Joice Mujuru and the Zanu-PF Women's League 1973-2014: Opportunities and Limits of Maternal Dignity (*Musha Mukadzi*) and Self-Preservation

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

at

Rhodes University

By

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DECEMBER 2021

Acknowledgements

This project would have been an impossible task without the immense collaboration I received from different supporters. This is proof again to me that even writing is a community effort. For the input provided by Dr. Joice Mujuru and different Academics, Civil Society Activists and Honorable Members of Parliament, I am very grateful and indebted to them, particularly for the time and risks they took to answer my research questions.

I would like to thank my Supervisor Dr. Siphokazi Magadla for her guidance, hard work and support. Many at times she believed in the work more than I did. I am grateful for the words of encouragement, guidance and immense patience as I struggled to find my way around the writing streets. Also, thank you to Dr. Shingi Mtero for the comments on the final draft and the many words of encouragement.

I have to thank the editorial skills and cutting insights of Ndapwa Alweendo on the final draft. I must also acknowledge the financial assistance and scholarship of an Andrew Mellon Masters Scholarship – I thank you for the much needed and useful funding. A heartfelt thank you to the family and community in the Rhodes University Department of Politics and International Studies.

To my family and friends, thank you for the love and sacrifices you all contributed in different ways. Many thanks to my husband Dr. Prolific S. Mataruse for the inspiration and space you provided for me to do this work. To Ruth and Pej, thank you for your smiles.

Abstract

The foundations of African feminisms are intertwined with the historical liberation of the African continent. Joice Mujuru's five decades in Zimbabwean political parties are no different in showing the gendered nature of the fight against the intersectional oppressions of nation, race, class and gender. The research aimed to examine the political life of Joice Mujuru between 1973 and 2018 in various political roles and what this might mean for how women political leaders participate and make decisions as autonomous individuals within political parties in Zimbabwe. This study is a political biography of Joice Mujuru's ideas and leadership in political parties in Zimbabwe since 1973, when she joined the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) as a guerilla of its military wing, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA). Mujuru was the only woman in the first ZANU-PF cabinet in 1980. She served the Zimbabwean government in different cabinet positions and became the first female vice-president in 2004, until her ousting in 2014. This study is based on an interview with Mujuru, and nine interviews with one Member of Parliament, two independent political party candidates, three academics, two CSO activists, the leader of LEAD political party in Zimbabwe and personal communication with a celebrated Zimbabwean writer. The study uses the concept of "patriarchal bargain" (Kandiyoti, 1988; Makhunga, 2016) and "femocracy" (Mama, 1995b) to show that Mujuru's participation in political parties has been shaped by compromising and negotiating a complex web of patriarchal constraints for acceptance and respect. This study shows that wifehood and motherhood, the idea of *musha mukadzi* ('woman as home'), stands out as a defining factor for Mujuru in her identity formation as a political party leader and how she views the roles of other women in Zimbabwean political parties and politics. I term this political identity maternal dignity, which is a collective set of ideas of maternal respect determining women's participation in political parties. The study shows that Mujuru uses dominant ideas of maternal dignity as a tool of self-presentation and self-preservation to survive as a political leader. Mujuru's expulsion from ZANU-PF and her subsequent leadership in other political parties demonstrates the ways in which maternal dignity limits women from shaping alternative ideas of leadership outside of respectable womanhood. Through a political biography of Mujuru, the study reaches the conclusion that post-independence Zimbabwe offers limited space for women's leadership, whether those women have liberation history credentials or not. The strategy of maternal dignity that Mujuru has used to navigate her political career is a "patriarchal bargain" with limited possibilities for women's meaningful participation, and the transformation of political parties and governance in Zimbabwe.

