, and traditional systems of authority. The Southern Rhodesian state perceived the youths as a dangerous class that should be regulated, delimited and underclass. This perception grew out of the realisation that ‘the youths have always had power, if not authority.’<sup>2</sup> The colonial state utilised youth oppression as a mechanism through which the roles of dominant and subordinate are inculcated in all humans, socializing them to participate in maintaining and perpetuating other forms of

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<sup>1</sup> T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940-1964*. (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2008), p.8.

<sup>2</sup> R. Waller, ‘Rebellious Youth in Colonial Africa’, *Journal of African History*, 47, (2006), pp.77-92.

oppression.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, youth oppression was a ‘technology of colonialism meant to create a subordinate social status’ among the youths.<sup>4</sup> The colonial state endeavoured to ‘empty the brains of young Africans of all form and content.’<sup>5</sup> It denied them the right to know their rich history and culture. In this regard, Fanon argued that colonialism “turns to the past of the oppressed and distorted, disfigured and destroyed it” to advance the white hegemony and exploitation of blacks.<sup>6</sup> The colonial state-controlled and harnessed the energies of African youths by pushing them into exploitative labour markets to build the colonial economy. African youths were marginalised in all aspects.

### **African youths and marginalisation**

The marginalisation of African youths in Rhodesia was a multi-dimensional process of social rupture. The African youths were detached from social relations and institutions and thus relegated to the fringes of society. They were prevented from full participation in the normal activities of their society.<sup>7</sup> They had no access to socio-economic resources (especially land); many were unemployed and those who were employed received low wages; and their voices were repressively muted by the state’s coercive forces.<sup>8</sup> African youths had no rights and dignity and they were not accorded any respect and consideration. The marginalisation of these youths was not only limited to material and socio-economic deprivation, it also entailed a lack of political influence over crucial decisions and disenfranchisement.

The marginalisation of the youths worsened after World War II when Southern Rhodesia experienced a significant demographic change, owing to the arrival of European settlers. Lonsdale and Low dubbed this phase the ‘second phase of colonialism’.<sup>9</sup> The British and Rhodesian governments encouraged people to immigrate to Southern Rhodesia, but the white Rhodesians enticed the immigrants to permanently reside in the country using social and economic incentives, “offering assisted passages, providing land for settlement and keeping

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<sup>3</sup> K. DeJong and B. J. Love, ‘Youth Oppression as a Technology of Colonialism: Conceptual Frameworks and Possibilities for Social Justice Education Praxis’, *Equity & Excellence in Education*, Vol. 48, Issue 3, (2015), p.489.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> F. Fanon, *Black Skin White Mask*, C. L. Markmann (trans.), (London: Pluto Press, 1986); J. Fokwang, ‘The African youth, competing cultures and the future of peace’, *South-South Journal of Culture and Development*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (1999), pp.46-65.

<sup>7</sup> I. M. Young, ‘Five faces of oppression’, In M. Adam (ed.) *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*. (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 35-49.

<sup>8</sup> E. M. Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People’s Union, 1961-87: A political history of Insurgents in Southern Rhodesia*, (London: Africa World Press, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> J. Lonsdale and D. A. Low, *East Africa: Towards a New Order. 1945-1963*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.174.

in place discriminatory laws that ensured that Africans were effectively shut out from the economy except as providers of cheap labour and consumers of manufactured goods.”<sup>10</sup> The period between 1946 and 1953 saw the Rhodesian white population virtually doubling up to 156,000, and about 110,000 Africans were evicted from their land and relocated to semi-arid areas like Uzumba and Pfungwe reserves.<sup>11</sup> John Llife noted that the aftermaths of World War II made youth violence and delinquency a ‘problem’ in Africa’.<sup>12</sup> Towards the late 1950s, the colonial state began to sense the exasperation and disgruntlement among the black youths in both rural and urban areas. The African youths in urban townships and reserves became involved in violence, sabotage and criminality which were frequently communicated in newspapers.<sup>13</sup> The colonial state became gradually more worried about the African political mobilizations and agitation.

In 1951, the colonial state enacted the notorious Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA)<sup>14</sup> - legislation that severely affected the youths. It was passed on top of the 1930 Land Apportionment Act (LAA) which took away vast tracts of arable land and reserved them for the white settlers while the blacks were relegated to the reserves often located in hot regions with low rainfall and unproductive soils.<sup>15</sup> When asked how the NLHA affected him and his family, Mr. Gwaze related:

My father told me that we were dislodged from our land which was situated near Mrewa township through the LAA. This land was declared a white area for horticulture and businesses. The settlers came and took over the land, and great pressure was exerted on the black inhabitants. They imposed unbearable hut taxes on our homes. They demanded us to work for them without payment to compensate for rent. The arable land available for Africans was cut back. We were compelled to destock our livestock. My father decided to move away from the white farm to Uzumba reserve in the early 1950s. He thought that Africans in the reserves had freedom. However, our movement to Uzumba reserve coincided with the enactment of the NHLA. The soils in the reserve were infertile. My

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<sup>10</sup> A. S. Mlambo, ‘Building a white man's country: Aspects of white immigration into Rhodesia up to World War II’, *Zambezia*, Vol. 25, Issue 2, 1998, p.132.

<sup>11</sup> D. Martin and P. Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War*. (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1981), p.54.

<sup>12</sup> J. Iliffe, *The African Poor: A History*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.187.

<sup>13</sup> T. Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning: The Social History of a Southern African City, 1893-1960*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2010), p. 83.

<sup>14</sup> The NLHA was intended to reduce the amount of land available per family, the number of stocks permitted per family and increased landless population. It was justified by the colonial state as a solution to overpopulation and massive land degradation which affected the native reserves.

<sup>15</sup> D. Martin and P. Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), p.53.

father had about 16 cattle, he was forced to destock his herd to only five. We had no freedom the Native Commissioner was too involved in the lives of Uzumba people. We were not allowed to plant rice or have a garden in vleis (*matoro*). Given this, my father had nowhere to get money to pay our school fees. These problems forced me to go and search for a job at a farm around Shamva at the age of 13 years old.<sup>16</sup>

The LAA and NLHA gravely affected the entire African population, whether urban or rural since every African was deemed as having a permanent home in the reserves.<sup>17</sup> The NLHA was intended to generate a loyal worker who could satisfy the demands of the state's rapid development of the secondary industry by depriving blacks of having access to farmland and many cattle. This deprivation was an economic tyranny and it did not come with any form of compensation to ensure social security. It caused economic disillusionment as it inhibited the Uzumba families the capability to make themselves economically viable. Without cattle, UMP people were ruined because cattle were the socio-economic backbones of society. The *African Daily News* stated that 'Africans, young and old grew thin due to poor diet, no milk due to destocking.'<sup>18</sup> Moreover, they were supposed to pay countless taxes such as the hut tax, dog tax, dip tax among others.<sup>19</sup> The NHLA was a damaging policy to the youths as it prompted chronic poverty and pushed them to the edges of despondency.

The NLHA prompted thousands of young Africans to move to urban areas in search of jobs and resultantly the urban townships and hostels became crowded.<sup>20</sup> Then again, the law was unsuccessful in generating jobs which were expected as the post-World War II economic momentum enjoyed by the state vanished. The economic growth rate was not able to absorb the projected numbers of youths. This resulted in a crisis of black unemployment.<sup>21</sup> The 1952 Annual Congress of the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce expressed fright at what it dubbed as the escalation of African 'loafers' and urban unemployment.<sup>22</sup> The increase in unemployment signified the growth of the youth population since the labour reserves in the

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Mr Gwaze, a former mujibha, in Dindi Village, 14 December 2019.

<sup>17</sup> T. O. Ranger, *Crisis in Southern Rhodesia*, (London: FABIAN Commonwealth Bureau, Research Series 217, 1960).

<sup>18</sup> *African Daily News*, 11 April, 1961.

<sup>19</sup> E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo, 'The Origins of the Zimbabwe Problem, 1888 – 1923', in Wilmer (ed.) *et al.*, *Zimbabwe Now*. (London: Rex Collings, 1973). pp.13-28.

<sup>20</sup> See I. Phimister, 'Rethinking the Reserves: Southern Rhodesia's Land Husbandry Act Reviewed', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, (1993), pp. 225-239.

<sup>21</sup> NAZ GEN-NOS, Zimbabwe Information Group, No sell-out in Zimbabwe, Occasional paper No.2, July 1979. p.4.

<sup>22</sup> NAZ S2960, An Examination of the Working of the Inter-Territorial Agreement of Migrant African Labour (Tripartite Agreement) between Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland: Memorandum on the shortage of Native Labour- City of Salisbury, 11 March 1952, p.2.

rural areas were moved to urban areas during the economic boom. It can be argued that the NHLA provoked questions of decolonisation among the youths, thus they became available for nationalist mobilisations.<sup>23</sup> Undoubtedly, the nationalist parties utilised the NLHA as a key weapon to stir antipathy against the colonial state. In George Nyandoro's phrasing, "it [NLHA] was the best recruiter the Congress [SRANC] ever had."<sup>24</sup> This policy put the youths between two hard surfaces since they had no, *inter alia*, economic freedom and access to basic services. Their only alternative and hope for substantive change were to participate in nationalist politics.

The colonial African youth was a 'resistor representative of a cross-section of African societies' negotiated experiences within the realities of European colonization.<sup>25</sup> To tame an African youth, the colonial state denied many the right to education. Atieno-Odhiambo argued that African education was mainly provided by missionaries, and the blacks only received religious knowledge which served to make them better Christians, hence submissive to their masters. This type of education could only produce 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' since it would not enfranchise them.<sup>26</sup> Chung maintained that 'education was severely restricted, and literacy was closely linked with proselytisation.'<sup>27</sup> Concerning this, Mr Mazanhi stated:

Schools in Mrewa were very few and the nearest school was roughly 10 to 15 km away. Most of these schools provided lower primary education [meaning the Sub A and Sub B and Standard 1 to 3] ended at Standard 3. They had ill-qualified teachers and limited resources. Many children dropped out of school before they reached Standard 3 not because of their intellectual and financial incapacities, but due to a shortage of schools.<sup>28</sup>

During an NDP rally in Highfields, Robert Mugabe mentioned that 'with all the thirst of knowledge, there were only 23 secondary schools in the country.'<sup>29</sup> Chung argued that in the 1960s, there were only half a dozen secondary schools for blacks (in Salisbury), with only two of them going as far as Form 6 (or Grade 13). Only about two percent of black children

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<sup>23</sup> W. R. Duggan, 'The Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 and the Rural African Middle Class of Southern Rhodesia', *African Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 315 (1980), pp. 227-239.

<sup>24</sup> M. L. Rifkind, 'Land Apportionment in Perspective', *Rhodesian History*, Vol. 3, 1972.

<sup>25</sup> J. M. Abidogun, 'Youth and Popular Culture in Colonial Africa'. in M. Shanguhya and T. Falola (eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018), pp.479-506.

<sup>26</sup> E.S. Atieno-Odhiambo, 'The Origins of the Zimbabwe Problem, 1888 – 1923', in S.E. Wilmer, (ed.) *et al.*, *Zimbabwe Now*. London, 1973. pp. 13 – 28.

<sup>27</sup> F. Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga. Memories from Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2006). p. 44.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Mr Mazanhi, Manyika Village, 15 December 2019.

<sup>29</sup> *African Daily News*, 3 January 1961.

had the privilege of acquiring secondary education.<sup>30</sup> Of note, the rural youths were not allowed to learn in towns.<sup>31</sup> The lack of educational opportunities was an egregious issue among the youths that prompted youths to involved in violent protests and nationalist politics.

### **‘Violence begets violence’: Youth and the colonial state**

The colonial African youths experienced almost all the typologies of violence ranging from symbolic and systematic violence (invisible violence) to physical violence meant to naturalise racial socioeconomic and political inequalities. The colonists constructed an image of an African who was inferior and incapable of acquiring white moral and cultural standards. The colonial settlers perceived natives as “children” and it was their right as “adults” to mentor and mete out disciplinary measures. Like in other colonies, the settlers created cultural hegemony through deploying language, dress and etiquette, among other facets, as tangible expressions of the social and cultural gulf between the two races.<sup>32</sup> Whenever the blacks failed to satisfy the white expectations, the whites used various derogatory labels such as criminal, rude, impertinent, *kaffir*, rebellious, deviant and delinquent, among others, and violence often reinforced these labels.<sup>33</sup> Mr. C. Meredith, who was the Native Commissioner of Mrewa, on many occasions called African ‘baboons.’<sup>34</sup> The term ‘baboon’ meant that Africans were feebleminded, barbaric, criminals and they had animal-like behaviour. Zizek identified this as a kind of invisible violence (which find expression in language and compartment) that manifested in the power differential between social groups as ‘symbolic’ violence.’<sup>35</sup> The African youths abhorred these derogatory brands of colonial supremacy associated with paternalism.<sup>36</sup>

Violence was entrenched in the economic and political structures of the colonial state. Violence and rough justice were coercive elements of colonialism. On one occasion, Godfrey Huggins, then Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister, voiced the necessity of violence in governing blacks. He stated that ‘they [Whites] would get nowhere by being lenient with the native. What the native understood was rough justice. People who thought that by slobbering

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<sup>30</sup> F. Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga. Memories from Zimbabwe’s Liberation Struggle*. (Stockholm, The Nordic Africa Institute and Weaver Press 2006). p. 44.

<sup>31</sup> *Bantu Mirror*, 2 December 1950.

<sup>32</sup> A.K Shutt, *Manners make a Nation: Racial Etiquette in Southern Rhodesia, 1910-1963*, (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2015).

<sup>33</sup> L. Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, (London: Heinemann, 1976), p.123

<sup>34</sup> *African Daily News*, 4 January 1961.

<sup>35</sup> S. Zizek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, (Profile Books, London, 2009).

<sup>36</sup> *African Daily News*, 18 January 1963.

over the unfortunate native they were doing him a good turn was mistaken...'<sup>37</sup> Arrighi averred that since the whites had gotten control of the country through military means, only militarism and coercion could sustain their domination and impede blacks from retaining power.<sup>38</sup> The socio-economic tensions between whites and blacks warranted the establishment of state security structures like the police, army and prisons ostensibly to preserve law and order in the state.

Lawrence Vambe depicted the daily experiences of youths at the hands of the violent colonial regime:

The settlers were now so spiritually bankrupt that their government and their police were using dogs and guns on defenceless black men, women and children, just as hunters through the ages had done on wild animals. The security forces patrolled, especially at night, every section of the cities... they lurk in the darkness, stopped people and searched them.<sup>39</sup>

In this regard, Ngulube argued that the colonial ideology was intended to advance capitalism and it was impossible without violence and exploitation of the black population.<sup>40</sup> Thus, violence and coercion were inherent characteristics of the colonial state.

Youth violence was not a consequence of youth verve, age or naivety, but a by-product of the violent environment they were bred in. In 1959, Mr. Sayi in the *African Daily News* described African youths as disrespectful and violent. He added that they delighted in using bad language in public and they did not care about what people said.<sup>41</sup> Some school-going youths even carried knives to school.<sup>42</sup> The colonial violence and exclusions impelled youths to become drivers of protests and perpetrators of violence. Thus, the phrase, "violence begets violence" - means violent conduct stimulates violent conduct. West confirms that frustration and despair among the youths were causatives of several social problems such as criminality

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted in P. Ngulube, 'Crime and Colonial Ideology: A Case Study of Bulawayo District in the period 1910-1936', BA Honours Dissertation, University of Zimbabwe, 1984, p.17.

<sup>38</sup> G. Arrighi, *The Political Economy of Rhodesia*, Hague, Mouton, 1967; Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective, A Study of the proletarianisation of the African peasantry in Rhodesia', *Rhodesia Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 6. No. 3 April, 1970, pp. 197-234.

<sup>39</sup> *African Daily News*, 21 January 1963; L. Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe* (London: Heinemann, 1976), p.271.

<sup>40</sup> P. Ngulube, 'Crime and Colonial Ideology: A Case Study of Bulawayo District in the period 1910-1936', BA Honours Dissertation, University of Zimbabwe, 1984, p.6.

<sup>41</sup> *African Daily News*, 18 May 1959.

<sup>42</sup> F. Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga. Memories from Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*. (Stockholm, The Nordic Africa Institute and Weaver Press 2006).

and violence.<sup>43</sup> It can be argued that colonial brutality made youths available for nationalist political mobilisations.

### **Accessibility to outside world news and youth mobilisations**

In the 1950s, the youths began to have more access to information about what was happening in other African colonies through African newspapers and tabloids (such as the African Daily News, The Harvester, The Bantu Mirror and Chapupu) and radio news. This significantly changed the African perceptions of the colonial regime and their responses. This was confirmed in the Director of Native Administration's report of 1956:

Current affairs in other territories in Africa have an undoubted influence on this colony and, with the increasing degree to which radio news broadcasts are now being listened to on privately owned wireless sets, and particularly in the Harare Townships, news of unrest is being widely disseminated.<sup>44</sup>

Also, proto-nationalist leaders such as Charles Mzingeli often used South Africa as an example when explaining the hardships confronted by the blacks, the necessity for greater suffrage, the wage gap between blacks and whites, and the disparity in compensation for black and white urban workers doing the same jobs.<sup>45</sup> In many cases, George Nyandoro also compared the Kenyan Mau Mau rebellion with the land question in Rhodesia.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, this compelled many youths to join nationalist politics as they discovered that other countries such as Ghana gained independence in 1957. International news radicalised the youths and intensified their hatred against the colonial regime and its enablers, thus black on black violence became rampant in the 1950s and 1960s.

Since the late 1950s, violence turned out to be a form of youth political participation. This period saw the rise of youthful politicians like George Nyandoro and James Chikerema who celebrated and valorised political violence. In 1957 the Salisbury City Council pronounced that vandalism, hoodlumism and youth violence were escalating and were a threat to the moral fibre of Mbare township's roughly 13, 500 children.<sup>47</sup> A Mbare resident, in the *African Daily News*, was greatly perturbed by the behaviour of school-going youths. He mentioned,

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<sup>43</sup> M. O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965*. (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2002), p.177.

<sup>44</sup> NAZ S/SA 6175 Annual Report of the Director of Native Administration, 1 July 1955-30 June 1956.

<sup>45</sup> B. Raftopoulos, "Nationalism and Labour in Salisbury, 1953-1965," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1995), p.89.

<sup>46</sup> D. Moore, 'The Ideological Formation of Zimbabwe's Ruling Class', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 17:3 (1991), p.484.

<sup>47</sup> *African Daily News*, 22 May 1957.

...they were increasingly patronising beerhalls and other places meant for old people only. These boys were following the example of elder boys who did not attend school... there is no hope of getting good citizens from the school-going boys.<sup>48</sup>

In response to this, the colonial government enacted the vagrancy law which was meant to criminalise and imprison idle youths who were perceived to be spivs, hooligans and loafers.<sup>49</sup> Given the nature of the youths in the 1950s and 1960s and the problems they faced, the militant nationalists had fertile ground for their political mobilisations. While some were coerced, many youths were willing agents of nationalist political violence. The following section analyses the emergence of youth political violence under the direction of the SCYL.

### **The SCYL: ideology, youth mobilisation and violence**

The SCYL was founded in 1955 by young political activists (namely James Chikerema, George Nyandoro, Edson Sithole, Paul Mushonga, and Dunduza Chisiza<sup>50</sup>), in Mbare with the agenda to discontinue the oppressive colonial system. The SCYL had considerably parallel objectives to organisations like the Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (RICU) and the Capricorn Africa Society (CAS), but its confrontational stance and oratory aptitude were novel and effectual. Scarnecchia observed that the SCYL changed “the practice of political mobilization drastically, utilizing the techniques of action, mass protest and intimidation, strategies which Charles Mzingeli’s RICU had carefully avoided, even at times when they would have been most advantageous.”<sup>51</sup> The SCYL called for attention to general urban challenges in African townships for instance, *inter alia*, poor accommodation, police abuses, unsanitary sceneries in public township areas, and draconian pass laws.<sup>52</sup> The SCYL also influenced the black opinion by drawing attention to the black resistance in other British colonies, especially the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya. These issues were published through its newspaper called *Chapupu* [Witness], which was one of the SCYL’s mobilising tools.

There was a correlation between youth agitation and the emergence of the confrontationist SCYL. In African townships like Mbare and Highfields, the blacks were confronted by a lack

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<sup>48</sup> *African Daily News*, 10 January 1959

<sup>49</sup> J. Alexander, ‘Hooligans, Spivs and loafers?’ The Politics of Vagrancy in 1960s Southern Rhodesia’, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 53, Issue 3, (2012), pp.345 – 366.

<sup>50</sup> A Malawian who once worked in South Africa and thereafter came to Southern Rhodesia.

<sup>51</sup> T. Scarnecchia, ‘Poor Women and Nationalist Politics: Alliances and Fissures in the Formation of a Nationalist Political Movement in Salisbury, Rhodesia, 1950-6’, *The Journal of African History*, Vol, 37, No. 2 (1996), p.301.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

of education and employment opportunities. The SCYL's leadership transcended class divides and speak to broader, common socioeconomic grievances and this seemed to be interesting, particularly to the youths. The SCYL used economic constraints, educational challenges and urban social insecurity to mobilise youth support. The promises to address these issues augmented the involvement of youths in nationalist politics as those who failed to get enrolled in the few available schools and the unemployed became enthusiasts of violent nationalist politics. The SCYL also gained political mileage by criticising Mzingeli for being conciliatory in his dealings with the colonial state.<sup>53</sup> It regarded Mzingeli's rhetoric of cooperation with the colonial state as conservative and out of touch with the younger generation.

The SCYL was established by young men who begrudged their exclusion from the opportunities availed to black elites in the 1950s under the banner of racial partnership.<sup>54</sup> Even though the leaders of the SCYL were educated and enjoyed a degree of social mobility, they belonged to a "generation of men frustrated with the lack of 'partnership' offered to them by older proto-nationalists and labour leaders."<sup>55</sup> Charles Mzingeli was violated many times by the SCYL members. Doris Lessing stated that "...he had more than once been beaten up by young men whom he mentored [who grew up to challenge him], they had invaded his little house and torn up his pamphlets, knocking him in front of his wife and children."<sup>56</sup> The emergence of SCYL ushered in a new kind of politics tainted with violence, resentment and intolerance. It disparaged the blacks who hold positions in the colonial government like Jasper Savanhu and Mike Hove, who were the first black members of parliament in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>57</sup> To the SCYL, participating in the politics of a European-dominated administration was traitorous to the struggle for independence, since such action would legitimise the colonial government, land appropriations and resource exploitation.

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<sup>53</sup> The SCYL condemned Charles Mzingeli, for pursuing negotiations for imperial citizenship for blacks which would link them to the metropole and the larger network of the Commonwealth. Mzingeli hoped that such citizenship would allow blacks to have the same rights and opportunities for political participation as in other British dominions.

<sup>54</sup> M. O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965*, (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2002), p204; G. H. Karekwaiwenani, *The Struggle Over State Power in Zimbabwe: Law and Politics since 1950*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, Timothy Scarnecchia, 'Poor Women and Nationalist Politics: Alliances and Fissures in the Formation of a Nationalist Political Movement in Salisbury, Rhodesia, 1950-6', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 37, No. 2, (1996), p.302.

<sup>56</sup> D. M. Lessing, *A Ripple from the storm*. (London: M. Joseph, 1958); T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940-1964*, (New York: University of Rochester, 2008), p.23.

<sup>57</sup> M. O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965*, (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2002). T. Ranger, *Are we not also men? The Samkange Family and African politics in Zimbabwe 1920-64*, (Harare: Baobab, 1995).

The SCYL leaders utilised their confrontational rhetoric and their broad urban appeal in Salisbury to mobilise people for what was presumed to be a peaceful bus boycott, as a response to the rising fares and the riddance of black-owned bus companies from the Salisbury transport market.<sup>58</sup> The youths composed the greater part of the most active participants of this bus boycott. The three-day boycott suddenly became violent on the first day, 17 September 1956. The *African Daily News* stated:

It started after the morning of the first day with a growing agitated multitude of protesters, 'mostly teenagers.' By the evening, young men were throwing stones at buses and taxis... after shattering its windows, they broke into Carter House girls' hostel [in Mbare] and raped sixteen young girls. These girls were punished for not participating in the boycott and dressing in an un-African way. The chaos continued till the boycott was crushed by police on 19 September.<sup>59</sup>

The young female hostel residents became the target of youth violence because they opted to flout the boycott and paid the higher fare. Although the SCYL leaders tried to dissociate themselves from the violent youths (may be due to fears of being apprehended by the state or the banishing of the party), violence was perpetrated by the boycott enforcers under the banner of the SCYL. Teresa Barnes argued that the SCYL leadership was culpable since they virtually sanctioned political rapes.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, as time went on, 'the raping of the women from the hostel became incorporated into a nationalist argument about the need for discipline.'<sup>61</sup> Some nationalist activists and revolutionaries like Maurice Nyagumbo and Nathan Shamuyarira justified and eulogised this violent instance as the only progressive way to gain independence.<sup>62</sup> The emergence of this confrontational nationalist politics fortified and transformed youth violence and political rapes into a political problem that Zimbabwe has continued to experience up to this day.

The involvement of school-going youths in the nationalist political agenda was not merely an unprompted response to protests and strikes, they were mobilised and coordinated by a leadership system. The relationship between education and political activism was soundly established and it is traceable to the interwar years when some educated blacks

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<sup>58</sup> T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940-1964*, (New York: University of Rochester, 2008), p.80.

<sup>59</sup> *The African Daily News*, 20 September 1956.

<sup>60</sup> T. Barnes, *'We Women Worked So Hard': Gender, urbanisation and social reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930-1956*, (London, Heinemann, 1999).

<sup>61</sup> T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940-1964*, (New York: University of Rochester, 2008).

<sup>62</sup> N. Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia*, (London, Andre Deutsch, 1965); M. Nyagumbo, *With the People: An Autobiography from the Zimbabwe Struggle*, (London, Allison and Busby, 1980).

founded unions which became proto-nationalist movements. For instance, student protests at Dadaya Mission School were part of the initial nationalist campaigns such as the 1945 Railway Workers' strike and the 1948 General Workers Strike.<sup>63</sup> Also, in 1957 Didymus Mutasa, who was a student at Goromonzi Secondary School, requested the SCYL leadership to come and address a meeting of the Makoni Students Association.<sup>64</sup> According to West, the SCYL attracted many youths to nationalist politics since it "was a movement by and for younger people and membership was limited to Africans between the ages of 16 and 40."<sup>65</sup> Therefore, protests by youths against substandard educational services were indivisible from the nationalist agendas.

Although the SCYL critiqued the LAA and the NHLA, it was an urban-based movement (based in Salisbury) and it did little, in practice, to expand its mobilisation drive and program of action to rural areas. Albeit this, the rural youths were already mobilising themselves against the obnoxious NLHA. In Mrewa District, the Africans espoused evasive strategies - what Thompson dubbed as the 'weapons of the weak.' An interviewee, Mr. Mazanhi said, Africans cultivated forbidden lands (including the vleis and the land near the river streams), refused to pay taxes and destroyed dip tanks. They violated the NLHA regulations by refusing to destock their livestock. Whenever the officials from the Native Affairs Department come to conduct stock counts, youths could drive some of their cattle onto the underused estates or mountains to hide them.<sup>66</sup> Thompson stated that these patterns of grudging acceptance and evasion remained the most common responses as implementation spread into new areas and intensified after 1955.<sup>67</sup> Concerning this, Mr. Mashavave mentioned that the state's determination to implement the NLHA using coercive mechanisms made people change from evasion to defiance.<sup>68</sup> The state seized cattle and prosecuted those who violated the NHLA. The youths' responses included the disruption of meetings organised by District officials, public grumbling, sabotage and violence against chiefs, headmen and black employees of the Native Affairs Department.<sup>69</sup> These violent responses

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<sup>63</sup> M. O. West, 'Ndabaningi Sithole, Garfield Todd and the Dadaya School strike of 1947', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 18, Issue 2, 1992, pp.297-316.

<sup>64</sup> D. Mutasa, *Black Behind Bars: Rhodesia 1959-1974*, (Harare, Longman, 1983), p.27.

<sup>65</sup> M. O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965*, (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2002), p.204.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Mr Mazanhi, Manyika Village, 15 December 2019.

<sup>67</sup> Cited in Ngwabi Bhebe, 'The nationalist struggle, 1957-1962', in C. Banana (ed.), *Turmoil and tenacity: Zimbabwe, 1890-1990*, (Harare: College Press, 1989).

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Mr Mashavave, Nyadire Village, 12 January 2021.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

manifested with the emergence of the SRANC. The following section examines how the SRANC related to the youths.

### **SRANC: Ideology, youth mobilisation and violence**

The SRANC was, the first multi-ethnic organisation, founded on 12 September 1957 in Mbare. It was a merger of the African National Congress (a Bulawayo-based party led by Joshua Nkomo), the Southern Rhodesian African Trade Union Congress (SRATUC) and the SCYL. Its prominent leaders included James Chikerema, George Nyandoro, Jason Moyo, Joseph Msika, Paul Mushonga and Joshua Nkomo was the president. The SRANC was a moderate party. This is evident in Terence Ranger's memo to his parents after he attended one of the initial meetings of this organisation in late September 1957. Ranger mentioned that "the Congress meeting was not much larger and hardly any more radical than a Christian Action gathering. It was too shrouded in timidity and did not give the impression of a group of men fighting to overthrow tyranny."<sup>70</sup> Concisely, the SRANC espoused a cautious and moderate strategy that was more gradualistic than the SCYL in its endeavours to bring change from within the colonial structure. The main objectives of the SRANC were principally to act in response to the LAA and the NHLA, limited education opportunities for blacks, Pass laws, the Native Affairs Department, disenfranchisement and unfair labour relations.<sup>71</sup>

After its launch, the SRANC hold mass meetings in the reserves throughout the country to create branches in rural areas.<sup>72</sup> The party rapidly grew and in only six months after its launch, it gained large membership and established many branches. By February 1958, the weekly meetings had grown into massive rallies since the party concentrated on issues at the core of the rural and urban discontentment.<sup>73</sup> In Mrewa, Mr Takawira mentioned that

People were enraged by the conduct of Mr. C Meredith [the Native Commissioner of Mrewa] who exercised absolute powers over them. He presided over criminal and civil justice, monitored land usage, collected taxes, monitored African livestock health, operated as welfare and advisory officer and so forth. He was responsible for the implementation of the NLHA. Unlike his predecessor, Mr. A Ling, Meredith was very arrogant and his application of land conservation measures and destocking regulations

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<sup>70</sup> T. O. Ranger, *Writing Revolt: An Engagement with African Nationalism, 1957-67* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2013), 23

<sup>71</sup> NAZ, F163/78/31, FISB, Security Intelligence Review No 21, September, 1957.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> NAZ, F163/78/31, FISB, Security Intelligence Review No 27, March, 1958.

was arbitrarily extreme. His conduct simply disadvantaged African youths and thus they affiliated with the SRANC, which intended to bring democratic institutions to substitute for the Native Affairs Department.<sup>74</sup>

It was not difficult for people to join a party that defended their grievances because they were infuriated by the behaviours of the Native Commissioner. It is said that Mr. Meredith implemented the NLHA without explaining it to the people.<sup>75</sup> He also turned down Mr. Ling's idea of building council schools in Mrewa reserves.<sup>76</sup> Like the SCYL, the SRANC thrived on capitalising on the youth grievances and frustration to mobilise against the colonial state.

The SRANC used the door-to-door and village-to-village mobilisation strategy. They gave speeches at grassroots organisations like burial societies, and churches among others. Mr. Mashavave stated that

Secret meetings were convened during cattle dipping days, after football games or *makonzati* (night concert). The SRANC members even visited people in their homes, and fields and frequently make the most of community gatherings organised by chiefs like Munhuwepasi Mangwende and Kapita [of Uzumba] who empathised with the nationalist cause. The rural youths were elated by their addresses, so much so that they declined to co-operate with the colonial state in its execution of rural programmes. The congressmen intrepidly attacked the colonial state and its unashamed arbitrariness and discrimination. Many people refused to comply with destocking regulations and they threatened to kill the district officials who worked in their reserves.<sup>77</sup>

It is said that the local and central congress officials did not only embolden people to resist colonial tyranny but to violate people who cooperated with the Native Affairs Department. Concerning this, Federal Security Intelligence reported:

...at rural meetings, congress speakers notably George Nyandoro, the General Secretary, have continued their attacks on government legislation and government departments, particularly the police and the Native Affairs Department. There has been nothing constructive in their criticism and distortions of the truth, which have formed the greater part of the SRANC propaganda designed to cause unrest. The attacks on government departments have had their objective of undermining the prestige of the Native

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<sup>74</sup> V. L. Robinson, Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into and Report on the Administrative and Indicial Functions in the Native Affairs and District Courts Departments, Salisbury, 20 May 1961, pp.9-33.

<sup>75</sup> *African Daily News*, 4 January 1961.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Mr Mashavave, Nyadire Village, 12 January 2021.

Commissioners and the loyalty of African policemen. The inevitable consequences of this trend will be the creation of a situation in which the African masses will be induced to take unconstitutional action over some imaginary grievance and the peace and tranquillity of the territory will be unnecessarily disrupted.<sup>78</sup>

These activities made the SRANC become a mass organization by 1958 with 39 branches countrywide.<sup>79</sup> They made people in the rural areas conscious of the gloomy political situation in the country. Nevertheless, their speeches and activities started radical mobilisations and protests in Mrewa district and thus it can be argued that the nationalists socialised the rural youths into political violence.

In urban areas, the SRANC incited the youths to engage in political violence. In 1957, for instance, the Congress together with the Tenant Board and Ratepayers Association, representing Highfield residents, engaged in a protest under the banner '*We Want Education*'.<sup>80</sup> Several youths were denied the right to education owing to the 1956 educational reforms which specified that only those who were 14 years old and below were eligible to be Standard III pupils.<sup>81</sup> Subsequently, those who failed to meet the conditions were driven out of school to create space for new students. On the other hand, the city council welfare programmes were inadequate to accommodate these youths and most of them became idle.<sup>82</sup> In 1957, 17 cases of youth petty theft and violence were recorded in Salisbury and 14 of these cases were committed by youths who had been expelled from schools due to the age issue.<sup>83</sup> Although educational problems can be deemed as cause and effect of youth violence and criminality, most of these crimes and violence occurred during the nationalist protests. This signifies youth violence and criminality were indivisible from nationalist politics. This was not peculiar to Southern Rhodesia, Tanzanian nationalist parties also utilised disgruntled and potentially violent male youth in the 1940s and 1950s to push their agendas.<sup>84</sup> In South Africa, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), targeted and attracted many school-going youths

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<sup>78</sup> NAZ F163/78/31, FISB Security Intelligence Review, No29, May 1958.

<sup>79</sup> N. Bhebe, 'The nationalist struggle, 1957-1962', in C. Banana (ed.), *Turmoil and tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890-1990*, (Harare: College Press, 1989).

<sup>80</sup> NAZ S/SA 6175, City of Salisbury: (Year by Year Annual Reports by Director of African Administration for the Mayoral Year), Salisbury Director for Native Administration Annual Report 1957, p.57.

<sup>81</sup> NAZ S3269/45/86, Native Education Policy, 1955-1963: Five Year Plan for Native Education 1956-1960, p.2.

<sup>82</sup> NAZ S/SA 6175, City of Salisbury: (Year by Year Annual Reports by Director of African Administration for the Mayoral Year) Salisbury Director for Native Administration Annual Report 1957, p.57.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, p.97.

<sup>84</sup> J.R Brennan, 'Youth, the TANU Youth League, and Managed Vigilantism in Dar es Salaam, 1925-73,' in Burton and Charton-Bigot (eds.), *Generations Past. Youth in East African History*, p.196-197

and the *tsotsi* gangs of the urban location into its nationalist politics.<sup>85</sup> The youths were important players in its “action” and confrontation strategy against the Apartheid government. This implies that youths were the political apparatus that prop up nationalist politics.

By 1959, the SRANC had managed to mobilise a considerable segment of the youth population into nationalist politics and it was repressively met by the colonial state. It was banned on 29 February 1959 through the Unlawful Organizations Act and its senior members, such as Chikerema, Nyandoro, Henry Hamadziripi, and Sithole, were arrested under the Preventative Detention Act.<sup>86</sup> However, Joshua Nkomo was in Britain and he managed to escape arrest. The next section examines the role of youths in NDP politics.

### **The NDP: Political Rift and Youth Violence, 1960-61**

The NDP, though ephemeral, espoused a more confrontational approach than the SRANC in its endeavours to advance African socio-economic interests. The NDP was established (when many nationalist leaders were either in exile or prison) on 1 January 1960 with Sketchley Samkange as the Secretary-General and Michael Mawema as the President.<sup>87</sup> Joshua Nkomo was later elected the president of the NDP in January 1961 upon his return from Britain.<sup>88</sup> The NDP aimed at establishing a democratic government elected on the principle of ‘One Man, One Vote’. It was determined to improve the educational, political, social and economic opportunities for Africans. It sought to work with other democratic movements elsewhere to fight all forms of oppression.<sup>89</sup>

The ideology of the NDP was inspired by the realisation that the ‘moral war’ had failed and non-violence had to be substituted by sabotage, riots and guerrilla war. Following its launch, Samkange and Mawema created a Youth Wing, which was an enigmatic structure whose responsibilities were to co-ordinate the *zhi* riots of 1960 and to suppress opponents by any means possible (but they told the Youth leaders not to destroy African-owned properties). According to the Rhodesian authorities, the NDP capitalised on rampant youth unemployment, insufficiency of money in the country and hooliganism to stimulate violent

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<sup>85</sup> C. Glaser, *Bo-Tsotsi: The Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1935–1976*. (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2000), p.83-85.

<sup>86</sup> D. Martin and P. Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War*. (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1981), p.66

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> The NDP maintained the leadership, objectives, organisation structure and membership of the SRANC.

<sup>89</sup> W. Nyangoni, *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)*, (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1977), pp.47-48.

turbulence.<sup>90</sup> Samkange stated that “youths were the most responsive to our messages and they were the easiest to mobilise... the most difficult to mobilise were the middle-aged and the elderly in the urban areas... We tried our best to mobilise every single youth...”<sup>91</sup> In this regard, Mr Mashavave said the reasons for this spectacular reception by youths entailed abject poverty, the continuous implementation of the notorious NLHA, incessant political tyranny and the rising call for independence from white minority rule.<sup>92</sup> According to Zvobgo, Samkange and Mawema managed to create a simple but very efficient secretive youth organisation in the first six months of 1960 and in July they signalled for widespread violence, sedition, intimidation and sabotage.<sup>93</sup>

Some NDP officials like Robert Mugabe<sup>94</sup>, George Silundika and Enos Nkala were radicals who incited youths to engage in violent door-to-door mobilisations and demonstrations.<sup>95</sup> They were prominent for their use of radical and militant language. They believed that the party objectives were achievable if they would utilise the youths to mobilise more support for the nationalist agenda. Thus, the NDP established the Youth Council to formalise the youth structures. The Youth Council leadership comprised radical and intransigent youths such as T. H. Mudzingwa, who was the chairman, and Charles Andrew Kapfunde, eighteen years old recalcitrant who had been sacked from school, was the chief organiser in Salisbury.<sup>96</sup> The political enthusiasm and morale of the youths were promoted through songs (composed by Hebert Chitepo, Nathan Shamuyarira, and Morris Tumba Musarurwa) with high rhythmic and martial melodies of the African past.<sup>97</sup>

The NDP used propaganda to encourage youths to use extra-constitutional methods to thwart the implementation of the NHLA and the new constitution (which allotted 15 out of 65 Assembly seats to Africans and allowed Southern Rhodesia to be autonomous from Britain). Although the official declaration was made during the 1960 June special congress,

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<sup>90</sup> NAZ F120/725/L343/2 Internal Security Weekly reports, Secret Memo August 20, 1960; October 19 1960.

<sup>91</sup> Samkange Newsletter, 27 July 1960, cited in T. O. Ranger, *Are We Not Also Men? The Samkange Family and African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920-64*, (London: James Currey, 1995), p.183.

<sup>92</sup> Interview with Mr Mashavave, Nyadire Village, 12 January 2021.

<sup>93</sup> *Zimbabwe News*, 4, December 1983.

<sup>94</sup> Mugabe was persuaded to join NDP whilst he had come to Rhodesia for a holiday. He was a teacher in Ghana, on a contract, and his experience with school children suited him to handle an office which deals with the youths.

<sup>95</sup> E. Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union, 1961-87: A Political History of Insurgency in Southern Rhodesia*. (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2005)

<sup>96</sup> NAZ F120/L343/2, Internal Security Weekly Report 1960-6, Secret Memo, January 6, 1960; January 12 1960; January 22, 1960; Morris Tumba Musarurwa a clerk in the Administrative Department of the African Newspapers.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

unconstitutional means were already widespread among the peasants and the party was relentlessly escalating them.<sup>98</sup> There were several reports of indoctrination, intimidation and meddling by NDP young firebrands at rural cattle sales and the NLHA extension. Though Whitehead banished meetings in rural areas, the NDP managed to infiltrate the rural areas through holding meetings in adjacent Native Purchase Areas (like Chitowa) and the use of organising secretaries (young firebrands) who infiltrated into the reserves moving from one village to another canvassing people.<sup>99</sup> Mr. Mafukidze asserted that these young politicians urged the peasants to reject the prices at cattle sales. The Mrewa people were displeased with the grading system and the destocking cattle were sold for very small prices. The chiefs and headmen who were allegedly collaborating with the Native Commissioner in destocking cattle were assaulted. They also targeted demonstrators and UFP supporters.<sup>100</sup> The former Chief Mangwende, Johannes Munhuwepasi, blamed these unrests on Mr. C. Meredith.<sup>101</sup> Similar incidents in which the people protested against the NLHA also occurred (around the end of February 1961) in other reserves, especially in Fort Victoria where the peasants demolished any emblem of the colonial system and intimidated state officials and puppets chiefs.<sup>102</sup> By April 1961, security intelligence reports indicated that the NDP's violent policy in the rural areas was triumphing. Violence became widespread so much so that the government and chiefs were exploring ways to discontinue it. The violent turbulence in the rural areas led to the suspension of the NLHA in 1961 and it had already affected 42 percent of the reserves.<sup>103</sup> It can be argued that the NDP succeeded in awakening the peasants but through the use of youth violence. It shows that violence and coercion were at the centre of the NDP politics and mobilisation strategies, and it was already endemic.

In Mbare and Highfield patterns of the party, and violent activities were unfolding. Shamuyarira cautioned the youths against the use of intimidation and calling those with different views sell-outs.<sup>104</sup> Aaron Jacha (who was a UFP official) said the NDP was a violent party that resorted to the use of petrol bombs and fighting than negotiating with the government.<sup>105</sup> An Internal Security report mentioned that:

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<sup>98</sup> *African Daily News*, 27 April 1961.

<sup>99</sup> NAZ, F120/725/L343/2, Internal Security Weekly Report, Secret MEMO, April 10, 1961.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Mr Mafukidze, in Marondera, 7 January 2021; Also see *African Daily News*, 24 March 1961, p.3; NAZ, F120/725/1343/2, Internal Security Weekly reports, Secret Memo, March 2, 1961.

<sup>101</sup> *African Daily News*, 4 January 1961.

<sup>102</sup> *African Daily News*, 9 March 1961.

<sup>103</sup> I. Phimister, 'Rethinking the reserves: Southern Rhodesia's Land Husbandry Act reviewed', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 2007, pp.225-239.

<sup>104</sup> *African Daily News*, 21 June 21, 1960.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

The Youth wing intimidated churchgoers and individuals going to the beerhalls to get them to the party meetings. These youths were always ready to confront the police and whenever they made arrests, insurrections would follow. They intimidated and assaulted UFP supporters and African MPs who were supporting the new constitution. The Young wing attempted to organise the townships into cells so that the party organisers could have control and efficiently direct people during strikes or boycotts.<sup>106</sup>

In tandem with this, Mr. Mashavave stated that the Youth wing terrorised people who expressed their desire for European habits and luxuries. This revival of African culture was linked with the invention and adoption of epithets and new passwords used to separate the devote from the deviants, prevaricators or collaborators and such words comprised *tshombe* (sellout); *mwana wevhu* (son of the soil); *nhunzvatumzva* (vacillator) among others.<sup>107</sup> These were violent and emotive labels that could jeopardise the life of the person labelled. These labels were formidable weapons for coercing people to join the party and participating in protests. This shows that a culture of youth political violence became more developed during the time of the NDP.

### **The NDP-ZNP split and youth violence**

In June 1961, violence erupted within the NDP as Michael Mawema attempted to establish a breakaway nationalist movement, the Zimbabwe National Party (ZNP).<sup>108</sup> Mawema and Patrick Matimba condemned Nkomo's leadership regarding him as weak-willed, spineless and a sell-out for approving unjust constitutional reform (which allotted 15 out of 65 Assembly seats to Africans, whilst Britain relinquishes its veto powers to any other legislation, irrespective of whether it discriminated against race) during the constitutional talks.<sup>109</sup> The ZNP members wanted Nkomo to step down, this is evident in Matimba statement that, "if Mr. Nkomo was thrown out of the leadership of the NDP tomorrow morning the ZNP would disband forthwith."<sup>110</sup> On 10 June 1961, the ZNP leaders tried to conduct a press conference to publicise the formation of the party. Mawema and Matimba were brutally confronted by the NDP youths and compelled to abandon the event. They ran

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<sup>106</sup> NAZ, F120/725/L343/2, Internal Security Weekly Reports, Weekly Notates to December 5, 1961.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Mr Mashavave, Nyadire Village, 12 January 2021.

<sup>108</sup> ZNP was the first organisation to use the name 'Zimbabwe' and Patrick Matimba was its Secretary General.

<sup>109</sup> M. Meredith, *The Past is Another Country: Rhodesia, 1890-1979*. (London: Deutsch Limited, 1979), p.31.

<sup>110</sup> M. Brooks, *The making of Mugabe's intolerance How an autocratic strain of Pan-Africanism of the early 1960s shaped Robert Mugabe*. <https://africasacountry.com/2019/09/the-making-of-mugabes-intolerance>, Accessed on 23 May 2020.

away from their party launch and took refuge in a police vehicle.<sup>111</sup> Before attacking the ZNP, Robert Mugabe had mentioned that there should be only one nationalist movement and anyone who was going to form a new party or break away from the NDP was a sell-out and such individuals were supposed to be treated with contempt. Mugabe said, “we will not entertain toy parties at the expense of national unity”<sup>112</sup> In parallel to this, Raftopoulos argued that when internal fissures threatened to destroy the party, dissidents were brutally marginalised, ideologically policed and programmatically deferred.<sup>113</sup>

The violent repression of the ZNP launch inaugurated a chilling precedent and presaged the ZAPU-ZANU split which occurred two years later and many of the ZNP cadres joined ZANU.<sup>114</sup> As will be seen in the next section, the culture of violence was carried over by ZAPU and it went to great lengths, using its *Zhanda* youths, to terrorise the ZANU members. The subsequent section analyses how ZAPU mobilised youths into political violence and the involvement of youths in the most dramatic nationalist fracture, the ZAPU-ZANU split.

### **ZAPU: Youth Violence and the African Nationalist Fracture, 1961-64**

After the colonial state banned the NDP, the nationalist leaders went on to revivify it under the façade of a new party, ZAPU, which was established on 17 December 1961 in Highfields (in Herbert Chitepo’s house). The newly formed party’s leadership and objectives were a replica of the latterly banned NDP. Most of the NDP members were elected to high-ranking posts and Joshua Nkomo remained the president. Like the previous nationalist parties, ZAPU continued to exploit the dissatisfaction of the African youths to contest the state through massive mobilizations and more militant tactics.

The ZAPU members used diverse methods to mobilise youths into the party. Mr. Mafukidze stated;

They posted enlightened urban youths to different areas to embark on the countrywide mobilisation of the rural youths. Urban youths were often viewed as knowledgeable and superior and their rural counterparts easily accepted them. The mobilisation was done with such prowess that no one would want to be left out. They used both persuasion and

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> B. Raftopoulos, ‘Problematizing Nationalism in Zimbabwe: An Historiographical Review’, *Zambezia: The Journal of Humanities of the University of Zimbabwe*, Vol. 26, Issue 2, (1999), pp.115–34.

<sup>114</sup> E. Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe: Transformations in Kalanga and Ndebele Societies, 1860- 1990* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012), p.192. While the ZNP was transitory, it proved to be a dress rehearsal for the ZAPU-ZANU split which occurred two years later. The split, according to Nkomo, was caused by the grudge which Mawema held against Nkomo for winning the presidency of the NDP.

arm-twisting tactics (on those found to be thick-headed). They gave youths some rudimentary training on how to engage in acts of sabotage (one should quickly disappear and if caught they were not supposed to reveal the secrets) and to disseminate information to other rural dwellers.<sup>115</sup>

In urban areas, Mr. Takawira mentioned, ZAPU engaged in the compulsory recruitment of youths into the party. All young people who were above 14 years old were supposed to participate in all the party activities and they were expected to have membership cards.<sup>116</sup> Parents were forced to release their children whenever there was an event in which the youths were supposed to participate.<sup>117</sup> If they failed to attend a single meeting or alleged to be in contact with the opponents, they were beaten, torched or even killed. These militant mobilisations compelled youths to join ZAPU and a lot of them found themselves in prison for violating political laws, especially in urban settings. Some youths favoured a prompter way of joining ZAPU which instantaneously showed their potential and enthusiasm to challenge the colonial state. Mr. Mafukidze said the quickest and most effective way for low-rank cadres and potential members to attain nationalist credentials in a party with radical elements like ZAPU was to assault or kill an African policeman.<sup>118</sup> Given this, the colonial state passed and amended several laws to protect African police who were at risk of becoming political sacrifices.<sup>119</sup>

The radical members of ZAPU like Robert Mugabe (who was the Secretary of Publicity) believed that to invite and convince the opponents and those who were indifferent to join the nationalist agenda, there was a need to use violence. The ZAPU Youth Front used all sorts of violence to make sure that the party's political principles and dogmas saturated the whole society. Doran argued that Mugabe preferred a non-selective kind of violence that involved targeting those whom the nationalists claimed to be liberating.<sup>120</sup> The opposition members and religious organisations were subjected to youth violence to coerce them to pledge their full support to the nationalist cause.<sup>121</sup> Mr. Lovemore Chiweshe, who was a UFP member, was assaulted by a group of men (20 strong men). He said:

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<sup>115</sup> Interview with Mr Mafukidze in Marondera, 7 January 2021.

<sup>116</sup> Interview with Mr Takawira, Nyadire Village, Uzumba District, 15 December 2019.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Mrs. Muzumba, Mutawatawa Areas, Maramba-Pfungwe, 19 December 2019.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Mr Mafukidze in Marondera, 7 January 2021.

<sup>119</sup> *Rhodesian Herald*, June 13, 1962; Also see Timothy Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1923-80* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2011), p.53-55.

<sup>120</sup> S. Doran, *Kingdom, Power, Glory - Mugabe, ZANU and the Quest for Supremacy, 1960 – 1987*, (Midrand: Sithatha Media, 2017).

<sup>121</sup> NAZ, S/SA 6175, Annual Report of the Director of African Administration for the Two-Year Period Ended 30 June 1962.

... one of them asked me why I had attended a ZNP meeting and demanded that I produce my ZNP card. I told them I was not a member of the ZNP. Then one of them quickly jumped and hit me with clenched fists saying he knew me to be a member of the UFP and that I had complained through the press that I was being intimidated.<sup>122</sup>

On top of that, Mr. Chiweshe was compelled to leave his home in Mbare.<sup>123</sup> Again, three top men of the ZNP, Mr. M. K. Mhizha (the Deputy President), Mr. Matimba and Mr. Thompson Gonesse have engaged in a hit and dodge battle in Mbare. They tried to hold a meeting at Mai Musodzi Hall but the meeting was disrupted by the ZAPU youths who pelted stones at them. The police had to escort Matimba and Gonesse from the hall to their homes in Highfields. Mr. Mhizha who was a resident in Mbare and others went on their bicycles. A few yards away from the hall. They were followed by a small crowd that attacked them near the Harare Female Dispensary.<sup>124</sup> Bhebe argued that the period between January and September 1962 recorded about 33 petrol bomb attacks on oppositions and their property.<sup>125</sup> In Mrewa, Mr. Takawira said youths were organised to make the Tribal Trust Lands ungovernable, especially on the part of the Native Commissioner. Youth engaged in political sabotage like destroying dip tanks and burning down mission schools and churches, especially those that belonged to religious organisations (like Guta raJehovah/ Mai Chaza, Seventh Day Adventist, Church of Christ, Apostolic Faith Church and Dutch Reformed Church) which often opposed the nationalist movement.<sup>126</sup> This implies that opposing ZAPU was synonymous with committing treason or suicide. Thus, Ndlovu Gatsheni argued that the ZAPU youths were like foot soldiers who operated on quasi-military lines not harmonious to democracy and human rights.<sup>127</sup>

The youths were tasked to force-march people to rallies and reconnoiter their communities. This is encapsulated in Stanlake Samkange reminiscences when he said:

Before a rally, our youth must wake up at 3 a.m., knock at the door of every house and tell people, we expect them to be at the rally and we shall be watching to see what they are doing. People will be afraid to stay away... Those who are not with us are sell-outs.

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<sup>122</sup> *Central African Daily News*, April 2 1962, p.3.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> N. Bhebe, 'The nationalist struggle, 1957-1962', in C. Banana (ed.), *Turmoil and tenacity: Zimbabwe, 1890-1990*, (Harare: College Press, 1989).

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Mr Takawira, Nyadire Village, Uzumba District, 15 December 2019.

<sup>127</sup> S. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Dynamics of Zimbabwean Crisis in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 3, no. 1, 2003, pp.99-134.

Those who form a rival political party must be prevented at all costs. So, houses and cars were stoned. Petrol bombs were thrown into people's bedrooms.<sup>128</sup>

Similarly, the ZAPU youths in Mrewa intimidated people who were perceived as colonial government sympathisers at the behest of the district and national ZAPU leaders. They burnt their crops, beat them and maimed their cattle.<sup>129</sup> The party's stance on this internecine black-on-black violence was summarised in the statement of Dumiso Dabengwa, who was the Youth League leader of Bulawayo, when he said, "any African who remains independent and does not take part in the common cause is as bad a sell-out as the so-called moderates. Those who are not with us are against us."<sup>130</sup> This shows that failure to participate in ZAPU programmes was dangerous as it harboured labels like *mutengesil*/ traitors to those individuals.

The ZAPU leadership directed youth violence to trade union leaders like Rueben Jamela of the SRTUC who refused to bring his union under ZAPU fearing that it would lose its autonomy. The SRTUC was aligned with the International Confederation of Free Trade Union (ICFTU) an American organisation and ZAPU was against that partnership. It was also alleged that Jamela had some intentions to form a new political party ahead of the incoming elections to sabotage ZAPU which was planning to boycott the election. Mugabe and George Silundika branded Jamela a 'sell-out' and an 'imperialist stooge' and they intimidated him with direct nationalist violence such as 'Kill Jamela, Drive him away – a sell-out.'<sup>131</sup> He was viciously harassed at Samuel Parirenyatwa's funeral. The ZAPU youths brutally beat him and burned his car.<sup>132</sup> This event was followed by a factional fight between the SRTUC and ZAPU youths in Salisbury and Bulawayo. The youth gangs in Salisbury assailed eight Africans and they also threw a petrol bomb at Jamela's house but the bomb failed to ignite. Doran argued that even the ZAPU officials mistrusted each other and they lived with suspicion, fear and a siege mentality since individuals like Mugabe had a tendency of directing youth violence against other party members whose loyalty was doubtful.<sup>133</sup> This discloses that youths were used as instruments of violence in nationalist politics. More

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<sup>128</sup> *Sunday Mail*, 16 September 1984.

<sup>129</sup> Interview with Mr Takawira, Nyadire Village, Uzumba District, 15 December 2019.

<sup>130</sup> *Bantu Mirror*, 2 December 1961.

<sup>131</sup> *African Daily News*, 10 April 1962; B. Raftopoulos, 'Problematising Nationalism in Zimbabwe: An Historiographical Review', *Zambezia: The Journal of Humanities of the University of Zimbabwe*, (1999), pp.141-142.

<sup>132</sup> T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence, 1940-1964*, (Rochester: University of Rochester, 2008), p.118.

<sup>133</sup> S. Doran, *Kingdom, Power, Glory: Mugabe, Zanu and the Quest for Supremacy, 1960-1987*, (Midrand: Sithatha Media, 2017).

vicious political schisms and internecine violence manifested during the ZAPU-ZANU split in 1963.

### **The Fracture of African nationalism in 1963**

The colonial state banned ZAPU on 20 September 1962 through the Unlawful Organizations Act, but it continued to operate defiantly underground.<sup>134</sup> Two days ahead of the nationalist conference arranged by Joshua Nkomo (at Cold Comfort Farm located a few kilometres out of Salisbury) to deliberate the future of the party, Ndabaningi Sithole, the National Chairman of ZAPU, proclaimed on 8 August 1963 that a new party, ZANU has been established. The leadership of ZANU comprised of ZAPU senior members such as Leopold Takawira, Robert Mugabe, and Henry Hamadziripi, among others. Losing senior leadership and the loyalty of the cadres under the command of each individual was a huge setback to ZAPU and there was a need to speedily consolidate and stabilize its ranks to avoid any further rebellion.<sup>135</sup> This gave rise to fierce battles between the party youths. The objectives and ideological positions of ZAPU and ZANU shared some striking similarities and this evokes a key question: what made Sithole and his companions break away from ZAPU?

There is no paucity of accounts explaining the ZAPU-ZANU split. Various scholars cited many reasons including class and ethnic frictions, Nkomo's incompetence (*vis-à-vis* the way he handled the 1961 constitutional talks) and his treacherous escape from the country to avoid capture when the SRANC and later NDP members stayed and stoically took their prison penalties.<sup>136</sup> However, the explanations which postulate ethnic and class antagonisms as the key reasons for the split are problematic and unbelievable, taking into consideration that both ZAPU and ZANU had Shona and Ndebele affiliates from considerably varying educational and socio-economic backgrounds amongst their ranks at local and executive levels. Msindo argued that "the increasing politicisation of ethnicity only took shape after the split as the warring factions sought to mobilise support constituencies."<sup>137</sup> The split was prompted by power dynamics with cunning and megalomaniacs like Robert Mugabe who had an obsessive

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<sup>134</sup> E. Msindo, 'Ethnicity and Nationalism in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe: Bulawayo, 1950-1963', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 48, No. 2, (2007).

<sup>135</sup> E. Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union, 1961-1987: A Political History of Insurgency in Southern Rhodesia*. (Asmara: Africa World Press, 2005), p.94

<sup>136</sup> *Central African Daily News*, September 29 1962, p4; D. Martin and P. Johnson. *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), p.68.

<sup>137</sup> E. Msindo, 'Ethnicity and Nationalism in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe: Bulawayo, 1950-1963', *The Journal of African History* 48:2 (2007), p.193.

desire for power.<sup>138</sup> Some other defectors like Herbert Chitepo, George Silundika, Morton Malianga and Enos Nkala begrudged Nkomo for excluding them from the ZAPU executive.

### **Youths and inter-party violence, 1963-1964**

The clashes between ZAPU and ZANU youths started immediately after the launch of ZANU in Salisbury. Although both Nkomo and Sithole condemned the factional violence in the press on 14 August 1963, little in what both leaders proclaimed showed their ability to end it.<sup>139</sup> Indeed, both leaders may perhaps want their factions to fight till a victor perceptibly emerged and then handle the challenging, if not impracticable task of uniting the adherents of the defeated party. More probable, however, is that a huge distance emerged between the ZAPU and ZANU executives and their respective district and grassroots community leaders. Since most of the ZAPU executives were outside Southern Rhodesia for a significant amount of time before the splitting, it can be postulated, in the dearth of verbal and written evidence from the cadres who controlled structures, that the youths fighting in both urban and rural areas had more allegiance to their district or local leaders and party representatives who were circumspect of conceding too much power to Sithole or Nkomo whilst the result of the splitting remained unclear. This was substantiated in Scarnecchia's study when he asserted that immediately after the split, "those carrying out the violence and discipline in the townships had begun to set their agendas."<sup>140</sup> It may be possible that neither Sithole nor Nkomo wanted youth violence to quickly wrap up of the split, the district leaders were behind the spike of factional violence.

Throughout 1963 and 1964, youth violence created a gloomy situation in Mbare and Highfield. A journalist, Stanlake Samkange, reminisced that throughout this period a lot of people were murdered in everyday fights between the party youths. He mentioned that living in Highfield turn out to be like hell on earth as the youths routinely attacked him, and stoned his car and his house.<sup>141</sup> W. A. Wakatama (who was a lecturer at the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland) painted a clear picture of the contemporary situation:

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<sup>138</sup> Msindo argued that Mugabe spoke strongly about the need for *de-Nkomonisation* of the struggle.

<sup>139</sup> F.S. Miles, Acting UK High Commissioner to Tanganyika, To N.G. Lamarque, Africa Economic Department, Commonwealth Relations Office, Dar es Salaam, 24 December 1963. TNA; DO/216/16/86. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940-1964*. (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), p.138.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*, p.150.

<sup>225</sup> T. Ranger, *Are We Not Also Men? The Samkange Family in African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920-1964*. (London: James Currey, 1995), p.203.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid*.

It is sad to see what is going on in the townships. One wonders how a majority rule can be achieved by throwing petrol bombs at each other. Who is going to enjoy the fruits of independence if we finish each other? You either spend your time thinking or marking the houses that will be petrol bombed or you spend your time thinking of the ways and means to protect your family at nightfall.<sup>142</sup>

Both ZAPU and ZANU mobilised youths from other cities or areas around Mbare and Highfield and bused them to fight for their parties. Maurice Nyagumbo mentioned that some ZAPU representatives mobilised youths from Mabvuku and Mufakose, brought them to Highfield and tasked them to stone the houses of the ZANU dissidents who were against Nkomo's leadership.<sup>143</sup> On the other hand, Edgar Tekere, who was involved in the mobilisation of youths in Harare and Gweru, stated that ZANU mobilised youths from other cities such as Gweru and Masvingo and bring them to Harare, especially at weekends to fight battles.<sup>144</sup> These narratives highlight the muscular and aggressive approach adopted by both parties in mobilising for the tough political struggles to control the townships.

Fay Chung asserted that youth violence in townships relentlessly targeted fellow nationalists rather than the colonial state. This violence was initially instigated by ZAPU, using the slogan "It is essential to destroy the snake inside the house [meaning ZANU] before destroying the snake outside [meaning the colonists]."<sup>145</sup> In parallel with this, Nyagumbo stated that the ZAPU youths were committed to purging all the ZANU officials and supporters.<sup>146</sup> They destroyed their houses and properties. Nyagumbo was a victim of youth violence since his house in Highfield was stoned and the asbestos roofs were torn.<sup>147</sup> On the other hand, the ZANU youth leaders like Enos Chikowore and Nyamupingidza, who played a key role in directing violence against ZAPU members, boasted that they could make it difficult for James Chikerema and Joshua Nkomo to stay in Harare for an hour.<sup>148</sup> Nyagumbo conceded that these events opened a 'black chapter in the history of Zimbabwe'.<sup>149</sup> These harrowing actions by youths have continued to occur in the country whenever inter-party or intra-party conflict occurred.

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<sup>142</sup> *African Daily News*, 12 February 1964.

<sup>143</sup> M. Nyagumbo, *With the People*. (Harare: Graham Publishing, 1980), p.179

<sup>144</sup> E. Tekere, *A lifetime of Struggle*. (Harare: SAPES Books, 2007).

<sup>145</sup> F. Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga: Memories from Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005), p.60.

<sup>146</sup> M. Nyagumbo, *With the People*. (Harare: Graham Publishing, 1980).

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> E. Tekere, *A lifetime of Struggle*. (Harare: SAPES Books, 2007).

<sup>149</sup> M. Nyagumbo, *With the People*. (Harare: Graham Publishing, 1980).

The urban youth violence predominantly affected ordinary people. Chung revealed that shops, schools and churches were looted and destroyed. Townships became no-go areas as violent party youths roved around demanding party cards.<sup>150</sup> During this period, one had to be extremely cautious when travelling to other townships. Mrs. Zvizvai stated;

It was not wise for Mbare residents to travel to Highfield or Mufakose or vice versa as there was a high risk of meeting these violent party youths. Beer drinkers had to think twice before they decided to go to prominent beer halls in Mbare such as Matapi and Mapitikoti, since there was a high risk of meeting the party youths.<sup>151</sup>

Scarnecchia added that even ‘the clearing of beer halls became a political act’.<sup>152</sup> These violent party youths also caused havoc in township schools. In 1964, they enforced school boycotts in townships which lasted for nearly two months. This period saw children and their parents being terrorised and threatened with death for challenging the boycott.<sup>153</sup> Chung argued that these boycotts disturbed children in exit grades who hoped to write their final examinations that year.

The ZAPU youths engaged in anti-sell-out campaigns synonymous with that of SCYL. The party youths targeted and ridiculed women who wore modern styles of clothes and hairstyles. The *African Daily News* captured these youth campaigns in October 1963. The ZAPU youths in Highfield intimidated and terrorised women and girls for wearing makeup, straightening their hair to look smart, wearing short skirts or imitating white culture.<sup>154</sup> This campaign was an apogee of the general plan to subject the general populace to the rule of thuggery. Most of these violent acts occurred without the authorisation of ZAPU or ZANU leadership. However, the level of callousness and intimidation by these youths made it unimaginable for the community leaders to intervene and stop their violent activities. These were the years of *Madirativhange*<sup>155</sup> meaning these undisciplined youths could do anything under the guise of defending their political parties. This reveals that the youths took advantage of the disorder in society to advance their interests.

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<sup>150</sup> F. Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga: Memories from Zimbabwe’s Liberation Struggle*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005).

<sup>151</sup> Interview with Mrs Zvizvai, in Highfields Harare, 02 January 2020.

<sup>152</sup> T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940-1964*. (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2008).

<sup>153</sup> F. Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga: Memories from Zimbabwe’s Liberation Struggle*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005).

<sup>154</sup> *African Daily News*, 20 October 1963.

<sup>155</sup> *Madirativhange* refers to scary and startling things done in an ecstatic atmosphere.

It is hard to understand how violence between ZAPU and ZANU factions spread out of Salisbury. The extant written documents denote that ZAPU and ZANU executives tried to tour the country in 1963 and they frequently encountered outraged assailants who disrupted and intimidated those who wanted to attend meetings.<sup>156</sup> Youth violence was also present in Mrewa, Mr. Mafukidze stated that:

At the time of the split, a demon ravaged Mrewa reserves. This demon resulted in the maiming of innocent people, killing and crippling their livestock, plundering houses and shops and burning down churches and schools. Young girls lost their virginity through (*madiro*) organised rape. We were in a situation where people of the same blood and colour lived like cats and dogs locked in the same kennel.<sup>157</sup>

Youth violence also hard-hit foreign nationals from Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia (who worked on the nearby farms) due to their poor grasp of the local languages (Shona and Ndebele).<sup>158</sup>

It is said that the ZAPU youths demanded money for ‘*Umdala*’ (a reference to their leader Joshua Nkomo) in Mrewa.<sup>159</sup> Those who failed to pay were labelled sell-outs and were violated. Mr. Mashavave said people were terrorised for failing to chant the ZAPU slogan (which goes like this: *ZAPU-Puza, mwana wevhu-Zhii, Umhlabati-Ngowethu*).<sup>160</sup> They harassed and murdered anyone who was perceived to be in connection with ZANU. On the other hand, the ZANU youths forced the locals to buy party membership cards which they distributed door to door. This is the period when ZANU began to set up party structures and prepare for the armed struggle.<sup>161</sup> It presented itself as a political party for the Shona people and supporting ZAPU was perceived as a betrayal. Thus, Mr. Takawira said when both ZAPU and ZANU were banned in 1964, “the masses breathed a big sigh of relief not because we condoned the colonial rule, but we condemned our fearful and self-destructive actions.”<sup>162</sup> However more grotesque violence in rural areas manifested again during the liberation struggle. This will be examined in greater depth in the following chapter. The next section is the conclusion of this chapter.

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<sup>156</sup> J. Alexander et al. *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the Dark Forests of Matabeleland*. (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), p.113.

<sup>157</sup> Interview with Mr Mafukidze in Marondera, 7 January 2021.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> Interview with Mr Mashavave, Nyadire Village, 12 January 2021.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> Interview with Mr Takawira, Nyadire Village, Uzumba District, 15 December 2019.

## Conclusion

When the ZANU-ZAPU split occurred in 1963, youth political violence was already endemic and frequently used in political contests. Since the late 1950s, the ‘sell-out’ imputation continued to be a firmly entrenched fixture in the nationalist political rhetoric and a cause of violence. The internecine violence of the late 1950s and early 1960s left a permanent stamp on Zimbabwe’s political culture.<sup>163</sup> It contributed to the emergence and development of a culture of violence in the country. The split resulted in politics of hatred and intolerance of opposition parties which continued to reign in today’s politics. Youth violence became a means of spreading the party ideology, mobilising the masses and punishing sell-outs throughout the liberation struggle and in the post-independence era. The former nationalist leaders did not repent from their violent politics when they took over the state, thus the ZAPU-ZANU struggles continued till 1987, and successive opposition parties suffered from the horrors of youth violence. More than 60 years later, intimidation, killings and burning of houses and property of political opponents by party youths continue. The next chapter examines how ZANU and ZANLA guerrillas mobilised, recruited and indoctrinated the youths toward the war efforts. The chapter will analyse the roles of the *Mujibhas* and *Chimbwidos* during the guerrilla war as both perpetrators and victims of violence.

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<sup>163</sup> L. M. Sachikonye, *When a State Turns on its Citizens: 60 years of Institutionalised Violence in Zimbabwe*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2011).

## CHAPTER 4

### War Collaborators, ZANU and the Anti-Colonial Struggle

#### Introduction

This chapter examines how ZANU and ZANLA guerrillas mobilised the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* (war collaborators) into political violence during the anti-colonial struggle. It mainly focuses on Uzumba Maramba-Pfungwe (UMP) since much of the guerrilla war was fought in the countryside. The chapter seeks to understand how these youths were recruited and indoctrinated into war collaboration. It shows that the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* were in an interstitial space of being perpetrators and victims of violence. The war collaborators were the architects of political violence and at the same time, they bore the brunt of the war since they were ‘the men in the middle’ of war who suffered from scourges of the guerrilla and the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSFs) violence. This chapter is made up of three sections. The first section presents the ZANU/ZANLA ideologies and the strategies used by ZANLA to recruit youths into war collaboration. The second section presents the roles of youth in war and their involvement in political violence. The last part examines the plight of the war collaborators during the struggle. This chapter helps to substantiate the main argument of this thesis that the culture of violence among the youths in Zimbabwe was the legacy of nationalism and the liberation struggle.

#### On ideology: ZANU/ZANLA during the guerrilla war

The intransigent attitude of Smith’s Rhodesian Front (RF) towards reforms and its Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) of 1965 became the harbinger of the liberation war. The UDI prompted the nationalist leaders to recourse to a guerrilla war.<sup>1</sup> In 1965, the ZANU leaders who escaped arrest and exiled themselves to Tanzania and Zambia gathered in Tanzania and established the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA)<sup>2</sup> to begin the liberation struggle using Zambia as the launchpad.<sup>3</sup> Herbert Chitepo was the first leader of ZANLA until 1972 and he was succeeded by Josiah Tongogara who led the organisation up to 1979 when he died. In the late 1970s, Robert Mugabe usurped the

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<sup>1</sup> S. E. Wilmer (ed.), *Zimbabwe Now*. (London: Rex Collings, 1973), p.2; D. Lan, *Guns & Rain: Guerrillas & Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*. (Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 1985), p.121.

<sup>2</sup> ZANLA was the military wing of ZANU which was formed in 1965 in Tanzania.

<sup>3</sup> The then President of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, permitted the Zimbabwean nationalists to establish bushy camps in his country, thus in the early 1970s, ZANLA had camps around Lusaka. See H. Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War: Counter-insurgency and Guerrilla War in Rhodesia, 1962-1980*. (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1989), p.3.

leadership of ZANU. This section is an overview of how the ZANLA guerrillas operated and how they indoctrinated youths into political violence.

The ZANLA's operation strategies were shaped by the ideological leanings of its parent organisation, ZANU.<sup>4</sup> ZANU was a Maoist organisation (Mugabe described its ideology as a “Marxist-Leninist of Maoist Thought”) that considered itself a vanguard party that would lead the people towards the revolution.<sup>5</sup> The party's ideology was also strongly rooted in the Leninist principle of democratic centralism in which the military adheres to the political objectives of the party.<sup>6</sup> Gradually, ZANU became extremely militarized as the structural relationship between the Supreme Council, *Dare reChimurenga* (an elected body of political officials), and the Military High Command (an appointed body that participated in the elections of the Dare) tilted the balance in favour of the military.<sup>7</sup> The military attained authority through the electoral system to the extent of controlling the party activities. Consequently, the ZANLA High Command became an unaccountable and undisciplined unit.<sup>8</sup> This indiscipline spiralled down to the ordinary guerrillas at the war front and ultimately to the war collaborators — who spent most of their time with these guerrillas. In the late 1970s, UMP communities received several troops of young guerrillas who had received a brief military training (due to the high demand for more guerrillas at the front) and they were undisciplined.<sup>9</sup> They socialised youths into violence and gave them authority over their parents, traditions and elders. Some youths instrumentalised this authority and the guerrilla protection to violate villagers and advance their selfish interests.

ZANU and ZANLA were intolerant to any form of critical thinking or dissension within their structures. Like most guerrilla movements, they extolled “the gun” as an emblem of power and of “cleaning up the rot”; purging cadres whose loyalty to the party was doubted.<sup>10</sup> Edson Zvobgo, then ZANU spokesperson, encapsulated the party's stance on violence when he said

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<sup>4</sup> N. J. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: peasant voices*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); G. C. Mazarire, ‘Discipline and Punishment in ZANLA: 1964–1979,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3, (2011), pp.571-591.

<sup>5</sup> Zimbabwe African National Union, ‘MWENJE No. 2 ZANU's Political Program’, Lusaka, 1 August 1972; R.G. Mugabe, ‘ZANU Carries the Burden of History’, *Zimbabwe News*, 10, 2 (May–June 1978), p. 56. In 1973, the ZANU *Dare reChimurenga*, in agreement with the incarcerated Central Committee members, adopted ‘scientific socialism’ and the basic principles of Maoism as the official ideology of the party. See P. Pandya, *Mao Tse Tung and Chimurenga: an investigation into Zanu's strategies*. (Braamfotein: Skotaville, 1988), p.68.

<sup>6</sup> G. C. Mazarire, ‘Discipline and Punishment in ZANLA: 1964–1979’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3, (2011), p.572.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Mr. Rusike, an eyewitness, in Nyadire Village, 18 December 2019.

<sup>10</sup> C. Andrew and O. Gordievsky, *KGB: The inside story of its foreign operations from Lenin to Gorbachev*. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990), p. 465.

the “ZANU Idea” was the “gun idea.”<sup>11</sup> This implies that violence was the best solution when dealing with party opponents. Although the Maoist guerrilla code of conduct (*nzira dzemasoja*) was against intolerance, the political commissars and ZANLA guerrillas preached violence and it was an integral apparatus of their political mobilisations.<sup>12</sup> The guerrilla encouraged the war collaborators to espouse ‘the gun idea’ (violence) against those who veered off the party line.

The initial ZANLA campaigns, launched from Zambia between 1966 and the early 1970s, based on conventional, commando-type operations were disastrous.<sup>13</sup> When ZANLA moved its bases to Mozambique in 1972, it adopted Mao’s protracted war strategy with the help of the Chinese military experts.<sup>14</sup> This approach emphasized having the freedom fighters penetrate the country, organising and politicising the peasants, and embarking on 'hit-and-run' bushwhack operations. Mao believed that the relationship between the guerrillas and the peasants should be, respectively, that of fish and water (meaning that the guerrillas and civilians would be mutually dependent). Owing to this, the war became both political and military as the Rhodesian Front and ZANLA guerrillas vied to control the rural populace.<sup>15</sup> Borrowing from Gramsci, the ZANLA guerrillas made the war be conceived as “partisan warfare” with clear political goals.<sup>16</sup> They mobilised and politicised the masses during the *pungwes* — all-night indoctrination sessions. These meetings were typified by extreme violence, killings of ideological foes and undue reprisals. The Gramscian principles of coercion and consent played an integral part to bring people to the *pungwes* and ensuring their loyalty to ZANU, the guerrillas and war.

The Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA)<sup>17</sup> and ZANLA differed in their ideologies and operations. ZIPRA adopted the Leninist/ Red Army notions of a guerrilla war and its forces were drilled by the Soviet instructors.<sup>18</sup> Lenin believed that the role of the guerrillas in the war was to battle the enemy forces and anything beyond that was the party’s

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<sup>11</sup> S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, ‘Rethinking Chimurenga and Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A Critique of Partisan National History,’ *African Studies Review*, Vol. 55, Issue 3, (2012), pp.1-26.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Mr. Rusike, an eyewitness, in Nyadire Village, 18 December 2019

<sup>13</sup> P. Moorcraft, *Mugabe's War Machine: Saving or Savaging Zimbabwe?* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> Y. Henkin, ‘Stoning the Dogs: Guerrilla Mobilization and Violence in Rhodesia,’ *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 36, Issue 6, 2013, p.503-532.

<sup>15</sup> ZANU War Communiqué, Lusaka, 4 January 1973

<sup>16</sup> Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith (eds.), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

<sup>17</sup> ZIPRA was an armed wing of ZAPU during the liberation war.

<sup>18</sup> L.H. Gann and T. H. Henriksen, *The struggle for Zimbabwe: Battle in the bush*. (New York: Praeger, 1981), p.104.

responsibility.<sup>19</sup> The ZIPRA philosophy emphasised fighting a war that was military rather than political. The ZIPRA guerrillas were not involved in politicising or organising villagers for a protracted war. Issues to do with political education and meetings were left to ZAPU structures. Thus, the colonial state responded differently to the ZIPRA and ZANLA campaigns and the peasants in their areas of operation experienced the war differently. The Smith regime established Keeps or Protected Villages (PVs)<sup>20</sup> in ZANLA areas of operation to counter their Maoist fish and water strategy.<sup>21</sup> In UMP, the villagers were displaced from their villages to the PVs, fenced with barbed wire and secured by the Guard Force.<sup>22</sup> The youths were harassed to alienate them from ZANLA guerrillas. However, in ZIPRA areas of operation, there were no PVs since it used conventional warfare and it was relatively well equipped. Moorcraft argued that the ZIPRA army was to a greater extent self-dependent and it did not infiltrate the villagers as much as the ZANLA guerrillas did.<sup>23</sup> They banked on their military prowess to garner the support of youths and villagers rather than mass politicisation and *pungwes*. This secured the youths and peasants from the RSFs' brutality. The following section examines how the ZANLA guerrillas recruited youths into war collaboration.

### **The recruitment of youth into war collaboration**

Scholars used diverse theories to explain how the ZANLA forces recruited youths for war efforts. These theories, including Lan's religious thesis, Manungo's patriotism and voluntary thesis and the emerging coercion thesis, shape the argument of this chapter. In some parts of UMP, it was not easy for a political party to set up effective branches as people dreaded the RSFs. The despotism of the colonial state made it treasonous for rural Africans to coordinate and organise themselves under the banners of proscribed political parties. When the ZANLA guerrillas arrived in UMP communities in the 1970s, they were confronted by complexities in connecting with the local inhabitants. The guerrillas were entangled in a situation that

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> The PV system was a borrowed phenomenon from Britain's Malaya counter-insurgency operation in the 1950s against the Chinese Communist guerrillas. The British triumphantly removed millions of peasants from their villages to isolate Chinese guerrillas. The same strategy was later utilised by the Portuguese against the FRELIMO guerrillas in Mozambique, setting up *aldeamentos*; and the United States adopted the same strategies in Vietnam.

<sup>21</sup> N. Nyachega and E. Msindo, 'Zimbabwe's Liberation War and the Everyday in Honde Valley, 1975-1979', *South African Historical Journal*, 71, 2019, pp.70-93.

<sup>22</sup> NAZ, GEN-P/CAT, *The Man in the Middle: Torture, Terror, Eviction and Resettlement and Eviction*, 1978.

<sup>23</sup> P. Moorcraft, *Mugabe's War Machine: Saving or Savaging Zimbabwe?* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2011).

required the use of persuasion, propaganda and coercion to recruit the youths into war collaboration and to have political control over the masses.<sup>24</sup>

Robson Kadzunge related how the youths were recruited into war collaboration:

When the guerrillas arrived in our area, Mashambanhaka, they presented themselves to the villagers and explained their motives and their need for youths to act as their assistants in the war. I still remember some of their names; there was Biggie Mushambaropa, and Godfrey Chakanetsa, among others. After holding some *pungwes*, the guerrillas then imposed duties on local youths whom they identified as *zvimbwidos* and *zvimujibhas*. The guerrillas did not take no for an answer. This was also done without the consent of their parents. Many parents did not want their children to get involved in the war because some of their children were too young to be introduced to perilous situations that come with the war, nonetheless, the fears of being labelled sellouts made them comply. The guerrillas had their bases in the mountains such as the Mukuru-anopamainza, Chemazumba, Mayema, Dzengwa and others.<sup>25</sup>

In tandem with this, Ngwabi Bhebe underscored that the parents were obligated to send young girls and boys, between 13 and 30 years old, to become permanent messengers for the guerrillas.<sup>26</sup> The initial relations between the guerrillas, UMP youths and their parents, were somewhat problematic and unstructured because the ZANU ideology had not yet penetrated some parts of the UMP District.

The ZANLA guerrillas used mass politicisation, a strategy inspired by Maoist philosophies of protracted war, to mobilise youths towards war efforts. The guerrillas dedicated so much time to compulsory *pungwes*. The guerrilla units comprised of political commissars whose responsibility was to educate and indoctrinate the youths to have an undivided loyalty for ZANU and sacrifice for the struggle.<sup>27</sup> The *pungwes* gave the guerrillas a platform to inculcate patriotism in the youths and conscientize them on the importance of cooperation and unity. The villagers were educated in the national grievances addressing issues like *inter alia* land appropriation, education, disenfranchisement and social inequalities. They pleaded

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<sup>24</sup>J. A. Dzimbanhete, 'Drawing Lessons from Zimbabwe's War of Liberation: Efficacious Use of Propaganda and Violence', *Small War Journals*, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/drawing-lessons-from-zimbabwes-war-of-liberation>, Accessed on 05 July 2020.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Robson Kadzunge, a former mujibha, in Uzumba Village, 12 December 2019.

<sup>26</sup> N. Bhebe, *The ZAPU AND ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and the The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*. (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1999).

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Mr. Rusike, an eyewitness, in Nyadire Village, 18 December 2019; G. C. Mazarire, 'Discipline and Punishment in ZANLA: 1964–1979,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3, (2011), pp.571-591.

with villagers not to support the RSFs who were the protectors of white minority rule. An interviewee, Ephraim pointed out that the guerrilla political education was intended to make the villagers perceive everything linked to the colonial regime as undesirable and detrimental to the advancement of blacks.<sup>28</sup> They wanted to convince the villagers that only ZANU could unshackle the people from the manacles of a malevolent colonial rule. Some youths were inspired by ZANU ideologies sermonized by the political commissars and also imbued in the liberation songs sung during the *pungwes*. The songs and the guerrilla *kongonya* dance were fundamental instruments of morale upliftment and political mobilisations.<sup>29</sup> Some former war collaborators (like Ephraim and Stella Kadzunge) confirmed that they were enthused by songs sung by the guerrillas during the *pungwes*, for instance, the one below which they used to greet people:

<i>Mhoroi mose!</i>	Greetings to you all
<i>A iye iye, A iye iye Makadii?</i>	How are you?
<i>A iye iye,</i>	A iye iye
<i>Norufaro,</i>	With happiness
<i>A iye iye,</i>	A iye iye
<i>Tonosangana kuZimbabwe</i>	We will meet in independent Zimbabwe. <sup>30</sup>

This song roused optimism and determination which emboldened youths to fight for the new Zimbabwe. The liberation songs clarified the objectives of the war and they aroused the spirit of revolution in the youths, hence joining war collaboration.

The commissariat team within the ZANLA guerrilla units established the Youth wing and other political structures (made up of trusted adults) to mobilise the much-needed support for the guerrillas operating in the UMP communities.<sup>31</sup> The Youth wing was a coercive structure that made sure that all the youths and villagers supported the war. Stella, a former *chimbwido*, said many youths became *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* as a result of coercion rather than mutual consent. In her actual words, she asserted that ‘the guerrillas and their Youth wings compelled us to become war collaborators. We joined involuntarily due to fears of lives and

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Ephraim, a former mujibha, in Chidodo Village, 12 December 2019; R. Kidd, From People's Theatre for Revolution to Popular Theatre for Reconstruction: Diary of a Zimbabwean Workshop. CESO Verhandeling No, 33, 15 August - 1 September 1983, p.12; N. Bhebe, *The ZAPU AND ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and the The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*. (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1999).

<sup>29</sup> V.M. Matiza, ‘Pungwe gatherings as forms of drama for development through music in Zimbabwe,’ *Muziki*, (2015), pp. 62-73.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>31</sup> ZANLA emphasized on political mobilisation and recruitment facilitated by political cadres who cultivated a network of cells countrywide. G. C. Mazarire, ‘Discipline and Punishment in ZANLA: 1964–1979,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3, (2011), pp.571-591.

being perceived as sell-outs or enemies of the revolution.’<sup>32</sup> The fears of death forced the youths and parents to consent to the guerrilla dictates to provide their services unconditionally. Stella said, ‘Our parents were afraid of objecting or complaining as they were branded sell-outs and instantly killed.’<sup>33</sup> In some instances, the guerrillas scorched the homesteads of perceived sell-outs to warn the would-be dissenters. Nicholas Zimhondi, a participant, said the Youth wing and guerrillas made sure that all the youths were involved and participating in the war, either as guerrilla or war collaborators. Only those who were either in poor health or in urban areas with their parents were spared by this recruitment drive in UMP communities.<sup>34</sup> On this, Auret argued that both ZANLA and ZIPRA employed terror tactics in their operations, they assailed women and children, and performed horrendous acts against those perceived as ‘sell-outs’.<sup>35</sup> During the war, the term ‘sell-out’ was a catchword tantamount to death. The term was misapplied and abused by the Youth wing and guerrillas to subjugate the youths and villagers to assist the ZANLA guerrillas.<sup>36</sup>

The ZANLA guerrillas utilised propaganda that was bound up with the liberation struggle.<sup>37</sup> It played an instrumental role in persuading some parents to allow their children to become war collaborators. Some parents developed trust and anticipation that guerrillas were going to liberate them from the malevolent colonial state. Mrs. Muzumba reflected that ‘we were sacrificed (by our parents) with the understanding and optimism that aiding the guerrillas would free them from the colonial regime.’<sup>38</sup> The guerrilla propaganda capitalised on the longstanding antipathy and indignation among the rural peasants over the loss of land due to racial removals.<sup>39</sup> Mr. Mukombe from Nyadire area added that before the guerrillas arrived in UMP communities, those who had wireless radios used to listen to the propaganda of ZANU officials beamed from Dar es Salaam, Lusaka and Maputo. The political leaders constantly sermonized war propaganda and pleaded with their listeners to assist the guerrillas. When they finally arrived in Nyadire village, they found a welcoming, supportive and politically

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with Stella Kadzunge, a former chimbwido, in Uzumba Village, 17 December 2019.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Nicholas Zimhondi, an eyewitness, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>35</sup> M. Auret, *From Liberator to Dictator. An Insider's Account of R. Mugabe's Descent into Tyranny*. (Cape Town: Claremont, 2009), p. 32.

<sup>36</sup> See T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and political violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940-1964*. (Rochester: University of Rochester, 2008)

<sup>37</sup> J. A. Dzimbahete, ‘Drawing Lessons from Zimbabwe's War of Liberation: Efficacious Use of Propaganda and Violence’, *Small War Journals*, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/drawing-lessons-from-zimbabwes-war-of-liberation>, Accessed on 5 July 2020.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Mrs. Muzumba, a former chimbwido, in Nyadire Village, 20 December 2019.

<sup>39</sup> T.O. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe. A Comparative Study*. Harare, 1985. p. 137.

conscious society prepared to lend a hand to them as the ZANU leaders had supplicated via the radio.<sup>40</sup> It seems some of the areas proximate to Murewa township, like Uzumba district, seemed to be politically informed in the early 1970s. Dzimbanhete argued that war propaganda was perfectly crafted and it integrated the anticipations of the rural population who wanted the unjust colonial system to end.<sup>41</sup> The ZANU's radio programmes laid a foundation for the guerrilla's appeals for collaboration and assistance from the local youths.

Furthermore, the guerrillas purported that the youths were going to be the beneficiaries of war when the country gains independence, and they were fighting for them. In Gramsci's terms, the guerrillas used myth and utopia that the post-colonial government will establish an ethico-political system that prioritized the youths.<sup>42</sup> Ephraim mentioned that the guerrillas emphasised that the post-independent state was going to open many opportunities for young people and it was the moral duty of the youths to make this dream a reality.<sup>43</sup> From a guerrilla viewpoint, all youths had the mandate to work with the guerrillas and complement their efforts in the war against the colonial regime. Comrade Gabarinocheka confirmed that youths were elated by the guerrilla addresses and they wanted to see the 'enemy' falling. The youths were tired of being dehumanised and maltreated by the RSFs and thus they chose to help the guerrillas to fight the Smith regime.<sup>44</sup> This shows that the utopian promises of the guerrillas were important in the recruitment of war collaborators.

However, Kriger perceives the recruitment of youth into war collaboration differently, and not in connection with guerrilla propaganda and indoctrination. She understands it from a patriarchal and matriarchal viewpoint. To kindle the peasants' empathy and responsiveness, the guerrillas revealed to them the anguish and hardships they faced in the struggle for freedom 'of the sons and daughters of Zimbabwe'. The guerrillas appealed for parental responsibility by reminding them: 'we are your children.'<sup>45</sup> As Violet puts it, 'our parents persuaded us to help the guerrillas and we identified them as *vanamukoma* - our brothers.'<sup>46</sup> She revealed that there was a strong connection between the elders in Katiyo village and

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with Mr. Mukombe, an eyewitness, in Nyadire Village, 20 December 2019. See NAZ, CCJP/CIIR/Box, Rhodesia: The Propaganda War, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, New York, 1978.

<sup>41</sup> J. A. Dzimbanhete, 'Drawing Lessons from Zimbabwe's War of Liberation: Efficacious Use of Propaganda and Violence,' *Small War Journals*, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/drawing-lessons-from-zimbabwes-war-of-liberation>, Accessed on 5 July 2020.

<sup>42</sup> Q. Hoare, and G. N. Smith (eds.), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Ephraim, a former mujibha, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Cde Gabarinocheka, a former ZANLA guerrilla, in Mutawatawa Areas, 4 January 2020

<sup>45</sup> N. J. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: peasant voices*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992);

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Violet Mashiri, a former chimbwido, in Karimbika Village, 10 December 2019.

ZANLA guerrillas. This means the elders and parents compromised the lives of their children by persuading them to assist the guerrillas.

The political theology of the First Chimurenga also played an important role in guerrilla mobilisations.<sup>47</sup> They presented ZANU as an organisation with a historical mission if not a messianic agenda prophesied by Mbuya Nehanda before she died in 1898.<sup>48</sup> Mr. Takawira mentioned that the guerrillas believed that they were led by the spirit of Chamunika, Nehanda and Kaguvi and they always make reference to Nehanda's famous prophecy, "*mapfupa edu achamuka*- our bones will rise".<sup>49</sup> The guerrillas mythologised the stories of these heroes to win the hearts of the peasants and youths. There were some claims that their links with the Nehanda spirits and *mhondoros* (lion spirits) enabled them to vanish or turn into lions in face of attacks by the RSFs.<sup>50</sup> Some youths were deeply enthused by these stories and they joined the struggle ardently. In this regard, Gramsci and Sorels argued that political myth is instrumental when mobilising people for a revolution against an oppressive state.<sup>51</sup> The guerrillas also sought help and guidance from the traditional leaders, spirit mediums and diviners.<sup>52</sup> Mr. Takawira said Chief Nyajina Bere (then leader of the Uzumba clan) and the local spirit mediums played a significant role in encouraging the youths to support guerrillas.<sup>53</sup> The guerrillas' respect for African Traditions Religion (ATR) connected them with the villagers who in turn allowed their children to collaborate with the guerrillas.

Many interview narratives reflect that the majority of youths voluntarily joined the struggle, especially after 1976.<sup>54</sup> Some of them were prompted by their hatred of the colonial regime.<sup>55</sup> Mr Mazanhi claimed that he joined the war because the RSFs were callous and heavy-handed

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<sup>47</sup> Even though ZANU adopted a Marxist ideology, it did not abhor local traditions, its guerrillas worked hand in glove with the spirit mediums since 1968. See also Y. Henkin, Stoning the Dogs: Guerilla Mobilization and Violence in Rhodesia, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 36, Issue 6, 2013, p.503-532.

<sup>48</sup> NAZ, GEN-P/ZIM, 'ZANU and the Zimbabwean Revolution,' *IKWEZI*, Vol 10, (1978), pp. 49-60; D. Lan, *Guns & Rain: Guerrillas & Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, (Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 1985).

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Mr. Takawira, an eyewitness, in Pfungwe, 05 December 2019.

<sup>50</sup> C. C. Mavhunga, *Transient Workspaces: Technologies of Everyday Innovation in Zimbabwe*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014).

<sup>51</sup> Q. Hoare and N. G. Smith, (eds.). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Mr. Takawira, an eyewitness, in Pfungwe, 05 December 2019.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Mr. Takawira, an eyewitness, in Pfungwe, 05 December 2019.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Mr Mazanhi, a former mujibha, Manyika Village, 15 December 2019. See also Y. Henkin, 'Stoning the Dogs: Guerilla Mobilization and Violence in Rhodesia,' *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 36, Issue 6, (2013), p.503-532.

<sup>55</sup> D. Mutanda, *The Rhodesian Air Force in Zimbabwe's War of Liberation, 1966-1980*. (North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2017).

when dealing with the youths whereas the guerrillas were very sociable to the villagers.<sup>56</sup> Some scholars argued that the youths voluntarily joined the struggle; and guerrilla violence, excluding the one directed at traitors, was a consequence of undisciplined guerrillas.<sup>57</sup> However, Mr. Mazanhi's account is problematic in the sense that it completely ignores the fact that the ZANLA guerrillas also abused and brutalised the youths into acquiescence. His prejudiced depiction of ZANLA as a benevolent liberation army distinctly displays the effect of propaganda and indoctrination on youths' reasoning capacities. It also potentially portrays his political position. Many participants purposely overlooked the flaws of the ZANLA guerrillas and they were quick to blame the RSFs for any mishap that occurred to them (but their accounts cannot be undermined because the RSF was deeply violent). The ZANLA propaganda influenced many youths, winning their hearts and minds, hence joining the war with undivided support for ZANU and the struggle. Taking a cue from Maxey, this was in parallel with ZANU's long-term agenda of a guerrilla war, to enhance political support and take over the entire country.<sup>58</sup>

Some youths were prompted by their selfish interests to benefit from the wealth and power attached to the statuses of *chimbwido* and *mujibha*.<sup>59</sup> Mrs. Mazungu said several youths were involved in looting and plundering the wealth of other villagers. They caused many people to run away from Uzumba to other areas and took over the belongings of the fugitives.<sup>60</sup> She said her brother called Clement Manyange lost everything to the *mujibhas* after he was forced to leave Uzumba in 1977. The status of *mujibha* also came with power as they were involved in community policing and monitoring the movement of people. They investigated people who were accused to be sell-outs and witches. This resulted in the shift of powers from the elders to the youths. The war collaborators committed many atrocities but they enjoyed guerrilla protection and immunity because of their strong relationship with the guerrillas.<sup>61</sup> Also, selfishness and narcissism incited other youths to become double agents of both the

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Mr. Mazanhi, a former *mujibha*, in Manyika Village, 15 December 2019.

<sup>57</sup> T. O. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*. (London: James Currey, 1985); D. Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People, c. 1870s-1990s*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

<sup>58</sup> K. Maxey, *The Fight for Zimbabwe. The Armed Conflict in Southern Rhodesia since UDI*. (London, Rex Collings, 1975), p. 12.

<sup>59</sup> Y. Henkin, 'Stoning the Dogs: Guerilla Mobilization and Violence in Rhodesia', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 36, Issue 6, (2013), p.15.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Mrs Muzungu, an eyewitness, in Uzumba Village, 12 December 2019.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

RSFs (the Rhodesian government paid the informants about R\$5000.00) and the guerrillas.<sup>62</sup> Noteworthy is the fact that some war collaborators joined the war, not for the sake of it, but because it was expedient to do so. These issues are further explained in the subsequent sections

Evans Rusere presented an interesting narrative of how he joined war collaboration. He asserted that:

We were idle after Smith closed down schools in rural areas, we wanted something meaningful to do. We admired the guerrillas; they became our role models. I developed an interest to carry an AK-47 and RPG firepower one day and getting involved and participating in the war on the behalf of the guerrillas was a step toward my dream.<sup>63</sup>

For Evans, war collaboration was an initiation process for a bigger picture, that is training as a ZANLA guerrilla in Mozambique. In this regard, Alcinda Honwana argued that lack of education opportunities and unemployment make the recruitment of youths into the war easier.<sup>64</sup> While others voluntarily joined war collaboration, it is imperative to note that coercion played an instrumental role as ‘the guerrillas infused an unquestioning idealism with a ruthless streak.’<sup>65</sup> The issue of voluntarism is also questionable since some of the collaborators were under 18 years old. However, the majority of youths wanted to enjoy the benefits and power attached to collaboration and to appease their selfish interests. The following section examines the roles played by the war collaborators in the guerrilla war.

### **The roles of the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* during the guerrilla war**

The presence of the guerrillas in UMP communities had an unforeseen and disconcerting effect of burdening youths with an avalanche of responsibilities. The *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* helped the guerrillas to control a large area with a small force. Bob North interviewed by Frederikse dubbed the war collaborators as a ‘bush telegraph’.<sup>66</sup> The ZANLA guerrillas established a network of *mujibhas* to monitor the movement of the RSFs in UMP communities. These youths watched and observed the prevailing settings for any signal(s) of the presence of ‘*muveni*’ – the enemy (the RSFs). The youths were very important for the survival of the guerrillas throughout the war. They devoted most of their time working on the

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<sup>62</sup> P. Moorcraft, *Mugabe's War Machine: Saving or Savaging Zimbabwe?* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2011). In 1978 the US\$ 1= R\$1,50. R\$ stands for Rhodesian dollar.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Evans Rusere, a former mujibha, in Dindi Village, 14 December 2019.

<sup>64</sup> A. Honwana, *Child Soldiers in Africa*. (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

<sup>65</sup> I. Pringle, *Dingo Firestorm*, (Cape Town: Zebra 2012).

<sup>66</sup> Bob North interviewed by J. Frederikse, *None but Ourselves, Masses vs Media in the Making of Zimbabwe*. (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1982). p. 70.

issues that affect the safety and security of the guerrillas. According to Bob North, the youths were able to decipher that the RSFs would attack the guerrilla bases. They enabled the guerrillas to know what the RSFs were doing, virtually twenty-four hours a day.<sup>67</sup> The youthful collaborators were energetic and tactical so they were capable to inspect and report RSFs movements without endangering the lives of the guerrillas and the villagers. In this regard, a former *mujibha*, Langton said:

‘We spent most of the time in the bush since guerrillas turned us into their eyes and ears. Our duty was to safeguard the guerrillas by providing information about the situation, *kutarisa kuti mhepo yakamira sei* [youth-guerrilla *patois* which means monitoring the prevailing situation and movement of RSFs]. We alerted them if there was any sign(s) of impending danger.’<sup>68</sup>

Langton’s narrative reveals that youths were at all times on a reconnaissance mission, monitoring the whereabouts of the RSFs and reporting any kind of situation that could put the lives of the guerrillas at risk.

To make the ‘bush telegraph’ effective, the guerrillas deployed the youths to strategic areas that could enable them to transmit the information as fast as possible.<sup>69</sup> The *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos* were constantly sent to nearby RSFs bases, like the Dawana military in Uzumba Reserve, as eavesdrops. They kept the areas assigned to them under surveillance, inspecting the position and movement of the RSFs. The youths provided essential information to the guerrillas, that is the number of soldiers planning to launch an attack, the type of weapons they had, and the route they took.<sup>70</sup> The *chimbwidos* were anticipated to utilise their feminine charm as a weapon to hoodwink the black soldiers or policemen into disclosing their classified information. A former freedom fighter, Comrade Gabarinocheka reminisced:

We used to send *chimbwidos* to police camps to trap the black police officers into a love affair to cajole them to reveal the duties they performed in the camp, how they operated, the type of weapons they have, and how they were trained. The *mujibhas* pretend to be cattle herders grazing their cattle or feigned to be ordinary young boys doing their day-to-day chores while watching the movements of the security forces. In the same way, the

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Langton, a former *mujibha*, in Uzumba Village, 12 December 2019.