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List of Abbreviations

AAPSO: Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization

ANC: African National Congress

CEDAW: Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

CIO: Central Intelligence Organization

FRELIMO: Front for the Liberation of Mozambique

LEAD: Labor Economists and African Democrats

NDP: National Democratic Party

NPP: National People's Party

MDC: Movement for Democratic Change

OAU: Organization of African Union

PRC: People's Reconciliation Commission

SADC: Southern African Development Commission

SWAPO: South West Africa People's Organization

UDI: Unilateral Declaration of Independence

UN: United Nations

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WPC: World Peace Council

ZJC: Zimbabwe Junior Certificate

ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front

ZANU: Zimbabwe African National Union

ZANLA: Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army

ZAPU: Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZIPRA: Zimbabwe People's Revolution Army

Chapter ONE

From Army Commander to 'Evil Witch'

1.1 Background to the Study

The advent of colonialism in Africa reconfigured the political, social and cultural organization of African societies. The imposition of European cultural and religious beliefs on African societies relegated African women out of positions of political and social leadership, assigning the positions they previously held in their societies exclusively to African men. Oyewumi's (1997; 2002) work on "the invention of women," and "the European foundations of feministic epistemologies," respectively, is seminal in analyzing the gendered disruption of colonialism. Similar important work was done by Ifi Amadiume (1987), Amina Mama (1995a; 2001) and continues to be done by many authors such as Sylvia Tamale (2020). This reconfiguration was experienced across the continent, including in Zimbabwe. This thesis seeks to address the question, how and to what extent has this reconfiguration affected women's political leadership in post-colonial Zimbabwe using the study of Joice Mujuru.

It was during this era that the political leadership of women was declared improper, following the Christian missionary beliefs that women could not lead – only men could head households, communities and the nation (Goredema and Chigora, 2009; Kriger, 1988). However, the large-scale and effective participation of women in the armed liberation struggle cemented the position of women in the leadership of the emerging Zimbabwean state. This shift paved a way for women's political leadership in post- independent Zimbabwe. In 2004, the then firmly established Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) Women's League celebrated the historic appointment of Joice Mujuru to the position of vice-president. She was the first woman to occupy this position. This move came after the women in ZANU-PF had vigorously campaigned for female representation in the executive (Machipisa 1999: 1). Despite this remarkable development, key feminist scholars still believed that the appointment of Joice Mujuru was a façade and an attempt to silence women as they claimed that Mujuru represented patriarchal interests (Kwinje and Win, 2004, in Hungwe, 2006). Some Zimbabwean feminists claimed that Joice

Mujuru's appointment meant that the women's movement had been hijacked and they feared that she was not going to be able to stand for women's rights and transformative feminist leadership (Hungwe 2006).

This thesis seeks to examine the experiences of Zimbabwean women in political parties through the case study of the political life of Joice Mujuru, who has played major roles in several political parties in Zimbabwe namely: ZANU-PF; the Zimbabwe People First (now known as National People's Party); the National People First; and the People's Rainbow Coalition. While some parties are trying to codify the quota system that ensures women's representation in their leadership structures, women remain marginalised in political parties from branch to national levels. Since political parties imagine themselves as future governors of their states, women's limited or absent representation within them means that we are not likely to see women lead in the highest offices of government. Experiences of women like Mujuru, who has been active since 1973 to the present, offer important understandings of women's experiences in political parties, their individual agency to shape party agendas and the extent to which party-political cultures can be transformed to enable women's substantive participation and leadership. The study draws from Kandiyoti's (1988) concept of "patriarchal bargains" to examine the ways in which women like Mujuru, despite their prolific and documented role in national liberation efforts, have to bargain with dominant patriarchal leaders in their parties to pursue their political agendas.