<sup>69</sup> P.L. Moorcraft and P. McLaughlin, *Chimurenga! The War in Rhodesia 1965 – 1980*. (Marshalltown: Sygma/Collins, 1982), p. 76.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Joseph, a villager, Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019; See also D. Maxwell. *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People*. (Westport, Conn.: Praeger. 1999), p. 136; M. Gumbo, *Guerrilla Snuff*. (Baobab Books, Harare, 1995), p. 123.

*chimbwidos* did their regular household tasks of fetching firewood and water whilst tracking the activities of the security forces.<sup>71</sup>

Since they were young and performing their usual responsibilities, the war collaborators proficiently carried out the intelligence work with agility and versatility. The guerrillas banked on this information to scheme and launch a surprise attack on the RSFs camps when they hardly anticipated it. For instance, such information enabled them to attack the Dawana military base on 11 September 1978 and killed the Canadian and American mercenaries, Guard Force and District Assistants. About 31 people were killed.<sup>72</sup>

The war collaborators engaged in community policing and detective work. They investigated any person who was suspected to have been in contact with the RSFs and the main intention was to get rid of sell-outs. This was also done to ensure the safety of the guerrillas at all times. It was difficult for visitors to enter UMP communities without going through youth scrutiny and vetting. Concerning this Sekuru Gwaze confirmed that ‘We had the power to interrogate and arrest any unfamiliar person who came to our village’.<sup>73</sup> Correspondingly, Kriger argued that youths in Mutoko executed taxing duties such as identifying and reporting suspected defectors and patrolling the villages to forewarn the guerrillas of any looming menaces.<sup>74</sup> Hayes, *et al.* professed that these youths acted as discipline enforcers who chastised those who were alleged to be obstinate, disobliging, or have ‘sold out.’<sup>75</sup> In most cases, *mujibhas* were given the duty to beat the perceived traitors.<sup>76</sup> Such authoritative duties assigned to the youths falsely bolstered their egos. However, some UMP villagers condemned these duties mandated to the youths by the guerrillas as a sign of forgetting what ZANU and ZANLA stood for and why the country was at war.

The *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* played an instrumental role as runners and couriers of guerrillas, offering transport and intelligence communication network.<sup>77</sup> The *mujibhas* conveyed letters to business people and urban workers asking for aid in cash or kind. The couriers used intelligent tactics to block the enemy from intercepting their communication network. They sew the letters inside their collars to make sure that the enemy will not have

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<sup>71</sup> Interview with Cde Gabarinocheka, a former ZANLA guerrilla, in Mutawatawa Areas, 4 January 2020

<sup>72</sup> Extract from the Chimurenga War Communique No. 19 – September to November 1978.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Sekuru Gwaze, a former mujibha, in Dindi Village, 14 December 2019.

<sup>74</sup> N. J. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: peasant voices*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.119

<sup>75</sup> P. Hayes, V. Tyson and M. Ndlovu, *Children of History*. (Harare: Academic Books, 1992), p. 76.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Ephraim, Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>77</sup> P.L. Moorcraft and P. McLaughlin, *Chimurenga! The War in Rhodesia 1965 – 1980*. (Marshalltown: Sygma/Collins, 1982).

access to them if the security forces search them.<sup>78</sup> They always travelled during the night to avoid being caught by the RSFs. In most cases, the *chimbwidos* carried goods such as shoes, blankets, foodstuffs and sting jeans. It was easier for female youths than male youths to pass through the roadblocks with these goods since they were not thoroughly searched and less suspected by the police.<sup>79</sup> The youths also assisted in transporting cases of ammunition (*makasha*) during the night from one area to another. These armaments could have arrived from Mozambique and the guerrillas concealed them from the RSFs. No matter the distance or how heavy these armaments were, it was the mandate of the war collaborators to assist the guerrillas. The *chimbwidos* were tasked to carry land mines, masquerading as pregnant women.<sup>80</sup> Given this, without doubt, the UMP youths were compelled to do tasks that imperilled their lives given the RSFs harsh treatment of those captured helping the ‘terrorists’. At times the RSFs tracked them and secretly followed them thus base bombardments were inescapable.

It was the responsibility of the masses to feed the guerrillas, but it was unsafe for the guerrillas to collect the food directly or for the adults to bring it to them. In this vein, Langton said:

If the RSFs saw an adult strolling in the bushes, they instantly became suspicious and follow that individual. It was somewhat safer for the youths to execute any responsibilities that involved the guerrillas. Thus, the guerrillas decided to employ the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas*. Since these youths were young, the RSFs could not rapidly suspect them of being the agents of the guerrillas.<sup>81</sup>

The *chimbwidos* prepared food in their villages and delivered it to the guerrilla bases in mountains. They had devised tricks to sneak out with food from the PVs or Keeps. They pretended like they were pregnant or carrying babies at their backs yet it was the guerrilla food.<sup>82</sup> Cde Tambudzai Mukubvu (a former *chimbwido*) interviewed by *The Herald* said that showed that some girls stayed in the mountains with guerrillas. She revealed that they stayed with the guerrillas on the Mukuru-anopamainza Mountain, cooking and washing for them. She said the mountain used to host large groups of guerrillas going to their operating areas, so they were always busy with their chores.<sup>83</sup> The involvement of *chimbwidos* in the war

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<sup>78</sup> Interview with Mrs. Muzumba, a former *chimbwido*, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Langton, a former *mujibha*, in Uzumba Village, 13 December 2019.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Cde Gabarinocheka, a former ZANLA guerrilla in Mutawatawa Areas, 4 January 2020.

<sup>83</sup> *The Herald*, 8 August 2016.

ushered in a new paradigm as women who were traditionally not allowed to participate in public spheres became important agents of the guerrillas.<sup>84</sup> Weiss argues the social change that was set in train by the liberation war turned women into critical role players in the struggle for freedom.<sup>85</sup> Their assistance and support were indispensable. Besides providing food and other logistical errands, they washed, ironed, and sew clothes for the guerrillas and also helped to nurse ailing or injured guerrillas.<sup>86</sup> Seidman reinforces that the position of women in society was transformed by their connections with the guerrillas.<sup>87</sup> Women became noticeable in society as they performed unique and highly regarded duties to sustain the lives of the guerrillas. Given this, it can be argued that *chimbwidos* played a pivotal role in guerrilla warfare, and without them, the war would not have been a success from the very start.

The youths were responsible for organising *pungwes* which in most cases were convened at guerrilla bases. In Mashambanhaka area, Batsirai Kazingizi was the Chief *mujibha* between 1976 and 1979, he was instrumental in organising *pungwe* meetings, said Robson Kadzue.<sup>88</sup> The *pungwes* were political rallies where the guerrillas sermonise their gospel of revolution against the tyrannical colonial state. The war collaborators made sure that all the villagers attended these meetings. They helped the guerrillas to familiarise themselves with their localities, showing them who was supportive of the struggle and who was not. It was during the *pungwes* when the *mujibhas* handed over the list of people who were caught or alleged to be sell-outs and witches to the guerrillas so that they could be disciplined and embarrassed in the presence of the whole village.<sup>89</sup> The *mujibhas* were the main actors in the penal floggings and executions of the perceived sell-outs and witches.<sup>90</sup> The intention of disciplining sell-outs was to set a precedent for individuals who had counter-revolutionary tendencies. In ZIPRA areas of operation, meetings were convened during the day and they were very brief, roughly two hours or so.<sup>91</sup> These meetings were organised by the ZAPU Youth wing and in most

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<sup>84</sup> J. Nhongo-Simbanegavi, 'For Better for Worse? Women and ZANLA In Zimbabwe Liberation Struggle', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, (Harare: Weaver Press,2000); T. Lyon, *Girls and Guns: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*. (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2004).

<sup>85</sup> R. Weiss, *The Women of Zimbabwe*. (London: Kesho Publishing Limited, 1986), p.234.

<sup>86</sup> T. O. Ranger, *Peasants Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*. (London: John Currey Ltd, 1985), p.255.

<sup>87</sup> G. Seidman, 'Women in Zimbabwe Post Independence Struggles', *Feminist Studies*, Vol 10, No3, 1984), p.427.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Robson, a former *mujibha*, in Uzumba Village, 12 December 2019.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>90</sup> Interview Mrs. Muzungu, an eyewitness, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>91</sup> P. L. Moorcraft and P. McLaughlin, *Chimurenga! The War in Rhodesia 1965 – 1980*. Marshalltown, (Marshalltown: Sygma/Collins, 1982).

cases were held in the absence of the ZIPRA guerrillas.<sup>92</sup> Special gatherings were organised when it was necessary.<sup>93</sup> However, in ZANLA areas, the guerrillas enforced and preside over the *pungwes* and all youths were compelled to attend these meetings to satiate the guerrillas' unsatisfiable craving for youth companionship. The war collaborators 'baby-sitted' the guerrillas to make their stay 'pleasurable and comfortable.' The guerrillas could not live without the youths, thus the war collaborators, later, became sworn enemies of RSFs.

The war collaborators were also present in the urban areas where the ZANU party structures organised and acquired the material necessities required by the guerrillas.<sup>94</sup> They collected money from the party enthusiasts and purchased the replenishments for the guerrillas. Initially, the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* had easy access to the party structures compared to the guerrillas themselves due to their agile versatility (were able to evade the security forces) and the fact that they were young boys and the RSFs were less suspicious of their connection to the guerrillas. However, as time went on, the security forces became conscious of their activities of aiding the 'terrorists' and they became targets of the RSFs brutality.

Salient in many interview accounts is the guerrilla militarisation of local youths to enable them to engage the RSFs into fight battles when the guerrillas were absent. Langton's narrative divulges that the *mujibhas* were taught how to plant landmines and use hand grenades and other small weapons.<sup>95</sup> This was synonymous with creating an informal guerrilla standby army (the RSFs dubbed these youths as locally trained terrorists) whose function was to sabotage and curb the RSFs' mobility in UMP communities through the landmines they planted.<sup>96</sup> The *mujibhas* also ensured that the landmines planted by the guerrillas blew the intended targets. For example, Manungo observed that when landmines were planted on a road, the *mujibhas* hide close to the area to alert innocent peasants of the danger.<sup>97</sup> The guerrillas also ordered the *mujibhas* to plant landmines in strategic points or to covertly hurl them at unsuspecting RSFs and their trucks. This strategy was effective since many RSFs perished because of the explosives. Alas, in some areas, the landmines planted by the youths killed and maimed innocent road users. Robson's narrative confirmed that a landmine planted by youths killed four young children in Borera who were using the road.

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Stewart, an eyewitness, in Highfields, 8 January 2020.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Langton, a former *mujibha*, in Uzumba Village, 13 December 2019.

<sup>96</sup> I. Pringle, *Dingo Firestorm*, (Cape Town: Zebra 2012).

<sup>97</sup> K. D. Manungo, *The Role the Peasants Played in the Zimbabwe War of Liberation, with Special Emphasis on Chiweshe District*, Doctoral Thesis, Ohio State University, 1991, p.173.

Their scotch cart and four oxen drawing it were torn into pieces.<sup>98</sup> Such a horrendous event is a testament to the flaws of guerrilla strategies. Some *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* were maimed or died from landmines and retaliatory punishments from the RSFs.

Also, the UMP youths were very instrumental in helping the guerrillas to counter the Selous Scout's (SS) pseudo-operations and clandestine activities.<sup>99</sup> The SS was a proficiently trained group with excellent knowledge of tracking guerrillas in the bush and they could endure wilderness conditions for a longer period.<sup>100</sup> The ZANLA intelligence system had a hard time dealing with the perilous SS and, on the other side, the youths were confronted with the difficulty to make a distinction between the genuine and pseudo-guerrillas. Given this, the RSFs always had adequate information on the whereabouts of the guerrillas in UMP communities. To counteract this, however, the youths played a fundamental role, this is palpably revealed in Mr. Takawira's narrative;

The SS headquarters was located in Bindura [about 90 km] which is not far from UMP. Surely, they wreaked havoc in UMP till the guerrillas came up with a new strategy of making us know the guerrilla groups fighting in our district. In UMP, there were about seven guerrilla groups. Whenever we saw a stranger in our village, we hastily informed the guerrillas. The guerrillas also gave us some passcodes which we used to identify real guerrillas. These passcodes constantly changed and the one which I vividly remember, if I say "*komuredhi*" [comrade], a real guerrilla was supposed to say, "*Sub chete ndiyo ichaunza rusununguko*" [only the gun will liberate this country]. If a person or a group failed to respond correctly to the passcode, it means that they were the SS.<sup>101</sup>

These strategies fundamentally rescued the guerrillas from perishing at the hands of relentless RSFs. The invaluable assistance from the youths thwarted the ultra-offensive pseudo-operations by the SS. The following section examines the involvement of the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* in the guerrilla war as perpetrators of political violence.

### **The War collaborators, ZANLA guerrillas and political violence.**

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<sup>98</sup> Interview with Robson, a former mujibha, in Uzumba Village, 12 December 2019.

<sup>99</sup> The SS was a legal terrorist group established to clampdown the guerrillas who were 'unconstitutional terrorists. See K. Flower, *Serving Secretly. Rhodesia's CIO Chief on Record*. (Johannesburg: John Murray General Publishing Division, 1987); P. L. Moorcraft and P. McLaughlin, *Chimurenga! The War in Rhodesia 1965 - 1980*. (Marshalltown: Sygma/Collins, 1982).

<sup>100</sup> L.H. Gann and T.H. Henriksen, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe. Battle in the Bush*. (New York, Praeger, 1981), p.65.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Mr. Takawira, an eyewitness, in Pfungwe, 4 January 2020.

Without a doubt, the ZANLA guerrillas used violent strategies in their operations. They stormed and ransacked villages, assailed women and children; and brutalised hapless people.<sup>102</sup> In these barbaric acts, the war collaborators were perpetrators and the guerrillas were both enablers and culprits of violence. This violence affected the victims physically and psychologically. This study discovered that the ZANLA guerrillas were ill-disciplined and it attempts to explain how this impacted the behaviour of UMP youths. The guerrillas failed to abide by the Maoist guerrilla code of conduct (*nzira dzemasoja*) which refrained them from perpetrating violent crimes against defenceless peasants. The guerrillas massacred, molested, raped and intimidated the villagers in front of the war collaborators. They taught the local youths to smoke *mbanje* (marijuana) and some of them turned into hooligans. Some guerrilla units seemed to have forgotten why they were at war, they failed to show leadership and socialising the youths in a virtuous way.<sup>103</sup> They gave youths the power to brutally punish their fellow villagers who were alleged to be ZANU opponents and, thus political violence became rampant.

At the height of the war, the war collaborators became an overbearing and dominant social group in the rural areas due to their guerrillas-borne duties. They overzealously effected the guerrilla ‘bush martial law’<sup>104</sup> targeting people who were alleged to be collaborating with the RSFs. Norma Kriger affirmed that the special relationship between the guerrillas and youths triggered the emergence of inter-generational conflicts.<sup>105</sup> The grouping of civilian organisations into parents’ wings and youth wings set the structural basis for youth to oppose the authority of their parents.<sup>106</sup> The war collaborators who perpetrated violent activities in society were mainly prompted by their selfish interests and vengeance. Thus, Mr. Jowero said, “the fears of war collaborators made people live with little hope that they could see tomorrow. They abused the word *mutengesesi* (sell-out) to appease their selfish interests”.<sup>107</sup> The youths became a formidable group that had power over life and death.<sup>108</sup> Their convivial relationship with the guerrillas presented them with the opportunity to violate their parents

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<sup>102</sup> See M. Auret, *From Liberator to Dictator. An Insider’s Account of R. Mugabe’s Descent into Tyranny*. (Claremont: David Philip, Publishers, 2009), p. 25.

<sup>103</sup> M. Nyagumbo, Letter from Maurice Nyagumbo to Robert Mugabe and the ZANU Central Committee, Rhodes House Library, Ranger Papers, Box 1, 201-202.  
<https://www.aluka.org/stable/10.5555/al.sff.document.ranger00103>, Accessed on 20 June 2020

<sup>104</sup> Bush martial law was a response to the Rhodesian Front’s martial law. The guerrillas introduced the bush martial law to punish the villagers who worked with the RSFs.

<sup>105</sup> N. J. Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War. Peasant Voices*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1992), p. 179.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Mr Jowero, a victim, in Uzumba Village, 14 December 2019.

<sup>108</sup> I. Pringle, *Dingo Firestorm*. (Cape Town: Zebra 2012).

and traditional authorities. As mentioned above, the guerrillas interacted much with the youths since most of them were youthful. Their generational differences with their parents made them develop close connections with the youths. Scores of elders who attempted to condemn the conduct of these youths became targets and they were savagely executed. During this time, UMP experienced youth hegemony in addition to guerrilla hegemony.

The youths exploited their guerrilla connections to settle their family feuds and terrorise other people. In this regard, Mr. Takawira said:

The guerrilla war allowed some youths to persecute their perceived enemies. For instance, there was a strong enmity between the Madziwa and Svatwa family. The Svatwa family reviled the Madziwa family because it was influential and they were the leaders of the community (*madzisabhuku*). Philemon Svatwa who was a Mujibha accused Baba Madziwa of selling out the guerrillas and the war collaborators to the Rhodesian forces.<sup>109</sup>

Tapfumanei Madziwa confirmed that his father was hated, scorned, and hunted daily by both guerrillas and youths in Pfungwe. In his actual words:

Due to the report made by Philemon, my father was hated by everyone in our village. One night the ZANLA 'boys' and the youths came to our homestead and dragged him from his bed and took him to the *pungwe* base. Along the way, the youths were yelling, *ngaurayiwe mutengesi* (kill the traitor). The guerrillas instructed the youths to callously kill him with axes and iron bars, then they told us to leave him there, lying on the open ground. They said the Smith government should come from Salisbury and entomb him.<sup>110</sup>

These narratives display that the *mujibhas* misled the guerrillas and necessitated the widespread killing of people who were not involved in counter-revolutionary activities.<sup>111</sup>

The guerrillas promoted violence because they could not preside over cases in a war situation. They were not trained to investigate the suspects and preside over their cases before executing them. The misinformed judgments made by the guerrillas in their kangaroo courts cost a lot of innocent lives. This violence traumatised the families who lost their loved ones in an unjustified and undignified manner.

The war collaborators directed violence toward people who worked in urban areas. Driven by jealousy, the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* would report them to the guerrillas, portraying them

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<sup>109</sup> Interview with Mr. Takawira, an eyewitness, in Pfungwe, 4 January 2020.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with Tapfumanei Madziwa, a victim, in Pfungwe, 5 January 2020.

<sup>111</sup> MI/33/4, 'Terrorist activities in the Mondoro Area', 10 October 1978, RAA/2001/086/347 cited in Y. Henkin, 'Stoning the Dogs: Guerrilla Mobilisation and Violence in Rhodesia', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 36, Issue 6, (2012), pp.503-532.

as the enemies of the revolution who deserved to be eliminated. Langton recounted how the war collaborators contributed to the death of many people they alleged to have sold out:

While working in Salisbury in 1976, Peter Saumba visited his homestead in Nyadiri one weekend and he was confronted by a group of *mujibhas* who were sent to carry out surveillance. These youths asked him to give the guerrillas eight goats and he refused since those were the only ones he had. These youths accused him of having divided support for the war and took him to the guerrillas. The guerrillas were furious when they heard that he refused to contribute to the war efforts and this was worsened by the fact that he had moved his family to Salisbury. Saumba was mercilessly beaten by the guerrillas and *mujibhas* and left half dead. Then the guerrillas instructed the *mujibhas* to bury him whilst he was still breathing. They went on to loot his property and destroy his house.<sup>112</sup>

Another narrative similar to one the above is the story of Mr. Jowero who was a ticket checker, working for United Bus Service, in Salisbury:

One day when I came home to check on my properties, I was advised (around 5 pm) by some youths who were close to me that some *mujibhas* had reported me to the guerrillas that I was reluctant to support the struggle and I had taken away my children from Uzumba to Salisbury. The reason I took away my children to Salisbury was that all schools in rural areas have been closed so I wanted them to learn in town. These youths told me that I was not supposed to sleep at home because the *mujibhas* were going to come in the evening and take me to the guerrillas. I heard no option but to find a place to hide. I slept *mudara remashanga* (rack of straw/ fodder). I woke up early in the morning, around 2 or 3 am and I left my homestead. I left my properties in 1978 and I came back after the war, only to find nothing, I lost everything to the guerrillas and *mujibhas*.<sup>113</sup>

Langton and Mr. Jowero's narratives reveal how the ZANLA guerrillas and UMP youths colluded in committing barbaric acts during the war. The narratives also point to the fact that the youths took advantage of their relationship with the guerrillas to loot the villagers' possessions and force others to leave UMP. The youths mainly targeted people who were influential in society especially teachers, District Administrators (DAs), and businesspeople among others.<sup>114</sup> They also capitalised on guerrillas' impetuosity and hastiness in making vicious decisions without any comprehensive inquiries done concerning the alleged crime committed.

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<sup>112</sup> Interview with Langton, a former *mujibha*, in Uzumba Village, 13 December 2019.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Mr Jowero, a victim, in Uzumba Village, 14 December 2019.

<sup>114</sup> I. Pringle, *Dingo Firestorm*, (Cape Town: Zebra 2012).

The war collaborators were either directly or causally responsible for the death of many innocent villagers after they labelled them ‘witches.’<sup>115</sup> They were scorned, humiliated, together with their families, and called using derogatory terms, for instance, *zvimbwasungata* (white men’s little sniff dogs) and *vana vevaroyi* (children of witches), during the trials. The guerrillas and the youths impetuously hewed the perceived witches to death.<sup>116</sup> Surprisingly, all the people who were alleged to be witches were females, advanced in age, helpless and could not flee and evade death.<sup>117</sup> These discriminatory punishments made females in a weaker position and they became guerrillas’ soft targets as the war intensified in UMP District. These punishments served to prove the preparedness of the guerrillas to discipline mercilessly any person who was not toeing the line. Yet, some female youths like Violet Mashiri were involved in scouting, despising and punishing the alleged witches. She ruefully remarked that ‘we arrested, beat up and even executed those who were suspected to be witches.’<sup>118</sup> Her expression of pang of guilt and regret over their conduct during the war might have been an indication that they indeed murdered or persecuted guiltless people at the peak of the war. This also shows that upon contemplation, she was horror-struck by their conduct as female youths during the war. Some unfortunate *chimbwidos* were labelled witches and cruelly executed by their fellows. Therefore, the liberation struggle was harsh on women since they were an easy target of youth-guerrilla violence.

The direct involvement of youths in the war severely affected the UMP communities. Being guerrilla porters and having received some military drills created a false impression among the youths that they were ‘junior guerrillas’, hence they developed a sense of superiority over their parents and elders. (Thus, their contemporary critics used common parlance: ‘*kunzi pakata hakusi kunzi ridza*’- figuratively means being a guerrilla porter doesn’t qualify one to be a guerrilla). These erroneous feelings of authority by youths tended to polarise the otherwise harmonious social group relations in UMP communities. Mr. Takawira said the villagers lived in fear of their children who turned out to be their enemies. Some groups of *mujibhas* went on a rampage intimidating and plundering people’s possessions using fake AK-47s made of wood. They were reported to the guerrillas but the guerrillas could not punish them. Such groups, in most cases, worked in cohorts with the ZANLA deserters or

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<sup>115</sup> The term ‘Witch’ had two meanings: i) it referred to female sorcerers who use magical powers to hurt others. ii) it also referred to people who were sent by the RSFs with poisoned stuff to kill the guerrillas.

<sup>116</sup> Interview with Violet Mashiri, a former chimbwido, in Manyika Village, 03 December 2019.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Ephraim, a former mujibha, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Violet Mashiri, a former chimbwido, in Manyika Village, 03 December 2019.

lone rangers.<sup>119</sup> Simply put, UMP's youths had turned into a 'proverbial third force' in disrupting and upsetting the lives of the villagers. In tandem with this, Kriger mentioned that the youths obtained power from their guerrilla-borne duties and used it to contest their parents' authority over their lives.<sup>120</sup> It seems the guerrillas had the challenge of controlling the youths who abused their powers.<sup>121</sup> Holland also underscored that the immunity from accountability enjoyed by the youths was either due to guerrilla indulgence or youths' use of guerrillas to further their interests.<sup>122</sup>

The guerrillas and youths perpetrated unthinkable atrocities which left many families traumatised. They murdered or mutilated alleged sell-outs in the presence of their families. People were not allowed to mourn *vatengesesi* or give them a decent burial. A clear instance of the viciousness of guerrilla punishments happened in 1975 when Robert Kapere from the Muswe area, declined to provide food for the ZANLA guerrillas and he was subjected to shocking retributive violence. Mr. Takawira related;

The guerrillas ordered the youths who reported him to torture him with hot iron bars. They defaced him, cutting parts of his face, and his wife was compelled to eat them. The guerrillas then ordered Kapere to run away for his dear life and they shot him as he tried to run away. The guerrillas went on to abuse his relatives and friends too, but they were not killed.<sup>123</sup>

Another occasion of the same proportion was the story of Raymond Kapiya, which reveals appalling levels of brutality. His father was reported to the guerrillas by his young brother (a *mujibha*), who alleged that his brother was sending his children to get foodstuffs from the RSFs. Raymond saw his father being throbbled to death by the guerrillas and youths. The guerrillas ordered the youths to tie him to a tree and left him there to decompose. He witnessed his father's corpse being ravaged by ravens as he was forced to pass through the area whenever he drove the cattle to the pastures.<sup>124</sup> These violent occasions were disquieting and traumatic to those who witnessed them. More violent occasions went unnoticed as

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<sup>119</sup> Interview with Mr. Takawira, an eyewitness, in Pfungwe, 4 January 2020.

<sup>120</sup> N. J. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War. Peasant Voices*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1992), p. 179.

<sup>121</sup> J. Alexander, J. McGregor and T. Ranger. *Violence and Memory: one hundred years in the 'dark forests' of Matabeleland, Zimbabwe*. (Oxford: Currey, 2000), p.165.

<sup>122</sup> H. Holland, *Dinner with Mugabe. The Untold Story of a Freedom Fighter who became a Tyrant*. (Johannesburg: Penguin Books, 2008), p. 213.

<sup>123</sup> Interview with Mr. Takawira, an eyewitness, in Pfungwe, 4 January 2020.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with Raymond Kapiya, a victim, in Muswe Village, 6 January 2020.

violence became the norm at the peak of the war. Any slight misunderstanding or misstep ensued in inhumane punishments from the youths and guerrillas.

Most of the time, the guerrillas forced recruits and *mujibhas* to partake in punitive procedures against the villagers. Some of the guerrillas were not ready to take the blame for the gratuitous killing, though they were the directors of those vicious events. In this way, the guerrillas shielded themselves from the *ngozi* (haunting spirit) of the aggrieved avenging his/her death. One of the former guerrillas, Comrade Gabarinocheka reminisced that some war collaborators came up with fictitious reports, thus whenever *chimbwido* or *mujibha* reported a case to the guerrilla, they gave the accuser a firearm to execute the suspects, since the guerrillas had no evidence of proving the accused guilty of the crime committed.<sup>125</sup> The youths killed many people thinking that *pfuti haina ngozi* (that is to say, if one kills using a gun, no avenging spirits will follow him/her). However, many participants confirmed that some war collaborators died mysteriously and others became mentally disturbed because of the avenging spirits.

In many instances, violence was prompted by undisciplined guerrillas who lacked leadership skills. This was revealed in many narratives, for instance, Violet Mashiri revealed that:

The Mutawatawa areas youths captured a man from Chitsungo Village who was a stranger in their area. This man had been sent by the guerrillas who were operating in Chitsungo area with a message to guerrillas in Mutawatawa areas. Upon being interrogated by the youths, the man failed to respond convincingly and he was then taken to guerrillas who were in the nearby village. He was handed over to the ultimate authorities, who were drunk as there were at a *ndari* (beer-drinking party). The guerrillas, under the influence of alcohol, questioned the ‘suspect’ and, just like Mutawatawa youths, did not believe his story. They ordered the youths to take him to the bush and execute him. It was discovered later after his death that he was indeed sent by the guerrillas in Chitsungo.<sup>126</sup>

Violet’s account reveals an agonising reality of how minor issues which only required common sense could lead to the death of innocent people. This narrative also divulges that the ZANLA guerrillas were ill-disciplined, intolerant, and had no patience to investigate complaints and allegations raised against some civilians. The guerrillas, in their trained

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<sup>125</sup> Interview with Cde Gabarinocheka, a former ZANLA guerrilla, Mutawatawa Areas, 4 January 2020; H. Schmidt, ‘Healing the wounds of war: memories of violence and the making of history in Zimbabwe’s most recent past’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 23, Issue 2, 1997, p.304.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Violet Mashiri, a former *chimbwido*, in Manyika Village, 03 December 2019.

wisdom, should have sent some messengers to Chitsungo to confirm the authenticity of the suspect's statements before executing him. For the guerrillas bush martial law prevailed over trained wisdom hence the stranger became a victim. Many people were killed without any evidence that attested to their wrongdoing.

In 1979, ZANU espoused the *gukurahundi* policy<sup>127</sup> in preparation for the 1980 elections. This policy was intended to wipe out all opposition parties and the guerrillas and war collaborators were the instruments of violence. In the late 1970s, Mugabe averred:

Our votes must go together with our guns. After all, any vote we 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.<sup>128</sup>

Mugabe and ZANU conceived the election as “another round of the liberation struggle, thus necessarily involving the annihilation of opposition parties.”<sup>129</sup> The British Observer Group (BOG) asserted that ZANU/ZANLA had contravened the armistice by ordering its guerrillas not to go to assembly points but rather to remain in their operational zones, ‘where they worked with their war collaborators to maintain the party’s military and political dominance.’<sup>130</sup> Ephraim’s narrative reveals what happened during this time:

... vicious acts of coercion against voters took place in UMP communities. The guerrillas and youth collaborators ruthlessly murdered those who were unwilling to conform. They threatened reprisal or continuation or renewal of the war if the ZANU lose the election. They took the names of people claiming that they have some machines which exposed how people voted. They banned people from attending meetings of other parties.<sup>131</sup>

The war collaborators provided the list of perceived supporters of the Smith regime and the internal settlement parties and they were embarrassed or killed in public as a warning to would-be dissenters. This shows that electoral violence which affected Zimbabwe since the 1980 election has roots in the liberation struggle. The ZANU-PF officials perceive opposition parties as *mhandu* (enemies) and elections as a declaration of war, they could not separate voting and violence. Noteworthy is the fact that the majority of the villagers who were killed

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<sup>127</sup> *Gukurahundi* is a Shona word which refers to wind that separates chaff from grain. Politically, it was a blatant, intolerant and deliberate violent policy which targeted the opposition parties and their supporters.

<sup>128</sup> M. Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe*. (New York, Public Affairs, 2002).

<sup>129</sup> M. Sithole and J. Makumbe, ‘Elections in Zimbabwe: The ZANU (PF) Hegemony and its. Incipient Decline,’ *African Journal of Political Science*, (1997), p.132.

<sup>130</sup> The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on Elections Leading to Independen Zimbabwe: Southern Rhodesia elections, February 1980. (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, February 1980), p. 31.

<sup>131</sup> Interview with Ephraim, a former mujibha, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

by the guerrillas were direct victims of war collaborators.<sup>132</sup> The following section examines the untold horrid experiences that the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* went through during the liberation struggle.

### **The plight of the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas***

The war collaborators went through a gory experience while they were delivering the information and food to the guerrillas. They were harshly punished by the RSFs, especially if suspected to have been in contact with guerrillas; and on the other hand, they were also flogged by the guerrillas if their loyalty was doubted. They suffered all forms of violence, from physical to psychological violence, as they were trapped in the middle of pressure from the guerrillas and RSFs who employed violence and coercion in their operations. This section mainly focuses on how the ZANLA guerrillas treated the war collaborators.

The guerrillas were rude and oblivious of the socio-economic situation in the UMP communities. Outlining the duties of *chimbwidos*, Stella mentioned:

We were suffocated by guerrilla duties. We spent most of the time cooking for them, and we had no ample time to do our regular household duties. The guerrillas used to beat us when we cook *munyemba* [cowpea leaves], *nyevhe* [African spider flower leaves], pumpkin leaves [*muboora*] or okra [*derere/ nhungumira*] for them. On one occasion, I was kicked in my stomach by the guerrillas and up to now, I still experience some pains when it's cold.<sup>133</sup>

In her narration, Stella mentioned two issues; first, the female youths 'spent most of their time cooking' for the guerrillas to the detriment of their everyday chores that equivalently required their attention. The youths had no life outside the guerrilla-sanctioned programmes. Second is the issue that the guerrillas had dietary restrictions; they claimed that *muriwo* makes them develop weak knees and weaker combat.<sup>134</sup> There was a popular song called, '*Gandanga haridye derere mukoma, rinoderera*' (Guerrilla cannot eat okra because they will feel debased or looked down upon). They ruthlessly punished the *chimbwidos* who were just mere messengers. The refusal to eat traditional diets by the guerrillas indicated that they were

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<sup>132</sup> T. Ranger, 'Bandits and Guerrillas: The Case of Zimbabwe', in D. Crummey (ed.), *Banditry, rebellion and social protest in Africa*. (London: James Currey, 1986), p.386.

<sup>133</sup> Interview with Stella Kadzunge, a former *chimbwido*, in Uzumba Village, 12 December 2019.

<sup>134</sup> N. J. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War. Peasant Voices*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1992); D. Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People*. (Westport: Praeger, 1999), p. 135, 137.

unsympathetic, inconsiderate, and not even thoughtful of the ominous circumstances encountered by the impecunious UMP communities.

The guerrillas had a fiendish tendency of demanding expensive provisions that endangered the lives of the youths to acquire them. Guerrillas required over-the-counter medications, clothing, alcohol and cigarettes. It was difficult for the UMP youths to bring these supplies amid strict security controls. The youths travelled to Murehwa township or Bindura to source such provisions.<sup>135</sup> They could not resist the guerrilla directives because the consequences were dire. In this regard, Astrow asserted that the RSFs ruthlessly penalized the youths for assisting the guerrillas by enacting fines on those purported to aid guerrillas and they frequently appropriated cattle as payment for fines.<sup>136</sup> The guerrilla requirements on one hand and the punitive procedures of the RSFs on the other made the lives of the UMP youths to be depressing and disconsolate.<sup>137</sup>

The *chimbwidos* were sexually abused and impregnated by the guerrillas. It was unmentionable for them to disclose that she was impregnated by a guerrilla. On this, Stella asserted that ‘the guerrillas forced us to sleep with them, they beat us if we declined.’<sup>138</sup> It was supposed to be a secret, the issue was not supposed to reach the village, and failure to keep the secret resulted in brutal punishments.<sup>139</sup> The guerrillas warned them that revealing such secrets was equivalent to selling out. The *chimbwidos* slept with guerrillas from various groups which entered their villages and bore babies without their fathers around. The girls were forced to lay blame on *mujibhas* (as the father of the baby) and owing to fear, they usually took the blame.<sup>140</sup> The parents who complained about this guerrilla debauchery were harassed, labelled sell-outs and summarily murdered.<sup>141</sup> This way, the UMP female youths had no alternative, but to become acclimatised to guerrillas’ unappeasable sexual desires. Nhongo-Simbanegavi maintains that sexual abuse of *chimbwidos* by the guerrillas increased venereal diseases.<sup>142</sup> As if was enough, the *chimbwidos* also suffered systematic rapes by the

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<sup>135</sup> Interview with Mrs. Muzumba, a former *chimbwido*, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>136</sup> A. Astrow, *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way?* (London: Zed Press 1983), p.47.

<sup>137</sup> I. Staunton, *Mothers of the Revolution*. (Harare: Baobab, 1990), p. 188.

<sup>138</sup> Interview with Stella Kadzunge, a former *chimbwido*, in Uzumba Village, 12 December 2019.

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Mrs. Muzumba, a former *chimbwido*, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>140</sup> Interview with Stella Kadzunge, a former *chimbwido*, in Uzumba Vilage, 12 December 2019.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> J. Nhongo-Simbanegavi, ‘For Better for Worse? Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe Liberation Struggle’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2000), p.78.

RSFs (Guard Forces, police and soldiers) during interrogations.<sup>143</sup> It seems the political rapes prevalent in Zimbabwe today have roots in the era of nationalism and liberation struggle.

While the ZANLA guerrillas were reliant on the youths for their security, they could not defend the youths against RSFs reprisal operations. Youths were defenceless and hapless in the middle of a war as they were always in trouble with the RSFs who indiscriminately opened fire at the youths seen outside their homes.<sup>144</sup> The Rhodesian state passed the Indemnity and Compensation Act in 1975 which granted the RSFs a *carte blanche* to brutally massacre rural people.<sup>145</sup> The guerrillas' reluctance to safeguard youths was possibly due to the inadequacy of resources as they were fighting a highly prepared and well-oiled army. In an attempt to explain this, Ephraim stated that the guerrillas did not want to fight in the villages because many people would be caught in the cross-fire and many lives would be lost. He said the RSFs had a tendency to shove the villagers into their trucks and used them as buffers in an event that guerrillas ambushed them.<sup>146</sup> Since the guerrillas were not willing to fight among the villagers, they were supposed to operate like the ZIPRA forces who kept themselves away from the villagers. Their Maoist fish and water strategy virtually imperilled the lives and belongings of the villagers. The youths were exposed to Rhodesian Air Force (RAF) raids since they spend most of their time 'babysitting' guerrillas in the bushes.<sup>147</sup> About nine girls were massacred on 24 March 1979 when the RSFs bombarded the Katiyo base.<sup>148</sup> Again, on 14 May 1979, the RAF bombarded Kangara Base and about 37 youths perished.<sup>149</sup> Many collaborators died because they lacked the skills to escape the danger. This implies that the guerrillas were ruinous and grave liabilities to the UMP youths.

The youths extended invaluable services to the guerrillas but they were callously victimised. This is clearly stated in Langton's narrative when he said that the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* were beaten or killed by the guerrillas for absenting from the meetings or coming late. He

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<sup>143</sup> M. Auret, *From Liberator to Dictator. An Insider's Account of R. Mugabe's Descent into Tyranny*. (Claremont, David Philip, Publishers, 2009), p. 36.

<sup>144</sup> J. A. Dzimbahete, Language as an Aspect of the War: Special Shona Registers of Zimbabwe's Liberation War, <http://www.jiarm.com/Dec/paper6522.pdf>, Accessed 1 July, 2020

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Interview with Ephraim, a former mujibha, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>147</sup> D. Mutanda, *The Rhodesian Air Force in Zimbabwe's War of Liberation, 1966-1980*. (North Carolina: McFarland, 2016), p. 167.

<sup>148</sup> J. Saunyama, 'Music gala lights up Uzumba,' *Newsday*, 06 April 2016, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/04/music-gala-lights-uzumba/> Accessed on 13 May 2020.

<sup>149</sup> S. Kawadza, 'Remembering Uzumba's gallant daughters,' *Herald*, 8 August 2016. <https://www.herald.co.zw/remembering-uzumbas-gallant-daughters/>, Accessed on 12 May 2020

mentioned that Edwin Siyawamwaya was executed after he was alleged to be selling out. Langton depicted Edwin's death as an appalling incident:

...he died slowly and in severe pain. The guerrillas knotted both legs and arms of the pair of overalls he was wearing and poured hot water inside. As if it was not enough, he was then dipped into a drum of boiling water, prepared by the youths. They left him at the scene, yowling like an injured dog until they killed him the next day.<sup>150</sup>

The ZANLA guerrillas operating in UMP District have preyed on the youths and villagers whom they claimed they were liberating. The war collaborators have continued to be marginalised up to this day. They remained a ZANU-PF political tool that is only remembered during hegemonic struggles. The next section is the conclusion of this chapter.

## Conclusion

Narratives of the liberation war in UMP show that the ZANLA guerrillas used many methods, ranging from coercion, and propaganda to African Traditional Religion, to recruit youths into collaboration. The war collaborators played a significant role as a 'conveyor belt' that linked the guerrillas with the masses and information. However, it seems their fellow ZANU comrades have forgotten them when they took over the state in 1980. Many former war collaborators are languishing in poverty. Many were injured whilst performing the war duties, but they were never compensated (they were side-lined when the state compensated the former guerrillas in 1997). Only a few war collaborators got the opportunity to join politics (in the 1980s and 1990s) through being elected into village committees as ZANU politicians regarded politics as the 'business of grown-ups'.<sup>151</sup> Four decades later, the state is still vetting the war collaborators to compensate them.<sup>152</sup> Even the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Collaborator Association (ZILIWACO) which was intended to represent the former war collaborators has become an elitist and partisan organisation that barely stands for the needs of its members in the rural areas. Its leaders, for instance, Pupurai Togarepi, use the organisation to champion their narrow interests, specifically to vie for positions in ZANU-PF with no or little response to issues affecting former war collaborators. The organisation is

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<sup>150</sup> Interview with Langton, a former mujibha, in Uzumba Village, 13 December 2019.

<sup>151</sup> T. O. Ranger, *Peasant consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*. (London: James Currey, 1985).

<sup>152</sup> T. Chimutambgi and M. Chada, 'Mujibhas, Chimbwidos to undergo vetting,' *Herald*, 07 January 2019; 'Compensate war collaborators,' *Newsday*, November 24, 2018; See also D. Chiwapu, *Struggle for liberation in Zimbabwe: The eye of war collaborator (Mujibha)*. (Manchester: Trafford, 2013).

sometimes reduced to becoming an electoral tool. The former war collaborators are only remembered during elections when ZANU-PF is canvassing for votes.<sup>153</sup>

The youths have continued to practice the duties of *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* in the post-colonial era. In the 1980s and 1990s, the youths (mostly former war collaborators) continued with their duties of hunting and disciplining sell-outs targeting the ZAPU supporters in the 1980s and MDC supporters in the 2000s. The culture of eavesdropping on neighbours and relatives became more developed like the systems of Stalin and Hitler used to counteract oppositions. This culture was handed down to other generations through state institutions like the Youth Brigade Movement and National Youth Service (NYS). The ZANU-PF-aligned youths have continued to enjoy immunity in the manner the war collaborators enjoyed guerrilla immunity during wartime. The youths perpetrated violence and looted properties of hapless citizens with the tacit approval of the ZANU politicians. The study also showed that UMP was under two hegemonies that is youth hegemony and guerrilla hegemony. This has continued to happen in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with youths establishing formidable groups, like Chipangano group, MaShurugwi gangs, among others, which operated with the blessings of the state. This leads us to the next chapter which examines the roles of youths in socialist Zimbabwe in the 1980s and 1990s.

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<sup>153</sup> 'Don't sleep over demos: ED... urges war collaborators to mobilise votes for ZANU-PF,' *Herald*, 13 July 2018.

## CHAPTER 5

### Youth and the Socialist ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe, c.1980-1999

#### **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on youth political participation in Zimbabwe during the first two decades of independence. It examines the emergence and operations of the Youth Brigade Movement (YBM) to understand the roles of youths in ZANU-PF's socialist politics and hegemonic struggles. It also explores the functions of the ZANU-PF Youth League since it was involved in the organisation of the Youth Brigades and it remained the only platform of youth participation after the abolition of the Youth Brigades. This chapter shows that there was a growing culture of impunity owing to police collusion with violent ZANU-PF youths. It argues that youths continued to occupy a liminal position of victims and perpetrators in ZANU-PF politics of control and power. But they were not docile conformers, they actively opposed and confronted the ZANU-PF regime for indulging in corruption, exclusionism, and youth marginalisation, among other grievances. This chapter consists of three main sections. First, it focuses on the emergence and operations of the YBM. Second, it examines the roles of the ZANU-PF Youth League in the 1990s. The final section endeavours to know why youths ceased to be the state's priority. It explores the relationship between socio-economic inequality and youth violence.

#### **The Youth Brigade Movement (YBM): Beginnings and Aims**

The YBM was a national service programme launched by the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Recreation<sup>1</sup> in 1981 to incorporate youths in some kind of national socialist development. This socialist programme was not unique to Zimbabwe, it had some striking similarities with the Ghana Workers' Brigades of 1957<sup>2</sup> (Mugabe having worked in Ghana before returning home to join the nationalist movement was probably enthused by this programme), Mali's Civic Service Program of the 1960s<sup>3</sup>, the Kenya Association of Youth Centres of 1966<sup>4</sup>, among others. The objectives of the YBM were outlined by the late Ernest Kadungure (then Minister of Youth, Sport and Recreation and the Secretary of the ZANU-PF Youth League)

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Recreation was created in acknowledgement of youth's contribution during the anti-colonial war and the need to incorporate them in building a new society.

<sup>2</sup> P. Hodge, 'The Ghana Workers Brigade: A project for unemployed youth', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 15, No. 2, (1964), pp. 113-128.

<sup>3</sup> D. Szymkowski, *Youth in development: Worker Brigade and the Young Pioneers of Ghana*, Thesis for the Degree of MA, Michigan State University, (1972), p.20.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p22.

after some Members of Parliament (MPs) asked him to justify the policies of his ministry. He said the purpose was:

- To change the attitude of youth from the psychology of the war to the spirit of reconciliation through socialistic-orientated political education.
- To reorientate and foster socialistic ideological commitments which alone will ensure total liberation from the forces of racism, capitalism and imperialism.
- To inculcate discipline, combat delinquency and all the concomitant ills of colonial and fascist rule; and foster loyalty and dedication in the service of the nation and state.
- To promote international solidarity with progressive forces the world over and the oppressed people still struggling under the yoke of colonialism.
- To provide a fundamental base for the development of socialism through the promotion of the new concepts of technical culture, agrotechnical culture and national defence.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Kadungure maintained that the ultimate goal of this multi-dimensional orientation of youths would be a collation of national identity, the provision of skills which will enhance the concept of self-reliance and the creation of a cadre that will be ideologically and militarily ready to defend the country against the ‘imperialistic designs of our enemies.’<sup>6</sup> He defined youth as anyone younger than 30 years old. So, the Youth Brigades were persons between 12 and 30 years old.<sup>7</sup> The movement mainly targeted the ex-guerrillas, the *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos*, and other youths whose education was disrupted by the war and were not employed.<sup>8</sup> It was portrayed as a programme to appreciate the role played by youths during the liberation struggle.

The youth ministry established the National Youth Council (NYC) under the leadership of Tichaona Jokonya to implement the Youth Brigade programme.<sup>9</sup> The council was made to work in collaboration with the ZANU-PF Youth League (a constituent component of the party and a vital organisational and ideological training ground with cells and branches nationwide).<sup>10</sup> The Youth League was modelled after the Russian *Komsomol* (All-Union Leninist Young Communist League) and the North Korean Socialist Youth League whose

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<sup>5</sup> *The Herald*, 12 September 1981.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, January 22, 1982.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 September 1981. See also Z. W. Sadomba, *War Veterans in Zimbabwe's Revolution: Challenging neo-colonialism and Settler and International capital*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2011), p.87.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 September 1981.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*; The Youth League, <https://zanupfyouthleagueorg.weebly.com/constitution.html>, Accessed: 11 November 2021.

duties entailed ideological indoctrination, monitoring the society and mobilising youths into labour brigades and suppressing any form of opposition among the youths and other citizens.<sup>11</sup> Kriger argued that the Youth League was tasked to recruit youths into the brigade system and help them to familiarise themselves with their duties.<sup>12</sup> During the 1985 International Youth Conference in Harare, Kadungure said:

The transfer of the nation's wealth and control of sources of raw materials to the people can only be accomplished by following a socialist path. It is to this end that the Youth League in Zimbabwe is at the forefront of the brigade movement which mobilises youths into cooperatives.<sup>13</sup>

During the second Mashonaland West Provincial Youth Congress in Chinhoyi, Kadungure urged all ZANU-PF Youth League members to join the Youth Brigades and play active roles in development projects that are run by various youth movements in the country.<sup>14</sup> The involvement of the ZANU-PF Youth League in the recruitment and socialisation of the youths was a cause of concern since this organisation was only accountable to Mugabe and ZANU-PF.<sup>15</sup> To this end, the contemporary critics perceived the YBM as a sinister para militia or an arm of ZANU-PF.<sup>16</sup>

The youths, especially the former guerrillas and war collaborators, anticipated the ZANU-PF regime fulfilling the wartime promises of a better life in independent Zimbabwe. On the other hand, the ZANU-PF leaders anticipated an undoubted youth loyalty and strict observance of party tenets. Concerning this, Ivo Mhike argued that the regime had to institutionalize and contain the aspirations of elated and potentially dangerous youths who had not joined the army or any other state departments as they could endanger the newly born state.<sup>17</sup> The 1982 Census report shows that nearly 60% of Zimbabwe's 7,9 million population (over 4 million)

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<sup>11</sup> 'Educate the Youth in Communist Ideology: League Branch, Tachai Brigade,' *Chinese Education*, Vol 8, 1975, Issue 4, pp.113-121; K. E. Gause, Coercion, Control, Surveillance, and Punishment: An Examination of the North Korean Police State. *The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea*. (2012). pp.53, 203.

<sup>12</sup> N. Kriger, 'ZANU-PF Strategies in General Elections, 1980-2000: Discourse and Coercion', *African Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 414, pp.1-34.

<sup>13</sup> *The Herald* 14 December 1985.

<sup>14</sup> Folder S-0130-0009-0022 - Zimbabwe - Population Census: Mission Reports - ZIM/81/P02 - 1982/84, <https://search.archives.un.org/zimbabwe-population-census-mission-reports-zim-81-p02-1982-84>, Accessed on 27 August 2021; *The Herald*, 27 June 1983.

<sup>15</sup> N. Kriger, 'ZANU-PF Strategies in General Elections, 1980-2000: Discourse and Coercion', *African Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 414, pp.1-34.

<sup>16</sup> *The Herald*, 24 May 1984.

<sup>17</sup> I. Mhike, 'Political Violence in Zimbabwe's National Youth Service, 2001-2007', in E. Oinas, H. Onodera and Leena Suurpää *What Politics? Youth and Political Engagement in Africa*. Youth in a Globalizing World, Vol. 6, Leiden: Brill, 2008, p.247; Also see O. H. Vezha, *The Youth Brigade Movement in Zimbabwe as a Strategy for Meeting the Needs and Aspirations of Unemployed Youth: A Case Study of Kaguvi Youth Training Centre*, University of Zimbabwe, 1987.

were young people below the age of 30 years old.<sup>18</sup> More than 80 000 school-leavers were being turned away from jobs in the cities each year.<sup>19</sup> The queues for vacancies were expected to get longer as school enrolment expands and job opportunities shrank in the face of the recession. Such a situation could, if neglected, create a fertile breeding ground for youth violence.<sup>20</sup> During this period, *The Herald* reported several incidents of banditry, robberies, murders and crimes of various sorts committed by the ex-guerrillas in urban and rural areas.<sup>21</sup> Also, there were some fears that idle and unemployed youths may be recruited into ZAPU dissident activities, which were causing discomfort to the ZANU-PF regime.<sup>22</sup> It is in this context that the state had to mobilise and assign unemployed youths to the youth centres for skills training.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the YBM was an ideological structure meant to combat unemployment and youth delinquency by involving youths in socialist economic development.

The establishment of the YBM was part of the scheme to create a one-party socialist state. According to Weitzer, there was a sense of insecurity (in Francis Njamjoh's terms, a sense of incompleteness) within ZANU-PF, following the multi-party constitutional framework negotiated at Lancaster House, which stirred exaggerated fears about threats to the new state and their incumbency.<sup>24</sup> The ZANU-PF officials, especially Robert Mugabe, had a one-party state mentality. Mugabe criticised the multiparty political system and declared that it had no place in Zimbabwean politics. He believed that it was a luxury to indulge in the politics of opposition.<sup>25</sup> As an admirer of the Soviet Union and China, he wanted to organise youths in the similar manner they were organised in communist countries. Mugabe wanted to utilise the energies of youths in economic development and defending the party and the state. This is perceivable in his speech when addressing youths demonstrating in support of a one-party state and government plans to give youth military training. He said:

The demand for a one-party state should be preceded by the laying of a strong foundation of ZANU-PF support throughout the country. The youth leagues should first be built into strong party organs so that not a single *Dzakutsaku* could raise his or her head...The

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<sup>18</sup> *The Herald*, May 24, 1984.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 17 September 1982.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 23 January 1981; 24 September 1981

<sup>22</sup> P. du Toit, *State- Building Democracy in Southern Africa: A Comparative Study of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe*, (Pretoria: HSRC Publishers, 1995), p. 276.

<sup>23</sup> *The Herald*, 1 January 1982.

<sup>24</sup> R. Weitzer cited in P. du Toit, *State- Building Democracy in Southern Africa: A Comparative Study of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe*, (Pretoria: HSRC Publishers, 1995), p. 276.

<sup>25</sup> *The Herald*, 1 January 1982.

youth should join the youth training centres which the government planned to introduce. ...the youths should become defenders of hard-won freedom and independence.<sup>26</sup>

He added that ‘the youths should be the eyes and the ears of ZANU-PF and identify all those who do not belong to the party’s youth league’.<sup>27</sup> Since the Youth League was in the leadership of the YBM, the movement was prone to produce youths who were committed to defending the ZANU-PF regime and influenced the grassroots with the party ideologies. Mugabe wanted to use the youths to consolidate his power and monopolise the state. He also wanted to merge the state and party (ZANU-PF) and that ‘would be the culmination of the entrenchment of the party hegemony.’<sup>28</sup> Thus, Coltart argued Mugabe expended much of ‘his energy and time on one mission and it was not the welfare of the people but it was how to take full control of the state and all significant organs of society.’<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, the youths and ZANLA guerrillas played an important role in mobilising electorates during the 1980 election. However, the ZANLA guerrillas were assimilated into the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) and became professional soldiers under British tutelage.<sup>30</sup> It became difficult for ZANU-PF to use ex-ZANLA combatants as political militias in successive elections.<sup>31</sup> This was another cause of a sense of incompleteness among the ZANU-PF leaders. As an alternative, the ruling party established the YBM to spread its ideology and mobilise people for the 1985 elections. The *Herald* revealed that the ZANU-PF officials always appealed to the Youth Brigades to cooperate and coordinate their activities with those of provincial members and mobilise new party members.<sup>32</sup> Simbarashe Makoni (who became the Minister of Youth, Sport and Recreation in 1983) told the brigades:

Apart from reading academic books, youth should study the works of the founders of Zimbabwe’s ideology. After the course, participants are expected to return to their districts armed with the necessary knowledge to teach members in their branches, wards and cells.<sup>33</sup>

On paper, the Youth Brigade system was meant to produce youths who were politically conscious with the desire to partake in national development without necessarily joining the

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> P. du Toit, *State- Building Democracy in Southern Africa: A Comparative Study of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe*, (Pretoria: HSRC Publishers, 1995), p. 276.

<sup>29</sup> D. Coltart, *The Struggle Continues: 50 Years of Tyranny in Zimbabwe*, (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2016).

<sup>30</sup> S. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Elections in Zimbabwe: A recipe for tension or remedy for reconciliation?* (Wynberg: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2012), p.6.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *The Herald*, 27 June 1983.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 February 1985.

ruling party. In actuality, the Youth Brigades were a carbon copy of the ZANU-PF Youth League which functioned as the custodian of the party against any forms of opposition. This is seen in their operations discussed in the second section of this chapter.

### **Recruitment and Training**

The enlistment of youths into the YBM started in September 1981. According to Ernest Kadungure:

The preliminary idea was to establish a group of nearly 5 000 steadfast youths who wear uniforms [bright red and green shirts and khaki trousers] and engage in a few archetypal self-help projects to advertise and promote the Youth Brigade activities before many youths joined. But the youth outpaced these limited anticipations. By July 1982, more than 272 000 youths had joined the movement.<sup>34</sup>

Nonetheless, the overall mobilisation of youths into the YBM was unimpressive. In 1984, Simbarashe Makoni said only 400 000 youths had joined the movement.<sup>35</sup> The number was small given the population of youth in the country (which was around 4 million).<sup>36</sup> Many youths did not want to identify with the YBM. Makoni said the whites considered it an organisation for blacks. Educated youth saw it as an organisation for uneducated youths. Employed youths considered it to be for the unemployed. Some took it for an arm of ZANU-PF.<sup>37</sup> Even in areas where ZANU-PF enjoyed strong support, there was some resentment in certain circumstances toward the Youth Brigade.<sup>38</sup> Nobert Mafukidze, an interviewee, said people feared the ex-guerrillas in the YBM because of their violent past.<sup>39</sup> He added that most of the participants were rural youths who joined for the sake of social navigation to create meaningful lives in an unpredictable socio-political environment.<sup>40</sup> Albeit the ZANU-PF politicians and the state media claim that youths were not forced to join the YBM,<sup>41</sup> many people complained that the youth leagues tended to force youths in their districts to join the movement.

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<sup>34</sup> *Zimbabwe News*, Vol. 14, No. 2. Also see, *The Herald*, 25 August 1983.

<sup>35</sup> *The Herald*, 24 May 1984.

<sup>36</sup> *The Herald*, 3 January 1987.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Nobert Mafukidze, in Marondera, 28 January 2021

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, *The Herald*, 24 May 1984.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 22 February 1982.

The youth training centres such as Kaguvi in Gweru, Chaminuka in Mount Darwin, Pangani in Filabusi, and others were opened between 1982 and 1983.<sup>42</sup> They acquainted the youths practically with the concept of cooperatives by engaging them in small-scale projects.<sup>43</sup> The centres emphasised the practical teaching of carpentry, building, animal husbandry and agronomy for two years.<sup>44</sup> The aim was to rehabilitate the youths from the war by giving them elemental skills that could help them to become self-reliant.<sup>45</sup> Mr. Mashavave, an interviewee, said they trained youths to participate in rural development projects to reduce rural-urban migration and the emergence of unemployed youth cohorts in urban areas.<sup>46</sup> The brigades were supposed to form cooperatives in their home area upon finishing the course.<sup>47</sup> This way, the ZANU-PF regime hoped to prevent youth delinquency, civil unrest in the cities, shortage of workforce in the countryside and pressure on council services in towns (to prevent the youth unemployment crisis like what happened in Ghana, Kenya, Mali, and other countries immediately after they attained their independence).<sup>48</sup> The co-optation of youths into the socialist YBM served to reorientate and realign youth activities according to what the state considered as more acceptable paths. Simultaneously, teaching youths some practical skills would enable the government to have a cheap source of labour provided by the brigades. Above all, the ZANU-PF regime sought to maintain the support of the ex-guerrillas and to build power and legitimacy by deploying them into co-operatives that signified economic change.

Besides, the training centres were intended to inculcate a sense of ‘patriotism’ and loyalty into the youths.<sup>49</sup> Nobert Mafukidze confirmed that the youths were taught the biased history of Mugabe and other ZANU-PF heroes to instill a level of political and ideological understanding and commitment in their minds.<sup>50</sup> This implies that ‘patriotism’ meant having an undoubted loyalty to the ruling party. In Ghana, the Worker’s Brigades and the Young Pioneers were taught the tenets of Nkrumahism to inculcate an undoubted loyalty to

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<sup>42</sup>*Ibid*, 25 August 1983.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 17 September 1982.

<sup>45</sup> Chaminuka Training Centre, Brief History of Chaminuka Training Centre, <https://chaminukacollege.wordpress.com/about-2/>, Accessed on 21 August 2021

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Mr Mashavave, Nyadire Village, UMP, 12 January 2021.

<sup>47</sup> *The Herald*, 4 November 1983.

<sup>48</sup> D. Szymkowski, Youth in development: Worker Brigade and the Young Pioneers of Ghana, Thesis for the Degree of MA, Michigan State University, (1972), p.20.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Nobert Mafukidze, in Marondera, 28 January 2021

<sup>50</sup> *The Herald*, 24 May 1984.

Kwame's leadership and the Convention People's Party (CPP) in them.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, the partisan indoctrination done at the training centres was intended to transform the YBM into a political movement that defended the ZANU-PF ideology from the grassroots.<sup>52</sup> The YBM was an ideological and organisational training ground meant to indoctrinate and capture uneducated and unemployed youths with the ZANU-PF ideology. This is further substantiated by the establishment of the 21<sup>st</sup> February movement or Pioneer Corps in 1986, which targeted kindergarten and primary school children, and the plan (though it did not materialise) to launch the Cadet Corps, compulsory national service for secondary school youths in 1988<sup>53</sup>, to capture all the youth groups.

During the training, Authur Sadomba recounted, the trainees spent most of their time in parades, singing the *Chimurenga* songs and sloganeering. Their slogans and songs demeaned Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU's role in the liberation struggle and depicted him as a tyrant. The instructors taught the youths to pronounce positive speeches about ZANU-PF and to have unswerving support for the regime.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, Elizabeth Madzimore, an interviewee, said "we were told that political oppositions especially Muzorewa, Sithole and Nkomo were economic saboteurs who could do all that they can to ruin the economy and disturb our people."<sup>55</sup> Like, in Russia and North Korea, the tutors used ideology and agitation-propaganda to vigorously promulgate the socialist ideals to change the mindset of the youths.<sup>56</sup> Owing to a strong patriotic feeling aroused by this propaganda, the youths tended to be a violent reserve force for the ruling party. Taking a cue from Mandaza, the training was partisan and ZANU-PF was yearning to monopolise the state and create a one-party state.<sup>57</sup> The brigades were meant to create a coherent socialist state, thwart oppositions and scaffold the one-party state philosophy.

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<sup>51</sup> J. S. Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism: Nation, State and Pan-Africanism in Ghana*. (Cleveland: Ohio University Press, 2017).

<sup>52</sup> D. Szymkowski, *Youth in development: Worker Brigade and the Young Pioneers of Ghana*, Thesis for the Degree of MA, Michigan State University, (1972), p.20.

<sup>53</sup> *The Herald*, 21 February 1986. The 21st February Movement was launched ZANU-PF youth league on Cde Mugabe's 62nd birthday for young children. The movement was intended to inculcate the ideas of 'patriotism' into Zimbabwean youths. These children were spent most of their time learning the history of Mugabe and other ZANU-PF liberation heroes. *The Herald*, 2 April 1987.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Authur Sadomba, Kaseke Village, UMP, 07 December 2019.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Elizabeth Madzimore, Mbare Flats, 11 December 2019; *The Herald*, 2 July 1983, p.1.

<sup>56</sup> Kim Jong-un, *Let KCU Members Become the True Sons and Daughters, Young Revolutionaries, of the Socialist Country*. (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House 2017).

<sup>57</sup> I. Mandaza and L. M. Sachokonye, *The One-party State and Democracy: The Zimbabwe Debate* (Southern Africa political economy series), (Harare: SAPES Books, 1991).

The YBM course also included military training.<sup>58</sup> The Youth Brigades were trained by military experts hired from North Korea.<sup>59</sup> To this, a journalist, Edward Girardet who attended the country's sixth Independence Day celebration at Rufaro Stadium, wrote;

Red flags flew. Youth brigades clasping wooden Kalashnikov rifles performed paramilitary displays and North Korean advisers madly waved signals to the cardholders flashing party slogans: “Long live ZANU-PF,” “Socialist ideology,” and “Crush dissidents!”<sup>60</sup>

Analogously, Authur Sadomba related that the youths woke up early in the morning to do physical exercises that comprised mountain climbing, push-ups and jogging. They were taught how to handle guns and other military skills<sup>61</sup> Ngoni Pawadyira (then Mashonaland Central Provincial Officer in the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Recreation) said physical education and paramilitary training were compulsory among others.<sup>62</sup> Mugabe justified this military training by saying that the Youth Brigades had the responsibility ‘to defend the areas they lived from enemy infiltrators.’<sup>63</sup> Correspondingly, Kadungure mentioned that the Youth Brigades were supposed to be vigilant and guard against internal sabotage (sponsored by ZAPU) and external attacks (caused by the Apartheid South Africa).<sup>64</sup> However, it is said that the training centres were intended to rehabilitate the youths from war, but then they tended to remilitarise instead of demilitarising them. Thus, contemporary critics argued that the establishment of the youth training centres was a direct consequence of ZANU-PF’s politics of power. Mugabe wanted to use these youth as political stormtroopers during the 1985 election to utterly destroy ZAPU and its supporters.<sup>65</sup> The next section examines how the Youth Brigades operated.

### **From guns to hoes? The operations of the Youth Brigades**

According to Kadungure, the YBM was designed to help the youth to exchange guns for hoes to ensure a better life for the people of Zimbabwe.<sup>66</sup> At Chaminuka Youth Centre, youths

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<sup>58</sup> *The Herald*, 17 September 1981; *Ibid.*, 19 January, 1983.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 January, 1983; *Ibid.*, 2 August 1982

<sup>60</sup> E. Girardet, ‘Zimbabwe: land of contradictions. Government talks up socialism, but depends on capitalism’, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 8 September 1986.

<sup>61</sup> *The Herald*, 19 January, 1983; 2 August 1982.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 August 1982.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 January, 1983.

<sup>64</sup> *Zimbabwe News*, Vol. 14, No. 2

<http://www.aluka.org/action/showMetadata?doi=10.5555/AL.SFF.DOCUMENT.nuzn198307>, Accessed on 20 August 2020.

<sup>65</sup> *The Herald*, 17 September 1981; S. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Elections in Zimbabwe: A recipe for tension or remedy for reconciliation?* (Wynberg: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2012), p.6.

<sup>66</sup> *Zimbabwe News*, Vol. 14, No. 2.

were involved in various activities such as building a laboratory and library at the Bradley Institute, a school run by the Salvation Army in Shamva District. Don Chipango (then Principal at Chaminuka Youth Centre) said they did these projects for free because it was part of their course.<sup>67</sup> In Highfield, there was Karigamombe Coop, a group of 10 youths in New Canaan, which specialised in selling vegetables, chicken, and other goods.<sup>68</sup> In Murehwa District there was the UMP-Zvataida Youth Brigade, which comprised of builders trained by John Sisk and sons. This construction brigade was contracted by the Uzumba Maramba-Pfungwe (UMP) Rural District Council to build five blocks of classrooms at Uzumba Secondary School. The UMP-Zvataida Youth Brigade was also involved in piggery and poultry projects.<sup>69</sup> At Nzvimbo, a communal area in Chiweshe, the Youth brigades were involved in the construction of roads, clinics and schools. One of the brigades assisted the Development Aid from People to People (DAPP), a Danish organisation, with the construction of a clinic at Mushumbi Pools. These brigades were also involved in agricultural projects, especially horticulture and afforestation.<sup>70</sup> These contributions were significant in propagating socialist ideals and exemplifying the roles that youth should play in society.

The construction brigades in Marondera managed to build 65 low-cost houses and eight standard houses, extended the Dombotombo clinic, renovated two schools and built a new play centre for about 100 children in 1982.<sup>71</sup> These brigades were possibly following the footsteps of other youth brigades in Eastern Europe (they had an opportunity to tour some of the countries, especially Rumania) for example in Serbia the youth brigades played an integral role in building New Belgrade in the late 1940s<sup>72</sup> and Poland also utilised its brigades to build Nowa Huta in the 1950s.<sup>73</sup> The government encouraged all the town councils to establish construction brigades modelled after the Marondera brigades to improve the infrastructure in their respective towns.<sup>74</sup> Involving the brigades in development programmes like public construction reduced the labour costs since they were paid through the brigade fund allocated to the youth ministry by the state. This also served to reduce the mounting

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<http://www.aluka.org/action/showMetadata?doi=10.5555/AL.SFF.DOCUMENT.nuzn198307>, Accessed on 20 August 2020.

<sup>67</sup> *The Herald*, 4 November 1983.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 24 November 1987

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 10 November 1983.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, 2 August 1982.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 10 July 1982.

<sup>72</sup> B. Le Normand, *Designing Tito's Capital: Urban Planning, Modernism, and Socialism in Belgrade*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014).

<sup>73</sup> K. A. Lebow, 'Public Works, Private Lives: Youth Brigades in Nowa Huta in the 1950s,' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2001), pp. 199-219.

<sup>74</sup> *The Herald*, 10 July 1982.

pressure of unemployment in the country. According to Sadomba, a few individuals benefitted from the YBM activities, for instance, Asomani Phiri and Fidelis Chimombe, graduates from the youth training centres who majored in public construction, established a building brigade (along the socialist regimentation lines) which developed into a company that constructed lots of houses in Harare's upmarket suburbs.<sup>75</sup> However, the brigades could have done more if they were not hijacked by the ZANU-PF regime to engage in its hegemonic struggles and if they had received meaningful support from various government ministries (the latter will be further discussed in the last section of this chapter).

The brigades played an important role in community service, that is helping the aged and the sick in hospitals; cleaning their communities, hospitals and government complexes; helping to improve health standards, and so on.<sup>76</sup> Like the Ghanaian Workers' Brigades who were involved in the emergence relief work of helping the victims of floods, the Youth Brigades were quick to respond where there was a disaster.<sup>77</sup> For instance, they helped people during the Dande river bridge catastrophe and the Chipuriro bus disaster in Guruve.<sup>78</sup> They were also called up to help when there was a crowd situation, especially during national events like Independence Day and Heroes Day and concerts to direct people to their seats and maintain order.<sup>79</sup>

While there were some commendable contributions toward the attainment of socialist development goals, some acts of political violence surfaced simultaneously with the emergence of the YBM. In Harare, there were several reports of harassment of members of the public by these youths. For instance, people were beaten up by some youths on duty during All-Africa heavyweight title fight at Rufaro Stadium. The youth brigades were there to direct 20 000 people to their seats. The *Herald* reporter saw two members of the Youth Brigade holding a man while a third repeatedly beating him with a knobkerrie. As he beat him, he shouted "so you think you can argue with the Youth Brigade?" Some people had alleged that they heard some brigade members claiming that they received their authority from ZANU-PF and they were above the police.<sup>80</sup> In 1982, people in Mashonaland East complained that the Youth Brigades were roaming the communal areas checking the

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<sup>75</sup> Z. W. Sadomba, *War Veterans in Zimbabwe's Revolution: Challenging neo-colonialism and Settler and International capital*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2011), p.87.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 2 August 1982.

<sup>77</sup> D. Szymkowski, Youth in development: Worker Brigade and the Young Pioneers of Ghana, Thesis for the Degree of MA Michigan State University, 1972; *The Herald*, 25 August 1983.

<sup>78</sup> *The Herald*, 27 June 1983.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, 9 September 1982.

<sup>80</sup> *The Herald*, 9 September 1982.

peasant's political allegiance. Those found without ZANU-PF membership cards were severely beaten and burnt.<sup>81</sup> Concerning this, Kangungure admitted during a parliament session that discipline was a problem among the Youth Brigades because it was difficult to control hundred-thousands of them in different places.<sup>82</sup> Aggrey Manyika (then Mashonaland East Provincial Officer for Ministry of Youth, Sport and Recreation) said tough action will be taken against members of Youth Brigades who mistreat the public. Robson Manyika also said, "to be a member of the Youth Brigade is a privilege, we cannot allow a few rotten apples to taint the reputation of the majority."<sup>83</sup> Manyika said the youth ministry should trace the offending members since they were attached to units and duties were assigned according to units.<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, no action was taken. Thus, Kriger argued that the ex-guerrillas in the YBM had carried over the war tactics into independent Zimbabwe.<sup>85</sup>

When the People's militia was launched in 1982 to fight the alleged ZIPRA dissidents, some of the Youth Brigades joined the militia. Others helped to recruit youths in their communities into the militia. On 9 May 1982, at Zimunya township (located south of Mutare), Mugabe said:

Young people will be armed to fight dissidents and bandits in the country. You need to be vigilant; you will be taught how to use guns to provide immediate protection to your community... Do not rely on the army and police alone for protection, but you, the people, must learn to defend yourselves against bandits and dissidents. The army might take too long coming to your aid as they have to prepare first and by the time they arrive, the dissident would have disappeared.<sup>86</sup>

Mugabe prompted the Youth Brigades and party youths to join the Fifth Brigade in the *gukurahundi* massacres which claimed nearly 20 000 people in Matabeleland and Midlands.<sup>87</sup> These youths perpetrated violence of various sorts, from physical torture, arson to murder, against ZAPU supporters. Msindo argued that the *gukurahundi* violence is much remembered more than the violence of the colonial regime.<sup>88</sup> In the Weberian sense, the operation of

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<sup>81</sup> *Also see Ibid*, 14 September 1982.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 17 September 1982.

<sup>83</sup> *The Herald*, 9 September 1982.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>85</sup> N. Kriger, 'ZANU-PF Strategies in General Elections, 1980-2000: Discourse and Coercion', *African Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 414, pp.1-34.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 10 May 1982.

<sup>87</sup> Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, Breaking the Silence and The Legal Resources Foundation, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980 – 1988, (Harare: CCJP 1997).

<sup>88</sup> E. Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe: Transformations in Kalanga and Ndebele Societies, 1860-1990*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2012).

Youth Brigades shows that the revolution (the liberation struggle) propagated a powerful and more dogmatic regime rather than emancipating the people from despotism.

The Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace (CCJP) reported that electoral violence began in 1984 mainly at the hands of the Youth Brigades and the Youth League.<sup>89</sup> They violently interrupted political campaigns and rallies of the opposition.<sup>90</sup> Ernest Kadungure often told the Youth Brigades to defend the party and lead it to victory in the 1985 elections. He said it was the responsibility of the youths to fight the malcontents among them.<sup>91</sup> The Youth Brigades were involved in the destruction of ZAPU offices in Harare and other parts of Mashonaland province. An elder, Mr. Mashavave said those who were suspected of running the ZAPU or UANC structures in Highfields and Mbare were intimidated, beaten, and forced to pledge their loyalty to ZANU-PF.<sup>92</sup> The political climate during this period prompted *The Herald* commentator to write:

Political hooliganism and political violence are occurring too frequently in our midst...

The competition should be political, through the ballot box and not the bullet or stone-throwing. If it is our young people who are perpetrating this cynical violence then their elders should crack the whip.<sup>93</sup>

That said, youth violence continued. Elisha Maunga witnessed the eviction of a UANC member from his house in Cherima, an area in Highfield, by the Youth Brigades. This happened after the UANC supporters held a meeting at this house and they pronounced slanderous statements against Mugabe and the government. The brigades were angered and they removed all the property from the house, locked it, and took the keys.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, sometimes the UANC and ZAPU youths retaliated and cause violent clashes which destroyed property.<sup>95</sup> Some unfortunate Youth Brigades were targeted and killed for instance in Mberengwa six Youth Brigades were killed by ZAPU youths.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, *Breaking the Silence and The Legal Resources Foundation, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980 – 1988*, (Harare: CCJP 1997).

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*; N. Kriger, 'ZANU(PF) Strategies in General Elections, 1980 –2000: Discourse and Coercion', *African Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 414, (2005), pp. 1–34.

<sup>91</sup> *The Herald*, 4 April 1985.

<sup>92</sup> Interview with Mr. Mashavave, Nyadire Village, UMP, 12 January 2021.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, 20 November 1984.

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Elisha Maunga, in New Canaan, Highfields, 28 March 2021.

<sup>95</sup> *The Herald*, 28 October 1984.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, 6 May 1985.

The Youth Brigades forced people into buses to attend ZANU-PF gatherings.<sup>97</sup> An Associated Press (AP) video on YouTube shows Joshua Nkomo complaining at a ZAPU rally in 1985 saying “the Youth Brigades are forcing people to join ZANU-PF... they [ZANU-PF politicians] cannot have a rally without these army elements that are not the army, carry them around in pumas [military trucks] forcing people to go to rallies.”<sup>98</sup> They even forced school-going children to attend *pungwes* (night functions). In some scenarios these children were assaulted and injured. This prompted Morris Nyagumbo to say “school-children were busy with their home works and should not be forced to attend party activities like singing at political gatherings. It was not a party policy that school-children should be made to attend night party functions.”<sup>99</sup> This seemed to be a publicity stunt since the party could not take any disciplinary measures against these youths. This reveals that ZANU-PF remained fundamentally militarised since the ex-guerrillas in the Youth Brigade were still carrying the wartime philosophy of perceiving ‘guns and elections’ as Siamese twins.<sup>100</sup> Like the 1980 election, the youths continued to use their wartime tactics of intimidating and abusing people during the campaigns.<sup>101</sup> In this regard, the CCPJ argued that the ZANU-PF youths operated like the Chinese Red Guards who violated people during the Cultural revolution to consolidate Mao Zedong’s power in China.<sup>102</sup>

The Youth Brigades and other ZANU-PF youths kept their communities under surveillance, monitoring the movement of people and scouting sell-outs. The party officials frequently told the youths that they were the eyes and ears of the party and government. Joshua Nkomo, during a ZAPU rally in 1985 said:

The people in Mashonaland are living in great fear. When you talk to them, they will look around to see who is there because they know there is a chairman, there is a commissar, there is youth and there is the Youth Brigade. All these groups want to see who they are talking to and why.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> N. Kriger, ‘ZANU(PF) Strategies in General Elections, 1980 –2000: Discourse and Coercion, *African Affairs*’, Vol. 104, No. 414, (2005), pp. 1–34.

<sup>98</sup> AP Archive, L114944 <http://youtu.be/jnbqen-9RnY>, Accessed: 23 June 2020.

<sup>99</sup> *The Herald*, 30 October 1984.

<sup>100</sup> M. Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2003).

<sup>101</sup> M. Sithole, *Zimbabwe: In search of a stable democracy*, p 229; Lemon, *The Zimbabwe General Election of 1985*, pp.13.

<sup>102</sup> Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, Breaking the Silence and The Legal Resources Foundation, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980 – 1988, (Harare: CCJP 1997), p.62. M. Singer, *Educated Youth and the Cultural Revolution in China*. (University of Michigan Press 2020).

<sup>103</sup> AP Archive, L114944, <http://youtu.be/jnbqen-9RnY>, Accessed: 23 June 2020.

In this way, the Youth Brigades share some similarities with Kwame Nkrumah's Young Pioneers who operated as a political wing of the Convention People's Party (CPP).<sup>104</sup> They made it difficult for people to participate in opposition politics because they could be known at the ward or village level.<sup>105</sup> However, in UMP, Mrs. Muzumba said the Youth Brigades were not beating people, they were only selling ZANU-PF cards and organising gatherings. She added that the environment only, with village committees spying on us, would tell you that opposition politics was unacceptable because the inhabitants of this area suffered a lot during wartime. They did not want to hear anything to do with Nkomo, Muzorewa, or Sithole, they feared that war will start again.<sup>106</sup> Borrowing from, Muzondidya, the post-colonial Zimbabwe was subdued to a repressive and despotic state which used all forms of violence against political oppositions.

The violence continued immediately after the election. This was triggered by Mugabe's inflammatory speeches. For instance, at a rally in Chitungwiza, Mugabe declared that '... it is now time to strike the bushes with your clubs... Take the rotten pumpkins out of the patch.'<sup>107</sup> He portrayed Nkomo and ZAPU as 'enemies of the state' that need to be punished.<sup>108</sup> Authur Sadomba confirmed that the Youth Brigades and other ZANU-PF structures especially the Women's League perpetrated despicable violent acts in Mbare and Highfields which left many people injured, displaced or dead.<sup>109</sup> The Law Committee for Human Rights (LCFHR) confirmed that several dozens of people including two pregnant women were killed in Harare.<sup>110</sup> The ZAPU candidates who participated in the election were targeted, beaten and some were axed to death.<sup>111</sup> The police turned a blind eye to this violence and intervened on the third day after many people were killed and injured.<sup>112</sup> This shows that youth political violence occurred with the tacit approval of the ZANU-PF top officials and the police.<sup>113</sup> The CCJP report states that up to 2000 people were displaced and many were killed in Harare,

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<sup>104</sup> D. Szymkowski, *Youth in development: Worker Brigade and the Young Pioneers of Ghana*, Thesis for the Degree of MA, Michigan State University, (1972).

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Ivo Mhike, on WhatsApp, 22 August 2020.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Mrs. Muzumba, a former chimbwido, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>107</sup> D. Caute, 'Mugabe brooks no opposition', *The Nation*, 31 August 1985, p.145; N. Kriger, 'ZANU(PF) strategies in general elections, 1980 –2000: Discourse and Coercion,' *African Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 414, (2005), p. 10.

<sup>108</sup> D. Caute, 'Mugabe brooks no opposition', *The Nation*, 31 August 1985, p. 145.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Authur Sadomba, Kaseke Village, UMP, 07 December 2019.

<sup>110</sup> LCFHR, *Zimbabwe: Wages of War*, (New York, LCFHR), 1986, p. 127.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *The Herald*, 6 August 1985.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

Matabeleland and Midlands during this election.<sup>114</sup> This violence made Abel Muzorewa, at one point, say that “the ruling party doesn’t believe in God and that, there is only party and party card.”<sup>115</sup>

The Youth Brigades colluded with the state security forces in their operations. Joshua Nkomo said police turned away victims who sought help because they were getting orders from the ZANU-PF senior members”.<sup>116</sup> The youths and the police served the same purpose of punishing and neutralising oppositions that threatened the ZANU-PF hegemony. Thus, the Youth Brigades committed many atrocities with impunity.<sup>117</sup> Some youths who were arrested and jailed for political violence did not serve many years in jail since many of them were released through the Presidential Amnesty. Clemency Order No.1 of 1988 granted pardon to many youths who had committed political atrocities during the *gukurahundi* and the election period.<sup>118</sup> This indicates that the culture of impunity which affected the country today has roots in the 1980s.

It can be argued the YBM did not fulfill many of its objectives, especially the one of reducing the rising unemployment rate in the country (this will be further elaborated on in the last part of this chapter). Instead, the ZANU-PF ideological and agitation propaganda taught in the training centres brainwashed the brigades and transformed them into party violent machinery. Judging the behaviour of ZANU-PF to date, the party is only concerned about winning elections and monopolising power rather than the welfare of the citizens. The Youth Brigade was a custodian of ZANU-PF interests that is to win elections and utterly destroy ZAPU at all cost. Without the use of youth violence, it could have been difficult for ZANU-PF to maintain its grip on power against ZAPU and Smith's comrades. It is the *gukurahundi* and electoral violence which pushed ZAPU to sign the Unity Accord on 22 December 1987, and it eventually gets swallowed by ZANU-PF.

The YBM was abandoned in 1987 because it was one of the ZAPU’s preconditions to sign the Unity Accord.<sup>119</sup> Besides, the ZANU-PF government had a plan (though it did not

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<sup>114</sup> CCJP and LRF, *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980 – 1988*, (Harare: CCJP 1997).

<sup>115</sup> *The Herald*, 9 April 1985.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 6 August 1985.

<sup>117</sup> LCFHR, Zimbabwe: *Wages of War*, (New York, LCFHR 1986), p.113; CCJP and LRF, *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980 – 1988*, (Harare: CCJP 1997), pp. 62–63. p. 73.

<sup>118</sup> N. Kriger, ‘ZANU(PF) Strategies in General Elections, 1980 –2000: Discourse and Coercion,’ *African Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 414, (2005), pp. 1–34.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*.

materialise) to launch a compulsory national service (Cadet Corps) in 1988, which targeted all school leavers.<sup>120</sup> Of note, the establishment of the YBM in Zimbabwe was a consequence of Socialist internationalism and developing countries that espoused socialism benefited from the Soviet Union's aid packages as it tried to reinforce its geostrategic position and have more nations to its side during the Cold War. However, the Zimbabwean state is characterised by a host of contradictions. Although it declared itself a socialist state, its survival was hinged on a capitalist economy.<sup>121</sup> The global collapse of socialism in the late 1980s and the ascendancy of democracy meant that there were no funds to sponsor youth movements and other socialist policies and thus even the plans to establish a compulsory national service did not materialise. Also, abolishing the YBM helped the ZANU-PF regime to appear democratic as democracy became a dominant ideology. The adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1990 compelled the ruling party to cut back its public expenditures and stop its welfarist and socialist programmes, and thus it was impossible to establish any youth movement in the 1990s. The next section examines the roles played by the youths in ZANU-PF politics in the 1990s

### **Youths and ZANU-PF authoritarian politics in the 1990s**

The global ascendancy of democracy in 1989 was followed by a wave of democratisation in sub-Saharan Africa. Many countries felt compelled to espouse democracy and hold some form of competitive multi-party elections. The ZANU-PF regime tried to appear democratic by allowing multiparty elections but its iron hand towards stronger oppositions was palpable. There was a serious need for consensual power to uphold the image of democracy. Gramsci asserted that a democratic system entails the exercise of consensual power, and consent can be organised through persuasion and ideology.<sup>122</sup> The ruling party engaged in an interchange of persuasion and coercion — persuasion was intended for the ZANU-PF supporters and carrots and sticks for the oppositions. Despite corruption scandals and violence, ZANU-PF still enjoyed popular support in the 1990s. The liberation narrative was important for its electoral popularity and the majority accepted it due to their resentment of colonialism and war. At the same time, the ZANU-PF politicians romanticized violence as an instrumental tool that could help the party to obtain the allegiance of the electorate since allegiance was

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<sup>120</sup> The New GOZ: Bio Information, [https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/88HARARE1365\\_a.html](https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/88HARARE1365_a.html), Accessed: 15 November 2021.

<sup>121</sup> E. Girardet, 'Zimbabwe: land of contradictions. Government talks up socialism, but depends on capitalism', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 8 September 1986.

<sup>122</sup> B. Fontana, 'Logos and Kratos: Gramsci and the Ancients on Hegemony', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 61, No. 2, (2000), pp.305-326.

certainly not complete nor assured. In this regard, Foucault posited that persuasion and coercion are not necessarily disconnected from each other; persuasion can even translate into coercion.<sup>123</sup> So long as the majority of the people consented to ZANU PF rule, multi-party elections were allowable and acclaimed by ZANU-PF officials. This is what Cheeseman and others termed electoral authoritarianism.

Given the high stakes needed to win elections and maintain its hegemony, ZANU-PF continued to utilise youth violence in the 1990s.<sup>124</sup> The collapse of the YBM meant that all the mobilisation responsibilities were now left to the Youth League. The Youth League had structures nationwide and it was easy for the party to expand its ideological indoctrination and influence the political choices of the electorates. The presence of the youth leagues in the communities meant omnipresent party surveillance of the citizens. They punished dissents and repelled oppositions to maintain ideological purity. In this regard, Kriger said the ZANU-PF regime dubbed the Youth League as ‘committed revolutionaries’ and ‘defenders of the revolution.’<sup>125</sup> The Youth League structures were strengthened through extensive patronage. An interviewee, Pedzisai Musere, said most of the members joined the Youth League to access the benefits attached to the membership such as employment in the public service, access to empowerment funding schemes, and access to land given through the resettlement schemes, and so on.<sup>126</sup>

Like the previous elections, ZANU-PF deployed violence against Edgar Tekere’s Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), formed in 1989, which vehemently exposed corruption in the government. This violence reached its height with the murder of Patrick Kombayi, an entrepreneur and ZUM politician, in Gweru for contesting against ZANU-PF’s Simon Muzenda (then Vice-President of Zimbabwe).<sup>127</sup> The ZUM officials were vilified and labelled sell-outs who represented the interests of the whites owing to their alliance with the Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe (CAZ), a white-dominated party. In Larry Diamond’s terms, post-colonial Zimbabwe witnessed the emergence of a pseudo-democracy. In a

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<sup>123</sup> M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (New York: Random House, 1977).

<sup>124</sup> G.M. Bob-Milliar, ‘Party Youth Activists and Low-Intensity Electoral Violence in Ghana: A Qualitative Study of Party Foot Soldiers’ Activism’, *African Studies Quarterly*, (2014), pp.125-153.

<sup>125</sup> N. Kriger, ZANU(PF) Strategies in General Elections, 1980 –2000: Discourse and Coercion, *African Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 414, (2005), pp. 1–34.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Pedzisai Musere, Mbare National, Harare, 03 April 2021.

<sup>127</sup> J. N. Moyo, *Voting for Democracy* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1992).

pseudo-democracy, opposition parties are allowed to operate and some features of electoral democracy are present, but the political atmosphere mainly favours the ruling party.<sup>128</sup>

During the campaign period, the Youth League orchestrated violence against the opposition. The Youth League was becoming an alias for political thugs or party foot soldiers who engaged in horrendous crimes against the citizens. In Highfields, Mr. Mashavave reflected:

The youths declared war against the township dwellers whose loyalty to ZANU-PF was doubted. They engaged in the door-to-door mobilisation of young people, forcing them to *toyi-toyi* around the township. The youths *toyi-toyied* singing songs like *Simudza gumbo, harizi rako, nderemusangano, kana rikatyoka, toisa rimwe*. [Raise that leg, it's not yours, it belongs to ZANU-PF, if you lose it, we will replace it.]” Other songs despised Tekere and his supporters, threatening them with violence. For instance, the one which goes like: “*Toenda kwaMutare netsoka, tichanoshayinira Tekere nevatsigiri wake, tora sub, takunoshayinira Tekere*. [We are going to Mutare on foot, we will spite Tekere and his supporters, bring the machine gun].”<sup>129</sup>

Also, the party youths in Mbare took the streets wielding skull-splitting knobkerries. They sang songs that gave the voters a clue about where to put their vote: “*Vhotera paJongwe, bereka mwana tiende chauya chauya!* [Put your vote where the cock (ZANU-PF's symbol) is, carry the baby and let's go, there is no need to worry about the aftermaths]”, said Evelyn Mukwewa.<sup>130</sup> People lived in fear of these youths, they did not hesitate to kill, abduct or disappear the opposition supporters. Taking a cue from Meredith, the ruling party perceived every election as another round of *Chimurenga* and the votes could only be acquired through the use of guns (violence).<sup>131</sup> The Youth League were the ZANU-PF guns that safeguarded its votes and hegemony through violent mobilization.

Most of the violent episodes were triggered by ZANU-PF officials who uttered inflammatory speeches. In UMP, Mr. Takawira mentioned that the ZANU-PF officials such as Sheba Chiyonga and Donald Nyamaropa boasted that all ZUM supporters were going to be beaten by the party youths. They mentioned that they did not fear the police and the youths were going to move around after the election, ejecting the opposition supporters out of UMP.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> L. Diamond, ‘Is the Third Wave of Democratisation over? An Empirical Assessment’, *The Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies*, Working Paper No. 236, (1997).

<sup>129</sup> Interview with Mr Mashavave, Nyadire Village, UMP, 12 January 2021.

<sup>130</sup> Interview with Evelyn Mukwewa, at Matapi Hostels, in Mbare, 12 February 2021.

<sup>131</sup> M. Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2003).

<sup>132</sup> Interview with Mr Takawira, an eyewitness, in Pfungwe, 05 December 2019.

Also, ZANU had an advert on the national television and radio which claimed that voting for ZUM is like AIDS which would lead to death whilst voting for ZANU-PF would lead to life.<sup>133</sup> The party youths pressured the UMP inhabitants, threatening to start a war if ZANU-PF loses the election. Sekuru Takawira said ‘If you do not vote for ZANU-PF, it means you want us to go back to war’ which became common parlance during the electoral campaigns.<sup>134</sup>

Much of the violence occurred in Harare townships which appeared to be ZUM’s strongholds. Explaining the youth operations, Elisha Maunga stated:

The youths spied on the movements of people in their communities. They threatened to prevent the suspected ZUM supporters from receiving food relief and withdraw from the ruling party patronage. Those in the civil service were threatened with job loss. They were told that they were not at liberty to support ZUM whilst they were working in the government.<sup>135</sup>

Relative to this, Mwonzora *et al*, argued that this politicisation of food aid has continued up to this day and this is a form of psychological violence against the electorates.<sup>136</sup> These activities violated the people’s right to express themselves and to vote for the party of their choice. This created an atmosphere of fear and conformity in the communities.

The Youth League also targeted the ZUM candidates, burning their properties and terrorising their families. In Highfield, Mr. Mashavave related, the Youth League organised a crowd of about 200 to 300 people and marched to Isaac Manyemba’s (a ZUM candidate) house. This occurred after Richard Nyandoro (who was representing ZANU-PF in Highfield West) at a rally, reportedly said that ‘the ZUM candidate must die.’ The mob threw stones at Manyemba’s house and damaged the roof.<sup>137</sup> The violence of the same measure also occurred in Highfield East, where, Herbert Ushewokunze, a ‘radical’ ZANU-PF member, encouraged the party youths to violate the ZUM members and supporters. A Report to the Electoral Supervisory Commission stated:

...Ushewokunze visited Joseph Dendere’s [who was a ZUM candidate] shop with a handgun, bodyguards wielding guns, and nearly 100 youths. The youths assaulted

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<sup>133</sup> CCJP and LRF, *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matebeleland and the Midlands, 1980 – 1988*, (Harare: CCJP 1997).

<sup>134</sup> Interview with Sekuru Takawira, an eyewitness, in Pfungwe, 05 December 2019.

<sup>135</sup> Interview with Elisha Maunga, in New Canaan, Highfields, 28 March 2021.

<sup>136</sup> G. Mwonzora and K. Mandikwaza, ‘The Menu of Electoral Manipulation in Zimbabwe: Food Handouts, Violence, Memory, and Fear – Case of Mwenezi East and Bikita West 2017 by-elections’, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol 54, Issue 8, (2019).

<sup>137</sup> Interview with Mr Mashavave, Nyadire Village, UMP, 12 January 2021.

workers and vandalised the shop. He intimidated the workers, declaring that after ZANU-PF wins the election, they were going to be butchered. Dendere reported this violent occasion to the police and the Chief Police Inspector dismissed the case arguing that Ushewokunze was a dignified man and he could not stoop that low. The following day Ushewokunze instructed the shop to be closed down and its workers were taken to the party office, but they managed to escape. Again, the police turned a blind eye and all reports against Ushewokunze and the party youths were dismissed.<sup>138</sup>

In Mbare the ZANU-PF officials convened a meeting with the party youths, rabble-rousing them to attack ZUM supporters.<sup>139</sup> Pedzisai Musere claimed that some ZANU-PF officials like Chris Pasipamire (who was a Central Committee member) secretly sanctioned the party youths to assault ZUM officials and destroy their election leaflets and posters in Mbare. Even though the police were given the names of the perpetrators and victims, no action was taken.<sup>140</sup> In UMP, Mr. Takawira confirmed that Alois Mangwende and Mabel Chinomona also encouraged the youths to terrorise opposition supporters in their villages and this violence displaced suspected opposition supporters from the area.<sup>141</sup> Thus, Laakso asserts that party youths, throughout the African continent, perform destructive roles in the name of defending the party interests.<sup>142</sup>

On the day of the election, the ZANU-PF youths intimidated people at polling stations. In Mbare, Evelyn Mukwewa confirmed that:

A gang of youths assembled near Matapi hostel, a few metres from the polling stations, wearing ZANU-PF regalia. They spent the whole day drumming, singing, dancing and chanting the party slogans to show their devotion to their party. They sang songs that intimidated the voters like the one which goes like *Ukavhotera pasipo ucharohwa chete nevakomana* [If you vote for the wrong party, you will be beaten by the youths]. The intention of this was to make it difficult for the voters to vote for the opposition.<sup>143</sup>

The assemblage of youths near the polling station was a form of psychological violence that affected the voters' right to vote for the candidates of their choice. Youth violence enabled ZANU-PF to win resoundingly against ZUM and UANC.

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<sup>138</sup> Report to the Electoral Supervisory Commission: 30 May 1990 in J. N. Moyo, *Voting for Democracy*. (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1992), Appendix 4, pp. 212–213.

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Authur Sadomba, Kaseke Village, UMP, 07 December 2019.

<sup>140</sup> Interview with Pedzisai Musere, Mbare National, Harare, 03 April 2021.

<sup>141</sup> Interview with Mr Takawira, an eyewitness, in Pfungwe, 05 December 2019.

<sup>142</sup> L. Laakso, 'Insights into electoral violence in Africa', In M. Basedau, G. Erdmann and A. Mehler, *Votes, Money and Violence: Political Parties and Elections in Sub-Saharan Africa*. (Uppsala: Nordic African Institute, 2007), pp. 224–252.

<sup>143</sup> Interview with Evelyn Mukwewa, at Matapi Hostels, in Mbare, 12 February 2021.

Although Mugabe called the winners and losers to embrace each other, violence also erupted in the post-election phase. The ruling party rallied youths in high densities like Mbare and Highfield, to 'educate' the opposition contestants who competed with them.<sup>144</sup> The party youths in Mbare and Highfields engaged in demonstrations demanding the ejection of ZUM politicians from their homes and jobs. They demanded all the ZUM members working for Harare City Council, education sectors, and other public sectors to be dismissed from their jobs.<sup>145</sup> One of the informants, Elisha Maunga, confirmed that Herbert Ushewokunze ordered the youths to beat ZUM supporters. Although these youths were arrested, they did not stay in jail for too long; Ushewokunze instructed the police to release them.<sup>146</sup> In Kwekwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa who had been voted to be an MP also incited the youths to harass and intimidate ZUM supporters. He encouraged the youths to join the Women's League in their demonstrations against ZUM.<sup>147</sup> Violence only stopped, in mid-May when the ZANU-PF senior member denounced these acts of vengeance. The party youths who were arrested on the account of electoral violence were among the beneficiaries of the presidential amnesty granted to the political prisoners soon after the election.<sup>148</sup>

The 1995 elections experienced less violence compared to the previous elections since the opposition was at its weakest point.<sup>149</sup> Some opposition parties like Edgar Tekere's ZUM, Abel Muzorewa's United Parties (UP) and Emmanuel Mugoche's Democratic Party (DP) decided to boycott the election citing an unbalanced political arena with the state funding given to ZANU-PF only, lack of media coverage and unchecked presidential powers, as their reasons.<sup>150</sup> Only the FORUM Party of Zimbabwe (FPZ) led by former Chief Justice Enoch Dumbutshena and ZANU-Ndonga led by Ndabaningi Sithole contested the election. These parties were critical to ZANU-PF's socialist policies. They wanted the ruling party to firmly implement the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) which involved privatisation, reduced government expenditure and decentralisation of power. They criticised the ZANU-PF campaigns which were intended to divert people's attention from the state's

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<sup>144</sup> M. Sithole, 'Democracy in Zimbabwe', *Africa Demos*, Vol. 3, No.1 (1993), p. 17; L. Sachikonye, 'The 1990 Zimbabwe elections: a post-mortem', *Review of African Political Economy*, 48 (1990), p. 96.

<sup>145</sup> N. Kriger, ZANU(PF) Strategies in General Elections, 1980–2000: Discourse and Coercion, *African Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 414, (2005), pp. 1–34.

<sup>146</sup> Interview with Elisha Maunga, in New Canaan, Highfields, 28 March 2021.

<sup>147</sup> Reports of Post-Election Violence and Reprisals Made Since 5 April 1990, pp. 219–20.

<sup>148</sup> *The Herald*, 16 July 1990.

<sup>149</sup> J. Makumbe and D. Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen: The politics of Zimbabwe's 1995 general elections*. (University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 2000).

<sup>150</sup> S. Darnolf, *Democratic Electioneering in Southern Africa*. (Goteborg: Goteborg Studies in Politics, 1997), pp. 179–80.

economic mishandling, blaming white economic dominance for the economic problems.<sup>151</sup> The FORUM and ZANU-Ndonga candidates became the targets of political violence. Owing to the opposition boycott, scholars tend to overlook the youth violence and other aspects which devitalised the opposition parties by merely blaming them for their self-inflicted weaknesses.<sup>152</sup>

As usual, the incumbent deployed its youths to intimidate the citizens starting from mid-1994. Mugabe, in May 1994, ordered the youths to engage in a door-to-door mobilisation campaign in high-density suburbs to oblige citizens to register as electorates. He told them that ‘remember you are the party and you are therefore the defenders of not just the party but the revolution.’<sup>153</sup> This campaign was not only limited to the registration of voters but also entailed securing financial support from people. During this phase, Pedzisai Musere confirmed, the opposition parties encountered challenges to convene their meetings peaceably in Mbare and Highfields. There were violent clashes between ZANU-PF youths and the opposition supporters as the opposition leaders told their supporters to retaliate when attacked.<sup>154</sup> The police knew the ZANU-PF youths who perpetrated this violence but they were never arrested. They promised the public to investigate this violence and nothing came out of these investigations.<sup>155</sup> Instead of condemning violence, the ZANU-PF officials and Mugabe himself praised the youths for violating and thwarting the opposition parties from holding their meetings in their areas.<sup>156</sup> In this way, the ruling party institutionalised violence as it was a coercive tool that anchored its hegemony. This violence instilled fear and anxiety among the members of the opposition.

The ZANU-PF youths in Mbare unrelenting continued with their violent tactics which they used in the previous election. Pedzisai Musere had this to say:

Patricia Mpange [a ZANU-Ndonga candidate] was repeatedly harassed by ZANU-PF youths who uttered derogatory phrases: ‘*vakadzi vanoita zvepolitics mahure*’ [women who participate in politics are prostitutes]. Her campaign aides were repeatedly terrorised by these youths when they were handing out fliers in shopping centres. On many

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<sup>151</sup> *Financial Gazette*, 15 December 1994, p. 4.

<sup>152</sup> C. Sylvester, ‘Whither opposition in Zimbabwe?’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (September 1995), p. 426.

<sup>153</sup> J. Makumbe and D. Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen: The politics of Zimbabwe’s 1995 general elections*. (University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 2000), p.303.