In order to fully comprehend the journey of Zimbabwean women in political parties, it is imperative to explore the emergence of women in the political arena through the liberation struggle. The participation of women in the liberation movement led to the formation of the ZANU-PF Women's League in 1977, and the formation of the Ministry for Women Affairs after independence in 1980 (Seidmam, 1984). These developments illuminate the need to understand the motives of women as they entered the political parties, which were then non-state national liberation movements that had to transform themselves into governing parties as ZANU-PF did in independent Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) was formed on the 8th of August 1963, after a split from the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), following an ideological disagreement. The founders of ZANU accused Joshua Nkomo, the founder of ZAPU, of having soft military tactics against white minority rule (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009b). Chimhanda (2003:2) argues that ZAPU used the threat of armed struggle as a negotiating tool for the

greater inclusion and representation of black people in the government, and for this reason, their approach was less aggressive. Violence broke out in Salisbury between ZANU and ZAPU youths, as ZAPU was accused of being a puppet of the United States (Mazarire, 2017). Both parties were successors to the National Democratic Party (NDP) which was banned in 1961, owing its origins as the 1950s Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (Chung, 2006). The majority of black people became followers and members of ZANU, as the movement appealed to the population by echoing the problems they were facing. These included unbearable social and economic inequalities, gross marginalization and discrimination of black people, as well as denial of voting rights for them to elect a leader of their choice and race because of colonial policies (Kriger, 1988). Drawing from Terence Ranger's book, *Peasant Consciousness and the Guerilla War in Zimbabwe,'* Kriger (1988) notes that peasant consciousness entails a collective understanding of the inequalities and struggles that affect peasants (defined as native communal farmers) as a social group. Kriger traces the development of peasant consciousness, noting that it moves through different stages until it reaches maturity, which results in a peasant radical nationalism (Kriger, 1988). This was the case in the development of the Zimbabwean struggle (Kriger, 1988).

ZANU-PF has morphed over time, and this study follows Joice Mujuru through different formations of the party. During the war, ZANU and ZAPU fought against Rhodesia and sometimes united for purposes of international talks under the movement known as the Patriotic Front (PF), although they kept their distinct names (Martin and Johnson, 1981). In the 1980 elections, both parties renamed themselves (as ZANU – Patriotic Front and PF-ZAPU, respectively) in a bid to retain or claim the identity of the PF that had fought in the war. After the liberation struggle ZAPU combatants did not agree with the manner in which they were treated in the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration was conducted resulting in a civil war in Matebeleland province in Zimbabwe and the violent crushing of ZAPU resistance, in a period known as Gukurahundi massacre soon after independence in the early 1980s (Mpofu 2019). Subsequently, ZAPU was assimilated into ZANU under the 1987 Unity Accord to formally create ZANU-PF. Consequently, reading the history of ZANU reveals a distinction between pre- and post1987, as the latter includes leadership from ZAPU. Pre-1987 ZANU is often simply referred to as ZANU or ZANU-Patriotic Front, in order to distinguish it from the unified post-87 ZANU-PF because the Patriotic Front had been a name adopted by both ZAPU and ZANU for the purposes of jointly negotiating independence from 1976.

The Zimbabwean liberation struggle was founded on the notion of nationalism, and the primary priority was to attain national liberation and the integrity of the black nation. Women, on the other hand, entered the struggle from a disadvantaged and marginalised background with a dual priority of national as well as personal liberation (Dodo, 2013:29). Colonialism defined by white male supremacy and African defined patriarchies worked together to constrain women in various ways. For women therefore, the liberation struggle presented an opportunity to challenge this social order and assert their claims to women's emancipation and inclusive gender equality.

Most of the women who have occupied government offices since independence to the present were either involved in the liberation struggle themselves, or were connected to the struggle through their husbands or other significant male relatives, save for a few (Chung 2006). This study will unveil the kind of woman political leader who was produced by the Zimbabwean struggle for national liberation, who continued to be nurtured and molded by the Zimbabwean government, by following the political life of Joice Mujuru. Her marriage to the late General Solomon Mujuru also further justifies why Mujuru fits in the mold of the 'normal' or 'typical' successful Zimbabwean female politician (Mawere, 2019). This study will show the ways in which these sexual politics shape women's within party structures and in appointed government positions. In chapter two, I discuss Amina Mama's (1995b) concept of "femocracy" to explicate the ways in which Zimbabwe also presents a case of women's participation that is linked to the powerful men in their lives, and the extent to which this shapes their actions and the policy positions that they take within their parties.