<sup>154</sup> Interview with Pedzisai Musere, Mbare National, Harare, 03 April 2021.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> L. Laakso, *Voting Without Choosing: State making and elections in Zimbabwe*. *Acta Politica* No.11 (Department of Political Science, University of Helsinki, 1999), p. 171.

occasions, Mpange and her aides were blocked from campaigning in Mbare by brutal youths and ZANU-PF district officers who declared the area a ZANU-PF area, and no other part was allowed to campaign there.<sup>157</sup>

In support of the above, Elizabeth Madzimore stated that some youths, rabble roused by the ZANU-PF Youth chairperson for Mbare, threatened to kill the opposition campaigners and they hurled stones at the vehicle carrying the opposition officials. The local youth chairperson threatened to eject all the opposition supporters from Mbare if ZANU-PF lost the election.<sup>158</sup> On the election day, the ZANU-PF party youths, in Mbare were reportedly turning back the electorates who resided far away from the polling stations to come and vote the next day.<sup>159</sup> Some of these violent occasions happened in the presence of the police, but it seems they were reluctant to act on issues that involved ZANU-PF even if they had abundant evidence to arrest the ZANU-PF-aligned youths.<sup>160</sup>

In rural areas like UMP, physical violence was minimal because the opposition parties failed to make impressive strides to garner the support of the rural populace. However, Mrs. Muzumba acknowledged that the youths intimidated people with the usual tactic of threatening to start a war again if ZANU-PF happened to lose the election.<sup>161</sup> She revealed that the youths and ZANU-PF district officers in Murewa North also disseminated the belief that the party officials could monitor the voting process and see who voted for the wrong party.<sup>162</sup> This was done to make the electorate hesitant to vote for the candidate of their choice.<sup>163</sup> As much as it romanticised violence, ZANU-PF sought to establish a discourse that liberation struggle was the ultimate good, and all citizens were supposed to be loyal to ZANU-PF since it was the deliverer of the liberation. Nevertheless, after the election, the youths who were arrested for perpetrating violence were granted an amnesty.<sup>164</sup> This shows that youth political violence occurred with the blessing of the ZANU-PF regime.

Many scholars tend to trivialise the youth political violence which occurred between 1980 and 1999. They dismissed the youth's violent actions as overzealous attempts to make

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<sup>157</sup> Interview with Pedzisai Musere, Mbare National, Harare, 03 April 2021.

<sup>158</sup> Interview with Elizabeth Madzimore, in Mbare, 02 April 2021.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> J. Makumbe and D. Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen: The politics of Zimbabwe's 1995 general elections*. (University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 2000). p.151.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with Mrs. Muzumba, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> J. Makumbe and D. Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen: The politics of Zimbabwe's 1995 general elections*. (University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 2000). P.162, 226.

<sup>164</sup> L. Sachikonye, 'The 1990 Zimbabwe elections: a post-mortem', *Review of African Political Economy*, 48 (1990), pp. 95–96.

ZANU-PF a persuasive party. Msindo argued that this violence occurred at a time when most Zimbabweans were still entangled in the post-independence euphoria and hence were hesitant to condemn the ZANU-PF regime.<sup>165</sup> As shown above, the Youth League was at the core of organising violence. These youths enjoyed police immunity since ruling party officials rescued them when they were arrested. Besides, most of the police officers were recruited from the ZANU-PF youths. It is clear that since 1980, violence was a recurrent election strategy to chastise contestants who dared to challenge the incumbent. Thus, violence becomes a part of ZANU-PF's political culture in the post-independence era.

### **Youth exclusion: A recipe of future youth violence?**

The Zimbabwe nationalist project placed youth at the core of its policies for liberation and economic development. Immediately after attaining independence, youths were perceived and presented in positive terms as the agents of change.<sup>166</sup> In Mugabe's terms, the youths were 'the life-blood of the nation and country's insurance for national perpetuation'.<sup>167</sup> The government created the youth ministry on the realisation that the previous regimes had not considered youths as an important social group.<sup>168</sup> The decision to have this ministry showed immense political willpower from the highest political level to champion youth empowerment and their involvement in the government. Yet another commendable contribution by the state was the development of the education system from primary to tertiary level.<sup>169</sup> In the 1980s and 1990s, it presented free primary education and university grants to help underprivileged students.<sup>170</sup> The state opened scores of new state-run secondary schools with reasonable fees. In the late 1990s, many schools began to offer Advanced levels, and the number of students eligible to go to universities increased. Given that, the state also increased the number of universities. The second university, the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) was established in 1989<sup>171</sup> and many other state and non-state universities were built in the early 2000s.

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<sup>165</sup> E. Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe: Transformations in Kalanga and Ndebele Societies, 1860-1990*. (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2012), p. 211.

<sup>166</sup> I. Olawale, 'What is in a Job? The Social Context of Youth Employment Issues in Africa,' *Journal of African Economies* 25, March 2016, pp.37-60.

<sup>167</sup> *The Sunday Mail*, 5 December 1982.

<sup>168</sup> *The Herald*, 3 January 1987.

<sup>169</sup> K. Mashininga and T. Mukeredzi, 'Mugabe – 'From glory to misery, especially for students', *University World News*, 14 September 2019, <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190911161959567>, Accessed on 25 August 2020.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Establishment of a Second University or Campus, under the chairmanship of Mr. P.R.C. Williams, to His Excellency the President. National government publication, 1989.

While palpable developments were seen especially in the education sector, the state failed to practically empower the youths whose population was increasingly bulging. Starting from the late 1980s, ZANU-PF began to perceive youths as the source of societal crisis due to student activism. This change of perception of youth was mostly exogenous – these were issues to do with the state's capacity to act on youth demands. Concerning this, Canaan Banana (the first President of Zimbabwe) said:

The vitality and creativity of Zimbabwe's youths can destroy society if it is not positively exploited for national development. The danger can be averted if youths are viewed as resources and not as a problem. Unemployment and under-employment amongst the youths, therefore, tend to be high and their latent energies are not channelled towards some productive activity, delinquency is the usual result.<sup>172</sup>

The youths were disgruntled because the state failed to maintain its expansive social expenditure, high unemployment rate, economic shrinkage and corruption. Nobert Mafukidze said that “young people including former Youth Brigades were getting tired of ZANU-PF's duplicity, corruption and political talk. We wanted jobs and to live better.”<sup>173</sup> The state was disintegrating into the Fanonist conception of the post-colonial era as the ZANU-PF bourgeoisie started to use the state as a channel for self-aggrandisement. Some cabinet ministers were involved in the ‘Willowgate scandal’ in which they were purchasing vehicles from Willovale Motor Industries tax-free and reselling them at inflated prices.<sup>174</sup> This was the rise of what Bayart termed as the ‘politics of the belly’ (the ruling party elites were misusing their status to expand their wealth) and *cabritismo* (corrupt thinking that a goat grazes where it is tethered).<sup>175</sup> This triggered the 1988 student demonstration against corruption, but the students were repressively met by the government and dismissed as sell-outs. In Gramscian terms, the ZANU-PF politicians had transformed from being revolutionary leaders to becoming a politico-economic class with selfish interests and tyrannical tendencies.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> *The Herald*, 8 April 1985.

<sup>173</sup> Interview with Nobert Mafukidze, in Marondera, 28 January 2021; Also see E. Girardet, ‘Zimbabwe: land of contradictions. Government talks up socialism, but depends on capitalism,’ *The Christian Science Monitor*, 8 September 1986.

<sup>174</sup> D. Hodgkinson, ‘Five lessons from Zimbabwe's game-changing student protests’, *The Conversation*, 6 November 2015, <https://theconversation.com/five-lessons-from-zimbabwes-game-changing-student-protests-50141>, Accessed on 31 August 2021.

<sup>175</sup> J. Bayart, *The state in Africa: the politics of the belly*. (London: Longman 1993), p. 242.

<sup>176</sup> Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

Moreover, the government had no comprehensive job creation policy for youths on any significant scale.<sup>177</sup> Statistics show that in the 1980s a net average of 7000 jobs per year were created in the formal sector against an average of 80 000 school leavers who entered the labour market each year.<sup>178</sup> The private sector was incapable to absorb 80 000 youths meaning it was the responsibility of the government.<sup>179</sup> But then, the government ministries and departments were minimally involved in creating youth employment.<sup>180</sup> A report for the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, written by Fanuel Nangati, shows that only two ministries directly confronted the problem of youth employment that is the Ministry of Labour, Manpower Planning and Social Welfare and the youth ministry itself.<sup>181</sup> The youth ministry provided jobs to thousands of youths through the Youth Brigade Movement. Then again, the movement did not generate employment for school-leavers or youths in general to any large degree as the ministry did not cater for the employment of those who were not members of the movement. Also, the number of youths who were involved in the projects for employment and training was very small; and comparatively insignificant was the number of funds invested by the government in schemes meant to generate youth employment. The ministry has since its inception in 1980 been given only \$500 000 as a loan for youths, who constitute about 60 percent of the total population.<sup>182</sup> Considering the number of poor youths in the rural areas and the number of school-leavers each year, the \$500 000 loan was not likely to have any impact on youths as a whole.

The majority of youths who spent two years at Youth brigade training centres could not get employment. According to *The Herald*, the government spent millions of dollars in training these youths to end up roaming about the urban streets or the rural areas with no possibility of initiating any project in their locality.<sup>183</sup> The other challenge was that the certificates offered by the youth training centres were not recognised by other government arms. The Ministry of Labour, Manpower Planning and Social Welfare could not admit young people to apprenticeship programmes unless they showed a satisfactory level of education, achievement and aptitude.<sup>184</sup> Also, the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement

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<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 January 1987. An unpublished report on the Needs Assessment Survey commissioned by the ministry indicates that there is a lack of overall government policy or planning for youth employment at any significant scale.

<sup>178</sup> *The Herald*, 12 December 1985.

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

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> Fanuel Nangati, A report the Ministry of Youth, sports and culture, 1985; *The Herald*, 12 December 1985.

<sup>182</sup> *The Herald*, 3 January 1987.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

excluded youths from the benefits of resettlement schemes since resettlement of people was done based on families and by definition, youths were disqualified. Thus, the employment opportunities for youths were very limited.

The adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1990 worsened the wounds of the youths. The ESAP entailed reforms such as cutbacks in public expenditures, decreasing deficits, downsize the public sector among others. These reforms made the government incapable of prioritising the needs of its citizens. The youth did not only lose the prestigious status that nationalism conferred to them in its rising stages, but they ceased to be the national priority. Relative to this, Trevor Makwanya related:

Some youths could not continue with their education since their parents were retrenched from work. Those who had just finished their tertiary education had nowhere to go as several companies were closing. Poverty crept in, and since then, our living standards have continued to fall. The state seemed to have ceased to address poverty, unemployment and other socio-economic problems.<sup>185</sup>

Correspondingly, the *Herald* stated that by 1999 workers were 10 times poorer than they were in 1990.<sup>186</sup> Honwana agrees that the post-colonial African states failed to determine national socio-economic policies and priorities and to uphold the social contract of their citizenry, making life difficult for many people.<sup>187</sup> She added that failed neoliberal economic policies and bad governance in Africa caused endemic poverty and chronic unemployment and as result 'youthhood' became a period of 'waithood' for many young people.<sup>188</sup> This created opportunities for the state to abuse jobless youths. Nevertheless, although some youths were still supporting ZANU-PF, the disaffected youths were able to develop a sense of shared identity and consciousness and joined the labour movements and civic organisations in contesting the government policies.<sup>189</sup>

The ruling party policies seemed to benefit the ex-combatants rather than ordinary youths. Even the Youth brigade programme mainly targeted the youths from war. The party and the ex-combatants have been exploiting each other in pursuance of their overlapping goals and

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<sup>185</sup> Interview with Trevor Makwanya, in Highfield, 12 April 2021.

<sup>186</sup> *The Herald*, 24 May 1999.

<sup>187</sup> A. Honwana, *The Time of Youth: Work, Social Change, and Politics in Africa* Sterling. (VA: Kumarian Press, 2012).

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid*, p.21.

<sup>189</sup> K. Kanyenze, Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP): precursor to the fast-track resettlement? In: Masiwa, M. (ed.), *The post-independence land reform in Zimbabwe: controversies and impact on the economy*. (Harare: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Institute of Development Studies, University of Zimbabwe, 2004), pp. 90-124.

by so doing the ruling party neglected the needs of the ordinary citizens. Edwin Makuvaza, an interviewee, asserted that:

The ex-combatants utilised their connections with the state and their role in the liberation struggle to rationalise their 'right' to have access to state resources especially land and first preference for employment and promotions. In 1997, the ex-combatants were given hefty perks that totalled Z\$4,5 billion [ZWD \$50,000 once-off gratuity per person and USD 2,000 monthly pension], money which the country did not have.<sup>190</sup>

Following the above extract, the decision to give the ex-combatants these excessive gratuities ruinously affected the lives of Zimbabweans. This was further worsened by involving the Zimbabwean army in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) war between 1997 and 1998. This war cost Zimbabwe approximately 3 million USD per day. Economists stated that the government spent ZW\$6 billion in an unbudgeted expenditure on the war.<sup>191</sup> The DRC war was one of the focal starting points of the economic meltdown. Many youths in the late 1990s could not afford to pay for university education as the government introduced fees in the universities in 1997.<sup>192</sup> Youths became victims of absurd policies and misgovernance by the ZANU-PF regime.

The climate of dissatisfaction intensified starting from 1997 owing to increasing pessimism about the future. In 1997 alone, 232 protests were recorded and that was the biggest number since independence.<sup>193</sup> In all these protests, the youths were at the centre stage. The burning issues were corruption (dramatically displayed in the embezzlement of War Victims Compensation Funds, Airport tender and the VIP housing scheme), unemployment, poverty, human rights abuses, price hikes (due to the enormous devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar) and shortage of food. The protests reached their height with the outbreak of the nationwide violent Food riots in 1998 which resulted in the looting of shops and destruction of properties.<sup>194</sup> The economic crisis was deepening and the youths were increasingly feeling marginalised from the political and economic processes. The ZANU-PF regime ruthlessly quelled these riots using the army, police and party youths, leaving many people injured and eight dead.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Interview with Edwin Makuvaza, in Highfield, 30 April 2021.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> Interview with Edwin Makuvaza, in Highfield, 30 April 2021.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO FORUM, A Consolidated Report on the Food Riot 19-23 January 1998, Report compiled by the Amani Trust on behalf of the ZHRNGO Forum.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

The period between 1997 and 2000 saw the ZANU-PF regime struggling to maintain its hegemony as it was losing the support of both passive and active groups that played a significant role in its power politics since 1980. The stifling economic and political settings prompted the youths to join the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA)<sup>196</sup> in 1997 and the Movement of Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999. Many people had realised that the ‘paradise’ promised to them during the liberation struggle turned out to be unemployment, repression and starvation. Young people felt marginalised because they were denied to reap the fruits of liberation. They were getting tired of hearing the ZANU-PF liberation narrative. The government’s failure to create a robust youth economic empowerment framework was a recipe for youth political violence that affected the country in the 2000s. The waning of consensual power made the ruling party resort to naked violence perpetrated by the National Youth Service (NYS) graduates and state-sanctioned vigilante groups like Chipangano.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter revealed that ZANU-PF has continued to involve youths in its hegemonic struggles in the post-colonial era. The ruling party transformed from being a revolutionary party to a politico-economic class with selfish interests and deep paranoia that power may slip away. Every election since 1980 was accompanied by youth violence and the perpetrators have escaped justice through Presidential amnesty. This shows that a culture of violence and impunity that continued to affect the country today was institutionalised in the 1980s and 1990s. Of note, the youths have continued to occupy an interstitial space of a victim and perpetrator of violence. The implementation of the YBM showed that the government only incorporates youths into its policies only when their actions can hamper its plans. Such social control of youth proved to be detrimental to the long-term development of the youths.

It is noteworthy to mention that the opposition in the 1990s was generally weak, though not nationwide. ZUM, for instance, was only popular in urban townships and it failed to make some impressive strides to garner rural votes. It was not so much a threat as ZAPU in the 1980s and the MDC in the post-1999 era. For this reason, there was not much youth political violence in that era. The ZANU-PF regime had brought ZAPU under control and they enjoyed relative political stability until the emergence of the MDC.

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<sup>196</sup> A non-governmental organisation, purposed to campaign for broad-based constitution and to protect the rule of law and human rights.

The government's ruinous policies in the 1990s marginalised the youths and thus were involved in protests fighting for their rights. Youths ceased to be part of the state's priority as ZANU-PF politicians were increasingly becoming obsessed with pursuing power and acquiring wealth unscrupulously. There was a rise of what Bayart termed as the 'politics of the belly' (the ruling party elites were misusing their status to expand their riches) and *cabritismo* (corrupt thinking that a goat grazes where it is tethered).<sup>197</sup> And, when the MDC was formed many youths joined the opposition. However, this marginalisation exposed other youths to manipulation by ZANU-PF politicians who recruited them into vigilante groups in the 2000s (this will be discussed in Chapter 7). On the other hand, the 1997 and 1998 protests and the formation of the MDC in 1999 prompted the state to hastily establish the NYS in the early 2000s. The next chapter examines the emergence and operation of the NYS in Zimbabwe.

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<sup>197</sup> J. Bayart, *The state in Africa: the politics of the belly*. (London: Longman 1993), p. 242.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **The NYS Brigades and ZANU-PF Politics in Zimbabwe, 2001-2018**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter examines the emergence and operations of the National Youth Service (NYS) brigades in Zimbabwe to understand their roles in ZANU-PF politics in the 2000s (using the case of Highfields and Uzumba Maramba-Pfungwe). It shows that the NYS was a ZANU-PF hegemonic project designed to harness the energy of young people to retain political power. The NYS was a coercive mechanism meant to include, exclude and repress the alleged supporters of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The chapter argues that the NYS brigades were an appropriated tool of fascist politics and they occupied an interstitial position of victims and perpetrators in ZANU-PF politics.<sup>1</sup> It also argues that these youths were agents with diverse self-interests and a sense of agency. This chapter contains three main sections. The first section examines the emergence of the NYS programme, recruitment and training of the participants to understand how these youths became a coercive tool in ZANU-PF politics. The second section focuses on how the NYS brigades operated and their relations with the law enforcement agents. It ends by discussing the impact of their operations on Zimbabwean citizens and the political culture.

#### **The emergence of the NYS programme in Zimbabwe**

The NYS was a programme for young people between the age of 10 and 30 years old. It was a borrowed phenomenon from the 1979 National Service Act passed by the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government.<sup>2</sup> The late Border Gezi (then Minister of Gender, Youth and Employment Creation) was the prime mover of the NYS programme. He fanatically believed in the silencing of dissent voices as the best way to manage the opposition. Dodo asserts that Gezi exhibited this characteristic since his days in the ZANU-PF Youth League when he used

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<sup>1</sup> A. Honwana, 'Innocent and Guilty. Child Soldiers as Interstitial and Tactical Agents', in A. Honwana and F. De Boeck (eds), *Makers and Breakers. Children and Youth in Postcolonial Africa*, (Oxford: James Currey, 2005), pp.31–52.

<sup>2</sup> *The Herald*, 3 March 2017.

to callously silence his critics.<sup>3</sup> With the NYS, Gezi sought to create youths who were loyal to ZANU-PF and prepared to defend the party.<sup>4</sup>

Hlungwani *et al* argued that the implementation of the NYS contradicted the 2000 National Youth Policy which underscored the ‘youth participation in all stages of empowerment programmes, from planning and decision-making to implementation and evaluation.’<sup>5</sup> Charumbira *et al* concurred that the NYS was a centrally planned programme devoid of grassroots consultations and input from the youths themselves.<sup>6</sup> As well, its introduction, virtues and curriculum were never overtly deliberated in parliament, and there were no legal statutes that regulated its implementation. Concerning this, Gezi stated that the “cabinet had already approved the National Youth Policy, and there is no need for the government to seek parliamentary approval before implementing the programme.”<sup>7</sup> This reveals that in ZANU-PF politics, there is what Gramsci dubbed as “*cadornism*” or a conviction that ideas or policies will be implemented because the party leaders deem them just and reasonable to be implemented.<sup>8</sup> Dzimiri argues that, in Zimbabwe, the ZANU-PF party interests are often masqueraded as state interests.<sup>9</sup> Surprisingly, the ‘NYS department was housed at the ZANU-PF headquarters in Harare.’<sup>10</sup> The obscurantism in enquiring about the verities and actualities of the NYS provokes the question: what was the rationale behind the advent of the NYS? This is the question that this section endeavours to answer.

Since the 1987 Unity Accord which integrated ZAPU and ZANU-PF, no other opposition party has generated more opprobrium toward the incumbent party than the MDC. The frailty of the opposition parties in the 1990s made ZANU-PF develop a sense of invincibility and complacency that future elections would be easily won, and it would reign Zimbabwe *ad*

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<sup>3</sup> O. Dodo, *Youth and Violence in Zimbabwe: Youth Involvement in Political Violence between 1999 and 2011*. [http://www.academia.edu/3681662/Youth\\_and\\_Violence\\_in\\_Zimbabwe\\_Youth\\_Involvement\\_in\\_Political\\_Violence\\_between\\_1999\\_and\\_2011](http://www.academia.edu/3681662/Youth_and_Violence_in_Zimbabwe_Youth_Involvement_in_Political_Violence_between_1999_and_2011), Accessed on 28 October 2020.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> P. Hlungwani, S. Masuku and M. Magidi, ‘Mainstreaming youth policy in Zimbabwe-what role for rural youth?’, *Cogent Social Sciences*, Vol. 7, Issue 1 (2017) <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311886.2021.1893907>, Accessed on 20 August 2021.

<sup>6</sup> M. Charumbira and G. Chituri, *The views of the youth - A study of youth perceptions, attitudes and views towards EU development Policy in Zimbabwe*. (Restless Development, European Commission in Zimbabwe, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> *The Chronicle*, 26 April 2001

<sup>8</sup> A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. In Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith (*trans.*), (New York: International Publishers 1971), p.145.

<sup>9</sup> P. Dzimiri, ‘African Multilateral response to the crisis in Zimbabwe: A responsibility to protect perspective’, *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, Vol 39, No. 2, (2012), pp.50-77.

<sup>10</sup> R. Shumba, *Social Identities in the National Youth Service of Zimbabwe*, Masters’ thesis, (Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg, 2006), p.49.

*infinitum*. Nevertheless, in 2000, the incumbent witnessed a very tough contest from the freshly formed MDC. The opposition managed to mobilise people against the ZANU-PF-sponsored draft constitution, and it was cast off by 55% of the voters in a referendum.<sup>11</sup> The opposition movement clamoured for a citizen-driven revision process of the 1979 Lancaster House constitution which had been altered several times by the ZANU-PF government.<sup>12</sup> Again, the MDC gave ZANU-PF the toughest competition during the 2000 parliamentary elections (which stupefied and outraged the ruling party), winning 57 seats out of 120, with 47% of popular votes, and ZANU won 63 seats which carried roughly 48% of the popular vote.<sup>13</sup> For ZANU-PF, this political struggle created a sense of incompleteness and an urgent need for an inexpensive, accessible and reliable institution that could be used to coerce people and make them toe the party line.<sup>14</sup> The ZANU-PF regime began to deride and demonise the MDC as a trojan horse of imperialism and neo-colonialism, which was against black economic empowerment and determined to derail the gains of the liberation struggle.<sup>15</sup> The supporters of MDC were depicted as “rowdy and violent high-density lumpen elements” and the “Zimbabwean contagion”.<sup>16</sup> Given this, the NYS was designed to harness the energy of the youths and directed it towards curbing the growing opposition base from taking over the rural areas and preclude the trajectory of ‘change’ that endangered the existence of ZANU-PF. The ruling party wanted to have subservient and dogmatic youths who could execute the party’s dirty work under the guise of protecting the gains of the liberation struggle.

The NYS programme was a blatant ruse by the incumbent party to politicise and indoctrinate youths into ZANU-PF ideology after the tertiary education students proved to be an existential threat to its hegemony. Since the 1980s, students have been organising protests

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<sup>11</sup> P. Bond and M. Manyanya, *Zimbabwe plunge: Exhausted nationalism, neoliberalism and the search for social justice*. (Asmara: Africa World Press, 2001); M. Meredith, *Mugabe: Power and plunder in Zimbabwe*. (New York: Public Affairs, 2002); B. Raftopoulos, ‘The state in crisis: Authoritarian nationalism, selective citizenship and distortions of democracy in Zimbabwe’, in A. Hammar, B Raftopoulos and S. Jensen (eds.) *Zimbabwe’s unfinished business: Rethinking land, state and nation in the the context of crisis*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), pp.217-241.

<sup>12</sup> S. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, ‘Introduction: Mugabeism and Entanglements of History, Politics, and Power in the Making of Zimbabwe’, In S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (ed.), *Mugabeism? History, Politics, and Power in Zimbabwe*. African Histories and Modernities, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> C. Lamb, *House of Stone: The True Story of a Family Divided in War-tone Zimbabwe*. (Chicago: Chicago Review Press), p.221.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Setfree Mafukidze, on WhatsApp, 13 July 2020; See M. R. Rupiya, ‘An examination of the role of the National Youth Service / Militia in Zimbabwe and its effect on the electoral process, 2001-2005’, *Journal of African Elections*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, (2005), pp.107-122.

<sup>15</sup> R. G. Mugabe, *Inside the Third Chimurenga*, (Harare: Jongwe Press, 2001)

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*.

against bad governance, corruption and violation of human rights<sup>17</sup> and this prompted them to join the MDC upon its formation in 1999. Some former Student Union (SU) leaders (like Learnmore Jongwe and Job Sikhala) assumed top leadership positions in the MDC. Students also played an instrumental role in de-campaigning the ZANU-PF-sponsored draft constitution during the 2000 constitutional referendum. This prompted Sikhumbuzo Ndiweni (then ZANU-PF Information and Publicity Secretary for Bulawayo) to state that "...the mistake that the ruling party made was to allow colleges and universities to be turned into anti-government mentality factories."<sup>18</sup> The ZANU-PF regime began to demonise youths and label those who were born after independence as 'born frees'. The born-frees were seen as 'unpatriotic youths' who were susceptible to external influence, as shown in their support for the MDC.<sup>19</sup> While the ruling party condemned the born-free generation, it was conscious that the state should reach out to the bulging youth constituencies (with about 300 000 school leavers every year) and inculcate 'patriotism'.<sup>20</sup> It is understood that the youths should not be left out of their political equation since their socioeconomic demands and influence have an impact on society. Therefore, the NYS was a political gambit to capture the youths, instill 'patriotic' values and repress them. Since ZANU-PF conflated its existence with that of the state,<sup>21</sup> 'patriotism' meant espousing the party ideology (Mugabeism).<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, the overall economic collapse and the land reform crisis pushed the government to establish the NYS programme. As discussed in chapter 5, Zimbabwe began to experience an economic collapse in the 1990s owing to the government's absurd decisions and policies (like its intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo's civil war) and rampant corruption. This collapse was accelerated in the 2000s by the violent land invasions which ruined the country's agro-based economy and caused the withdrawal of aid and loans from Western countries. The results were poverty, hyperinflation and high rates of unemployment. Knowing this could cost its hegemony, the ZANU-PF regime created the NYS as coercive machinery to force people to vote for the party during the elections. There were some

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<sup>17</sup> S. Dorman, *Understanding Zimbabwe. From liberation to authoritarianism*. (London: Hurst & Co, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> *The Chronicle*, 26 April 2001

<sup>19</sup> E. Chitukutuku, Things Youth in Africa Consider important or valuable and how they inform youth participation in Electoral and Governance Processes, Discussion paper for the 2014 Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS), Annual Youth Dialogue in Elections and Governance, July 2014.

<sup>20</sup> According to the Situation of Youth (SOY), the youth population constituted about 56% of Zimbabwean population around 2003. It argued that more than 6 million youths who were wandering in streets in urban areas and villages. Thus, there was a need to attend these youths before they graduated into a problem lot.

<sup>21</sup> B. Raftopolous (ed.), *The Hard Road to Reform. The politics of Zimbabwe's Global Agreement*'. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2013), p.16.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*; Mugabeism refers to the ZANU-PF ideology which entailed one-partyism, leadership cult, racism, xenophobia and anti-democracy.

indicators that the bulging youth population could help the MDC to oust ZANU-PF from power. Youths were perceived as a ticking time bomb and security threat to the government. Therefore, the NYS was established to control the aspirations of the unemployed youths who could potentially cause mayhem in the country.

The NYS was meant to create a para-militia that could help to execute the *Third Chimurenga*<sup>23</sup> against the commercial white farmers for bankrolling the MDC. John Chirara, an NYS deserter, admitted that during the training, their instructors dedicated most of their time to teaching them history and the virtues of the *Third Chimurenga*. They were taught to sing songs of the liberation struggle and to do slogans that vindicated the *Third Chimurenga*. These songs and slogans were inundated with racism as they regarded the whites as ‘vapambepfuma’ (the colonisers) or ‘disgruntled Rhodesians’.<sup>24</sup> The ZANU-PF rule was hegemonic as it revolved around ideology (Mugabeism) and liberation war narrative, and the NYS was a project intended to keep the revolutionary spirit alive. Borrowing from Gramsci, conservative elements in ZANU-PF politics and the need to keep the liberation narrative going, made the incumbent establish a militarised youth service that could ‘defend a racially defined state’.<sup>25</sup> As correctly observed by Scarnecchia, the establishment of a youth service that supported an endangered political elite was a hallmark of a fascist strategy in ZANU-PF politics.<sup>26</sup> The next section discusses how youths were recruited into the NYS programme.

### **From voluntarism to conscription: The recruitment of youth into the NYS programme**

The first National Youth Training Centre (NYTC) was opened in August 2001, in Mt Darwin, with only 1000 youths and more centres were established in eight provinces by January 2002. It is approximated that 22 000 youths had received training from the five main NYTCs by the end of 2004 and 80 000 by 2007.<sup>27</sup> However, Madondo argued that the exact number of youths who were trained remained unclear.<sup>28</sup> Unlike other NYS programmes

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<sup>23</sup> The *Third Chimurenga* was a violent and retributive form of land reform initiated by the Mugabe government on 15 July 2000 to repossess land from white commercial farmers and redistribute it.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with John Chirara, NYS participant, in Manyika Village 03 January 2020.

<sup>25</sup> A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. In Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith (trans.), (New York: International Publishers 1971).

<sup>26</sup> T. Scarnecchia, ‘The ‘Fascist Cycle’ in Zimbabwe, 2000-2005’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2, (2006), pp.221-237.

<sup>27</sup> Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. ‘Subliminal Terror? Human Rights Violations and Torture in Zimbabwe During 2008.’ (Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2009); Heal Zimbabwe, National Youth Service Reintroduction: A Promise for Political Violence in 2023, 15 April 2021. <https://kubatana.net/2021/04/15/national-youth-service-reintroduction-a-promise-for-political-violence-in-2023/>, Accessed on 10 September 2021.

<sup>28</sup>O. Madondo, ‘The problem of youth in Mugabe’s Zimbabwe’, *African files: Zimbabwe* page. [www.africafiles.org/zimbabwe.asp.2008](http://www.africafiles.org/zimbabwe.asp.2008), Accessed on 4 July 2020.

elsewhere in Africa which are all-embracing and they transcend social class boundaries<sup>29</sup>, the Zimbabwean version was unparalleled as it sought to capture the marginalised youths. Elliot Manyika (who took over the youth ministry after the demise of Border Gezi) said that NYS trainees would target the “unemployed youths, orphans, single mothers and street kids”.<sup>30</sup> The programme seemed to target youths from poor backgrounds and peasantry classes and thus most of the NYTCs were situated in rural areas (the recruitment of rural youths into NYS was fundamental for the maintenance of ZANU-PF’s rural support base). Besides, the economic collapse left many youths unemployed and desperate and the NYS was at least a temporary occupation for the time. Nonetheless, youths from a rich background and those related to politicians did not join NYS, they found ways to evade conscription.<sup>31</sup>

At the outset, the NYS programme was intended to be voluntary and small-scale, and its primary objectives were skills enhancement and moral education. However, before long ZANU-PF unilaterally decided to make it a large-scale programme that incorporated paramilitary training.<sup>32</sup> The ZANU-PF government made the NYS ‘compulsory’ for all school leavers, starting from January 2003, because very few youths were voluntarily joining the programme.<sup>33</sup> The violent activities of the first graduates attracted criticism from the MDC and several civic organisations and made the programme disliked and shunned. They condemned the NYS as a ZANU-PF project to continue its stay in power, hence the unpopularity of the programme.<sup>34</sup> The government declared that students who had finished high school could only get their “O” level or “A” level certificates after finishing a six months NYS training.<sup>35</sup> The tertiary institutions were ordered to give admission preference to the NYS graduates. They were compelled to work with the NYS head office to make sure that the militias were granted first preference in all courses.<sup>36</sup> Those who were completing their tertiary courses in state-run tertiary institutions were forced to join NYTCs before they were conferred their qualifications. The government also implemented a policy that disallowed those without NYS training certificates from getting employed in the public

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<sup>29</sup> E. Obadare, *Statism, Youth and Civic Imagination. A Critical Study of the National Youth Corps Programme in Nigeria*. (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> *The Herald*, 13 October 2000.

<sup>31</sup> E. Were, ‘Rethinking the Relevance of the National Youth Service Scheme in Emerging Democratic States Evidence from Kenya’, *Journal of Global South Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2, (2019), pp.399-421.

<sup>32</sup> B. Zulu, ‘Manyika to table controversial bill in Parly’, *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 23 August 2002.

<sup>33</sup> *The Herald*, 2 July 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Solidarity Peace Trust, *National Youth Service Training – ‘Shaping Youths in a Truly Zimbabwean Manner.’ An Overview of Youth Militia Training and Activities in Zimbabwe, October 2000 - August 2003*, 5 September 2003.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *The Zimbabwean Independent*, 29 November 2002.

service.<sup>37</sup> Making the NYS certificate a *de-facto* prerequisite for admission into tertiary education and employment in the public service was a form of systematic coercion which left the youths with no option but to join the NYS training centres for the sake of socio-economic opportunities. Comparatively, the youth service in Tanzania, Kenya, Egypt and Rwanda are compulsory, but the programme can be taken up after completing tertiary education.<sup>38</sup>

The austere economic conditions typified by unbridled corruption and poverty dwindled the economic prospects, particularly for the bulging youth population. The few economic opportunities were non-existent without the NYS certificate. The NYS training became the only avenue with opportunities for their upward social mobility.<sup>39</sup> Concerning this, Andrew Makora said:

The NYS was a noble way out of poverty, especially for rural youths. I tried to get a job after finishing my 'O' level, but I was turned down many times. I had a lot of pressure to take care of my siblings since our parents had died. Being the eldest in the family meant I had to take up the duty to support my three sisters. The NYS was my last resort because it promised us to get employment in the civil service and fortunately, it helped me to join the army.<sup>40</sup>

Setfree Mafukidze related that many youths were after the socio-economic benefits attached to the NYS certificate. They were added to the government payroll as ghost workers or 'youth officers' once they graduated.<sup>41</sup> This connotes that the NYS was intended to reward those who were prepared to undertake the ZANU-PF indoctrination course and to marginalise youth from non-ZANU-PF families. Accordingly, Honwana argued that the dearth of economic opportunities pushes many youths to join political party militias or participate in politics of extremities.<sup>42</sup>

The fear of electoral violence also played a role in recruiting youths into the NYS programme. Concerning this Tawanda Chipere stated:

Some youths in UMP joined the programme to shield their families from the violence that accompanied elections. People always accuse each other of being a sell-out, either to

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<sup>37</sup> Solidarity Peace Trust, National Youth Service Training – 'Shaping Youths in a Truly Zimbabwean Manner.' An Overview of Youth Militia Training and Activities in Zimbabwe, October 2000 - August 2003, 5 September 2003.

<sup>38</sup> E. Were, 'Rethinking the Relevance of the National Youth Service Scheme in Emerging Democratic States Evidence from Kenya', *Journal of Global South Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2, (2019), pp.399-421.

<sup>39</sup> R. Shumba, Social Identities in the National Youth Service of Zimbabwe, Masters' thesis, (Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg, 2006), p.49.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Andrew Makora, in Jerusalem, Highfields, on 15 January 2020

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Setfree Mafukidze, WhatsApp, 13 July 2020.

<sup>42</sup> A. Honwana, *Child Soldiers in Africa*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006)

settle their old scores or for other reasons. So, having someone in the NYS saved many families from brutalisation by the party youths. In some cases, parents forced their children to enlist in the NYS so that they were not suspected to be MDC supporters.<sup>43</sup>

Some participants like Ratidzo Muusha and Andrew Makora also stated that the ZANU-PF structures in rural areas were active in coercing youths to join the NYS.<sup>44</sup> While youths were coerced to join the youth service, some voluntarily joined the programme. Setfree Mafukidze said these youths were lured by the power and impunity that came with the green uniforms. They wanted to use this power to create their socio-economic fortunes in their communities.<sup>45</sup> This implies that youths were not mere victims of ZANU-PF coercive politics, but they were also agents driven by diverse self-interests.

Although youths were subjected to coercion, they did not conform to the state's coercive policies. Setfree Mafukidze mentioned that some youths in urban areas did not recruit into NYS, they managed to instrumentalise the economic disorder in the country by starting informal businesses such as running unregistered private taxis or *mushikashika*, selling fuel on the black market, selling *mabhero* (second-hand clothes) at Mupedzanhamo flea markets, money changing, scavenging items at garbage sites for recycling, and so on, to sustain their lives.<sup>46</sup> In rural areas like UMP, Tawanda Chipere mentioned that youths ventured into agricultural projects, especially growing tomatoes and supplied Harare, Shamva and Bindura. Some became involved in gold panning along the Mazoe river and Nyadire river.<sup>47</sup> These activities distracted their mind and shielded them from recruiting into youth service. This reveals that some youths in both urban and rural areas were able to evade the state's coercive conscription. Therefore, youths were not docile conformers to state coercion, they were conscious of their situation and they were able to exercise agency.

Over and above, the NYS was, to a greater extent, a centre-piece of state manipulation and coercion. The state coerced youths to join the NYS training directly or indirectly through its social engineering strategies. It seems some of the ideas that shaped the Zimbabwean NYS were borrowed from the fascist German. The Nazi government compelled all German male

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<sup>43</sup> Interview with Tawanda Chipere, in Dindi Village, in UMP, 09 December 2020.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Andrew Makora, in Jerusalem, Highfields, on 15 January 2020; Interview with Ratidzo Muusha, in Nyadire Village, UMP, 14 December 2019.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Setfree Mafukidze, on WhatsApp, 13 July 2020;

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Tawanda Chipere, in Dindi Village, in UMP, 09 December 2020.

youths to become Hitler Youth.<sup>48</sup> Those who did not go through the youth training camps were deprived of jobs and university placement.<sup>49</sup> Thus Ross asserted that politicians in the contemporary world are reading Hitler's autobiography, *Mein Kampf* (My struggle), to get ideas on how to safeguard their hegemony and dominate the political space.<sup>50</sup> The next subsection examines how the NYS were trained.

### **'Shaping youth in a truly Zimbabwean manner': The NYS training**

The initial policy statements from the state officials constantly obscured the military element in the youth training, they merely focused on its skills development capability and 'patriotism' aspects. The military drills which encompassed weaponry training were chief elements of the NYS training. Although the ZANU-PF regime publicly refuted the military aspect of the NYS training<sup>51</sup>, many participants confirmed that the youth training involved military drills. Webster Chizema described the training as 'half military' since they spent most of the time doing rigorous physical workouts and weapon training.<sup>52</sup> Ratidzo Muusha, a former NYS member, substantiated that they used to wake up early in the morning, around 3 am, run for roughly 15 km, and do about 200 push-ups. Those who showed signs of laziness or failed to do these exercises were severely throbbed by the commanding officers. Muusha stated, "we were taught to march militarily and how to handle weapons, although we often used broomsticks instead of guns. We were also taught some military survival strategies, how to set up roadblocks and how to harass the enemies."<sup>53</sup> However, despite this overwhelming evidence, the ZANU-PF officials especially Elliot Manyika indignantly disapproved that the NYS was designed to turn youths into foot soldiers who could embark on military-like operations to defend the ZANU-PF hegemony.<sup>54</sup>

In July 2003, the state finally conceded to the denied policy of weapon training in youth service when Sidney Sekeramayi (then Minister of Defence) stated that the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) was a key stakeholder in the NYS training programme.<sup>55</sup> Sekeramayi

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<sup>48</sup> H. W. Koch, *The Hitler Youth: Origin and development, 1922-1945*. (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000); J. T. Lauridsen, 'Hitler Youth,' in P. S. Fass (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society, Volume 2: World History in Context*, (2004), pp.430-431, [www.ic.galegroup.com](http://www.ic.galegroup.com), Accessed on 30 July 2020.

<sup>49</sup> R. J. Evans, *The Third Reich in power*. (New York: Penguin Group 2005)

<sup>50</sup> E. Ross, 'Hitler Youth: Hitler secret weapon,' 2011, [www.logos-publishing.com](http://www.logos-publishing.com), Accessed on 30 June 2020.

<sup>51</sup> *The Herald*, 'Youth training is not military training', 8 January 2002.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Webster Chizema, in Highfields, 16 January 2020

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Ratidzo Muusha, in Nyadire Village, UMP, 14 December 2019.

<sup>54</sup> L. Makamure, 'Kunonga Holed Up in Anglican Cathedral', *Zimbabwe Independent*, 15 February 2008; Thompson, Ginger "Mugabe's Recruits Flee Brutal Zimbabwean Past". *The New York Times*, 15 April 2003.

<sup>55</sup> *The Chronicle*, 17 July 2003.

stated that the NYS should encompass weapon training and the youths would become a standby force (under the military command) to defend the nation.<sup>56</sup> The announcement of the state's 'intention' to introduce weaponry training indicated that the state eventually owned up to its 'de facto' policy. Besides, the NYS was a highly militarized institution run by persons with a military background. Although the Director of the NYS, David Munyoro, was a non-combatant, the organisation was overseen by Retired Brigadier Boniface Hurungudu and the NYS training centres were managed by Colonel Josphat Shumba, who was an ex-Director of Military Intelligence. In this regard, Kriger argued that the NYS were trained by the military personnel who had publicly declared that they will never recognize any leader other than Mugabe.<sup>57</sup> This distinctly reflects the nature of skills imparted to the youths in the NYTCs. Comparatively, the current Tanzanian NYS and Ugandan *Chakamchaka* programs were also attached to the military to maintain a reserve force of youth.<sup>58</sup>

Research confirms that the NYS programme was disguised as paramilitary training. On being asked about other skills (such as agriculture, carpentry, and welding, among others) which the government claimed that they were being trained, Webster Chizema and other participants established that they were not taught any other skills besides paramilitary skills.<sup>59</sup> Most of the participants seemed to be adamant about such training. The NYS training shared some similarities with that of the Hitler Youth and Malawi Young Pioneer (MYP) which also incorporated combat skills.<sup>60</sup> These kinds of skills were meant to generate dauntless, inhumane and forceful youths.<sup>61</sup>

Besides, the National Strategic Studies (NSS) syllabus was an essential component of the NYS programme. Ranger stated that youths were taught a one-dimensional version of history

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> N. J. Kriger, 'War veteran: Continuities between the past and the present', *African studies quarterly*, Vol. 7, Issue 2 & 3, (2003), pp. 139-152.

<sup>58</sup> 'National Service', <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/tanzania/national-service.htm>, Accessed on 22 July 2020; Human Rights & Peace Centre and Liu Institute for Global Issues, *The Hidden War, The Forgotten People: War in Acholiland and Its Ramifications For Peace and Security in Uganda* (Kampala: Human Rights & Peace Centre and Vancouver: Liu Institute for Global Issues, 2003), <https://allafrica.com/view/resource/main/main/id/00010178.html>, Accessed on 19 July 2020.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Webster Chizema, in Highfields, 16 January 2020; Interview with Andrew Makora, in Jerusalem, Highfields, on 15 January 2020

<sup>60</sup> The Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) was a youth service programme which was turned into a paramilitary wing of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). See P. Banda, 'Political violence by ruling party youth militias threatens credibility of upcoming elections', *Special Feature: In Placid Malawi, Shades of Mugabe's Zimbabwe*, <https://saiaa.org.za/research/special-feature-in-placid-malawi-shades-of-mugabes-zimbabwe/>, Accessed on 28 October 2020.

<sup>61</sup> Storm Front, 'Hitler and the youth' 20 September 2007, <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t42220/>, Accessed on 2 August 2020.

that extolled Mugabe and ZANU-PF and ignores the roles played by non-ZANU-PF groups and individuals.<sup>62</sup> In line with this, an interviewee, Nathan Gatsi revealed:

...when teaching history, the instructors concentrated on the brutalities of the colonial rule, land removals and how the blacks suffered the burden of colonial bondage. They reminded us how the ZANLA guerrillas sacrificed themselves for the country to attain independence. We were told to model ourselves on the leadership of Robert Mugabe and prop up his ideas and vision for Zimbabwe. Patriotic history was drilled into our heads to the extent that we began to view the whites and everyone associated with them as our enemies. We were taught to be watchful and ready to defend the country against the western proxies (*zvimbwasungata*) and sell-outs (*vatengesesi*) who were conduits of neo-colonialism. We were trained to be the ‘educators’ of the masses, especially the rural youths, to make them understand *gwara remusangano* (ZANU-PF party ideology).<sup>63</sup>

The NYS was a model of state coercion that compelled youths to espouse ZANU-PF views and its violent political culture. In this regard, Oosterom argued that the NYS was intended to develop ‘good citizenship’ among the youths premised on loyalty to the ruling party, and thus open to partisan indoctrination.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, Kamuzu Banda’s Young Pioneers in Malawi were brainwashed to embrace Kamuzuism and the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) philosophy of loyalty, obedience, discipline and unity.<sup>65</sup> The youths were taught to perceive the ZANU-PF hegemonic battle against the MDC as ‘war’ against the agents of the West and the youths had an obligation to deploy violence against all defectors. Therefore, the NYS was a hegemonic project intended to reproduce the liberation war narrative and inculcate undemocratic, racist and xenophobic mentalities in the youths.

The tutors used a document called “*Inside the Third Chimurenga*” (a compilation of Mugabe's speeches) as a manual. This document extolled Mugabe, the *Third Chimurenga* and other ZANU-PF officials, especially Border Gezi and Chenjerai Hunzvi. Many participants mentioned that they were never given a chance to read this handbook personally. Shadreck Kaseke, who was a tutor at Border Gezi Training Centre in Mt Darwin, said:

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<sup>62</sup> T. Ranger, ‘Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30, 2 (2004), pp. 215–35.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Nathan Gatsi, in Mutawatawa Areas, UMP, on 16 December 2020.

<sup>64</sup> M. A. Oosterom and Lloyd Pswarayi, *Being a Born-free. Violence, Youth and Agency in Zimbabwe*, Institute of Development Studies Research Report, Vol. 2014, No. 79.

<sup>65</sup> P. Banda, ‘Political violence by ruling party youth militias threatens credibility of upcoming elections’, *Special Feature: In Placid Malawi, Shades of Mugabe’s Zimbabwe*, <https://saiia.org.za/research/special-feature-in-placid-malawi-shades-of-mugabes-zimbabwe/>, Accessed on 28 October 2020.

The NYS teaching material comprised of ZANU-PF campaign materials and political speeches. The ultimate goal was to change the youths' mindset, to see Zimbabwe without Mugabe and ZANU-PF as impossible. The material contained some anti-colonial views that cultivated a liberation struggle-based entitlement discourse as the legitimising doctrine for ZANU-PF to stay in power.<sup>66</sup>

Andrew Makora stated that the youths were given paperback vernacular pamphlets which contained adverts urging the reader to vote for ZANU-PF. Most of them had a voting paper on the front cover and subtitled "Vote ZANU-PF" with an X (voter's mark) opposite the ZANU-PF emblem.<sup>67</sup> The training materials were uncouthly racist and they denigrated the MDC accusing it of pursuing the return colonialism in the country.<sup>68</sup> The NYS curriculum was designed to brainwash the youth and turn them into a forceful electioneering tool for ZANU-PF.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, the Hitler Youth were trained using Hitler's autobiography, *Mein Kampf* which contained the Nazi ideological frameworks such as one-partyism, the leadership cult, ultra-nationalism and anti-communism.<sup>70</sup>

The NYS training did not encourage youths to think logically or search for the truth on their own but it made them become obedient enthusiasts who take instructions from their ZANU-PF leaders unquestionably. A former NYS brigade, Tapiwa Chipere remarked:

The NYS was like a religious cult. The youths were taught to perceive Robert Mugabe as a demi-god. Mugabe was a cult leader who was idolised with absolute devotion. Our tutors portrayed those who do not support ZANU-PF as malevolent people who conspire to harm Mugabe and ZANU-PF. We had to memorise ZANU-PF slogans and catchwords used to repel criticism of the ZANU-PF. Once you joined the NYS there was no going back as those who tried to desert were perceived as sell-outs and they were disappeared or killed.<sup>71</sup>

Issues like this prompted Mamvura to ask the question: Is Mugabe also among the national deities?<sup>72</sup> The NYS was associated with what Gramsci termed as 'statolatry' since veneration

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<sup>66</sup> Interview with Shadreck Kaseke, WhatsApp Conversation, December 2021.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Andrew Makora, in Jerusalem, Highfields, on 15 January 2020.

<sup>68</sup> T. Ranger, 'Nationalist historiography, patriotic history and the history of the nation: the struggle over the past in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*. Vol. 30, No. 2, (2004) p.215.

<sup>69</sup> *IOL*, MPs horrified at Zim youth camps – report, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/mps-horrified-at-zim-youth-camps-report-354507>, Accessed on 29 July 2020.

<sup>70</sup> R. J. Evans, *The Third Reich in power*. (New York: Penguin Group, 2005); I. Kershaw, *Hitler: A biography*. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008)

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Tawanda Chipere, in Dindi Village, in UMP, 09 December 2020.

<sup>72</sup> Z. Mamvura, 'Is Mugabe also among the National Deities and Kings: Place Renaming and the Appropriation of African Chieftainship Ideals and Spirituality in Mugabe's Zimbabwe', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, (2021).

and aggrandizement of the Mugabe government were above anything else, including personal well-being and independent thought. The NYS training inculcated fanaticism as these youths were made to perceive the ZANU-PF rule as 'perpetual'.

While the youths were being trained to violate their fellow citizens, they were also victims of human rights violations during their training period. The training facilities were poorly constructed and the living conditions were very harsh. Many participants confirmed that their dormitories had no proper doors and sometimes they saw snakes and scorpions inside. The camps were frequently hit by food shortages.<sup>73</sup> According to a parliamentary report, the trainees could sometimes sleep without eating anything and they were repetitively given *Sadza* (thick maize porridge) and cabbage or beans every lunch.<sup>74</sup> Tapera Kamukore, who trained at Border Gezi Training Centre in 2003, mentioned that:

We suffered from hunger, especially during the last two months of the six-month training. The food rations were mediocre. Those who resided in the areas close to the camp received some foodstuffs from their parents. The instructors justified the food shortages as a purposeful technique to impart some military survival skills.<sup>75</sup>

Like in Eritrea, the conditions in the NYS training camps increased the number of deserters who fled to neighbouring countries.<sup>76</sup> The programme was poorly financed and training centres were compelled to shut down in 2006 due to resource constraints. The conclusive conscription of youths occurred in 2005.<sup>77</sup>

Besides hunger, some female trainees were sexually molested by both male tutors and trainees.<sup>78</sup> These female trainees were sexually abused by multiple molesters almost every night. Ratidzo Muusha, who trained at Border Gezi Training Centre, stated that they slept in the same dormitories as boys. The tutors and boys frequently raped them. She was raped almost every night and she had no one to tell. She tried to report the issue to the desk commander but he flogged her with a sjambok.<sup>79</sup> In this realm, Pius Ncube stated 'I have

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<sup>73</sup> *IOL*, MPs horrified at Zim youth camps – report, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/mps-horrified-at-zim-youth-camps-report-354507>, Accessed on 29 July 2020.

<sup>74</sup> Solidarity Peace Trust, National Youth Service Training - "Shaping Youths in a Truly Zimbabwean Manner." An Overview of Youth Militia Training and Activities in Zimbabwe, October 2000 - August 2003, 5 September 2003.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Tapera Kamukore, in Chidodo village, UMP, on 28 November 2019.

<sup>76</sup> UK Home Office, Country Policy and Information Note: Eritrea: National Service and Illegal Exit, version 5.0 (London: Independent Advisory Group on Country Information, July 2018), <https://www.refworld.org/publisher,UKHO,,ERI,5b4f28f7,0.html>, Accessed on 10 September 2020.

<sup>77</sup> C. Manyukwe, 'Youth training centres closed,' *Zimbabwe Independent*, 12 May 2006.

<sup>78</sup> *IOL*, MPs horrified at Zim youth camps – report, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/mps-horrified-at-zim-youth-camps-report-354507>, Accessed on 29 July 2020.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Ratidzo Muusha, in Nyadire Village, UMP, 14 December 2019.

heard that some of the girls have found themselves engaging in abortion because they had unwanted pregnancies and they couldn't say no to their superiors, to the authorities, who were training them in these camps.'<sup>80</sup> Some girls who were subjected to rapes were as young as 11 years old. These rampant sexual activities accelerated the spread of HIV, and unwanted pregnancies and destroyed the future of the victims. Moreover, the youths were exposed to drugs such as marijuana and alcohol during the training. Several participants mentioned that drugs and alcohol were always available despite some food shortages.<sup>81</sup> The victims of violence observed that the NYS trainees seemed to be always intoxicated when they embarked on their torture missions against the opposition supporters. The youths were told that if they engaged in their violent missions whilst intoxicated, they would not remember what they have done; *alas*, they still remember.<sup>82</sup>

However, some youths joined the NYS and realised that its ideologies and objectives were against their beliefs and they deserted. It was treasonous to desert NYS and the deserters used migration as a safety valve. Some fled to neighbouring countries and others went to the UK and Australia. John Chirara related:

I voluntarily joined the NYS because I was looking forward to getting a university placement upon finishing the youth service course. I was at Mount Darwin Training Centre. The living conditions at that camp were like hell. We were traumatised. Girls were raped, we were beaten for no specific reason and sometimes we went to bed on an empty stomach. We were taught violence and this was against my values as I was raised in a Christian family. We planned to escape with my friends. We fled early in the morning before the 15 km jogging routine. we just left without anything, only the clothes that we wearing. We got help from so many people until we managed to get to Botswana.<sup>83</sup>

Chirara's story shows that youths do not always conform to the state's coercion policies. He deserted the youth service training after realising that it was not harmonious with their values and ambitions. He chose to exile himself rather than sacrifice his values. This implies that youths are a social group with a sense of agency.

All things considered, the NYS training was a hegemonic project intended to reorient and capture the youths using the ZANU-PF ideology (Mugabeism), and turn them into tools of

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<sup>80</sup> Pius Ncube cited in the Solidarity Peace Trust, National Youth Service Training - "Shaping Youths in a Truly Zimbabwean Manner." An Overview of Youth Militia Training and Activities in Zimbabwe, October 2000 - August 2003, 5 September 2003.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Tapera Kamukore, in Chidodo village, UMP, on 28 November 2019.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Interview with John Chirara, NYS participant, in Manyika Village 03 January 2020.

coercion. According to Dodo, ‘the programme was intended to generate youths who could forsake their relatives, and could not respect life and the sanctity of human blood, all for the survival of their party.’<sup>84</sup> Like the Kenyan NYS and the Rwandan *ingando*, the Zimbabwean NYS curriculum promoted the authoritarian position and ideologies of the ruling party.<sup>85</sup> This creates a need to revisit Simon Muzenda’s argument that the NYS programme was ‘shaping youths in a Zimbabwean manner’.<sup>86</sup> The next section discusses how the NYS militias operated in Highfields and UMP.

### **‘We were ZANU-PF’s team B’: The instrumentalization of the NYS brigades as ZANU-PF militia**

Upon finishing the training, the NYS brigades were given uniforms (military fatigues which earned them the pseudonym ‘Green Bombers’) and sanctioned to operate as eyes and ears of the government in their communities.<sup>87</sup> These youths were a predatory army of bandits who roamed around the country perpetrating physical and psychological violence against their fellow Zimbabweans with impunity. Vincent Kahiya described the NYS graduates as “... bands of brutes trained to become willing instruments of ZANU-PF in its terror campaign against the opposition.”<sup>88</sup> Tafara Chidziva, a former NYS brigade, provided a clear picture of the nature of NYS graduates and their operations. He remarked:

We perceived everything negatively. We were an angry and violent band of youths. When we happened to go to shopping centres and meet people purchasing their stuff, we would get jealous and irritated. We used to disturb people buying in shops owned by suspected supporters of the MDC. We could plunder their shops or even burn them. This spirit of vandalism was infused in us during the training. Our acts were forms of revenge after the six months of mistreatment in the training camps. We mainly targeted areas with a lot of opposition supporters. We used to engage in operations that the state did not want the army to do. So that it could lay the blame for all the violent activities on youths. To be précised the army was the ‘A’ team and we were ZANU-PF’s ‘B’ team.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> O. Dodo, Youth and Violence in Zimbabwe: Youth Involvement in Political Violence between 1999 and 2011. [http://www.academia.edu/3681662/Youth\\_and\\_Violence\\_in\\_Zimbabwe\\_Youth\\_Involvement\\_in\\_Political\\_Violence\\_between\\_1999\\_and\\_2011](http://www.academia.edu/3681662/Youth_and_Violence_in_Zimbabwe_Youth_Involvement_in_Political_Violence_between_1999_and_2011), Accessed on 28 October 2020.

<sup>85</sup> E. Were, ‘Rethinking the Relevance of the National Youth Service Scheme in Emerging Democratic States Evidence from Kenya’, *Journal of Global South Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2, (2019), pp.399-421.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> The NYS brigades had several names these include the Green Bombers owing to their uniforms (military fatigues), Border Gezi after the name of the founder of NYS, the Taliban after the Islamic terrorist group called Taliban or ZANU-PF militias etc.

<sup>88</sup> *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 1 February 2002.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Tafara Chidziva, in Canaan, Highfields, on 16 January 2020.

In this realm, Welshman Ncube, then Secretary-General of the MDC, criticised the NYS training for transforming youths into felons and bandits who terrorised harmless citizens including their parents and relatives.<sup>90</sup> Like the Malawi Young Pioneers, the NYS brigades were a fundamental tool in the operationalisation of the incumbent's one-party totalitarianism and internal terrorism.<sup>91</sup> These youths were tasked to intimidate, displace or murder political dissents.<sup>92</sup> Given this, Ottaway argued that authoritarian regimes turn to paramilitary violence in times of political and economic crisis to terrorise and subdue their opponents.<sup>93</sup>

The NYS brigades and the ZANU-PF Youth League were fundamental campaigning tools for the party in every election (including the by-elections). They sought to stifle and silence the opposition through intimidation and ruthless persecution of its members. The pattern of torture intensified during the build-up period for elections and after the elections. In Highfields, Paul Matanga, an interviewee, stated:

The brigades used to interrupt MDC rallies and harass the supporters. They could throw stones at the crowd to displace them. On several occasions, the brigades together with the Youth League and war veterans invaded the rally venues before the rally starts so that the MDC members would arrive and see them occupying the area. This could force the MDC officials to cancel the rallies because the police were refusing to help them.<sup>94</sup>

In UMP, Ratidzo Muusha said the NYS brigades mobilised the local youths and they engaged in a door-to-door campaign, assaulting or killing those perceived to be opposition supporters. They also vandalised their properties including their granaries with agricultural produces.<sup>95</sup> These violent instances, sometimes, forced MDC contestants to withdraw their candidature in parliamentary or council elections before the voting day.<sup>96</sup> In Frimpong-Ansah terms, the NYS brigades were a “political capital” to ZANU-PF politicians, exploited and politicised for personal ambitions.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *The Daily News*, 3 July 2002.

<sup>91</sup> K. M. Phiri, ‘A Case of Revolutionary Change in Contemporary Malawi: The Malawi Army and the Disarming of the Malawi Young Pioneers’, *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Military Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2000), <https://web.archive.org/web/20110721214828/http://www.uz.ac.zw/units/cds/journals/volume1/number1/article3.html>, Accessed on 28 July 2020

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> See M. Ottaway, *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-authoritarianism* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003).

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Paul Matanga, in Highfields, on 17 January 2020.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Ratidzo Muusha, in Nyadire Village, UMP, 14 December 2019.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*; ZESN Report on Local Authority Election 28-29 September 2002, p.8.

<sup>97</sup> J. H. Frimpong-Ansah, *The vampire state in Africa: The political economy of decline in Ghana*. (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1991).

Many participants in both Highfields and UMP mentioned that NYS brigades used to set up their bases adjacent to polling stations. In 2002, the MDC exposed about 146 militia bases that were situated close to the voting station. The brigades were tasked to ensure that in more than 50 percent of voting stations, MDC agents were incapable of providing a chain of custody of the ballot boxes or constantly monitoring the voting process.<sup>98</sup> These youths used to beat or abduct the MDC polling agents *en route* to either voting stations or counting centres.<sup>99</sup> In UMP communities, they camped near the entry points of the voting stations, watching the arriving voters and instructing them to vote for ZANU-PF. They also attacked known MDC supporters when they come to voting stations. Thus, Aalen and Muriaas argued that the party militias were a fundamental instrument in manipulating the electoral outcome.<sup>100</sup>

In the post-election phase, the NYS brigades and other ZANU-PF agents were involved in retributive attacks on the MDC politicians and their supporters. Mrs. Muzumba stated that in UMP, the ZANU-PF politicians used the NYS brigades and the youth wing to violate people who were suspected to have voted for the opposition [during the 2002 Presidential elections and 2005 Parliamentary elections]. Many people were forced to leave their homes and hide in hills and mountains. These youths committed many atrocities including rape, wrecking houses, murder, and paralysing innocent people.<sup>101</sup> In Highfield, Tafara Chidziva mentioned;

The ZANU-PF politicians based the NYS brigades from different parts of the country. These youths were ruthless and fearless; they disappeared, burnt, or hewed MDC supporters with axes during the night. They were allowed to operate from council halls and libraries. They prevented the injured from getting medical assistance from nearby clinics.<sup>102</sup>

The MDC officials who had acted as election agents were among those who suffered the worst violence. Mrs. Muzumba said it was easier to track down MDC election agents since their names and physical addresses were published in the newspapers before the election.<sup>103</sup> Like Kwame Nkrumah's Young Pioneers in Ghana, the main function of the NYS brigades was to promote a culture of fear since they kept their communities under surveillance and

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<sup>98</sup> ZHRNGO Forum report, *ibid*, AI, *ibid*, MDC, *ibid*.

<sup>99</sup> Amnesty International, 'Zimbabwe: Hundreds Detained in Politically-Motivated Crackdown.' Press Release. 2002. <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/zimbabwe-hundredsdetained-politically-motivated-crackdown>, Accessed 30 June 2020.

<sup>100</sup> L. Aalen and R. Muriaas, *Manipulating Political Decentralisation: Africa's Inclusive Autocrats*. (London: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Mrs. Muzumba, a former chimbwido, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Tafara Chidziva, in Canaan, Highfields, on 16 January 2020.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*; Interview with Mrs. Muzumba, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

cracked down on any forms of dissents.<sup>104</sup> Thus Bratton and Masunungure argued that ZANU-PF utilised its 'degrees in violence' to carry out an 'election cleansing' to eliminate those who were bidding to outmaneuver them from power.<sup>105</sup>

The NYS brigades set up illegal roadblocks and imposed unofficial curfews to restrict free movement and association of people.<sup>106</sup> They harassed those who walked after dark. These youths forced people to carry ZANU-PF membership cards wherever they go and produce them on demand. According to Mrs. Muzumba:

They stopped all the vehicles travelling to and from Uzumba and asked the travellers to show their party cards. Those who did not have the party cards were not only subjected to severe torture but their national identity cards and items were stolen. They were also forced to buy the cards at the roadblocks.<sup>107</sup>

In Zimbabwe, a national identity card is virtually the only source of personal identity people possess and it should be carried around all the time. Having your national identity card stolen is equivalent to having your vote stolen since one cannot vote without proof of identity. During the 2002 election, about 1 300 stolen identity cards have been reported to human rights organisations.<sup>108</sup> Forcing people to buy ZANU-PF cards was a lucrative business for the party as hundreds of thousands of people purchased these cards. The party raised a lot of campaign funds through card sales, chiefly at the hands of the NYS brigades.<sup>109</sup> Mrs. Muzumba also mentioned that since 2003, the NYS brigades imposed a compulsory system of 'registration' on both residents and visitors, which coerced them to report their movements (in and out of UMP) to the Youth League or the brigades. They also used their roadblocks to inhibit the MDC from deploying its polling agents in UMP communities. In Cote d'Ivoire,

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<sup>104</sup> L. Aalen and R. Muriaas, *Manipulating Political Decentralisation: Africa's Inclusive Autocrats*. (London: Routledge, 2018). J. Gandhi and E. Lust-Okar, 'Elections Under Authoritarianism', *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12, (2009), pp.403-422; O. Hodzi, 'The youth factor in Zimbabwe's 2013 harmonised elections,' *Journal of African Elections*, Vol. 13, No. 2, (2014), pp.48-70.

<sup>105</sup> M. Bratton and E. V. Masunungure, 'Zimbabwe's Long Agony', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 4, (2008), p.51.

<sup>106</sup> Solidarity Peace Trust, National Youth Service Training - "Shaping Youths in a Truly Zimbabwean Manner." An Overview of Youth Militia Training and Activities in Zimbabwe, October 2000 - August 2003, 5 September 2003.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Mrs. Muzumba, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>108</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum Research Unit, 'Briefing Paper No. 1: Pre-Election Danger Signals of Large-Scale Disenfranchisement', p. 68.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

Laurent Gbagbo's Young Patriot operated in the same manner. They used roadblocks to stop the activities of the opposition in the strongholds of the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI).<sup>110</sup>

The NYS graduates were tasked to 'conscientize' and 're-educate' those who defected from ZANU-PF. They were deployed to rural areas since (in Fanonian terms) the rural peasants were believed to be good absorbers of the 'revolutionary' propaganda.<sup>111</sup> The activities of the brigades were vehemently reinforced by state-run media which was used to broadcast anything that legitimised ZANU-PF's stay in power. The radio stations repetitively played Elliot Manyika's songs called *Norah*. In this song, Manyika urged ZANU-PF enthusiasts to 're-educate' and 'encourage' those who left ZANU-PF for the opposition. He also mentioned that '*ZANU ndeye ropa*' (ZANU-PF is a product of blood and violence). The song subtly perpetrated political violence since NYS brigades, who were mandated to be the educators of the masses, were trained to intimidate and pester the opposition supporters. To these youths, 're-education' of defectors to be patriotic was synonymous with brutalization and forcing them to support ZANU-PF. In UMP the brigades and the Youth Leagues organised re-education meetings (*pungwes*) which were usually held during the night. They compelled people to wear party regalia and sing the songs of liberation struggles during the meetings. Those who were accused to be sell-outs were beaten and embarrassed in public.<sup>112</sup> Like Gbagbo's Young Patriots in Côte d'Ivoire, the NYS brigades espoused a 'vitriolic discourse around patriotism and citizenship'.<sup>113</sup> Thus, Ranger argued that the NYS brigades were available to chastise their parents and relatives.<sup>114</sup>

Moreover, the NYS brigades directed political violence toward schools and teachers.<sup>115</sup> Generally, teachers were viewed as broad-minded people who were imparting alternative viewpoints to the young population. In UMP, some ZANU-PF politicians together with NYS brigades accused teachers of proselytising opposition politics in their classes. Thomas Kaseke recounted that between 2002 and 2013 teaching was a dangerous profession owing to several

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<sup>110</sup> HRW, Côte d'Ivoire: Violence Campaign by Security Forces, Militias, 26 January 2011, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/01/26/cote-divoire-violence-campaign-security-forces-militias>, Accessed on 20 September 2020.

<sup>111</sup> F. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*. C. Farrington (trans.) (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963), p.114.

<sup>112</sup> Interview with Ratidzo Muusha, in Nyadire Village, UMP, 14 December 2019.

<sup>113</sup> See R. Marshall-Fratani, 'The War of "Who Is Who": Autochthony, Nationalism, and Citizenship in the Ivoirian Crisis', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 49, No. 2, (2006), pp. 9-43.

<sup>114</sup> T. Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, (2004), pp.215-234

<sup>115</sup> Human Rights NGO Forum, teaching them a lesson: A report on the attack on Zimbabwean teachers summarises some of the attacks on school buildings, teachers and pupils. September 14, 2002, <https://www.hrforumzim.org/publications/reports-on-political-violence/teaching-them-a-lesson-a-report-on-the-attack-on-zimbabwean-teachers/>, Accessed on 28 November 2020.

episodes of youth violence which forced many teachers to run away from their schools. The militias severely beat teachers and looted their houses.<sup>116</sup> During the elections, they set up their bases near schools that were used as voting stations.<sup>117</sup> Ephraim confirmed that during the 2005 and 2008 elections the NYS militias took over schools in Chidodo and turned them into their barracks and torture camps.<sup>118</sup> In these schools, the normal teaching activities were impeded due to the harassment of teachers. Since these schools were used as voting stations, it means voting in UMP communities took place in militia camps. Given that the voting venues were associated with youth violence it means people were not free to vote for their choices.

The NYS brigades fervently participated in the anarchic land appropriations or the *Third Chimurenga* as they were promised the status of future war veterans, land and incentives.<sup>119</sup> The benefits attached to 'heroism' stimulated many youths into unrestrained fits of hatred and rage against white people whom they identified as *muveengi*- the enemy. Paul Matanga explained the role of these youths during the *Third Chimurenga*:

The ZANU-PF politicians and military bosses sent the NYS brigades, war veterans, and other hired youths to terrorise and evict white farmers off the land. They were ferried with government and army trucks to different areas to partake in these violent land seizures. Farmworkers were forced to attend re-education meetings, and those who failed to attend were beaten. Farm managers suffered the worst violence as they were perceived as tools of the white farmers. To the NYS brigades and other youths, this violent land reform was an opportunity of enriching themselves by stealing farm equipment, inputs (seeds, fertilizers, fuel), and farm produce and selling them on the black market. The land reform allowed them to do whatever they wanted, without any hindrance from the law.<sup>120</sup>

In tandem with this, Mutondi confirmed that youths were a major force in the land grabbing and most of them were motivated by incentives they were given by political elites.<sup>121</sup> The NYS brigades and the war veterans were ruthless when executing their mission. A participant, Tafara Chidziva revealed that they smeared Derek (a white farmer who had a farm in Murewa) with cow dung and drenched him in dirty water for continuing to stay on his

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<sup>116</sup> *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 1 March 2002.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Donald Chaora, in Manyika Village, 28 November 2019.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Ephraim, in Chidodo Village, 16 December 2019.

<sup>119</sup> Interview with Ratidzo Muusha, in Nyadire Village, UMP, 14 December 2019.

<sup>120</sup> Interview with Paul Matanga, in Highfields, 18 January 2020.

<sup>121</sup> B.P. Mutondi, *Fast Track Land Reform*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 2012), p.67.

farm, which was not designated for acquisition in the state's land reform programme.<sup>122</sup> The *Third Chimurenga* was a strategy to gain the support of ordinary Zimbabweans by allocating them land and at the same time punishing white commercial farmers for bankrolling the MDC.<sup>123</sup>

In some instances, the NYS brigades took advantage of the political disorder in the country. Since 2000, Zimbabwe witnessed galloping inflation and some commodities became either expensive or scarce. The brigades took over the state's responsibility of enforcing price controls, they ransacked retail stores and tuck shops found selling commodities above the price marked by the government. They often raided and looted shops in the presence of police, who usually showed no interest to prevent this.<sup>124</sup> Some of the looted goods were sold on the black market at exorbitant prices. For instance, the brigades attacked a supermarket at Machipisa shopping centre (in Highfield), accusing the shop owner, Shepstone Matanhire, of causing shortages to make the ZANU-PF regime look bad. Paul Matanga, related this story:

We were queuing at Matanhire's supermarket waiting for sugar to be delivered that morning. Upon the arrival of the delivery van, a group of Border Gezi youths appeared wielding sjamboks and batons. Many people run away when they saw them. They approached the shop owner and accused him of overcharging goods, and they commanded him to load up about 200kg of the sugar into their truck. The truck was then taken to an isolated area and they shared the sugar among themselves. These youths were seen selling the looted goods on the black market, charging double or thrice the official price.<sup>125</sup>

This shows that NYS brigades have gotten themselves an unsavoury reputation for plundering shops under the facade of enforcing the state's price controls. In UMP, Langton confirmed that these youth militias operated in the same manner. It was hard to operate a retail shop since these youths were taking advantage of price controls to pillage shops.<sup>126</sup> However, in communities where many people were facing abject poverty, the brigades were amassing unprecedented wealth as some were able to build shops and buy motor vehicles in

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<sup>122</sup> Interview with Tafara Chidziva, in Canaan, Highfields, on 16 January 2020.

<sup>123</sup> J. Alexander, 'Squatters, veterans and the state in Zimbabwe', in B. Raftopoulos, A. Hammar and S. Jensen (eds.) *Zimbabwe's unfinished business: Rethinking land, state and nation in the context of crisis*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), pp.83-117; B. Raftopoulos, 'The state in crisis: Authoritarian nationalism, selective citizenship and distortions of democracy in Zimbabwe', in B. Raftopoulos, A. Hammar and S. Jensen (eds.) *Zimbabwe's unfinished business: Rethinking land, state and nation in the context of crisis*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), pp.217-241.

<sup>124</sup> *Financial Gazette*, 16 January 2003.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Paul Matanga, in Highfields, 18 January 2020.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Langton, in Uzumba Village, 13 December 2019.

their early twenties.<sup>127</sup> Given this, Mhike argued that the NYS brigades were not docile conformers to the state's strategies, some of them managed to negotiate within and outside the frame constructed by the state. They were agents driven by self-interests.

The NYS brigades were also involved in the politicisation of Grain Marketing Board (GMB) food and farming inputs. The Fast-track land reform was followed by a severe food crisis which made citizens dependent on food aid provided by humanitarian organisations. The government was the only licensed importer of maize and it was sold through the GMB at a regulated price. The youth militias and war veterans took over the role of selling maize at GMBs. This resulted in a surge of political discrimination as those who were perceived to be MDC supporters were not permitted to buy maize. The militias made ZANU-PF cards an 'internal passport' for one to buy maize. Several people, both in urban and rural areas suffered from starvation whilst the youth brigades and war veterans profited. In this regard, Mrs. Muzumba revealed that on several occasions, the militias hijacked trucks ferrying maize or farming inputs coming from the GMB depot in Murewa and declared the grain/ farming inputs to be given to ZANU-PF supporters only.<sup>128</sup> During the electoral campaigns, they also recorded the names of the electorates and promised them grain. In this regard, the Zimbabwe Electoral Supervisory Network (ZESN) stated that many people perceived voting as a means of alleviating hunger rather than a political right.<sup>129</sup> Ephraim confirmed that in UMP, voters were given grain after voting and most of the grain distribution points were situated adjacent to the voting stations. When distributing grain, the youths pronounced the slogan, '*Vhotera ZANU-PF kana kuti uchafa nenzara*' (Vote for ZANU-PF or starve). Some people were forced to pretend that they were illiterate so that they could then be 'assisted' to vote as they feared further violence and denial of food.<sup>130</sup> ZESN observed that there was a relationship between voting itself, voting for ZANU-PF and receiving food aid.<sup>131</sup> The ruling party exploited the food crisis as a great opportunity to manipulate the rural masses.<sup>132</sup> In this regard, Oosterom argued that the exclusion of MDC supporters from accessing socioeconomic resources was a form of political violence.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> Interview with Mrs. Muzumba, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>129</sup> Zimbabwe Electoral Supervisory Network (ZESN), 'Report on Local Authority Election 28-29 September 2002', p. 11,

<sup>130</sup> Interview with Ephraim, in Chidodo Village, 22 December 2019.

<sup>131</sup> Zimbabwe Electoral Supervisory Network (ZESN), 'Report on Local Authority Election 28-29 September 2002', p. 7.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> M. Oosterom and S. Gukurume Managing the born-free generation: Zimbabwe's strategies for dealing

Also, the war veteran and the brigades monitored the distribution of food aid from international donors.<sup>134</sup> Langton mentioned that some ZANU-PF politicians persuaded the World Food Programme (WFP) officials to situate their feeding schemes adjacent to the militia bases where MDC enthusiasts were persecuted during the elections.<sup>135</sup> Again, people suffered from political abuse of maize as the traditional leaders together with the NYS militia were involved in selecting people who were eligible to receive food aid as well as sharing the food packages.<sup>136</sup> It was difficult for the victims of the militia torture to access food. Violet Mashiri, an interviewee, stated these youths took the bags of maize which were supposed to be given to the perceived MDC families and shared them among themselves.<sup>137</sup> This politicisation of food aid also served to coerce people to support ZANU-PF.

Undeniably, it is clear that the political indoctrination in the NYS training centres resultantly created a group of youths championing the notions of 'self' and 'other'<sup>138</sup> thus the citizens experienced two hegemonies, that of the youths and that of ZANU-PF. While these youths executed ZANU-PF's dirty schemes, they created opportunities for themselves to accumulate wealth, using political violence. Noteworthy, the youth population constituted most of the victims of this violence. The NYS operations were only possible because of state support. Therefore, the next section analyses the collusion between NYS brigades and the state security structures.

### **The state security agents and NYS brigades**

The ZANU-PF government has, on many occasions, publicly denied its connection with youth brigades' violent activities yet it secretly sanctioned them to do the dirty work which could not be done by the army and police. During a parliamentary session in January 2002, John Nkomo, then Minister of Home Affairs, was asked by MDC MPs, why NYS brigades were setting up roadblocks and demanding people produce ZANU-PF membership cards. John Nkomo stated that the police were the only institution that had the right to set up roadblocks and if any other person was doing so, was violating the law and legal action

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with the youth, CMI Working Paper, No. 2, October 2019.

<sup>134</sup> P. Dzimiri, 'The Responsibility to Protect and the Youth: A Case Study of the Youth Activism in Zimbabwe', *Anthropologist*, Vol. 17 No. 2, (2004), pp.441-454; N. Kriger, 'ZANU PF politics under Zimbabwe's 'Power-Sharing' Government', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol. 30, No.1, (2012), pp.11-26.

<sup>135</sup> Interview with Langton, in Uzumba Village, 13 December 2019.

<sup>136</sup> M. Oosterom and L. Pswarayi, Being a Born-free. Violence, Youth and Agency in Zimbabwe, Institute of Development Studies Research Report, Vol. 2014, No. 79, December 2014.

<sup>137</sup> Interview with Violet Mashiri, in Manyika Village, 03 December 2019.

<sup>138</sup> R. Shumba, Social Identities in the National Youth Service of Zimbabwe, Masters' thesis, (Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg, 2006).

should be taken.<sup>139</sup> That said, the youth brigades continued to mount roadblocks and there were rare instances in which they were apprehended and prosecuted. On a few occasions, the police disassembled the roadblocks without arresting the lawbreakers. In January 2003, Wayne Bvudzijena, then police spokesperson, declared that the police were not colluding with the NYS brigades and that these youths could not seize the powers of the police, but they had the right to “effect a citizen’s arrest just like any other person”.<sup>140</sup> Nevertheless, some police officers who attempted to apprehend the NYS brigades for mounting roadblocks or other issues, found themselves being severely castigated by their superintendents or losing their jobs.<sup>141</sup> The collusion between the police and NYS brigades was not surprising since ZRP leadership was overtly partisan (Augustine Chihuri declared in 2001 that he will never salute any other president who was not Mugabe).

There were many reports that police virtually took no action against the NYS brigades whenever they perpetrated political violence.<sup>142</sup> The police were debilitated or could take half-hearted action as they feared losing their jobs or being viewed as MDC supporters. This is lucidly depicted in Tapera Kamukore’s account:

We used to beat up *vatenges* [sell-outs, MDC supporters], and we were not worried about the police because we knew that they could not arrest us. If they happened to arrest us it will be just for a few days and they released us. Whenever the victims of violence reported us, the police officers would talk to us aside and we would explain to them what happened. In many instances, the police advised us to change our statements, to say that we resorted to violence because the complainants had provoked us. The police instead arrested those who had reported us and encouraged us to continue beating up people. We realised that we were at liberty to do anything and no one could question us.<sup>143</sup>

The above narrative shows that the youth brigades violated people with impunity. Sometimes the police participated in violent activities together with the brigades. When they rescued victims of youth violence, they could let the perpetrators scot-free without charging them with any crime. Furthermore, the brigades had their torture camps proximate to police

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<sup>139</sup> *The Herald*, 10 January 2002.

<sup>140</sup> *The Mirror*, 7 January 2003.

<sup>141</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, ‘Human rights and Zimbabwe’s presidential election’, p. 67 <http://www.hrforumzim.org/publications/human-rights-and-zimbabwes-presidential-election-special-report-4/> Accessed on 23 July 2020.

<sup>142</sup> A. Meldrum, "Living in fear of Mugabe's green bombers". *The Guardian*, 19 February 2003, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/feb/19/zimbabwe.andrewmeldrum>, Accessed on 23 July 2020.

<sup>143</sup> Interview with Andrew Makora, in Jerusalem, Highfields, on 15 January 2020.

stations and it was difficult for victims to enter the police station without being seen.<sup>144</sup> This dissuaded many victims from reporting cases of violence since the police-NYS brigade collaboration was palpable.

After the 2002 election, the ZANU-PF regime incorporated many NYS brigades into security services (army, prison service, intelligence and police) and a few joined the civil service. It is said that about 16 600 NYS graduates were absorbed into the state's security service.<sup>145</sup> These youths were quickly promoted and moved to the countryside. During elections, these state security agents, with NYS backgrounds, were employed as officials at polling booths to help ZANU-PF to have control over the election outcome.<sup>146</sup> Some participants in both Highfields and UMP mentioned that the brigades were, sometimes given police uniforms by their colleagues in the police force and patrolled the voting queues without showing their ZRP numbers.<sup>147</sup> This displays that the police collaborated with the NYS militias in causing mayhem in adjacent areas.<sup>148</sup> The fact that the police officers were recruited from the NYS training centres points out that they colluded with the brigades to safeguard the ZANU-PF hegemony. In this regard, Mhike argued that the NYS militias were part of the ranks and file of a violent, coercive and fascist ZANU-PF regime (which included the police, CIO, war veterans and the Youth League).<sup>149</sup> As in Fascist Italy, the police were either bystanders or collaborators when the militias were mortifying and punishing the oppositions.<sup>150</sup> In the Gramscian sense, the politicisation of the security structures to collude with the militias in political violence was one of the morbid symptoms of the hegemonic crisis and the rise of fascism in Zimbabwe.<sup>151</sup>

Some interviews with former police officers revealed that police had been technically rendered immaterial as the NYS brigades seemed to be above the constitution. A former police officer, Samuel Chikara (who used to work in Highfield) stated that:

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<sup>144</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, December 2002: "Are they accountable?", makes similar observations about police-war vet-militia collaboration and impunity. Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, December 2002.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76

<sup>146</sup> Interview with Tapera Kamukore, in Chidodo village, UMP, on 28 November 2019.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum: "Are they accountable?", makes similar observations about police-war vet-militia collaboration and impunity. Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, December 2002, p.76.

<sup>149</sup> I. Mhike, 'Political Violence in Zimbabwe's National Youth service, 2001-2007', in E. Oinas, H. Onodera and L. Suurpaa (eds.) *What Politics: Youth and Political Engagement in Africa*, (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp.246-264.

<sup>150</sup> T. Scarnecchia, 'The 'Fascist Cycle' in Zimbabwe, 2000-2005', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2, (2006), pp.221-237.

<sup>151</sup> A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. In Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith (trans.), (New York: International Publishers 1971).

We could not help the victims or investigate cases of political violence because the youth militias were backed by ZANU-PF top echelons, they could countermand police order and contravene the constitution without any consequences. These youths contravened the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) countless times. This made the general populace lose faith in the police and the constitution itself.<sup>152</sup>

This is substantiated by Langton's narrative when he mentioned:

I went to Mutawatawa police station [in UMP] to report youth violence that occurred at my next door. The police came, together with an intelligence officer [CIO] and they took pictures of the scorched houses. They told me that they could not do anything as they were also being harassed by the NYS brigades.<sup>153</sup>

The security services could not help the victims of political violence; this is a sign the party had become more powerful than the state. The youth brigades operated with the blessings of the ZANU-PF regime. Similarly, Hastings Banda's Youth Pioneers enjoyed state protection as they could not be apprehended by police without the authorisation of commanding officers.<sup>154</sup>

Nevertheless, the relationship between the NYS militias and state security structures was not always uncontentious. Sometimes the NYS militias overstepped the mark as far as police, army and courts were concerned and they were apprehended. This is substantiated by Mr. Takawira's narrative:

Lawrence Kadenge, an MDC activist who resides in Manyika village, came with police after some suspected MDC supporters were attacked [during the 2008 presidential runoff]. When they arrived, many people had left the village for their safety. Some were hiding in their fields and others in the mountains. Kadenge and the three police officers met with the NYS youths and they were severely beaten. A few days later these youths were hunted down and they were arrested. Their case was taken to the magistrate court in Murewa and they were sentenced to five years in prison.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Interview with Samuel Chikara, a former police officer, in Highfields, 23 January 2020.

<sup>153</sup> Interview with Langton, in Uzumba Village, 13 December 2019.

<sup>154</sup> K. M. Phiri, A Case of Revolutionary Change in Contemporary Malawi: The Malawi Army and the Disarming of the Malawi Young Pioneers, *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Military Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2000).

<https://web.archive.org/web/20110721214828/http://www.uz.ac.zw/units/cds/journals/volume1/number1/article3.html>, Accessed on 28 July 2020.

<sup>155</sup> Solidarity Peace Trust, National Youth Service Training - "Shaping Youths in a Truly Zimbabwean Manner." An Overview of Youth Militia Training and Activities in Zimbabwe, October 2000 - August 2003, 5 September 2003.

This implies that the NYS militias only suffered the wrath of the state if they openly challenged law enforcement agents, to take over their authority or attack them. That said, the collusion between the police and NYS brigades in political violence contributed to the continuity of a culture of violence and impunity in the 2000 era. The next section discusses the legacies of the NYS in Zimbabwe.

### **Sacrificing the entire generation? The legacies of the NYS programme**

The NYS was publicly proscribed in February 2009 when the Government of National Unity (GNU) was established. By this time, the NYS training centres had succeeded to train nearly 80 230 youths since 2001.<sup>156</sup> However, some of these youths continued to receive salaries from the state as ghost workers and ‘youth officers’ without a well-defined mandate. The ZANU-PF officials attempted to re-introduce the programme in 2010 but they faced resistance from their MDC counterparts. Some of the youth militias were stripped of the state’s payroll in 2012. Despite this, the NYS brigades continued to be part of ZANU-PF’s surveillance networks. In 2019, Mthuli Ncube, the current Minister of Finance, urged the state to remove 4000 ‘youth officers’ from the state’s payroll since the state was spending about Z\$19.3 million every year on their salaries.<sup>157</sup> It is not clear whether the government has completely laid off these ‘youth officers’ as some ZANU-PF officials during the 2019 ZANU-PF Congress were advocating for the revival of the NYS programme.<sup>158</sup>

The 2018 election showed that the ZANU-PF support base was dwindling and a lot of youth vote was being taken by the opposition. They began to advocate for the re-establishment of the NYS programme to impart ‘patriotism’ among the youths and to keep the revolutionary spirit alive.<sup>159</sup> It seems they were inspired by Mugabe who had a plan to re-establish the NYS ahead of the 2018 elections to guarantee the ZANU-PF victory, and this was thwarted by his removal from the presidency in November 2017.<sup>160</sup> Also, the ZANU-PF regime was intimidated by the mass protest that occurred on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2018 following the delay in the announcement of the election results and allegations of vote rigging. The angry protesters vandalised property around the Harare CBD and looted shops. The police were ineffective to control the situation, and the regime had to involve the army to quell this violent protest. On

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<sup>156</sup> *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 3 March 2017.

<sup>157</sup> J. Thompson, ‘Zimbabwe’s Zanu PF to revive infamous ‘green bombers’, *Sunday Times*, 16 December 2018 <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/africa/2018-12-16-zimbabwes-zanu-pf-to-revive-infamous-green-bombers/>, Accessed on 30 July 2020.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> *Zimbabwe Independent*, 3 March 2017.

this day, the army killed six people and about 35 people were injured. According to *Sunday Times*, a member of the ZANU-PF Central Committee stated that “Zimbabwe is ruled by a revolutionary party and for it to survive, the youth should know the country’s history and be patriotic. If we don’t do this [relaunching the NYS programme], we might as well kiss goodbye the youth vote in 2023,”<sup>161</sup> To vindicate the re-launch of the NYS, Victor Matemadanda, the ZANU-PF Political Commissar, said “We have realised that the youths are giving us problems. We had the G40 in ZANU-PF that almost sunk our party and now the person giving us grief, Nelson Chamisa, is within the same generation.”<sup>162</sup> However, the youth ministry finally re-introduced the NYS on 13 April 2021.<sup>163</sup> The old generation in ZANU-PF is fearful of the youths and they want their party and the country to be led by ‘mature’ people, thus marginalising the youths from the political leadership.

The NYS programme has relegated the youths to become ‘instruments’ of political violence, occupying unimportant positions in the power hierarchy. It purposely corrupted and hardened the youths, then deployed them to terrorise their parents and relatives in a bid to maintain the ZANU-PF hegemony. The youth brigades were, in many instances, abused by ZANU-PF politicians. Some former youth brigades mentioned that ZANU-PF candidates often promised them incentives during the election campaigns which they were not given after they won elections. Andrew Makora said that during the 2005 parliamentary elections, the NYS trainees were promised to be given cash gratuities which they never received. When they raised the matter after the election with their camp chief officer, they were told that they could take their uniforms with them when they leave the training camp, and that was the least they could do to solve the matter.<sup>164</sup> Taking a cue from Honwana, the NYS disempowered many youths and relegated them to become desperate tools of political violence, only remembered when the ZANU-PF hegemony is under threat.<sup>165</sup>

The ZANU-PF regime sacrificed almost an entire generation of youths for political expediency, with inestimable far-reaching repercussions upon the fabric of the state. A generation of school leavers was taught to infringe the democratic rights of their fellow

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<sup>161</sup> *Sunday Times*, 16 December 2018. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/africa/2018-12-16-zimbabwes-zanu-pf-to-revive-infamous-green-bombers/>, Accessed on 30 July 2020.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> M. Kujeko, ‘Zimbabwe’s notorious youth service revived ahead of election season’, *Daily Maverick*, 21 June 2021.

<sup>164</sup> Interview with Andrew Makora, in Jerusalem, Highfields, on 15 January 2020

<sup>165</sup> A. Honwana, ‘Innocent and Guilty. Child Soldiers as Interstitial and Tactical Agents’, in A. Honwana and F. De Boeck (eds), *Makers and Breakers. Children and Youth in Postcolonial Africa*, (Oxford: James Currey; Trenton NJ: Africa World Press; Dakar: Codesria, 2005), pp.31–52.

citizens and simultaneously, their rights to unbiased education and a safe life free of violence. These youths were exploited and abused in a sardonic and well-calculated way by the individuals entrusted with the responsibility for their future and well-being. A former NYS militia, Tennyson Karanda mentioned that:

"My dream was to become a pilot but in a country like ours, youths do not have many options – we just take anything that comes our way. I was very desperate and I joined the NYS. We allowed ourselves to be manipulated and exploited for money, and we knew that ZANU-PF officials do not care about us as they dropped us and forget us after winning the elections.<sup>166</sup>

The prospects of the NYS brigades to meaningfully participate in the political and socio-economic development of the country were ruined since they were taught to loathe and murder opponents. In the development context, most of the NYS graduates constituted Zimbabwe's lost generation.<sup>167</sup> As previously mentioned, substance abuse also destroyed the future of these youths as some of them chose a life of drugs over anything else.<sup>168</sup> Some of them are suffering from avenging spirits or *ngozi* of the people they killed. Violet Mashiri confirmed that some of the perpetrators of violence have gone mad, and the spirits of those they murdered are haunting them<sup>169</sup> In this regard, Chung argued that despots often play "a subversive role" of organising and manipulating youths to become "cannon fodder in political games"<sup>170</sup>

The youth brigade violence left the victims with a permanent disabilities, scars and deep trauma. As revealed above, many people lost their loved ones and their property because of violence. Langton mentioned that Catherine Kadzunge, an MDC activist in Uzumba, among other examples, lost her eye. 'If she didn't turn, she could have died because they were targeting the back of her skull. It hurts that Catherine always sees the perpetrators walking scot-free, they were never arrested.'<sup>171</sup> This violence was intended to send a more general, intimidating message to MDC enthusiasts in the communities. The deep trauma that typifies

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<sup>166</sup> Interview with Tennyson Karanda, in Dindi Village, UMP, 28 November 2019.

<sup>167</sup> F. P. T. Duri, 'Green Bomber,' *Torture and Terror: Political Security and the Nazi Legacy in Zimbabwe, 2001-2009*, M. Mawere (ed.) *Development Naivety and Emergent Insecurities in a Monopolised World: The Politics and Sociology of Development in Contemporary Africa*. (Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG 2018). pp.35-76.

<sup>168</sup> C. Smith, 'I was ordered to kill my father,' *IOL*, 9 March 2003, [www.iol.co.za/news](http://www.iol.co.za/news), Accessed on 30 July 2020.

<sup>169</sup> Interview with Violet Mashiri, in Manyika Village, 03 December 2019; *Nehanda radio*, 'Ngozi haunts Zanu-Pf killers,' 6 March 2010, [www.nehandaradio.com](http://www.nehandaradio.com), Accessed on 23 September 2020.

<sup>170</sup> B. Peta, 'Independent appeal: Rescuing Zimbabwe's lost generation,' *The Independent*, [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk), Accessed on 30 June 2020.

<sup>171</sup> Interview with Langton, in Uzumba Village, 13 December 2019.

the social fabric of Zimbabwe (especially in UMP) has generated an atmosphere of communal fear that deters people from supporting the opposition and ensures total acquiescence to the ZANU-PF regime. However, the safety of the NYS brigades during and after the campaign was not guaranteed as the victims defended themselves. Some youths in Highfields mobilised themselves to retaliate against these assailants.<sup>172</sup>

The NYS programme resulted in the surge and institutionalisation of political rape. The male youths and the instructors raped female youths during training and get away with it. In their campaigns against the opposition supporters, the youth brigades used rape as a political weapon and they were not prosecuted as long as they targeted the MDC supporters.<sup>173</sup> Many participants confirmed that the NYS brigades, sometimes, raped women whilst their husbands were watching. Also, men were at times coerced by brigades to sodomise each other.<sup>174</sup> In UMP, the youth brigades forced girls and women to attend *pungwes* at militia bases, to satisfy their sexual desires.<sup>175</sup> This did not only result in pregnancies and STIs but also ruined the lives and future of the youths and created a horrible legacy for the nation.<sup>176</sup> The ZANU-PF agents of violence (including the police and CIO), are today, still using rape as a political tool.<sup>177</sup>

The violent activities of the NYS brigades and other ZANU-PF proxies prompted the MDC to launch the Democratic Resistance Committees (DRCs) in 2007 and the Vanguard in 2016 as defensive mechanisms against the youth brigades and other ZANU-PF proxies. Andrew Makora said the DRCs used violent tactics similar to that of the NYS brigades and other ZANU-PF-aligned groups when engaging in ‘retaliatory violence.’ They beat, vandalised property, killed and gang raped their victims.<sup>178</sup> In this regard, Charles Moyo wrote that ‘since the MDC split in 2005, the party has been morphing into an intolerant, violent and

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<sup>172</sup> Interview with Andrew Makora, in Jerusalem, Highfields, on 15 January 2020.

<sup>173</sup> D. Muleya, Youth service breeds killer gangs – report, *The Independent*, 22 April 2005, <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2005/04/22/youth-service-breeds-killer-gangs-report/>, Accessed on 30 July 2020

<sup>174</sup> Interview with Violet Mashiri, in Manyika Village, 03 December 2019.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> Solidarity Peace Trust, National Youth Service Training - "Shaping Youths in a Truly Zimbabwean Manner." An Overview of Youth Militia Training and Activities in Zimbabwe, October 2000 - August 2003, 5 September 2003.

<sup>178</sup> Interview with Andrew Makora, in Jerusalem, Highfields, on 15 January 2020.

democratically deficient polity, relatively analogous to ZANU-PF's narrative of violence.'<sup>179</sup> The Vanguard was a radical and brutal paramilitary and vigilante group organised by the MDC Youth Assembly, 'with footmarks of party foot-soldiers on its character.'<sup>180</sup> The Vanguard militia was prominent for perpetrating violence within the MDC Alliance. The militia was involved in the intra-party violence, brutally attacking Thokozani Khupe (the natural successor of Tsvangirai), Douglas Mwonozora (then MDC Secretary General), and Lovemore Moyo (then National Organising Chairperson) during the funeral of Morgan Tsvangirai in Buhera. Again, the youths attacked Khupe together with Witness Dube at MDC offices in Bulawayo. The MDC Vanguard also used non-physical violence, for instance, they verbally abused Thokozani Khupe labelling her *hure* (prostitute). Given this, Conway Tutani, the *Newsday* political commentator, portrayed the Vanguard as a 'foul-mouthed, thuggish, hysterical and maniacal lynch mob.'<sup>181</sup>

The NYS left a tough legacy as it turned youths into vandals. It played a huge role in the emergence of state-sanctioned vigilante groups such as the Chipangano group in Mbare and Al-Shabaab in Kwekwe, among others. Some youths who graduated from the NYS who had no employment ended up establishing vigilante groups that harassed people and usurped council property in their communities. This will be further discussed in the subsequent chapter. Many participants mentioned that some of the former NYS brigades were involved in cattle rustling.<sup>182</sup> During the time of writing this thesis, the citizens were being persecuted by machete-wielding gangs known as MaShurugwi who also enjoyed state impunity. This means that the culture of youth violence is institutionalised and the state should address it. The ensuing section is the conclusion of this chapter.

## Conclusion

The study of the Zimbabwe NYS helps to understand the political, social and economic problems faced by youths in postcolonial Africa. Youth are seen as an existential threat by their governments. It shows that some African governments only incorporate youths into their policies only when their actions can hamper their plans and when they want to use them. The ZANU-PF regime utilised the NYS to exploit vulnerable youths to make them acquiescent to

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<sup>179</sup> C. Moyo, 'Party Foot-Soldiers, Quasi- Militias, Vigilantes, and the Spectre of Violence in Zimbabwe's Opposition Politics,' *Modern Africa: Politics, History and Society*, Vol 8, Issue 1, (2020), p. 67.

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<sup>181</sup> 'Intra-party violence rocks MDC-T.' *Newsday*, 5 June 2018, Available at: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2018/06/intra-party-violence-rocks-chamisas-mdc-t/> (Accessed 1 September 2018)

<sup>182</sup> Interview with Langton, in Uzumba Village, 13 December 2019.

its hegemony (political views and a violent political culture) and its abuses. The programme was also harmonious with its politics of patronage as it entailed both coercion and incentives.

Like the Kamuzu regime in Malawi, the ZANU-PF regime allowed its youth militias to usurp the responsibilities of the security services so long their actions serve its interests. Given this, some scholars like Rotberg and Habasonda would want to misconceive Zimbabwe as a weak state. Of note, Zimbabwe is a very strong state and youth violence only happens with the blessings of the state. Allowing the youths to be at the forefront of violence helps the regime to reinforce the image that youths are violent, immature and they cannot handle political leadership.

The NYS proved to be a detrimental social control to the long-term development of the youths. It inducted the youths into political thuggery instead of helping them to expend their energies on the socio-economic development of the country. It relegated youths to become victims and perpetrators of violence in ZANU-PF politics. Although youths in postcolonial Africa are subjected to coercion, they do not always conform to the state's coercive policies. They can negotiate within and outside the margins created by the state. The following chapter examines the emergence and operation of the Chipangano group in Mbare.

## CHAPTER 7

### **Youth, Vigilantism and ZANU-PF politics in Zimbabwe: The Chipangano Phenomenon, c.2000-2017**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter examines the emergence and development of state-sanctioned vigilantism in Zimbabwe with a particular focus on the Chipangano vigilante group in Mbare District. Chipangano was a ZANU-PF coercive tool designed to retain the party's support base in Mbare, which had become an MDC stronghold since 2000. The vigilantes were allowed to engage in quasi-state functions and extortionist activities as long as they defended the ZANU-PF interests in the district. This chapter shows that youth violence was a continuing culture nurtured by the ZANU-PF politicians who defended Chipangano by denying its existence; and thus, the group members engaged in extra-judicial activities with impunity. It also shows that youths are relegated to the violent structures and used as cheap campaigning tools; and in this way, they occupy the position of either victim or perpetrator. The first part of this chapter analyses the formation of the Chipangano group and its organisational structures. The second part presents the rationale behind the establishment of Chipangano in Mbare. The last part of the chapter presents how this vigilante group operated and its relations with the Mbare police. Along the way, the chapter foregrounds the symbiotic relations between ZANU-PF and Chipangano vigilantes.

#### **'An oath of loyalty': The naissance and organisation of the Chipangano group**

Chipangano is a Shona word that means an agreement or a covenant. Chris Masango (a ZANU-PF enthusiast) said, Chipangano was an agreement 'to be obedient to President Robert Mugabe, where he goes we will go and when he dies we will also die'<sup>1</sup> This entails that the group was a 'brotherhood' of Mugabe's supporters.<sup>2</sup> Jim Kunaka defined the name Chipangano as, "an idea of a person who believed in a single party, that is ZANU-PF."<sup>3</sup> This corresponds with Precious Shumba's argument that the Chipangano group emerged to curtail the rising cases of defections to the MDC by ZANU-PF youths witnessed during the 2000 parliamentary election.<sup>4</sup> The ZANU-PF leadership in Mbare then vetted those believed to be

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<sup>1</sup> *The Zimbabwean*, 14 August 2012.