The original founding executive of ZANU was comprised of Ndabaningi Sithole, Herbert Chitepo, Edgar Tekere, Henry Hamadziripi, Mukudzei Midzi, Robert Mugabe and Leopold Takawira, to mention a few; there were no women at the formative stage (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009b). As soon as ZANU was formed in 1963, a military wing was also established, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA). For its first two years Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009a) notes that ZANU was involved in campaigns and demonstrations against white minority rule. On November 11 1965 Ian Smith (then Prime Minister of 'Rhodesia') announced the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009b). The UDI was the last nail in the proverbial coffin as ZANU-PF resolved that, because of this act, the only way to obtain independence for black people was through an armed struggle. Robert Mugabe affirmed that:

> For all those who cherish freedom and a meaningful life, the UDI has set a collision course which cannot be altered. 11 November 1965 marked a turning point of the struggle for freedom and land from a constitutional and political one to a primary military struggle (Chingono, 1999).

Reed (1993) notes that when the Sino-Soviet split occurred in the late 1960s, anti-colonial movements split along those lines; some were allied with the Soviet Union whilst some got their support from China. In 1969, Reed states that the World Peace Council (WPC) and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO), organizations which were both Soviet-dominated, formally allied themselves with older and more established liberation movements, including the African National Congress (ANC), the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), the South West People's Organization (SWAPO) and ZAPU. ZANU, which was considered to be a relatively new movement, was more inclined to China and ZAPU to the Soviet Union. ZIPRA the military wing of ZAPU and ZANLA the military wing of ZANU, therefore, were backed by different super powers, with ZIPRA being backed by the Soviet Union (and its allies) and ZANLA by China (Alexander and McGregor, 2004). This major shift in alliances coincided with the return of key ZANU members from Beijing – including Emmerson Mnangagwa and Josiah Tongogara – where they had been studying mass mobilization and guerrilla warfare at the Nanking Academy (Reed, 1993). The return of these cadres facilitated the solidification of ZANU's growing bond with China; Reed (1993) notes that by 1970, about 20 Chinese military training instructors were deployed to ZANU's military training bases outside of Zimbabwe, such as the Itumbi base in Tanzania.

The main political objective of the Zimbabwean war of liberation was the attainment of black majority rule in an independent, sovereign multi-racial Zimbabwe. This entailed the removal of white political dominance, as well as the introduction of universal suffrage, equal citizenship and subsequent black empowerment. Another substantial priority was land redistribution. Events that led to the immediate outbreak of the second Chimurenga War, also known as the Rhodesian Bush War, included increased bus fares in Salisbury so much that forced civilians to spend up to 30 percent of their earnings on bus fare (Muzondidya, 2005).

The ZANLA forces settled on a guerrilla warfare strategy (Chingono, 1999). Jackson (2011: 4) notes that the war began after the imposition of international sanctions on Rhodesia, leading to a clash on the 28th of April 1965 between the Rhodesian security forces and seven ZANLA insurgents near Sinoia, an area now known as Chinhoyi. At the onset of the liberation struggle, there were two separate parties with two distinct armies fighting against the minority Rhodesian government, namely ZIPRA (aligned with [organisation]) and

ZANLA (aligned with [organisation]). Chingono (1999) notes that towards the end of the 1960s, ZANLA adopted Maoism, and the accompanying Chinese communist ideologies contained in the writings of Mao Zedong. In 1969, Mazarire (2017) notes that ZANU representatives in the United Kingdom, joined a number of Maoist organizations. Davin (2010) argues that, because the Maoist system was inclusive of women's participation in the Chinese army, guerrillas who returned from training in China in 1972 began recruiting more women into the guerrilla army following the Maoist ideologies.