<sup>2</sup> E. Conway-Smith, Nando's pulls controversial 'dictators' ad after Zimbabwe threats, *The World*, November 29, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> *The Standard*, 14 June 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Precious Shumba (Director of Harare Residents Trust) by the author, Harare Residents Trust (HRT), 44 years old, 27 July 2017.

genuine party supporters and formed the Chipangano group as a gesture of total commitment to ZANU-PF.<sup>5</sup>

The Chipangano group was founded by the late Ali Khan Manjengwa, who was a member of the ZANU-PF Harare Provincial Executive Committee, between 1999 and 2001.<sup>6</sup> The *raison d'être* of the establishment of Chipangano was to create an auxiliary force that could help him to revitalise the ZANU-PF hegemony in Mbare against the vibrant MDC which had taken over the district. Manjengwa's main intention was to integrate redundant youths who were involved in touting, hawking and criminality. He managed to identify a few of these youths and created a small clique that aimed at building ideological issues and operations.<sup>7</sup> It was through these individuals that a tacit agreement that incorporated Chipangano into the ZANU-PF system was reached. The group was bequeathed the control of Mbare on the condition that they defended ZANU-PF.<sup>8</sup> The loyalty of Chipangano members was secured through the use of state resources and institutions, and this was a form of 'parasitic politics' in Mbare. Bratton and van de Walle perceived these activities as 'neopatrimonialism' and others refer to them as 'Big Man politics' in Zimbabwe.<sup>9</sup> Hill confirmed that Manjengwa was the face of ZANU-PF violence in Mbare during the run-up to the 2002 presidential election.<sup>10</sup> At the time of Manjengwa's murder, the MDC alleged to have evidence that he and his Chipangano were planning to murder Tichaona Jeter Munyanyi, then Member of Parliament (MP) for Mbare East constituency.<sup>11</sup> Thus the group was perceived as a coercive campaign force (brutal band of thugs) that was meant to deal decisively with the MDC officials and their supporters.<sup>12</sup>

Chipangano was an underground movement that regenerated itself through assimilating new people.<sup>13</sup> Ali Khan Manjengwa was shot dead on 22 August 2002 and Tichaona Munyanyi was suspected to be the mastermind of Manjengwa's assassination. It is alleged that there was an irreconcilable rivalry between Munyanyi and Manjengwa over the control of Mbare

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<sup>5</sup> *Daily News*, 29 March 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Precious Shumba by the author, Harare Residents Trust (HRT), 27 July 2017.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> M. Bratton and N. Van de Walle, *Democratic experiments in Africa*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Neopatrimonialism refers to a system of social hierarchy where patrons use state resources in order to secure the loyalty of clients in the general population. It is a legalized corrupt system with its informal patron-client relationship that can reach from very high up in state structures down to individuals in small villages.

<sup>10</sup> G. Hill, *The Battle for Zimbabwe: The Final Countdown*. (Zebra Press, Cape Town, 2003), p.247.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> SW Radio, 'Chipangano Becoming More Independent of ZANU-PF', 17 September 2012, <http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/Chipangano%20190912.pdf>, Accessed on 23 March 2017.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

District. Undoubtedly, Manjengwa was killed because he was very violent and the people of Mbare described him as a ‘warlord who lived by the sword.’<sup>14</sup> After the death of Manjengwa, the late Amos Midzi, who was a ZANU-PF Harare Provincial Chairperson (2001-2014), became the godfather of the vigilante group. His connection with the group was exposed by Didymus Mutasa, then ZANU-PF Secretary for Administration, when he publicly instructed Midzi to end the Chipangano’s violent campaigns as he was one of the leaders. Midzi denied his connections with the group but Mutasa insisted that “if you tell me that you don't know that group, I will tell you that you are lying ... I want to know why you are not ending it.”<sup>15</sup> Midzi used the Chipangano vigilantes in 2003 to sabotage his rival Elias Mudzuri, then MDC Harare Mayor (2002-2005). During this occasion, the vigilantes force-marched the inhabitants of Mbare to Town House to demand the ouster of Mudzuri.<sup>16</sup> Since 2003, Midzi has used the vigilante group in every campaign in Epworth. The Chipangano vigilantes consolidated their powers during the time of Midzi to become a social control group that was involved in every aspect of people’s lives, spying and monitoring their movements and speeches.

Around 2003, Tendai Savanhu, who was a ZANU-PF politburo member, joined Amos Midzi to become one of the patrons of the Chipangano group. His connection with the group is evident in his hate speech against Ian Kay, then MDC-T MP for Marondera, in 2012 when he said, “Please allow me and Chipangano youths a week’s stay here and we would eliminate Kay without any problem... Down with all whites.”<sup>17</sup> Tapera Mufudza, a former Chipangano member, asserted that Savanhu was responsible for the sprouting of Chipangano bases in Mbare.<sup>18</sup> Another insider, Nyasha, interviewed by *The Zimbabwean* confirmed that Savanhu created a training camp where Chipangano members were taught the values of ‘patriotism’ (to hate MDC and white people). Nyasha said Savanhu used to tell the vigilantes in the camp that, ‘it is our patriotic duty to eliminate anyone who hinders the progress of ZANU-PF.’<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Zimbabwe: Schoolboy Brutally Assaulted following Manjengwa’s Death’, *Daily News*, 29 August 2002. Manjengwa was assassinated at B6 Block 12 of Nenyere Flats in the Magaba Section of Mbare where he was holding a meeting with the ZANU-PF youths.

<sup>15</sup> *The Zimbabwean*, 24 July 2012. [www.thezimbabwean.co/2012/07/chipangano-zanu-pf-product-dydmus/](http://www.thezimbabwean.co/2012/07/chipangano-zanu-pf-product-dydmus/), Accessed on 14/12/12.

<sup>16</sup> *The Daily News*, 25 March 2003; Interview with Precious Shumba by the author, Harare Residents Trust (HRT), 27 July 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Nehanda Radio, Savanhu says ‘I would eliminate whites’, [nehandaradio2012/03/12](http://nehandaradio2012/03/12), Accessed on 11 December 2017.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Tapera Mufudza, a former Chipangano member, by the author, Paground Flea market, Mbare, 25 July 2017.

<sup>19</sup> *The Zimbabwean*, 02 August 2011, [www.thezimbabwean.co/2011/08/inside-chipangano-hungry-thug-reveals/](http://www.thezimbabwean.co/2011/08/inside-chipangano-hungry-thug-reveals/) Accessed on 14 December 2017.

Tendai Savanhu used the group in his campaigns to be the MP for Mbare Constituency (though he lost the elections in 2005 and 2008, and only won in 2013).<sup>20</sup> Interviewees confirmed that Chipangano gained total control of public spaces and resources in Mbare through Savanhu when he became one of the City Commissioners for Harare between 2004 to 2008.<sup>21</sup> This will be discussed in greater detail in the course of this chapter.

Jim Kunaka who was part of Chipangano since its genesis assumed the leadership of the group following the death of Manjengwa. His thuggish behaviour helped him to become the ZANU-PF Youth Chairperson for Harare Province in 2008. In his confession in 2015, Kunaka confirmed that he was the leader of the vigilante group and he ‘admitted being the face of ZANU-PF violence.’<sup>22</sup> He said, “I was the political violence master...while in ZANU-PF and Chipangano...”<sup>23</sup> A former Chipangano member confirmed that Kunaka’s political career was influenced by both Amos Midzi and Tendai Savanhu.<sup>24</sup> It was not easy to become a top terrorist in the camp. There were rituals of power and complex relationships between the Chipangano youths and holders of top office in the land. Leading a violent group as Chipangano came with the fodder of impunity. In ZANU-PF politics, people like Jim Kunaka, who ruthlessly perpetrate violence against the opposition, had higher chances of acquiring high political positions. Noteworthy is the fact that the group was also loyal to other ZANU-PF top officials like Ignatius Chombo (former Minister of Local Government, Public Works and Urban Development from 2000 to 2015) who used to go to Mbare and meet the group, not Chipangano but as Mbare District.<sup>25</sup>

The organisational structure of the Chipangano group consisted of prominent people who were within ZANU-PF structures.<sup>26</sup> In tandem with this, Precious Shumba mentioned that the coordinators of the Chipangano activities included Alfonso Gobvu, Namion Modern Chirwa (then Chairperson of the Joshua Nkomo District), Douglas Mutyoramwendo (who operated from Mbare District 3) Nathan Mapuranga, and Elizabeth Madzimure (commonly known as Mai Bwanya) who was among the influential players of the Women’s Affairs in the party’s District Coordinating Committee (DCC) and also a former ZANU-PF provincial member and

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<sup>20</sup> Pindula, Tendai Savanhu, [https://www.pindula.co.zw/Tendai\\_Savanhu](https://www.pindula.co.zw/Tendai_Savanhu), Accessed on 12 December 2017.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *News day*, 16 October 2015, [www.newsday.co.zw/2015/10/ex-chipangano-leader-jim-kunaka-apologises/](http://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/10/ex-chipangano-leader-jim-kunaka-apologises/) Accessed on 12 December 2017.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Interview with anonymous by the author, Mbare Post Office, 20 July 2017.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Precious Shumba by the author, Harare Residents Trust (HRT), 27 July 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with a former Chipangano member by the author, Majubeki, Mbare, 02 August 2017.

her husband Cornelius Mandizvidza Bwanya was a ZANU-PF Central Committee member.<sup>27</sup> It also consisted of some war veterans and former ZNA members like the late John Murukai, popularly known as Longchase (his Chimurenga name), who was based in Kuwadzana 7.<sup>28</sup> Taking a cue from Utas, the operation of informal networks like Chipangano can only be understood if we take into account the fluid, flexible, and ever-changing 'webs of power'.<sup>29</sup>

The Chipangano membership was made up of energetic young men and women (roughly between the age of 15 and 40 years old), mostly drawn from Mbare's different hostels and Jo'burg Lines.<sup>30</sup> A former Chipangano member, Jonas Tofa, confirmed that Chipangano members were politically indoctrinated in three localities in Mbare's Jo'burg lines, Mbare Musika and Mbare flats.<sup>31</sup> New members took an oath of loyalty to ZANU-PF and this closed terror group. In his confession, Kunaka reveals that Chipangano was synonymous with a cult, arguing that "once you join you have to behave like the people in the cult"<sup>32</sup> They spent most of the time singing liberation war songs and chanting slogans. They engaged in fitness training, trained to use firearms and not to question the orders from their leaders. They were taught to develop pro-ZANU-PF thinking and to be anti-opposition. The senior members of the group could beat people in front of the new members to display how they dealt with those who defied the oath.<sup>33</sup> It is said that the Carter House Flat, a municipal building, was the headquarters of Chipangano.<sup>34</sup> Many people who were kidnapped or abducted were tortured in that flat. Setfree Mafukidze, an interviewee, mentioned that the vigilantes also used ZANU-PF offices as their bases especially the one near the Koffman plot.<sup>35</sup>

The youths joined the Chipangano group for different reasons. Unemployment played a big role in growing the Chipangano membership. Honwana observed that socio-economic challenges compel youths to join politics of extremities. She concurs that there is a positive relationship between a stagnant economy and youth political violence.<sup>36</sup> Moore maintained

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<sup>27</sup> *The Zimbabwean*, 02 November 2011, <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/2011/11/chipangano-a-business-outfit-hiding/>, Accessed on 28 July 2017.

<sup>28</sup> "Chipangano militia leader dies", *News Day*, 7 May 2012, Retrieved: 2 August 2019

<sup>29</sup> M. Utas, *African conflicts and informal power: Big Men and networks*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.14.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*; See also *The Zimbabwean*, 02 July 2011.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Jonas Tofa by the author, Mbare Post Office, 20 August 2017.

<sup>32</sup> *Newsday*, 19 October 2015.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Jonas Tofa by the author, Mbare Post Office, 20 August 2017.

<sup>34</sup> *The Standard*, 18 February 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Setfree Mafukidze by the author, WhatsApp interview, 13 July 2020

<sup>36</sup> A. Honwana and F. de Boeck (eds.), *Makers and Breakers: Children and Youth in Postcolonial Africa*, (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2005).

that those without alternative ways of survival were easily enlisted into Chipangano.<sup>37</sup> The youths were allured by opportunities availed to them by ZANU-PF politicians, for instance being included on the council's payroll which was bloated to accommodate the Chipangano members<sup>38</sup> and having access to residential stands in Harare peri-urban areas given to the group members through the ZANU-PF housing cooperative such as Ushewokunze and Ngungunyana.<sup>39</sup> Some with criminal mentalities wanted to use Chipangano's political connections to escape prosecution. To this, Precious Shumba started;

When you further interact with these people, they were not necessarily ZANU-PF. The majority were just people who wanted to make a living. What they wanted from ZANU-PF was probably protection from prosecution... as the police would develop a hands-off approach, allowing them to do what they want.<sup>40</sup>

Also, several youths confirmed that they joined the group as a way to protect themselves from the violence of the same Chipangano. Some wanted to benefit from the protection fees extracted from buses and market stalls. Noteworthy is the fact that some of the members were not residents of Mbare, they were individuals from other communities such as Mabvuku, Highfields, Epworth, Chitungwiza and Budiriro who came to Mbare to exploit some financial opportunities, and their Chipangano membership remained unknown in their communities.<sup>41</sup> Using Nyamnjoh terminology, the Chipangano youths were able to exercise agency as they capitalised on the 'incompleteness' of their patrons. Nyamnjoh argued that 'conviviality is negotiated on the edge of conflict, imposed by necessity'.<sup>42</sup> The patrons and the youths were in a precarious situation and they both needed each other to survive and realise their ambitions. Thus, the patrons had to pursue their agendas acknowledging and respecting the incompleteness of Chipangano youths who were important in their political games.

The Chipangano group was bankrolled through the money collected from money-spinning zones such as the Mupedzanhamo Flea Markets, Mbare Musika, Mbare Bus Terminal, Magaba Industrial Area and Siyaso. The group collected 'protection fees' from informal traders and bus touts and they were taken to the leaders of the group.<sup>43</sup> The outfit was

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<sup>37</sup> D. Moore quoted in S. Kibble, 'Zimbabwe between referendum and elections', *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, Vol. 35, No.1, (2012).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p.102.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Precious Shumba by the author, Harare Residents Trust (HRT), 27 July 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with anonymous by the author, Mbare Post Office, 25 August 2017.

<sup>42</sup> F. B. Nyamnjoh, 'Incompleteness: Frontier Africa and the Currency of Conviviality,' *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 2015.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Pineal Denga by the author, Fantasyland (Harare CBD), on 27 July 2017.

structured in such a way that different wards and branches could finance themselves.<sup>44</sup> These extortionist and extractive activities undermined the MDC-controlled council which was supposed to collect this money. Friday Mleya, a former MDC-T councillor in Mbare, said Jim Kunaka and Chipangano collected about USD 4000 per day from Mbare bus terminus and huge amounts from the market stalls which the group sub-letted without the council's permission.<sup>45</sup> The vigilantes sought to regain support for the ZANU-PF regime by controlling the council's revenue base thereby pushing the activities of the opposition into obscurity. The ZANU-PF politicians needed this localised militia because it was easier to maintain and deny their connections with the group.<sup>46</sup> The ensuing section discusses the dynamic factors which led to the emergence of Chipangano in Mbare.

### **The dynamic forces behind the emergence of Chipangano**

As shown in the preceding chapters, ZANU-PF relied on war veterans, youth leagues and NYS militias to coerce electorates to vote for the ruling party. Carey *et al* identified these groups as pro-government militias.<sup>47</sup> Since 2000, the ZANU-PF politicians began to use underground vigilante networks in their hegemonic struggles. This enabled the incumbent to attain goals that were not attainable using known state agents. The use of vigilante and criminal networks in its hegemonic struggles enabled the regime to deny its involvement in violent activities thereby avoiding accountability.<sup>48</sup>

The escalation of political violence in Mbare was linked to the emergence of the MDC as a resilient opposition party that vigorously contested the ZANU-PF regime since independence. The progressive growth and vitality of MDC youth movements prompted Ali Khan Manjengwa to create a youth group that defended ZANU-PF ideology in Mbare. Mashingaidze argued that the incapacity to withstand competition and manage diversity in Zimbabwe's political spaces has resulted in some leaders embracing violence as an instrument of electoral mobilisation and political control.<sup>49</sup> In Nyamjoh's terms, the ZANU-PF politicians were developing a sense of incompleteness and a deep paranoia that power

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<sup>44</sup> *The Zimbabwean*, 02 November 2011, <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/2011/11/chipangano-a-business-outfit-hiding/>, Accessed on 27 July 2017.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Friday Mleya by the author, WhatsApp Conversation, 12 September 2021.

<sup>46</sup> *Daily News*, 21 July 2013.

<sup>47</sup> S. C. Carey, N. J. Mitchell and W. Lowe, States, the security sector, and the monopoly of violence: A new database on pro-government militias. *Journal of Peace Research*, 50, (2013), pp.249-58

<sup>48</sup> P. Staniland, 'States, Insurgents, and Wartime Political Orders,' *Perspectives on Politics* 10, (2012), pp.243-264.

<sup>49</sup> T. M. Mashingaidze, 'Guardians of the nation or unruly disciples? A critique of youth participation in post-colonial Zimbabwe's contested political spaces.', R. Bowd and A. B. Chikwanha (eds.), *Understanding Africa's contemporary conflicts Origins, challenges and peacebuilding*, Monograph 173, (2010), p.116.

may slip away easily.<sup>50</sup> Along the same vein, McGregor argued that the continuous defeat of ZANU-PF turned urban governance into a battlefield as the government engaged in the centralisation of powers over the local authorities, developing parallel party structures and using vigilante groups to control central markets and the urban land.<sup>51</sup> The Chipangano group was strategically stationed in Mbare because it was a known informal space and it gave them greater visibility as it was the busiest long-distance terminal in the country and adjacent to Harare city centre.

The institutionalisation of violence by the ZANU-PF regime facilitated the emergence of vigilantism in Mbare. The state legitimised and licensed violence through its laws such as the Amnesty Ordinance 3 of 1979, the General Pardon Ordinance 12 of 1980 and the Clemency Order of 2000.<sup>52</sup> According to Harris, vigilantism can be interpreted as symptomatic of a culture of violence.<sup>53</sup> This notion was sustained by Pineal Denga (former MDC-T MP for Mbare) when he said state-sanctioned vigilantism has gotten a place within the Zimbabwean political culture because of the frequent use of violence by the state to suppress individuals and organisations contesting against it and its reluctance to discontinue it.<sup>54</sup> As shown in Chapter 5, the perpetrators of violence have been given immunity by the ZANU-PF government. Besides, the Chipangano group was created in a way that gives an impression that violence was enigmatic and difficult to clamp down.<sup>55</sup> Resultantly, this has generated a culture of violence and drastically undercut the process of democratic development as the vigilantes became untouchable ruffians in the political arena.

The ZANU-PF government was marred with extremely corrupt institutions (formal and informal) which promoted criminal activities and preyed on public resources.<sup>56</sup> The ruling party established 'extractive' and predatory informal political institutions supported by state security structures. Chipangano emerged as a devious ZANU-PF wing with a grabbing hand rather than the normative helping hand. The issue of corruption and lack of efficacy led many

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<sup>50</sup> F. B. Nyamnjoh, 'Incompleteness: Frontier Africa and the Currency of Conviviality,' *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 2015.

<sup>51</sup> J. McGregor, 'Surveillance and the city: Patronage, Power-sharing and Politics of Urban Control in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol.39, Issue 4, (2013), pp.783-805.

<sup>52</sup> L. M. Sachikonye, *When a State Turns on its Citizens: 60 years of Institutionalised Violence in Zimbabwe*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2011).

<sup>53</sup> B. Harris, 'As for Violent Crime that's our Daily Bread': Vigilante violence during South Africa's period of transition, *Violence and Transition Series*, Vol. 1, (2001).

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Pineal Denga by the author, Fantasyland Chicken Inn (Harare CBD), 27 July 2017.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with anonymous by the author, Mbare Post Office, 20 July 2017.

<sup>56</sup> T. Mutongwizo, 'Chipangano Governance: Enablers and Effects of Violent Extraction in Zimbabwe,' *African Peace and Conflict Journal*, Vol. 7, No.1, (2014), pp.29-40.

people to join the Chipangano group. This is what one of the residents, Zivayi Mashayamhanda, had to say;

... Chipangano worked in collaboration with the police and that is why the vigilantes always evaded imprisonment. The police officers could watch the Chipangano terrorising the populace without any action. I heard that some police bigwigs were also benefitting from the Chipangano activities. While some police officers were stall owners at Mupedzanhamo flea market, others accepted bribes from the Chipangano group. The ambiguous relationship between the group and the police resulted in the ballooning of Chipangano membership and the intensification of its cruelty and criminality levels.<sup>57</sup>

The foregoing remarks are analogous to Loader's argument that "across the developed and the developing world there is a broad and diverse network of vigilantes that only work through government but, above, below and beyond government"<sup>58</sup> The Chipangano group only thrived because of the malignant duplicity of police who turned a blind eye on its activities, denying its existence and cultivated a culture of impunity for perpetrators. Along the same vein, Stanislawski stated that vigilantism emerges in areas ('blackspots') or situations in which the state is unable or unwilling to provide safety to a certain group.<sup>59</sup> Mbare was turned into a 'blackspot' where police had no influence, not because they could not influence but because they were captured by ZANU-PF politicians, hence they allowed the vigilantes to illegally take over the jurisdiction of the district.

As shown in the preceding chapters, Zimbabwe was besieged by economic hardships since the late 1990s. This intensified in the 2000s due to the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) which invited condemnation from Western countries and the decline of agricultural production. The country was also hard hit by hyperinflation (which reached 231 million % by the end of 2008) to the point of forsaking its worthless currency for a multicurrency system in 2009.<sup>60</sup> Many companies closed, the unemployment rate rose, the disposable income for the employed was eroded and food insecurity struck many households. The state responded to this with *ginya-nomics*<sup>61</sup> or *Operation Dzikisai mitengo* (price controls) which resulted in the

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<sup>57</sup> Interview with Mr Zivayi Mashayamhanda by the author, at his homestead in Mbare National, 03 August 2017.

<sup>58</sup> I. Loader, 'Plural policing and democratic governance', *Social Legal Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2000, p.328.

<sup>59</sup> B. H. Stanislawski, *Black Spots: Insecurity from beyond the horizon*, PhD thesis, (New York: Syracuse University, 2006).

<sup>60</sup> *Financial Gazette*, 12 June 2015.

<sup>61</sup> *Ginya-nomics* is a term coined by Tendai Biti (former Finance Minister in the Inclusive Government) mocking the government's approach to arrest inflation.

acute shortages of basic goods and the emergence of the black market. The economic hardships caused a lot of suffering among the youths. Some failed to acquire education due to financial constraints; those who managed to get their qualifications had nowhere to get employment unless they had very strong personal links with the employers. Given this, many youths resort to *kukiya-kiya* (self-reliance). Whereas the formal economy was breaking down, informal businesses in Mbare remained lucrative. When shops in the cities became empty, fresh vegetables, maize and other local foods were found in Mbare. Cars were repaired, furniture produced and everything possible was recycled.<sup>62</sup> However, Chipangano emerged as a self-serving group aimed at exploiting and profiting from these flourishing businesses. The group invented some cruel and extortionist rules in Mbare to extract money from informal traders, travellers and taxi drivers. To cope with this, youths joined the vigilante group to protect their business interests and to access opportunities created by ZANU-PF politicians.<sup>63</sup>

The Chipangano group had several educated youths [university graduates] in its membership. Jonas Tofa asserted;

After finishing my degree, I failed to get a job because of the economic decay confronting this country. My friend who was a group member persuaded me to join Chipangano. At first, I was against the idea but due to the incessant poverty, I gave in to his advice. Joining Chipangano opened many economic opportunities for the members as the group was the sole controller of all means of production in Mbare.<sup>64</sup>

This indicates that socio-economic challenges compelled youths to join the Chipangano group. Pursuing the Youth bulge theory, Fuller and Goldstone asserted that the increase in the population of redundant youths created a pool of youths who can be easily exploited by unscrupulous politicians and enlisted into vigilante groups. It is believed that unemployed youths especially males can venture into anything to get money for beer, drugs and necessities.<sup>65</sup>

Nevertheless, there are also a lot of positives in the story of the youth in Mbare that do not reduce them simply to instruments of violence. Whilst the economic situation was getting

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<sup>62</sup> Ecumenical Service on Southern Africa (KASA), Mbare's new rulers, (2012), [www.woek-web.de/cms/front\\_content](http://www.woek-web.de/cms/front_content) Accessed on 02 September 2017.

<sup>63</sup> K. Aning, '*Unemployment cause of political vigilantism*', A presentation at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of the Accra Dialogue under the theme 'The Scars of vigilantism: A legal of political question?', (2017), <http://mobile.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewArchive/Unemployment-cause-of-political-vigilantism-Dr-Aning-diagnoses-603036>, Accessed on 05 December 2017.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Jonas Tofa a former Chipangano member by the author, Paground Flea Market, 25 July 2017.

<sup>65</sup> T. Mude, 'Political Violence: Major Socio-Political Consequence of Urban Youth Unemployment in Zimbabwe,' *Review of History and Political Science*, March 2014, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 107-139.

tougher and socio-economic opportunities were dwindling, some youths refused to join violent political groups like Chipangano and chose to pursue their music careers. Mbare has grown to become a hub for contemporary urban culture including the highly successful production of music such as 'Zimdancehall' that has changed the texture and impressions of and about youth coming from that social space. This has drawn ZANU PF to consider new strategies of mobilisation using popular music icons drawn from there to lure the youth to vote. The next section discusses the operations of Chipangano in the Mbare district.

### **Chipangano crusades: Political violence and parasitic politics in Mbare**

The Chipangano violence surfaced after the 2000 parliamentary election when ZANU-PF lost Mbare to the MDC. There was a series of onslaughts against MDC members in an attempt to retain ZANU-PF hegemony in the district. Violence always intensified during electoral campaigns, thus Bøås and Utas argued that elections became 'the new battlegrounds.'<sup>66</sup> The Chipangano group became a coercive electioneering tool that forced citizens to vote for ZANU-PF. The period leading to the 2002 presidential election witnessed the rise in Chipangano torture cases in Mbare, from 2 to about 5-10 people per day.<sup>67</sup> The reports of torture continued to increase even after the election. Most of the people who were targeted by the vigilantes were those who had exhibited some anti-ZANU-PF tendencies such as wearing MDC t-shirts, attending MDC rallies, or failing to do the ZANU-PF slogans.<sup>68</sup> Anyone who failed to comply with Chipangano's re-establishment of ZANU-PF hegemony was targeted.

The Chipangano violated people's fundamental rights as it forced them to conform to its selfish requirements.<sup>69</sup> The SW Radio confirmed;

The violent ZANU-PF youth clique...has been campaigning for the party, forcing innocent civilians to reveal their details and ordering them to vote for Robert Mugabe in the following election. The Chipangano vigilantes ... have been regularly forcing residents, vendors and passers-by to attend ZANU-PF rallies held on open grounds in the area or the burial of a national hero at the National Heroes Acre. There is an incident where people with no identity documents were told to reveal their details to the

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<sup>66</sup> M. Bøås and M. Utas, 'The Political Landscape of Postwar Liberia: Reflections on National Reconciliation and Elections,' *Africa Today*, Vol. 60, No. 4, (2014), pp.47-65.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with a nurse by the author, at Mbare Polyclinic, 05 August 2017.

<sup>68</sup> The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Political Violence Report May 2004.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Tapiwa Chideme by the author, at his homestead in Mbare, 02 August 2017.

group, on the promise that Chipangano would approach the Registrar General for help in registering them to vote and they were supposed to vote for ZANU-PF.<sup>70</sup>

The Chipangano vigilantes were involved in stealing people's national identity cards or forcing them to reveal their details to help their patrons in vote-rigging.<sup>71</sup> In this way, the vigilantes managed and controlled people's voting behaviour and intensified authoritarian control. No one had the capability of asking about the legality of the operations of Chipangano because of its ruthless methods of subjugating the citizens. Thus, Haysom asserted that vigilante groups are contemporary tools of authoritarianism and repression.<sup>72</sup>

The violent activities of Chipangano generated a climate of terror in Mbare.<sup>73</sup> It had a network of spies who monitored the movements and activities of suspected MDC supporters.<sup>74</sup> The vigilantes expelled opposition representatives and activists from Mbare. Some MDC members who were unfortunate, like Shepherd Bandau, then MDC Branch Treasurer for Mbare, were murdered.<sup>75</sup> On 16 May 2004, the Chipangano vigilantes invaded the venue of an MDC rally in Mbare East and attacked the MDC supporters who had gathered for the rally. They followed the local MDC officials to their homes and attacked them.<sup>76</sup> Some MDC supporters who were seen putting up posters were visited during the night; their property was destroyed and they were forced to leave Mbare. They were told that 'Mbare is not a place for MDC supporters.'<sup>77</sup> Many participants revealed that Amos Nyakudya, Makuwatsine and Gonzo were involved on several occasions as the main perpetrators of Chipangano violence.<sup>78</sup> The activities of the Chipangano group revealed that it was a convenient tool of coercion used by its patrons to silence the voices of the opposition and revivify the ZANU-PF hegemony in Mbare. Thus, Kreuzer argued that politicians involve vigilante groups in political competition to carry out some dirty activities including the use of violence.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> SW Radio Africa, 'Violent Chipangano gang campaigning for ZANU PF', 13 April 2012

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Setfree Mafukidze by the author, WhatsApp interview, 13 June 2020

<sup>72</sup> N. Haysom, *Vigilantes: A contemporary form of repression*. Paper presented at the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Seminar No. 4, (1989).

<sup>73</sup> The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *Political Violence Report May 2004*, p.9.

<sup>74</sup> J. Alexander and J. McGregor, 'Introduction: Politics, Patronage and Violence in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 39, No.4, (2013), pp.749-763.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Tapiwa Chideme by the author, at his homestead in Mbare, 02 August 2017.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> P. Kreuzer, 'Private Political Violence and Boss-Rule in the Philippines', *Behemoth A Journal on Civilisation* 1, 2009, p.47.

The Chipangano vigilantes complemented the state security forces in perpetrating violence during the 2008 presidential runoff election. There was an operation code-named *Mavhoterapapi* (Where did you place your X?) which targeted those who were suspected to have voted for Morgan Tsvangirai in the first round of the election.<sup>80</sup> The vigilantes embarked on a door-to-door campaign hunting down MDC-T supporters. Pineal Denga said the victims were taken to either George Hartely swimming pool, Carter House or Nharira Primary school where they were tortured by CIOs and forced to reveal the names of other MDC-T supporters.<sup>81</sup> The group established countless ZANU-PF bases around the community boreholes (drilled using the constituency development fund given to the MPs) asking for ZANU-PF membership cards for one to access water.<sup>82</sup> Known MDC-T supporters were not allowed to fetch water. The vigilantes created an imbalanced political landscape in Mbare because the campaigns and activities of MDC-T were vehemently pushed down to become underground. Supporting the opposition party was perceived as traitorous and treasonous. This operation ended when Tsvangirai boycotted the election.

Also, the Chipangano violence intensified during the constitution drafting process (2009-2013) because ZANU-PF wanted the process to produce a pro-ZANU-PF constitution. The vigilantes were mandated to force people to vote ‘yes’ for the clauses that were favourable to ZANU-PF. Concerning this, Precious Shumba stated;

...they [Chipangano] assisted the ZANU-PF structures in drilling people on how to respond to questions and you would realise that the same ZANU-PF approach in Mbare was used across the rest of Zimbabwe. The people were told what to say, how to say it, to speak after what has been said, what to do when there is a dominance of MDC and how to disrupt meetings. They even controlled attendances. Some people were stopped from attending just because they were known to be opposition.<sup>83</sup>

Douglas Mwonzora also confirmed that Mbare was volatile during the time of the constitution referendum.<sup>84</sup> There were serious cases of violence that occurred during the meetings, one case resulted in the death of a participant at Mai Musodzi Hall in Mbare.<sup>85</sup> A

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<sup>80</sup> In 2008, harmonised elections were held and the Movement for Democratic Change- Tsvangirai (MDC-T) won the March 29 elections with 48% margin failing to reach the required 50% plus hence a presidential re-run was held on 27 June 2008.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Pineal Denga by the author, Fantasyland Chicken Inn (Harare CBD), 27 July 2017.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Precious Shumba by the author, at Harare Residents Trust (HRT), 27 July 2017.

<sup>84</sup> Independent Lens | Democrats | Political Violence in Mbare, Zimbabwe | PBS <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=C013L1M8u4w>, Accessed on 04 August 2017.

<sup>85</sup> ZESN, *Ballot Update*, 15 September 2010.

witness, Zivanai Mashayamhanda, said the victim was struck in the head by a brick and died on the spot.<sup>86</sup> Mwonzora also attended a funeral of an MDC supporter in Mbare, who was allegedly beaten to death by the vigilantes. This violence was meant to discourage open discourse among the citizens. In parallel with this, Perlman argued that authoritarianism breeds vigilante groups whose task is to carry out murder in a bid to send a message to political opponents.<sup>87</sup>

The Chipangano group appropriated Harare City Council's (HCC) properties and duties with the help of ZANU-PF politicians. When Mbare markets were restructured after the demolitions of Operation *Murambatsvina* in 2005, Tendai Savanhu (who became one of the members of the commission which run HCC) dismissed scores of council employees with influential positions. He also called the council to reallocate market stalls in Mbare business zones.<sup>88</sup> However, this reallocation involved expelling known MDC enthusiasts in business zones and redistributing market stalls preferentially to ZANU-PF supporters. In the same way, people who lived in council houses were reallocated through the manipulation of waiting lists and evictions of MDC enthusiasts. The vigilantes relentlessly aimed at displacing all MDC members from Mbare District. It seized the council flats including the Carter House and Paget House and expelled alleged MDC members. In 2011, the MDC-T claimed that over 1000 people were displaced and moved into safe houses, and human rights organisations dealt with 140 victims.<sup>89</sup> During this occasion, Paul Gorekore (then MDC-T Councillor of Ward 3) was brutalised by the group and they burnt down his flat, looted his property and injured his young brother.<sup>90</sup> In all these activities, Jim Kunaka, who worked for HCC as a 'market attendant', was at the forefront.<sup>91</sup> This indicates that the Chipangano vigilantes were agents of ZANU-PF's zero-sum politics which punished 'enemies' (MDC supporters) and reward the 'patriots' (ZANU-PF supporters).

Complementing the above, Utas argued that 'bigmanity' entails capturing formal structures, disrupting local order and making vigilante networks establish control over public space and

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<sup>86</sup> Interview with Zivayi Mashayamhanda by the author, at his homestead in Mbare National, 03 August 2017.

<sup>87</sup> J. Perlman, 'Megacity's Violence and its Consequences in Rio de Janeiro', in: K. Koonings and D. Kruijt (eds.), *Megacities: The Politics of Urban Exclusion and Violence in the Global South*. (Zed Books, New York/London 2009), pp.52-68.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *The Zimbabwean* 23 February 2011; See also CCJP 'Violence in Mbare: Testimonies from the victims', 18 July 2011, <http://www.swradioafrica.com/pages/ccjptestimonies180711.htm>, retrieved 31 July 2017.

<sup>90</sup> *The Zimbabwean*, 09 February 2011.

<sup>91</sup> Pindula, Jim Kunaka, [http://www.pindula.co.zw>Jim\\_Kunaka](http://www.pindula.co.zw>Jim_Kunaka), Accessed on 23 December 2017.

resources.<sup>92</sup> Savanhu (Big man) captured the local state and allowed Chipangano to act as a surrogate for the state to incapacitate the MDC councillors. The group was also tasked to generate income for the party (through selling membership cards and collecting extortion fees), maintaining partisan access to local state resources and eliminating the opposition. Agbibo argued that African politicians create disorder as it allows them to access state resources, bankroll their patronage networks, suffocate the opposition and actualize primitive and exploitative acquisition.<sup>93</sup> Thus, Médard argued that African politicians alter economic resources and transform them into political authority.<sup>94</sup>

Chipangano progressively exerted stern supervision of Mbare markets, apportioning them into sections and creating a cell structure to monitor the activities. The vigilantes established illegal cartels that controlled the main trading hubs which included Mbare Musika, Mupedzanhamo flea markets and Siyaso home industrial areas.<sup>95</sup> They collected fees from stall owners and vendors for their ‘protection service’.<sup>96</sup> The Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA) revealed that HCC received only 1% of proceeds from market stalls while Ignatius Chombo and Oppah Machinguri, then ZANU-PF Women’s League National Secretary, and other top-ranking figures who owned multiple stalls were profiting from illegal subletting.<sup>97</sup> To this, Friday Muleya said;

After Operation *Murambatsvina* (Clean up the city), the HCC re-pegged the markets. Many stallholders received about 2-metre tables and they [Chipangano] tended to subdivide these tables. You would find out that the person recognised by the original pegging was paying about \$23 per month for the table to the council, and the subletters were charged up to \$100 per month for their tiny subdivision of the table. When the HCC attempted to intercede and officially scale down the size of the tables to stop the extortion of the sub-letters, this action was met with violence. The vigilantes burnt the council truck and the municipal police officers were violated.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> M. Utas, ‘Introduction: Bigmanity and network governance in African conflicts,’ (2012), p. 8; A. Simone, *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African life in four cities*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), p.145.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>94</sup> J. F. Médard, ‘Le “big man” en Afrique: esquisse d’analyse du politicien entrepreneur’, *L’Année Sociologique*, Vol. 42, (1992), pp.167–92.

<sup>95</sup> J. McGregor, ‘Surveillance and the city: Patronage, Power-sharing and Politics of Urban Control in Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 39, Issue 4, (2013), pp.783-805.

<sup>96</sup> *Daily News*, 21 July 2013.

<sup>97</sup> CHRA, On partisan allocation of stalls, ‘Breaking news on Harare market stalls’, 18 September 2009. Solidarity Peace Trust, hoping without hope: Murambatsvina- Ten years on, Bulawayo, 06 October 2015; See also *NewsDay*, 03 November 2015.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Friday Mleya by the author, Harare City Council, Mbare Branch, 29 July 2017.

This shows that the vigilantes played a watchdog role which involved protecting the business interests of ZANU-PF politicians. Jim Kunaka, as a council market attendant, directly monitored the running of the markets, rent collection and inspection of tickets. This resonates with Chabal and Daloz's notion that African politicians are usually blameworthy for being the engineers in the business of violence.<sup>99</sup> The ZANU-PF politicians were key players in the informal sector, and thus Chipangano dared to attack the council whenever it tried to interfere with its business.

The Chipangano group appropriated transit spaces such as car parks, bus stops, junctions and the central transport terminus for long-distance buses for their private gains. The vigilantes demanded extortion fees from public transport operators and touts and those who failed to pay were beaten and pushed out of business.<sup>100</sup> A kombi driver, Chris Tambwera said;

We were forced to pay ranking fees to operate from Mbare Musika. More than 6 000 commuter omnibuses were operating in Harare and the Chipangano group used the *Mandimbandimba* [Rank marshalls] to collect the 'protection' fees. A commuter omnibus that ferries 18 passengers paid US\$1 and a 75-seater bus paid US\$6 per trip. Those who failed to comply were barred from using the ranks. When there was a ZANU-PF function, the Chipangano touts compelled us to transport ZANU-PF supporters to the venue.<sup>101</sup>

The council lost its sources of income to Chipangano leaders especially Jim Kunaka and Naimon Modern Chirwa who became excessively rich through running the council properties.<sup>102</sup> It is said that Jim Kunaka used to swindle about USD 4000 daily at the bus termini while the council was getting close to nothing.<sup>103</sup> This means the council was losing more than US\$100 000 per month to the vigilantes. Jim Kunaka had a 'political authority' to override the council's decisions. He could phone Tendai Mahachi, then Town Clerk, and tell him that he needs money.<sup>104</sup> When his council bosses tried to transfer him to another station, they quickly reversed the decision after Kunaka intimidated them using his Chipangano youths who came to protest at the council offices, at Remembrance Building in Mbare.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> P. Chabal and J. P. Daloz, *Africa works: Disorder as political instrument. African issues*. The International African institute, (James Curry and Indiana University Press: Oxford and Bloomington. 1999), p.80.

<sup>100</sup> 'ZANU-PF's gangs spin out of control', *Mail and Guardian*, 04 October 2012.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Chris Tambwera a Kombi driver by the author, Copa Cabana (Harare CBD), 20 July 2017.

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Precious Shumba by the author, Harare Residents Trust, 27 July 2017.

<sup>103</sup> Over 400 buses use Mbare termini and are charged \$10 each but council is not getting anything.

<sup>104</sup> *Newsdzezimbabwe*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

This event shows that Chipangano vigilantes were a band of anti-social and case-hardened youths who survived through their parasitic activities in Mbare. The group was an example of how political authority can be translated into economic benefits.<sup>106</sup>

The Chipangano group was by nature narcissistic or self-serving. This is evident in its monopolisation of employment opportunities and its expulsion of the US\$5 million donor projects which could have benefitted the people of Mbare.<sup>107</sup> In 2011, it discontinued the renovation of the dilapidated Mbare flats by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, despite the approval of HCC.<sup>108</sup> They threatened to use violence against the construction workers demanding a 51 percent stake in the project and the employment of the group members.<sup>109</sup> Owing to this, the Bill and Melinda project was stopped under the guise of the indigenisation policy. The group seemed to buttress Mugabe's anti-West ideology and thus, it ended up scathing the project as being funded by the 'enemy' (USA donors). It went on to vandalise boreholes that were funded by western donors.<sup>110</sup> Such activities scared away the donors and investors who wanted to help the poor people of Mbare.

Another surprising event was the harassment of Alex Mashamhanda (popularly known as Mashwede) who proposed to construct an electrical substation near Matapi Police station to power his business.<sup>111</sup> Although the council had approved the proposal, Jim Kunaka and Alfonso Gobvu requested a bribe but after he failed to comply with the demands of the duo, he and his workers were physically assaulted by Chipangano vigilantes and the project was stopped.<sup>112</sup> In the same manner, the group halted the construction of Mashamhanda's diesel service station and he had already spent nearly US\$300 000 to buy the necessary equipment for the project.<sup>113</sup> The vigilantes accused Mashamhanda of being funded by the MDC-T. Another businessperson called Sten Zvorwadza (who was a political activist) was also victimised and tortured by the vigilantes. This happened at Mbare Police Station after he had

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<sup>106</sup> J. F. Médard, 'Le "big man" en Afrique: esquisse d'analyse du politicien entrepreneur', *L'Année Sociologique*, Vol. 42, (1992), pp.167–92.

<sup>107</sup> Chipangano kills \$5m house scheme, *Newsday*, 5 November 2011.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> T. Mutongwizo, 'Chipangano Governance: Enablers and Effects of Violent Extraction in Zimbabwe', *Africa Peace and Conflict Journal*, Vol. 7, No.1, (2014), pp.29-40.

<sup>110</sup> *Daily News*, 26 February 2012; See also *Zimbabwean*, 3 November 2011; SW Radio Africa, Violent Chipangano gang campaigning for ZANU-PF, 14 April 2012; Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Deal with Chipangano, 30 March 2012; *Standard*, 02 September 2012.

<sup>111</sup> 'Zimbabwe: Human Rights Report- Zimbabwe', 19 April 2013, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201304230975.html>, Accessed on 22 October 2017.

<sup>112</sup> 'Chipangano: An organised criminal network', *Daily News*, 21 July 2013.

<sup>113</sup> 'Chipangano: An organised criminal network', *Daily News*, 21 July 2013.

gone to file a report against Chipangano for disrupting the installation of his paraffin tanks.<sup>114</sup> This indicates that the vigilantes had the power to overturn the council's decisions and they wanted to benefit from all the businesses in Mbare. This caused insecurities among the investors. Thus, Mbembe and Roitman framed the insecurity in urban Africa in terms of *la crise* [the crisis], or, in other words, the incoherence, instability, discontinuity and uncertainty prompted by the fusion of economic downturn, volatilities and ruptures.<sup>115</sup>

Lloyd Sachikonye argued that the emergence of the Chipangano group in Mbare led to an upsurge in cases of political rape against women.<sup>116</sup> The group used rape as a means of political torture against women who were not treading along the party lines. In 2013, Jim Kunaka was also accused of raping a vendor who was selling t-shirts without using any protection and he boasted to her saying, "*Chero ukandirepotera handisungwe nekuti tisu varidzi venyika*" (even if you report me to the police, I will not be arrested because we are the owners of this country).<sup>117</sup> Many victims of politically motivated rape mentioned Naimon Chirwa, one of the leaders of Chipangano, as the most notorious figure who raped scores of women in Mbare. Chirwa controlled and collected rentals from several council flats in Mbare. He took advantage of women who were desperately searching for accommodation in Mbare by sexually abusing them. Merjury Zambuko said Chirwa could come anytime and increased the rentals and those who failed to pay on time were compelled to surrender their sexual rights.<sup>118</sup> Also, the vigilantes organised compulsory '*pungwes*' (night vigils) during the elections with the intention to rape young girls and women. This increased the spreading of venereal diseases in the district and the perpetrators never faced justice.

It can be argued that 'beyond formal democratic institutions and processes, politics is often rooted in the informal sphere of power.'<sup>119</sup> The Chipangano group was active in the governance of Mbare through violence while the state acted as a bystander.<sup>120</sup> There is a sense in which Chipangano epitomised the conduct of ZANU-PF politicians who used

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> A. Mbembe, and J. Roitman. 'Figures of the Subject in Times of Crisis.' *Public Culture*, Vol. 7, No. 2, (1995), p.324.

<sup>116</sup> L. M. Sachikonye, *Zimbabwe's Lost Decade: Politics, Development and Society*, (Weaver Press, Harare, 2011), p.58.

<sup>117</sup> SW. Radio Africa, Chipangano gang leader Jim Kunaka allegedly raped Harare woman, 10 June 2017. <http://nehandaradio.com/2013/06/10/chipangano-gang-leader-jim-kunaka-allegedly-rapes-harare-woman/>, Accessed on 28 July 2017.

<sup>118</sup> Mrs Merjury Zambuko, at Majubheki/ Jo'burg Lines, 58 years old, 04 August 2017.

<sup>119</sup> T. Mutongwizo, 'Chipangano Governance: Enablers and Effects of Violent Extraction in Zimbabwe', *Africa Peace and Conflict Journal*, Vol. 7, No.1, (2014).

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

deceitful means to mutate the waning social order into patronage resources that lubricate the allegiance of their vigilante networks. The ZANU-PF politicians created social disorder to attain their selfish interests while the country is in disarray.<sup>121</sup> In these political games, very few youths from the Chipangano group benefitted from their violent activities. There were two types of youths in the Chipangano group. Those in leadership positions benefitted much from the group activities while an ordinary member was a mere tool of violence.

### **Chipangano vigilantes and the state security structures**

Although, Mbare police and Chipangano often tried to dissociate themselves from each other (the former more than the latter), the connection between the two was very clear. The police constantly provided backing to the vigilantes. The collusion between Mbare police and Chipangano was not surprising because, in January 2001, Augustine Chihuri, then Commissioner of Police, publicly declared that he was a ZANU-PF supporter and he would not, as a leader of the police, recognise or salute anyone who did not fight in the liberation war. This was a contravention of the Police Act of Zimbabwe which underscores that the police force should be non-aligned to any political organisation.<sup>122</sup> It should be noted that most of the top-ranking police officers were either war veterans or NYS graduates who wanted to maintain ZANU-PF hegemony in their areas of operation. Senior police officers encouraged their subordinates to support ZANU-PF in its hegemonic struggle and those who were sympathetic to opposition parties or who tried to enforce the law on a non-partisan basis were either purged, transferred or demoted. It was difficult for police officers to uniformly apply the law to all citizens.<sup>123</sup> Thus, in Mbare there was a surge of ‘police vigilantism’ if one escaped the wrath of Chipangano vigilantes, one would fall prey to cunning and devious Mbare police.

The members of Chipangano illegitimately engaged in ‘policing duties’, carrying out investigations, and arbitrary arresting and punishing suspected MDC supporters. Human Rights Watch (HRW) uncovered that there was an unwritten agreement between the police and Chipangano which gave the vigilantes absolute control over many areas of Mbare where

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<sup>121</sup> P. Chabal and J. P. Daloz, *Africa works: Disorder as political instrument. African issues.* (The International African institute, James Curry and Indiana University Press: Oxford and Bloomington, 1999).

<sup>122</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, *Zimbabwe - Police Act [Chapter 11:10]*, <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail>, Accessed on 23 September 2020.

<sup>123</sup> Human Rights Watch, “*Our Hands are tied*” *Erosion of the Rule of Law in Zimbabwe*, (2008b), p.24.

the police were not venturing any longer.<sup>124</sup> One of the informants interviewed by HRW divulged;

We reached a cordial agreement with the police in Mbare through Matapi officer-in-charge, that police will let Chipangano... be responsible for administering justice and maintaining order at the main bus terminus, Mbare Musika, and the surrounding... markets at Mupedzanhamo. Our job is to make sure that the area is free of MDC people; no MDC supporter is allowed to become a trader at Mupedzanhamo or Mbare Musika. We also patrol all blocks of flats... to make sure that all occupants have ZANU-PF membership cards. If a crime is committed in our area, a report is made to us and we deal with the matter, not the police. Only two days ago, a man was caught stealing from a bus and we arrested him and took him to Mbare 3 base. We beat him and “sentenced” him to clean our offices for two weeks as punishment.<sup>125</sup>

This reveals that the police allowed the vigilantes to operate in their shadows and they were culpable for prevalent violations of the MDC supporters.<sup>126</sup> Comparatively, the Apartheid government in South Africa sanctioned vigilante groups (such as the A-Team, Ama-Afrika, Pakatis, Mabangalala, Amadoda, Witdoeke, Amasolomzi, Amabutho and the Green Berets) to operate in townships ‘enjoying varying degrees of police support.’<sup>127</sup> Huggins positioned ‘vigilante acts on a continuum between a formal and an informal pole according to their degree of state involvement, organisation and spontaneity.’<sup>128</sup> In this respect, Chabal and Daloz asserted that African states failed to maintain institutionalized structures in accordance with the Western/Weberian principles since the state is not emancipated from society (embedded with local informal social relations).<sup>129</sup> Hence, state security structures operate on non-objective rationales supporting informal relations when they perform their duties.<sup>130</sup>

Whenever Chipangano was implicated in violence, the police conjured to appear feeble and helpless. On 25 June 2008, the vigilantes expelled sixty-three families from Mbare because they were suspected to be MDC-T supporters who contributed to the defeat of ZANU-PF in

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> Human Rights Watch interview with ZANU-PF Chipangano member, Harare, 29 August 2008.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, Country summary, January 2009, p.3.

<sup>127</sup> H. Haysom, *Vigilantes: A contemporary form of repression*. Paper presented at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Seminar No. 4, (1989).

<sup>128</sup> M. Huggins, *Vigilantism and the State in Modern Latin America: Essays on Extra-legal Violence*. (Praeger Publishers, New York, 1991).

<sup>129</sup> P. Chabal and J. P. Daloz, *Africa works: Disorder as political instrument. African issues*. (The International African institute, James Curry and Indiana University Press: Oxford and Bloomington, 1999).

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

the first-round of 2008 elections.<sup>131</sup> These families went to Matapi Police Station to open a case. The officer-in-charge allegedly first phoned the ZANU-PF Youth Leader in the area and directed complainants to go and meet him at Mudyadzo Bar in Shawasha Flats.<sup>132</sup> One of the complainants said;

...the Chipangano youths came to Mudyadzo, they said, "We now want to teach you that we are above the police — they can do nothing about us, they cannot help you." Then, they proceeded to beat us using hosepipes, iron bars, knobkerries and sjamboks from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m., after which they let us go. They remained in their office laughing. We reported the assault at Mbare Police Station. Since that day no arrests have been made and yet we know the people who evicted and beat us and these people are also known to the police in Mbare. Even now, ZANU-PF activists are staying in our homes from where they evicted us.<sup>133</sup>

This indicates that Mbare police had ceased to be custodians of the law in the district, but rather bystanders as the Chipangano unleashed retributory violence against the opposition supporters. This is analogous with, Stanislawski's concept of Black Spots which avers that vigilantism occurs in areas where the influence of the state is minimal for instance the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and some vigilante-controlled areas in Los Angeles.<sup>134</sup> However, the difference is that the Chipangano group enjoyed the protection of the partisan police as they both safeguarded the political interests of ZANU-PF.

Pineal Denga's narrative revealed more on the relationship between Mbare police and Chipangano. He said;

I went to Mbare Police Station to launch a complaint to the officer-in-charge, a lady, but I am now forgetting her name. When I looked at the charts on the walls, I saw some phone numbers and I thought those were the contacts for police officers; but I started to see the names of those who are in ZANU-PF, there was Jim Kunaka, Munyoro, Mai Bwanya and Mudzengerere. So, I realised that I was in the wrong office and the officer in charge was a war veteran. I also realised that I used to see her, sometimes, dishing out ZANU-PF t-shirts in my presence, this means these people were well connected.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Human Rights Watch interview with victim, Harare, 23 August 2008.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> B. Stanislawski, 'Para-States, Quasi-States, and Black Spots: Perhaps Not States, But Not "Ungoverned Territories," Either', *International Studies Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (2008), pp. 366-396.

<sup>135</sup> Interview with Pineal Denga by the author, at Fantasyland Chicken Inn, Harare CBD, 27 July 2017

It can be argued that the relationship between the Chipangano and Mbare police was a marriage of convenience because the police also wanted to be seen working against the opposition to secure their jobs. If Chipangano arrested someone alleged to have caused political violence or problems in the district, the police would be happy to deal with that, in favour of ZANU-PF.<sup>136</sup> Tapiwa Chideme corresponds with Pineal Denga when he said the senior police officers were fanatic supporters of ZANU-PF who sometimes coerced junior officers in their camps to wear ZANU-PF t-shirt whilst they are on duty.<sup>137</sup> He also mentioned that the police were no longer calling each other by their ranks because they were instructed to use the title ‘comrade’ (a political term solely used by ZANU-PF members).<sup>138</sup> The actions of the police prompted Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum to ask a question, “Who guards the guards?”<sup>139</sup> Borrowing from Chabal and Daloz, the inefficiency of the police profited the African politicians who thrived on instrumentalising the prevailing political disorder.<sup>140</sup>

On many occasions, the police shielded the Chipangano group claiming that it knew nothing about the group, its activities and its leadership.<sup>141</sup> James Sabau, then Harare Provincial Police Spokesperson, defended the group saying;

... some unruly individuals had taken advantage of the name Chipangano to engage in unlawful activities, such as extorting money from vendors...victims were not coming forward with specific reports of victimisation, making it difficult for the police to act. We are prepared to deal with any cases of violence or victimisation of residents. We will deal with the individuals perpetrating the violence because if we say we want to deal with Chipangano we don’t know who exactly we should be arresting. ...the issue of Chipangano is being generalised. We do not have any specific cases that have been reported to us but we just hear people saying Chipangano is doing this and that. So, I think anyone who has a case should come to the police and we will take the necessary corrective measures.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Interview with Edknowledge by the author, Heal Zimbabwe Trust, 21 July 2017

<sup>137</sup> Interview with Tapiwa Chideme by the author, Mbare, 02 August 2017.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *Who guards the guards? Violations by law enforcement agencies in Zimbabwe*, 2000 to 2006, (2006).

<sup>140</sup> P. Chabal and J. P. Daloz, *Africa works: Disorder as political instrument. African issues.* (The International African institute, James Curry and Indiana University Press: Oxford and Bloomington, 1999), p14.

<sup>141</sup> *Financial Gazette*, 31 May 2012.

<sup>142</sup> *The Zimbabwean*, 15 August 2012, <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/2012/08/report-chipangano-offences-zrp/>, Accessed 28/07/17.

This denotes that the police were unsympathetic to the victims of Chipangano violence and they sanctioned violence and delinquency in Mbare. The police even helped the group to counteract people who filed lawsuits against it. They created false evidence or fictional cases to rationalize the arrest and detention of the complainants. This is evident in the case of Mashwede Diesel Company employees who sued Jim Kunaka in 2012 for disrupting the construction of their service station and soliciting a bribe.<sup>143</sup> Jim Kunaka won this case because he got help from Superintendent Chrispen Makedenge (from the Criminal Investigation Department) and Assistant Inspector Shoko. They created false evidence against the Mashwede employees arguing that they wanted to bribe Jim Kunaka to acquire the construction site.<sup>144</sup> Thus, Schuberth argued that when both police and the vigilantes 'are politicized, they radicalise their agenda.'<sup>145</sup>

It is clear that police turned a blind eye to vigilante violence in Mbare. Theresa Makone, the Minister of Home Affairs (2009-2013), posited that police were so useless that they could not even use tear gases or arrest Chipangano vigilantes because they were getting instructions from ZANU-PF headquarters.<sup>146</sup> The police force was captured by the ZANU-PF regime (which conflated itself as the state) and it could not clamp down the vigilante group without the blessings of the government. The next section examines the involvement of Chipangano in intra-party violence and its collapse.

### **Intra-party violence and the demise of Chipangano**

In ZANU-PF, intra-party violence often reared its ugly head during party primary elections.<sup>147</sup> The Chipangano group tended to unleash violence against ZANU-PF supporters to force them to support a pro-Chipangano candidate. This is exemplified by the group's campaign against war veterans in 2012, denying them the right to contest in the party's primary elections. A former Chipangano member revealed what Jim Kunaka told the group;

War veterans should not be allowed to partake in the impending elections. Who is a liberation war veteran? Any person who will support the war veterans will be punished very hard...If the war veterans failed to accumulate wealth during the war, there is

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<sup>143</sup> 'Chipangano's links to the top exposed', *The Zimbabwean*, 31 October 2012.

<sup>144</sup> *The Zimbabwean*, 31 October 2012.

<sup>145</sup> M. Schuberth, 'Challenging the Weak States Hypothesis: Vigilantism in South Africa and Brazil', *Journal of Peace, Conflict & Development*, Issue 20, April 2013, p.50.

<sup>146</sup> S. Kibble, 'Zimbabwe between referendum and elections', *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, Vol 35, No 1, (2012).

<sup>147</sup> L. M. Sachikonye, *Curse of Political Violence: Time to break the cycle of terror*, 2012, pp.40-42.

nothing for them now...there is a need now to deal callously with those who do not toe the party line.<sup>148</sup>

This indicates that Chipangano was obstreperous and domineering to the extent that it viewed Mbare as its sphere of influence. It intended to eliminate all forms of competition from all angles and make Jim Kunaka a ZANU-PF councillor in Mbare. The group feared that if leadership was going to change in Mbare, their illegitimate businesses and hegemony was going to be jeopardised.

Besides, the Chipangano group got involved in intra-party violence on the basis that its patrons (Amos Midzi and Tendai Savanhu) were perceived as individuals sailing the party in the wrong direction.<sup>149</sup> They were aligned to Gamatox, Joice Mujuru's faction, which was a rival to Mnangagwa and Grace Mugabe who at that point, were appearing to be both in the Lacoste group, which later splintered. Taking a cue from Beller and Belloni, this factionalism was an 'elite factionalism', but its repercussions affected all the party structures.<sup>150</sup> The ZANU-PF elites pitted the youths against each other and this resulted in the emergence of other youth groups affiliated with certain factions, for instance, the Boko Haram group and Godwin Gomwe's ZANU-PF Youth Movement were affiliated to Grace Mugabe's Generation 40 (G-40) faction.

In connection with the above, Edknowledge had this to say;

I observed that Mbare was divided into two rival camps with vigilante groups affiliated with different factions. Intraparty violence surfaced because Chipangano controlled a particular part of the area with business opportunities and market stalls whereas Boko Haram did the same. It was then difficult to have people who were perceived to be in one camp to have market stalls in other areas and that could trigger violence in one way or another.<sup>151</sup>

The Boko Haram group was a product of factionalism created not only to take over the Mbare business zones but also to agitate for the ascendance of youths in ZANU-PF and elevate the name of Grace Mugabe (using the slogan "*Munhu wese kunaAmai*" - everyone should support Grace Mugabe). Tapiwa Chideme said the group also victimised and discredited

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<sup>148</sup> Interview with a former Chipangano member by the author, at Paground flea market in Mbare, 25 July 2017.

<sup>149</sup> Interview with Edknowledge by the author, Heal Zimbabwe Trust (HZT), 21 July 2017.

<sup>150</sup> F. P. Belloni and D. C. Beller. (eds.) *Faction Politics: Political Parties and Factionalism in Comparative Perspective*. (Santa Barbara and Oxford 1978b).

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

other members of ZANU-PF who were against Grace Mugabe.<sup>152</sup> In 2013, it rallied people to vote for Godwin Gomwe (who was affiliated with the G-40 cabal) as the Harare Provincial Youth Chairperson to oust Jim Kunaka. Gomwe replaced Kunaka in 2013 but it did not take long before he was ejected from the party (through a vote of no confidence) for disrespecting senior party members.<sup>153</sup> Thus, the realist scholars, such as Thomas Hobbes and Hans Morgenthau, concluded that the perpetual power struggle results in some individuals gaining the power to the detriment of others.

However, the involvement of youths in factional battles as tools of violence was not a problem unique to ZANU-PF only; this was also prevalent in MDC politics. Since the 2005 split, when Welshman Ncube and Gibson Sibanda (founding members of the MDC) left the MDC to form the Movement for Democratic Change – Ncube (MDC-N), MDC has continuously used youth violence in various formations of the party; when battling for leadership positions and resolving other political issues.<sup>154</sup> When it splintered in 2005, youth violence was unleashed against all those who rebelled against Morgan Tsvangirai. Welshman Ncube, Gibson Sibanda, Trudy Stevenson, among others, became victims of youth violence. Likewise, when Tendai Biti (who was the MDC-T Secretary General) and Elton Mangoma (who was the MDC-T Deputy Treasurer) were dismissed from the party in 2014, they were also subjected to violence. Biti and Mangoma established their party known as the MDC Renewal, which later splintered into the People's Democratic Party (PDP) led by Biti and the Renewal Democrats (RD) led by Mangoma. The fallout between the former allies was caused by disputes over joining the MDC Alliance in the 2018 elections. Elton Mangoma, who is disabled, was brutalised by the PDP youths during this split.

Again, in 2018 the MDC Vanguard, a youth paramilitary and vigilante group organised by the Youth Assembly, was involved in the succession disputes between Nelson Chamisa and Thokozani Khupe after the demise of Morgan Tsvangirai. Khupe (who was expected to succeed the late Morgan Tsvangirai) was beaten up, derided, and demeaned in public spaces by the Vanguard. In February 2018, Lovemore Moyo (who was the MDC's National Chairperson), Abednico Bhebhe (then Organizing Secretary), and Thokozani Khupe, were physically attacked by the mob of youth and Vanguard during Morgan Tsvangirai's funeral

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<sup>152</sup> Interview with Tapiwa Chideme by the author, Mbare, 02 August 2017.

<sup>153</sup> 'The rise and fall of Godwin Gomwe', *The Standard*, [www.thestandard.co.zw/2015/06/14/the-rise-and-fall-of-gomwe/](http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2015/06/14/the-rise-and-fall-of-gomwe/), Accessed on 23 December 2017.

<sup>154</sup> C. Moyo, 'Party Foot-soldiers, Quasi-militias, Vigilantes, and the Spectre of Violence in Zimbabwe's Opposition Politics,' *Modern Africa: Politics, History and Society*, Vol. 8, Issue 1, (2020), pp.65-103.

in Buhera.<sup>155</sup> These youths nearly burnt these MDC officials inside a hut they had sought refuge in. In March 2018, the Vanguard clashed with youths from the Khupe faction at the MDC's Bulawayo offices, and many people, including Witness Dube (Khupe's assistant and driver), were severely injured.<sup>156</sup> The violence within MDC was also non-physical as it manifested in language, for instance, the youths labelled Thokozani Khupe 'hure!' (prostitute).<sup>157</sup> In Kuwadzana, Shakespeare Mukoyi (the Vanguard leader) used the group to intimidate Charlton Hwende during the party primary elections in 2018. In November 2019, the MDC rival factions (this time Chamisa *versus* Mwonzora factions) clashed at the party's headquarters and viciously fought each other; and during this fight, Douglas Mwonzora's vehicle was vandalised.<sup>158</sup> The MDC youths tended to perpetrate violence against all those who had divergent views. The activities of the Vanguard reveal that this youth group was a fierce and radical vigilante and paramilitary group in the MDC which operated as party foot-soldiers.<sup>159</sup> Their roles in the MDC politics were not different from that of the Chipangano group in ZANU-PF as they were both used as tools of violence during the factional battles.

In 2014, Jim Kunaka and Tendai Savanhu were expelled from ZANU-PF and Amos Midzi mysteriously died on 9 June 2015. The ZANU-PF regime used these events as a justification that the Chipangano group was no longer in existence. Nevertheless, the reality is that Edison Takataka (aligned to the G-40) who succeeded Godwin Gomwe, as the Provincial Youth Chairperson, together with Kuda Mavhaza, who was Mbare Ward 4 Chairperson, revived the Chipangano group.<sup>160</sup> One of the former members of Chipangano said that some group members who refused to accept this change of leadership found themselves in jail.<sup>161</sup> Even Jim Kunaka himself faced some difficult times with the judiciary and CIO after he was discharged from ZANU-PF.<sup>162</sup> Taking a cue from Friedrich, factionalism is a sensation that

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<sup>155</sup> G. Dube, 'MDC-T VP Thokozani Khupe Beaten Up, Nearly Set on Fire in Hamlet At Tsvangirai Funeral', *VOA*, 20 February 2018, <https://www.voazimbabwe.com/a/morgan-tsvangirai-thokozani-khupe-mdc-t-beaten-up/4262709.html>, Accessed on 13 August 2022.

<sup>156</sup> G. Dube, 'MDC-T Activists Seriously Injured as Rival Party Factions Clash', *VOA*, 04 March 2018 <https://www.voazimbabwe.com/a/mdc-t-rival-factions-clash-bulawayo/4279757.html>, Accessed on 13 August 2022.

<sup>157</sup> A. Chibamu, 'Activists in MDC-T regalia charge Khupe; chant 'hure! hure! hure!', *New Zimbabwe*, 23 May 2018. <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/activists-in-mdc-t-regalia-charge-khupe-chant-hure-hure-hure/>, Accessed on 13 August 2022.

<sup>158</sup> *The Zimbabwe Mail* 2019.

<sup>159</sup> C. Moyo, 'Party Foot-soldiers, Quasi-militias, Vigilantes, and the Spectre of Violence in Zimbabwe's Opposition Politics,' *Modern Africa: Politics, History and Society*, Vol. 8, Issue 1, (2020), pp.65-103.

<sup>160</sup> 'Police must deal with ZANU PF terror gangs', *Dailynews*, 20 July 2017.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with a former Chipangano member by the author, Majubeki, Mbare, 02 August 2017.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

falls under the category of ‘pathologies of politics’ as it alienated the fundamental meaning of ZANU-PF politics, serving the interests of individuals.<sup>163</sup>

It appears that the Chipangano group died a natural death and its last rites were done during the 2017 November coup which ousted Mugabe from power. The involvement of Chipangano leaders in factional politics contributed to the collapse of the group. The group stood with the faction of its patrons (Amos Midzi and Tendai Savanhu), who supported the Joice Mujuru faction, and when Mujuru was outmaneuvered by the G-40 cabal, her proxies including the Chipangano leaders fell with her in 2014. The attempts to revive the group under new leadership and realign it to the G-40 cabal just yielded some transitory results. The 2017 November coup was the final blow to the existence of the Chipangano group. Although the group members are still there in Mbare and other parts of Harare, the ZANU-PF politicians in the Mnangagwa regime are not willing to sponsor it. The regime is now more reliant on the army and police than youth vigilante groups. The youths in the Mnangagwa regime are mainly used as social media trolls (they are called Varakashi – which means destroyers). Their job is to defend the regime on all real-time social networks, mobilise support and disseminate ZANU-PF propaganda. The regime also uses popular music icons, especially Zimdancehall artists, to lure the youth to vote. The only vigilante group that is still getting favours from the current ZANU-PF regime is the Al-Shabaab since it stood with Mnangagwa even during the days when he was dismissed from ZANU-PF.

## **Conclusion**

The emergency of Chipangano generated predatory power relations and tainted the state-citizen interface not only in Mbare but across the whole of Zimbabwe. Many vigilante groups similar to Chipangano emerged in different parts of the country. It seems the ZANU-PF politicians, essentially interested in retaining power, traded public powers to vigilante groups for political support. Thus, the socio-economic relations in Mbare were shaped by domination, exclusionism and rent-seeking activities, and the state-citizen relations were shaped by violence and patronage. The predatory expropriation of rents from council properties and the violation of citizens by the vigilantes happened because of the state’s ‘intentional blindness’ or complicity in perpetuating its activities. The state was reluctant to perform its basic functions of providing security to the citizens, and upholding the rule of law and civil liberties because the ZANU-PF politicians were benefitting from the vigilante

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<sup>163</sup> C. J. Friedrich, *The Pathology of Politics*, (Harper & Row, New York 1972).

activities. The state proved to be more of a predator than a guardian as the political leaders captured and politicised the police force for their selfish interests. The police were reduced to becoming patronizing instruments since they operated as both gatekeepers to vigilante activities in Mbare. The security services in Africa and Zimbabwe, in particular, are far from being impartial and competent, their duties go beyond protecting the people as they are used as tools of aggrandizement by politicians who often discriminate against certain groups.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the emergence and development of youth political violence in Zimbabwe in two distinct phases that is when the ZANU was a counter-hegemonic movement (1963-1979) and when it took over power (1980-2018). From its early days, ZANU was reliant on youth violence for its political mobilisations, inter-party conflicts with ZAPU, and the liberation struggle. It portrayed itself as a revolutionary party that would create what Gramsci termed an ethico-political system (benevolent government) to replace the repressive and violent colonial system. The youths were portrayed in positive terms as agents of change, future leaders, and beneficiaries of the revolution. The party romanticised violence as a vital tool to end colonialism. And, thus the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* overzealously participated in ZANU/ZANLA violent politics during the liberation struggle. Nonetheless, the use of coercive power and violence became difficult to forsake in the post-colonial era. A revolution did not materialise with the coming of independence. Instead, ZANU-PF mutated from being a revolutionary leadership to a politico-economic class with selfish interests and a deep paranoia that power may slip away easily. Hegemony became important for the governance of society and to maintain political power. I argued that multiparty politics made ZANU-PF feel 'incomplete' without violent youth groups and thus coercion was, in many instances, a tool-of-choice than a consensual method. This study was grounded on an interpretive and retrospective reflection of youth violence in Mbare, Highfield, and Uzumba Maramba-Pfungwe (UMP). So, the conclusions drawn from this study are context-specific (specifically for youth violence that occurred in the mentioned districts) and cannot be generalised. Nevertheless, some of the arguments presented in the study can be of great use in analysing related phenomena elsewhere.

Throughout the long historical continuum, from the emergence of Zimbabwean nationalism and its political parties up to the present time, the youths have been both perpetrators and victims of violence that was meant to discipline the perceived political foes. This study showed that youth political violence was endemic in the country's political culture. I argued that this violent political culture tended to create some kinds of political sub-cultures wittingly or unwittingly. Since the late 1950s, the 'sell-out' imputation continued to be a firmly entrenched logic in the nationalist political rhetoric and a direct causal of political violence. The political logic of the early nationalist movements, especially the National Democratic Party (NDP) was shaped by Marxist philosophies. They believed that the only way to invite people to support the nationalist cause was through the use of 'revolutionary

terror.’<sup>1</sup> Some radical nationalists like Robert Mugabe, and George Silundika, among others, believed that all blacks should support African nationalism and they perceived the moderates and indifferent as sell-outs or counter-revolutionaries.<sup>2</sup> The internecine violence of the late 1950s and early 1960s left a permanent stamp on Zimbabwe’s political culture.<sup>3</sup> It contributed to the emergence and development of a culture of violence in the country. When the ZANU-ZAPU split occurred in 1963, youth political violence was already endemic and frequently used in political contests. The split resulted in politics of hatred and intolerance of opposition parties which continued to reign in today’s politics. More than 60 years later, intimidation, killing, and burning of houses and property of political opponents by the youths continue.

Youth violence became a means of spreading the party ideology, mobilising the masses, and punishing sell-outs throughout the liberation struggle. The ZANLA guerrillas involved the *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* in war politics because of their energy, agility, and good knowledge of their communities. These youths played a significant role in connecting the guerrillas and the masses. Although they were coerced to recruit into war collaboration, they cannot be perceived as mere victims because youths were a collection of various interest sub-groups with diverse agendas. In UMP, some youths became war collaborators because they wanted to use that platform to become ZANLA combatants. Some wanted to enjoy the power, immunity, and privileges availed to them through their association with the guerrillas. However, they sometimes misused their relationship with the guerrillas to perpetrate violence against their neighbours and relatives to settle old scores or for any other reasons. Concerning this, Barker and Ricardo asserted that violence, extremism, and cruelty are not inborn behaviours, but are inculcated through initiation modelling, propaganda, embarrassment, intimidations, and coercion.<sup>4</sup> Honwana argued that youths are initiated into violence through a meticulously planned procedure of reconfiguring identity and getting rid of the civilian

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<sup>1</sup> S. Hick, Marx’s Philosophy and the ‘necessity’ of violent politics.

<https://www.stephenhicks.org/2013/02/18/marxs-philosophy-and-the-necessity-of-violent-politics/>, Accessed on 05 December 2021.

<sup>2</sup> T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940-1964*. (Rochester: Rochester University Press, 2008). Also S. Doran, *Kingdom, Power, Glory: Mugabe, Zanu and the Quest for Supremacy, 1960-1987*. (Midrand: Sithatha Books, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> L. M. Sachikonye, *When a State Turns on its Citizens: 60 years of Institutionalised Violence in Zimbabwe*. (Harare: Weaver Press, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> G. Barker and C. Ricardo, Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/ Aids, Conflict and Violence, Social Development Papers, Conflict and Reconstruction, Pare No.26, (2005).

mind and transforming them into pitiless killers.<sup>5</sup> I argued that the ZANLA guerrillas used political education, ideological indoctrination, and violent imagery to initiate and socialise war collaborators people into violence.<sup>6</sup>

The study revealed that the youths from war did not renounce their violent practices, they continued to perform their surveillance duties in the post-colonial era. They hunted and disciplined sell-outs targeting members of ZAPU in the 1980s, ZUM and other parties in the 1990s, and MDC in the 2000s. Like the systems of Stalin and Hitler, ZANU-PF developed the culture of eavesdropping on neighbours and relatives to counteract opposition. This culture was handed down to other generations through state institutions like the Youth Brigade Movement (YBM) and National Youth Service (NYS). Also, the ZANU-PF-aligned youths who perpetrated violence have continued to enjoy immunity in the manner the war collaborators enjoyed guerrilla immunity during wartime.

Despite their violent activities, the roles of the war collaborators cannot be undermined. Used and dumped when it is convenient to do so, many former war collaborators are languishing in poverty.<sup>7</sup> Many were injured whilst performing the war duties, but they were never compensated as they were side-lined when the state compensated the former guerrillas in 1997. Only a few war collaborators got the opportunity to join politics (in the 1980s and 1990s) through being elected into Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) and Ward Development Committees (WADCOs) but many others were excluded as ZANU politicians regarded politics as ‘business of grown-ups’.<sup>8</sup> Four decades later, the state is still vetting the war collaborators supposedly to compensate them.<sup>9</sup> Even the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Collaborator Association (ZILIWACO) which was intended to represent the war collaborators has become an elitist and partisan organisation that barely stands for the needs of its members in the rural areas. Its leaders, for instance, Pupurai Togarepi use the organisation to champion their narrow interests, specifically to vie for positions in ZANU-PF, with no or little regard to issues affecting former war collaborators. The organisation is

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<sup>5</sup> A. Honwana, *Child soldiers in Africa*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> L.M. Hilker and E. Fraser, Youth exclusion, violence, conflict and fragile states, Report prepared for DFID Equity and Rights Team, (2009).

<sup>7</sup> ‘War collaborators demand compensation’, *Daily News*, 9 October 2014, <https://dailynews.co.zw/war-collaborators-demand-compensation/> Accessed on 22 November 2021.

<sup>8</sup> T. O. Ranger, *Peasant consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*. (London: James Currey, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> T. Chimutambi and M. Chada, ‘Mujibhas, Chimbwidos to undergo vetting,’ *Herald*, 07 January 2019; ‘Compensate war collaborators,’ *Newsday*, November 24, 2018; See also D. Chiwapu, *Struggle for liberation in Zimbabwe: The eye of war collaborator (Mujibha)*. (Manchester: Trafford, 2013).

sometimes reduced to become a political campaigning tool. The former war collaborators were only remembered during elections when ZANU-PF was canvassing for votes.<sup>10</sup>

The state has remained entrapped in African nationalism with an appalling history of using the youths to silence alternative views. The former nationalist leaders did not repent from their violent politics when they took over the state. In the Gramscian sense, they became a politico-economic class with a deep paranoia that power would easily slip away. The same prowling ghost of violence resurfaced immediately after independence with the *Gukurahundi* violence which devoured the lives of innocent people. Every election since 1980 was accompanied by youth violence and the perpetrators have escaped justice through Presidential amnesty. A culture of impunity that continued to affect the country today was institutionalised in the 1980s and 1990s. The Youth brigades and the Youth League were among the apparatus of political violence witnessed during this period.<sup>11</sup> I have argued that the implementation of the YBM in the 1980s shows that the government only incorporates youths into its policies when their actions can hamper its plans and such social control of youth proved to be detrimental to the long-term development of the youths. Although the Youth brigade program was meant to involve ex-guerrillas and other youths who did not have access to education and employment opportunities in national economic development, it was poorly funded and was not connected to meaningful employment prospects in the labour market. However, the ‘socialist’ indoctrination or agitprop imparted in the youth training centres transformed youths into instruments of violence. Like the Ghanaian Workers Brigade and the Young Pioneers who are remembered as a locus for Convention People’s Party (CPP) intimidation, the Youth brigades were involved in spreading ZANU-PF ideology, mobilising supporters, and intimidating and punishing ZAPU supporters.<sup>12</sup>

After 1989, countries in sub-Sahara experienced a wave of democratisation that blew across the region. Some forms of competitive elections were held in various countries and resulted in the demise of authoritarianism.<sup>13</sup> Although ZANU tried to appear democratic by embracing multiparty democracy in the 1990s, its violent attitude towards stronger

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<sup>10</sup> ‘Don’t sleep over demos: ED... urges war collaborators to mobilise votes for ZANU-PF,’ *Herald*, 13 July 2018.

<sup>11</sup> CCJP and LRF, *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988*. (Harare: CCPJ, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> J. S. Ahlman, ‘A New Type of Citizen: Youth, Gender and Generation in the Ghanaian Builders Brigade’, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (2012), pp. 87-105.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph, Richard. "Democratization in Africa after 1989: Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives." *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (1997), pp.363-82.

oppositions was clear. The political elites lacked the political will necessary for the establishment of strong democratic institutions. Gramsci asserted that a democratic system entails the exercise of consensual power, and consent can be organised through persuasion and ideology.<sup>14</sup> The ZANU-PF regime interchangeably used persuasion and coercion to maintain its hegemony. It used persuasion when dealing with party supporters and a carrot-and-stick approach for oppositions. The liberation discourse and populism were key to the electoral campaigns since independence. In UMP, ZANU-PF appreciated the significance of peasants' support in the liberation war and encouraged them to maintain their consent if they wanted peace to prevail. The theatre of war was more unbearable and devastating in the rural areas than in urban areas. I argued that the memories of colonial domination and war atrocities could not be erased from the minds of UMP inhabitants and that voting for ZANU-PF was a way of avoiding the possibilities of war in the future. They also had the trust, faith, and respect of the party leadership and they conceded to its liberation narrative of war heroism. Unlike the labour-dominant urban areas where economic performance was a determinant of consent, the effects of a sluggish economy took longer to be sensed in rural areas since people produce their foodstuffs.<sup>15</sup> Simultaneously, violence was romanticised as an essential tool for making political foes tread the ZANU-PF party line. So long as the majority consented to ZANU PF rule, multi-party elections were permitted and indeed acclaimed by the ruling party. It has gotten the needed consent of the electorates, but that consent was certainly not complete or assured. The unabating depreciation of consent in the late 1990s irreversibly led to the crisis of authoritarianism in Zimbabwe.

After the collapse of the YBM in 1987, the Youth League took full charge of spreading the party ideology, mobilising support, and spying on people. I argued that youths joined the Youth League to access the patronage benefits availed to the members such as employment in the civil service, loans for youth empowerment, food aid, and so on. These party youths violated the opposition supporters in Mbare and Highfield during the 1990 and 1995 elections. Using the case of Ghana, Paolo argued that the youth leagues are intended to positively influence democratic consolidation through non-violent activities, but they participate in hard-line and violent politics, thus rescinding the prospect of useful

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<sup>14</sup> B. Fontana, 'Logos and Kratos: Gramsci and the Ancients on Hegemony', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 61, No. 2, (2000), pp.305-326.

<sup>15</sup> I. Muvingi, 'The Politics of Entitlement and State Failure in Zimbabwe', *Peace Research*, Vol. 40, No. 1, (2008), pp.77-101.

contribution from the demographic majority in the continent.<sup>16</sup> In this regard, Kanyadudi argued that youth leagues are not taken seriously by their mother parties and their duties are restricted to canvassing support for the party.<sup>17</sup> In ZANU-PF politics, youths were regarded as *mumera mutete* meaning they were not ripe to participate in serious political processes and decision-making. They do not have the power to influence the party nomination processes, programs, or even manifestos.<sup>18</sup> This systemic exclusion of youths from political and democratic processes within the party is a direct causal violent politics since the youths want to be seen doing something for the party, especially during the elections.<sup>19</sup> I argued that the ZANU Youth League is more of an ‘ideological’ training ground in which youths are indoctrinated and socialised with radicalism and violent politics.

The ZANU-PF government began to perceive youths as an existential threat in the late 1980s, and there were plans, since then, to establish a compulsory youth service (Cadet corps) for all school leavers. The government’s ruinous policies, corruption, and marginalisation of certain groups especially the youths resulted in student demonstrations in the late 1980s and a series of protests organised by labour and civic organisations in the late 1990s. The liberation struggle proved not to be universally beneficial and it was not an end in and of itself. Liberation was linked to the political elite’s materialistic interest. The political office became a gateway to economic fortunes. The liberators became an insatiably greedy politico-economic class as they failed to uphold the liberation principles and deliver the socio-economic prospects. Their unrestrained quest for material wealth emasculated their hegemony to the extent that they had to recourse to open coercion to maintain their grip on power. When the MDC was formed in 1999 many youths joined the new opposition. The ZANU-PF regime then established the NYS in 2001 to socialise youths and propagate an authoritarian nationalist narrative that justified violence as ‘defending the revolution.’<sup>20</sup> Given the unprecedented economic meltdown, the skyrocketing youth unemployment, and abject poverty in the 2000s, the ZANU-PF regime knew that they could not win elections without an instrument of coercion. This study showed that the NYS was a repressive tool

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<sup>16</sup> S. A. Paalo, ‘Political party youth wings and political violence in sub-Saharan Africa: A case of Ghana’, *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*, Vol 8, No.1, (2017), p.1.

<sup>17</sup> C. J. O. Kanyadudi, *From the Wings to Mainstream: The Role of Political Party Youth Leagues in Democratisation and Regional Integration in East Africa*, (Nairobi: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> S. A. Paalo, ‘Political party youth wings and political violence in sub-Saharan Africa: A case of Ghana’, *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*, Vol 8, No.1, (2017), pp.1-14.

<sup>20</sup> G. Mwonzora and K. Helliker, ‘Learning and performing political violence: ZANU-PF Youth and the 2008 presidential run-off election in Zimbabwe’, *African Studies*, Vol. 79, Issue 4, (2020), pp.367-386.

designed to help the ZANU-PF regime to cope with the increasing decline of consensual power. Owing to the naked form of repression witnessed in the 2000s, Zimbabwe was holding what Hermet *et al* termed as state-controlled elections -since the ruling party influenced the electoral outcome with its violent structures.<sup>21</sup>

The ZANU-PF regime utilised the NYS to exploit vulnerable youths to make them acquiescent to its hegemony (political views and a violent political culture) and its abuses. The state coerced youths to join the NYS training directly or indirectly through its social engineering strategies. It seems some of the ideas that shaped the Zimbabwean NYS were borrowed from the fascist German. The Nazi government compelled all German male youths to become Hitler Youth.<sup>22</sup> Those who did not go through the youth training camps were deprived of jobs and university placement.<sup>23</sup> Thus Ross asserted that politicians in the contemporary world are reading Hitler's autobiography, *Mein Kampf* (My struggle), to get ideas on how to safeguard their hegemony and dominate the political space.<sup>24</sup> However, I argued that the NYS was a detrimental social control that destroyed the future of several youths. Instead of helping them to expend their energies on the socio-economic development of the country, it inducted them into political thuggery. It also, in a way, created a conducive environment for the sprouting of vigilante groups like Chipangano in Mbare, Al-Shabab in Kwekwe, Top Six in Chinhoyi, Jomochocho in Hurungwe, among others. Some NYS members who did not get employment opportunities formed or joined violent vigilante groups in their localities.

The socio-economic challenges exposed youths to manipulation by ZANU-PF politicians who recruited them into vigilante groups in the 2000s. The economic crisis in the country created a sense of hopelessness and frustration among the youths and this pushed some of them to join vigilante groups. Indeed, ZANU-PF politicians played a 'subversive' role in manipulating youths to brutally realize their selfish political interests. In Sierra Leone, Weinstein and Humphreys argued that the recruits were offered individual and material incentives (like money, residential stands, resource rents, loot, and positions of authority) to

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<sup>21</sup> G. Hermet, R. Rose and A. Rouquié (eds.) *Election Without Choice*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1978).

<sup>22</sup> H. W. Koch, *The Hitler Youth: Origin and development, 1922-1945*. (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000); J. T. Lauridsen, 'Hitler Youth,' in P. S. Fass (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society, Volume 2: World History in Context*, (2004), pp.430-431, [www.ic.galegroup.com](http://www.ic.galegroup.com), Accessed on 30 July 2020.

<sup>23</sup> R. J. Evans, *The Third Reich in power*. (New York: Penguin Group, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> E. Ross, 'Hitler Youth: Hitler secret weapon,' 2011, [www.logos-publishing.com](http://www.logos-publishing.com), Accessed on 30 June 2020.

enlist into violent groups.<sup>25</sup> This is similar to what Bayart termed as ‘politics of the belly.’ Politicians use their status and inducements to ‘fill the bellies’ of the vigilantes and in return, they sabotage the activities of the opposition parties for the benefit of their patrons.<sup>26</sup> I argued that many youths joined vigilante groups like Chipangano because they perceived it as an avenue for their upward social mobility. Some wanted protection from violence and others wanted to benefit from the power and impunity that comes with their association with ZANU-PF politicians.

The emergency of vigilante groups like Chipangano generated predatory power relations and tainted the state-citizen interface as ZANU-PF politicians traded public powers for undoubted political support. The Chipangano violence targeted the poor of the poorest who ventured into vending at Mbare Musika, selling *mabhero* (second-hand clothes) at Mupedzanhamo, and operating *mushika-shika* (unregistered private taxis) business for survival. The socio-economic relations in Mbare were shaped by domination, exclusionism and rent-seeking activities; and the state-citizen relations were shaped by violence and patronage. The Chipangano group was a ZANU-PF parallel structure designed to undermine the MDC-controlled council. Smith argued that symbiotic relationships between political parties and vigilante groups can be found throughout the sub-Saharan region. In the same manner, crime control vigilante groups in Nigeria such as the Bakassi Boys and the Oodua People’s Congress (OPC) were manipulated by politicians during the elections to mobilise support, cause political riots, and disrupt the electoral process and facilitate electoral fraud and perpetrate violence against electorates.<sup>27</sup>

The study of Chipangano helps us to understand how the Mugabe regime thrived on instrumentalising ‘disorder.’ Patrick Chabal’s thesis of instrumentalization of disorder encapsulated the operations of state-sanctioned vigilantes like the Chipangano group. Chabal averred that politicians are often facilitators in the ‘business of violence’ and they are responsible for the emergence of vigilante groups, militias, and other criminal gangs which prey on the public resources and terrorise people.<sup>28</sup> Political violence is an instrument of creating disorder and the presence of disorder generates a favourable environment that

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<sup>25</sup> J. M. Weinstein and M. Humphreys, ‘Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War,’ *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 52, Issue 22008. pp.436-455.

<sup>26</sup> J. F. Bayart, *The state in Africa: The politics of the belly*. (London: Longman, 1993)..

<sup>27</sup> D.J. Smith, ‘The Bakassi Boys: Vigilantism, Violence, and Political Imagination in Nigeria’, *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 19, Issue 3, (2004), pp.429-455.

<sup>28</sup> P. Chabal and J. Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*. (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1999).

provides opportunities to the extortionist and criminal groups to manipulate to their advantage.<sup>29</sup> The groups (like Chipangano) that emerge out of political disorder turn out to be highly exclusionary, serving the interests of the few. They capitalise on their collusion with the state to usurp public resources and use violence against the citizens. This “politics of disorder” enabled ZANU-PF to mobilise youths into vigilante groups and establish mutual political relationships. These youths perpetrated political violence and in return, they were allowed to control business zones in their areas. In Francis Nyamjoh’s terms, both Chipangano and ZANU-PF capitalised on the ‘incompleteness’ of each other.<sup>30</sup>

Since independence, the ZANU-PF regime was dependent on violence because it was unsure about the effectiveness of consensual strategies for renewing its hegemony. Williams argued that hegemony is dynamic, “It does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has to be continually renewed, recreated, defended and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not all its own.”<sup>31</sup> The ZANU-PF politicians were aware of this and thus they had a deep-seated paranoia that power can easily slip away. Nyamjoh termed this as a sense of ‘incompleteness.’<sup>32</sup> The ZANU-PF elites were aware that the change of government would result in their prosecution for the violation of human rights. The globalisation of accountability for human rights infringement and the waning of state boundaries as buffers from prosecution troubled the elites and compelled them to retain power by any means necessary.<sup>33</sup> It is this incompleteness that made the ZANU-PF regime establish the Youth Brigade Movement in the 1980s and the National Youth Service in the 2000s to have reliable and inexpensive paramilitary wings that maintain the party’s grip on power. Incompleteness also resulted in the emergence of vigilante groups like Chipangano that appropriate the police and Harare City Council duties in Mbare.

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> F. B. Nyamjoh, ‘Incompleteness: Frontier Africa and the Currency of Conviviality’, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, (2015), pp.1-18.

<sup>31</sup> R. Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society. Revised Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. *See also* Hegemony in Gramsci <https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/postcolonialstudies/2014/06/20/hegemony-in-gramsci/>, Accessed: 23 November 2021.

<sup>32</sup> F. B. Nyamjoh, ‘Incompleteness: Frontier Africa and the Currency of Conviviality’, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, (2015), pp.1-18.

<sup>33</sup> Africa News, ‘Zimbabwe’s Makoni Says Would Not Oppose ICC Action Against Mugabe’, *Monster and Critics*, 29 February 2008, [http://www.monsterandcritics.com/news/africa/news/article\\_1393350.phpZimbabwe\\_Makoni\\_says\\_would\\_not\\_oppose\\_ICC\\_action\\_against\\_Mugabe](http://www.monsterandcritics.com/news/africa/news/article_1393350.phpZimbabwe_Makoni_says_would_not_oppose_ICC_action_against_Mugabe), Accessed on 5 December 2021.

Nyamnjoh argued that ‘conviviality is negotiated on the edge of conflict, imposed by necessity.’<sup>34</sup> While ZANU-PF politicians needed youths to sabotage the MDC-controlled council in Mbare for their political mileage, the youths also needed power, impunity, and material benefits from these politicians. Thus, they ended up having a patron-client relationship. Both the patrons and the youths were in a precarious situation and they both needed each other to survive and realise their ambitions. In this case, youths were able to exercise agency as they capitalised on the ‘incompleteness’ of their patrons. On the other hand, the ZANU-PF patrons (Amos Midzi and Tendai Savanhu) had to pursue their agendas acknowledging and respecting the incompleteness of Chipangano youths who were important in their violent political games. These patrons shared some similarities with the Nigerian political godfathers who maintain groups of thugs to terrorise their political foes, disturb the electoral process and manipulate the election results.<sup>35</sup>

Like the Kamuzu Banda regime in Malawi, ZANU-PF allowed its youth militias and vigilante to usurp or undermine the responsibilities of the security services so long their actions ultimately serve ZANU interests. To this end, some scholars like Rotberg and Habasonda would want to misconceive Zimbabwe as a weak state.<sup>36</sup> The Zimbabwean state is very strong and youth violence only happens with the blessings of the state. Allowing the youths to be at the forefront of violence helps the regime to reinforce the image that youths are violent, immature and they cannot handle political leadership. The expropriation of rents from council properties and the violation of citizens by vigilantes and militias happened because of the state’s ‘intentional blindness’ or complicity in perpetuating their activities. The state was reluctant to perform its basic functions of providing security to the citizens and upholding the rule of law and civil liberties because the ZANU-PF politicians were beneficiaries of youth violence. The state proved to be more of a predator than a guardian as the political leaders captured and politicised the police for their selfish interests. The police were reduced to becoming patronizing instruments since they operated as both gatekeepers to

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<sup>34</sup> F. B. Nyamnjoh, ‘Incompleteness: Frontier Africa and the Currency of Conviviality’, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, (2015), pp.1-18.

<sup>35</sup> B. Rasak, A.J. Oye, M. Ake & A.A. Raji, ‘God Fatherism and Political Patronage in Nigeria: A Theoretical Overview’, *Political Science Review*. Vol. 8, No. 1, (2017), pp.77-101; M. Jones, ‘Nigeria election 2019: How ‘godfathers’ influence politics,’ *BBC News*, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-47089372>, Accessed on 5 December 2021.

<sup>36</sup> R. I. Rotberg, *Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators*, <https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2016/07/statefailureandstateweaknessinatimeofterrorchapter.pdf>, Accessed: 25 November 2021; L. M. Habasonda, *Regional Dynamics of Fragile States: Zimbabwe in the Southern Africa Region*, in D. O. Paulos Chanie (eds) *State Fragility and State Building in Africa: Cases from Eastern and Southern Africa*, The United Nations University Series on Regionalism book series (UNSR, Vol. 10), pp 113-131

the activities of ZANU-PF-aligned groups.<sup>37</sup> The security services in Africa and Zimbabwe, in particular, are far from being impartial and competent, their duties go beyond protecting the people as they are used as tools of aggrandizement by politicians who often discriminate against certain groups.

Although youths in postcolonial Africa are subjected to coercion, they do not always conform to the state's coercive policies. They can negotiate within and outside the margins created by the state. I argued that youths were agents with self-interests, they joined vigilante groups and even the NYS for the socio-economic benefits and power that comes with membership. Benard *et al* argued that membership in violent groups can play a significant purpose in giving youths (especially those considered as social misfits or excluded) a sense of importance, security, status, a positive identity, and a substitute for family.<sup>38</sup> However, some youths who joined the NYS and realised that it was not in line with their expectations, deserted the program and migrated to other countries for better economic opportunities. Some youths did not join the violent groups at all, they managed to instrumentalise the economic disorder in the country by starting informal businesses such as running unregistered private taxis or *mushikashika*, selling fuel on the black market, money changing, scavenging items at garbage sites for recycling, and so on, to sustain their lives. Some youths in rural areas like UMP ventured into agricultural projects especially growing tomatoes to supply nearby towns, and gold panning among other activities.

Like in other African countries, the patriarchal power structures in Zimbabwe neglect and exclude youths from decision-making processes. Even though the National Youth Policy advocates for the involvement of youths in policymaking, they are in most cases not consulted as most decisions are made by the elders.<sup>39</sup> Crespo-Sancho argued that “intergenerational inequality and youth perception of a lower status and less opportunity than their parents at the same age can contribute to feelings of frustration.”<sup>40</sup> Political and socio-economic marginalisation stimulate a sense of common identity and consciousness among the youths and this compels them to confront the political system responsible for their suffering.

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<sup>37</sup> I. Muvingi, ‘The Politics of Entitlement and State Failure in Zimbabwe’, *Peace Research*, Vol. 40, No. 1, (2008), pp.77-101.

<sup>38</sup> Bernard *et al* quoted in L. M. Hilker and E. Fraser, Youth exclusion, violence, conflict and fragile states. Report prepared for DFID's Equity and Rights Team, 30 April 2009.

<sup>39</sup> National Youth Policy, [https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Zimbabwe\\_2000\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Zimbabwe_2000_National_Youth_Policy.pdf), Accessed on 24 September 2021.

<sup>40</sup> C. Crespo-Sancho, Youth as partners in the prevention of violent conflict, 21 June 2018, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/youth-partners-prevention-violent-conflict>, Accessed: 25 November 2021.

Thus, in Zimbabwe, between 2016, 2017 and early 2019 young people organised themselves through social media and engaged in demonstrations and social activism to display their dissatisfaction with the ZANU-PF government. Protests of the same nature led to the dethronement of despotic regimes in Egypt, and Tunisia, among others.<sup>41</sup> However, the ZANU-PF regime disconnected the social network platforms and responded to protests with excessive force. The Mnangagwa regime perceives social media as a security threat to its hegemony. To cope with this, the ZANU-PF youths are now working as social media trolls (with parody accounts) who counter the regime criticisms, ferret information, and spread misinformation and disinformation.

Even under the Mnangagwa regime, youth are still marginalised in all aspects. The regime usually pays lip service to issues like youth political representation, their roles are still limited to the party Youth League. Some draconian regulations that limit youth political participation are still in existence such as the University of Zimbabwe Ordinance Number 30 which prohibits students from exercising their fundamental rights such as freedom of assembly, speech, or association, and the Zimbabwe Youth Council Act which placed an age limit of 40 years for one to contest for the country's presidential post.<sup>42</sup> Youths are still perceived as threats for instance Samantha Kureya, popularly known as Gonyeti, was kidnapped for an online skit that poked fun at the regime, and Haruzivishe Makomborero was jailed for exercising his freedom of expression.<sup>43</sup> Within ZANU-PF, youths are demoted from their position or chucked out of the party if they criticise the state and party leadership, for instance, Lewis Matutu and Godfrey Tsenengamu were suspended from the party after exposing corruption and rot in the ZANU-PF government.<sup>44</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the socio-economic marginalisation of youths owing to the closure of informal economy businesses, demolition of informal marketplaces and vending sites, and demolition of houses.<sup>45</sup> To ease the stresses of being redundant, many youths in high densities were involved in drug abuse. They are taking a drug popularly known as *mutoriro* (crystal meth)

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<sup>41</sup> R. Brynen, P. W. Moore, B. F. Salloukh and M. Zahar, *Beyond the Arab spring: Authoritarianism and democratization in the Arab world*. (Colorado: Boulder/ Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012).

<sup>42</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC), OHCHR Study on Youth and Human Rights: Youth in Zimbabwe <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Youth/ZimbabweHRCommission.pdf>, Accessed on 23 September 2021.

<sup>43</sup> S. Mazingaizo, 'Zimbabwe activist Makomborero Haruzivishe jailed for 14 months', *Time live*, 06 April 2021, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/africa/2021-04-06-zimbabwe-activist-makomborero-haruzivishe-jailed-for-14-months/> Accessed on 24 September 2021.

<sup>44</sup> T. Mhaka, Godfrey Tsenengamu and Lewis Matutu: Zanu-PF 'rebels' without a cause, *Nehanda Radio*, 7 February 2020. <https://nehandaradio.com/2020/02/07/godfrey-tsenengamu-and-lewis-matutu-zanu-pf-rebels-without-a-cause/>, Accessed: 25 November 2021.

<sup>45</sup> Zimbabwe Peace Project, The Impact of COVID 19 on Socio-Economic Rights in Zimbabwe, 18 May 2021.

and Broncleer cough syrup.<sup>46</sup> There is a lot of fear among the citizens that the 2023 elections may be marred with violence given the reintroduction of the NYS on 13 April 2021 and the violent disruption of MDC-Alliance's meetings with community leaders around October 2021.<sup>47</sup>

There are several aspects of youth political violence that I identified and left unresolved because some of them were beyond the purview of this study. Future research priorities should be on under-researched issues like how the members of violent groups relate. What brings cohesion, allegiance, and a sense of a common fate in violent groups? How do former members of violent groups relate to their communities? Although there is a growing literature on safety valves and youth resilience, further research is needed on how and why the majority of youths do not participate in political violence. What are the safety valves/ alternatives that alleviate their dissatisfaction with being marginalised? Also, there is a need to examine how a culture of impunity and corruption influences youths to join violent groups. Lastly, future studies should also examine the practice of use-and-dump of youths during the elections and the legacies of youth political violence in Zimbabwe.

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<sup>46</sup> N. Chingono, 'We forget our troubles: crystal meth use rises during lockdown in Zimbabwe', *The Guardian*, 16 March 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/mar/16/crystal-meth-mutoriro-drug-use-rises-zimbabwe-lockdown>, Accessed on 23 September 2021.

<sup>47</sup> Heal Zimbabwe Trust, National Youth Service Reintroduction: A Promise for Political Violence in 2023, *Kubatana Archives*, 15 April 2021.

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