Joice Mujuru joined the liberation struggle in 1973, and understanding her upbringing and how she became a guerrilla war fighter in 1973 is pivotal to this study. Though this work focuses on Joice Mujuru, it's necessary to situate her within the context of the other women in the struggle – she was not alone. Several other women played significant roles in the armed struggle, in both ZANU and ZAPU, including Margret Dongo, Ruth Chinamano, Amai Chitepo, and Oppah Muchinguri (Lyons, 2004). These women have been influential in post-independence Zimbabwe and form a cohort which has yet to be explored. Dongo founded a vibrant opposition party in the 1990s and Muchinguri held various offices, including being Minister of Defence in the post-Mugabe administration. Arguably, any of these women could be a good choice for this study. The choice to use Mujuru as an avatar to explore the gendered politics of colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe is motivated by the contentious stature of her historical record as 'shooter of the helicopter', her attainment of vice-presidency, her subsequent demise towards the end of Mugabe's reign, and her eventual role in opposition politics. These make her an important character and subject of study. Mururu's selection does not separate her from her context, but rather uses her as a useful entry point into a still-developing scholarship.

1.2 **Research Goals**

- To examine the political life of Joice Mujuru between 1973 and 2018 from: her entry to the liberation struggle; her various duties in government after the independence of Zimbabwe serving under the ZANU-PF; and her leadership of the Zimbabwe People First/National People's Party and the People's Rainbow Coalition .
- To examine how women political leaders participate and make decisions as autonomous individuals within political parties in Zimbabwe.

1.3 Methodology

The methodology used for this study is a biographical research method. This method draws from analyzing the life history of an individual using their history to create meaning and shape discourses. A political biography is ideal for studying the life of Joice Mujuru, as this thesis will show in chapter two, she joined the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe at a very young age and went on to occupy several powerful political positions before ultimately becoming the first female vice-president of Zimbabwe . Studying her life history through using the biography method provides an opportunity to document Mujuru's life, thus providing critical lessons about women political leadership in Zimbabwe. More about the methodology will be unpacked in chapter four of this thesis.

1.4 Thesis Chapter Outline

This thesis contains seven chapters. Chapter one introduces Joice Mujuru and the political party system she operated in through the ZANU-PF Women's League. The chapter provides the background and context of the study, as well as outlining the goals and aims of the whole thesis. The chapter seeks to provide a background of Zimbabwean women's contributions in the country's pre- and post-colonial eras. An exploration of the stages of Joice Mujuru's political journey is unveiled in Chapter Two, from the time she joined the war up to her first election as an independent politician in 2018. Various successes, achievements, shortcomings and failures are articulated in this thesis in a bid to fully understand the kind of imagery that has been built around Mujuru over the years.

Chapter Three discusses theoretical concepts that explicate women's roles in political parties as well as in governance. The primary focus is on the strategies and coping mechanisms applied by women within the constraints of patriarchy, through the discussion and application of Deniz Kandiyoti's (1988) theory of patriarchal bargains, which posits that women devise coping mechanisms in very limiting patriarchal societies. In Zimbabwe, most prominent women in politics are attached to prominent men in politics, in a way that suggests that these women's involvement in politics is conditional on their husbands'. To understand these dynamics, this chapter will also employ Amina Mama's (1995b) concept of femocracy, which illuminates how some women end up being loyal to the political party they belong to rather than to the pursuit of democracy.

Chapter Four discusses the use of qualitative research methods, specifically biographical research, to collect data for this study. Chapter Five presents the research findings through analysis of the interviews held with Mujuru, other women politicians, academics and civil society activists. In Chapter Six, the discussion chapter, I outline and discuss the findings according to the themes developed in Chapter Three and Four. Chapter Seven comprises the conclusions as well as recommendations of the study.

Chapter TWO

Joice Mujuru: A Life in Politics

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of Joice Mujuru the girl, the combatant and the politician. The chapter offers a chronological overview of the rise and fall of Mujuru, capturing her multifaceted episodes in Zimbabwean politics. Her rise and fall are discussed within a context of Zimbabwean women in the liberation struggle, and women in the aftermath of the war. Mujuru's decades of involvement in Zimbabwean political life as a liberation hero cum seasoned politician post-independence, and then in opposition politics, offer the opportunity to examine women's contributions in Zimbabwe's political party life. The chapter will look at Mujuru's life from the time she joined the liberation struggle in the 1970s through to the time she moved from one political position to the next in the 1980s up to the time she was ousted from ZANU-PF and ran as an independent politician.

2.2 Joice Mujuru: Childhood and Joining the War

Joice Mujuru was born Runaida Mugari on 15 April 1955, in the Dotito Rural Area in Mount Darwin District, which is located in north-eastern Zimbabwe. She was born in between the two major wars of Zimbabwean liberation, the First Chimurenga (War of Liberation) 1896 to 1900 and the Second Chimurenga 1966 to 1980 (War of Liberation). Mujuru was one of twelve children born to her parents, most of whom were female (Pindula, 2020). From the interview held with her on 20 February 2019, she stated that:

> Actually I am a middle child; my mother had 12 of us. So call it top six set. The third one was a son, who passed on when he was crawling, and I was the last of the first six set, so it meant he died before I was born. So when my father was expecting to have a son, now you are having after the death of that third child who was a son, you are having 3 girls. What a disappointment you know, to a male chauvinist like an African man, when your wife is always giving you girl children. Then the second set of six, my mother had two girls and 4 boys (Interview with Joice Mujuru, February 2019).

After completing two years of secondary education at Howard Secondary School in Mazowe in Zimbabwe, she left for Zambia in 1983 at the age of eighteen to join the liberation struggle, training under the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) forces

(Duri, 2015). Completing two years of secondary school at the age of 18 however depicts that there were inconsistencies with the education system at that time. This is because ordinarily, a Zimbabwe Junior Certificate (ZJC) student was supposed to be aged 14. Mujuru speaks of finishing her ZJC at the age of 18, giving reason for writers to be confused with whether she joined the liberation struggle at 14 or 18 years of age. The very limited educational and employment opportunities for African women offered by the colonial Rhodesian government was one of the main motivating factors of Mujuru's decision to join the liberation struggle (Charumbira, 2015). At this point, she was aware of the gross inequalities that existed between black and white people, and she also understood that the oppression of Africans by the white minority government could be challenged (Lyons, 2004: 110).

In the interview, she noted that the freedom fighters whom she encountered and went to war with explained to her the advantages of joining the struggle, and calmed her fears about the gender stereotypes that marginalized women as too weak to fight, insisting that ZANU-PF was following the Chinese Revolution, which was inclusive of women.

> I was at Howards Institute, or now you call it Howard Secondary School. So when I got home, the group of freedom fighters also visited for the political education, visited our village. So they saw me and got interested with my age and they were also, not just girls, but they were also looking for boys, who would also join. But because my village had very little boys that were born in that village. And to them it was a good thing because they also wanted girls to join the liberation struggle. So and they were telling me that you know what, what you are going to do, you won't be the first woman to do that. We derived our knowledge of political understanding from the Chinese revolution (Interview with Joice Mujuru, February 2019).

The Mashonaland Central Province of Zimbabwe, because of its proximity to the border with Mozambique, was the first to receive guerrilla freedom fighters who had completed their training in that country. As this was close to the location of Mujuru's hometown, she became aware of the war and quickly learned why it was important to take up arms. She stated that she was by no means forced to go, but rather understood that she needed to go.

The interview with Mujuru shows that young people were very much aware of the systems of oppression that were a result of colonialism. Many joined the national liberation movements to remove these structural oppressive systems and create a better Zimbabwe for themselves (Kriger, 1988).

> So between ZANU and ZAPU, they were now competing to recruit fighters and that side of my, our being to the proximity of Mozambique we were easily targeted, hence

> I was recruited in 1973, soon after my writing of my form two exams. And that time I was 18, that's where you can also correct other writers, they used to say she was recruited when she was 15, others say 16, others say 17, no, I was 18. In fact I was above 18 because I was close to 19 by the next April. So they were very clever when approaching certain ages. It was very difficult for a girl child to leave your parents at that age. But they used to talk about things that would interest the girl child, and say ok fine, how do you see your educational system? The unfortunate thing then was that us we were the first Form Twos who were not allowed to write our JC [Junior Certificate] exams. Because there was a new system which was introduced by [Ian] Smith, so that did not go down well with some of us who came from poor families, because, after Form Two, I would come out well, go and train as a nurse, go and train as a teacher or a police woman. But I couldn't because I had no certificate. So to them, maybe it was a positive thing to do, but to us as children who were coming from a poor background, it was something which really disturbed our whole planning (Interview with Joice Mujuru, February 2019).

Mujuru had personal grievances with the education system and the fact that, at eighteen years of age, she still could not access an educational qualification which would at least guarantee her some form of employment, even though she was considered better educated among her age-mates. This served as part of the motivation to go to war. She stated that one of the reasons she stood out in her group of recruits was that she was relatively more educated. She also noted that the presence of girls among the recruits served as motivation for more men to join the war.

> I then became the pillar of that group. Why because one I had this Form Two level of education and I was maybe an easy candidate to teach certain things and understand faster and interpret them. So we recruited hordes of youths during my time, which included young mothers and young fathers, no longer girls and boys of my age. And you know that male chauvinist attitude fell on the boys and men. "How can we leave a girl to go and fight when we remain doing nothing." To the freedom fighters it was a good omen that we are getting these people, so 1973, that's when I joined the struggle, 1974, the Rhodesians now had started recruiting mercenaries, from Israel, from all over the world. And they were now beginning to hear that they are now younger ones and also girls and young boys that are joining, and this is exactly what the OAU (Organization of African Unity) needed the liberation movement parties to do, so for ZANU-PF it was a plus, you see and for the liberation movement it was also a plus, because to the countries outside Africa, they were talking to regarding the liberation of these African states that were colonized, it was a good because they're now able to talk about the terrible systems that are no longer affecting old ages, but even the young ages. (Interview with Joice Mujuru, February 2019)

Mujuru narrated that being educated also gave her an advantage in that group as she was able to comprehend the details of the war. The motives behind Mujuru joining the liberation

struggle are complexly interwoven with her childhood and youth growing up in an aggressive and repressive colonial system. One may surmise that waging the liberation war in Zimbabwe, and in Africa in general, was a measure of last resort, a measure of self-defense and a natural response to threatened freedoms, human dignity and survival.

2.3 Becoming Army Commander: Teurai Ropa/Cde Nehanda

In the interview, Mujuru related how she made the decision to join the liberation struggle, stating that she was worried if she would ever get the chance to finish her education.

> So they started telling me about how women participated in the Chinese Revolution and so on. And I was very much interested and I said to myself, will I be able to then proceed with my education because my feeling was let me finish my education then so that I can also help my siblings and my father and mother. But they said no you know what, once you get to Zambia you can carry on with your education if you want to end up being a nurse, if you want to end up being a doctor, anything, you can be. (Interview with Joice Mujuru, February 2019)

On her way to her first training camp base in Zambia in February 1974, Mujuru claims to have single handedly shot down a helicopter which had ambushed her and the team she was travelling with using an AK-47 (Tendi, 2016; Duri, 2015). This historic event, for which she has been hailed numerous times, earned her respect from the camp commanders in Zambia when she arrived. After this incident, Rhodesian forces reportedly searched for the young woman who had shot down a plane, killing the two white occupants (Lyons, 2004: 111). The ZANLA forces took her to safety in Zambia where she was exiled and, for this reason, she could not return to be involved in active combat. She continued her training and eventually became a commander tasked with looking after young fighters and training recruits.

During her training in Lusaka, she displayed passion and extreme dedication, and loyalty towards the liberation struggle. Chung (2006) explains that she also took part in activities that educated the youths about the war, including acting in dramas and plays to demonstrate the necessity of going to war.

In 1975, Joice Mujuru served as a political instructor at two military bases, and at the age of twenty-one she was appointed as a camp commander of the Chimoio training base in Mozambique (Mawere, 2019). Mujuru acquired the liberation war name Teurai Ropa (‘the one who spills blood’), and rose to become one of the first female commanders of ZANLA

forces, leading the ZANLA Women's Detachment. Through her leadership skills, she invoked the revolutionary spirit of Mbuya Nehanda, an iconic and idolized historic figure who inspired women's rebellion through her aggressive involvement during the earlier Rhodesian Wars of 1896-97. Because of this, Mujuru was also known as Comrade Nehanda in the camps, a name that gave her strength and motivation because of its original owner (Charumbira, 2015). This is important because it links Mujuru's prowess as a soldier to Nehanda's reputation as a military leader. Nehanda was a spirit medium whose reputation began to grow as she used her spiritual gifts to lead and inspire consecutive successful rebellions against white settler colonialists in the 1890s (the First Chimurenga). She was hanged in 1898 after being accused of killing a senior Rhodesian army official. Thus, within the context of the armed struggle, Nehanda was the most prolific woman figure of the Shona people. That name being given to Mujuru elevated her stature as an outstanding figure in the Second Chimurenga.

When Chimoio (a city in Mozambique) was attacked in November 1977 by Rhodesian forces in a very bloody battle that left many dead, Mujuru escaped capture and, despite being nine months pregnant, she still engaged in active combat (Lyons, 2004; Seidman, 1984). She gave birth to a baby girl who was taken away from her a month after she was born and sent to a military camp in Zambia, whilst Joice Mujuru continued with her liberation war duties. From being an army commander, Joice Mujuru stated that,

> What I gained from my command position was that I became courageous and that womanly shyness went. I even became a better woman because I was facing so many challenges and could solve them without any man's help (Seidman, 1984: 419-440).

Joice Mujuru's involvement in the liberation struggle proved to be the beginning of a lifelong political journey which was tried and tested many times. It was not surprising, therefore, that in 1977 Mujuru was also elected to occupy the secretarial position of the ZANU-PF Central Committee together with Sheba Tavarwisa, making them the only two women in a committee of thirty-three people (Lyons, 2004). In the same year, Mujuru was elected as the leader of a newly formed ZANU-PF Women's League in Xai Xai, Mozambique (Nhongo-Simbanegavi, 2000; Duri, 2015). At the first ZANU-PF conference in 1979, Joice Mujuru was elected as the party's Minister of Women's Affairs. In 1980, at the age of twenty-five, after the nation of Zimbabwe attained its independence, Joice Mujuru emerged as the Minister of Community

Development and Women Affairs, and as the first post-independence Member of Parliament for the Mt. Darwin West Constituency parliamentary seat.

Like her counterparts who had dedicated their lives to national liberation, who now had to adapt to a new identity as leaders of an independent country, Mujuru was thrown into the deep end of government in 1980, despite her lack of governing experience (Seidman, 1984; Chung, 2006). She continued to forge new pathways by becoming the favored candidate nominated by the ZANU-PF Women's League for the post of vice-president following the death of Simon Muzenda in 2004. She was vice-president from 2004 to 2014, losing the position in the party and in government following accusations by President Mugabe that she was plotting to remove him from office through a coup d'état.

2.4 Zimbabwean Women and the Liberation Movement: 'Triple struggles for freedom'

Women were instrumental in wars during the pre-colonial era, before white settlers colonized the Shona and Ndebele Kingdoms (Chogugudza, 2006). It was not surprising that women became a great part of the First Chimurenga war of 1896 to 1897. Lynn (2014) writes about Claudia Jones, a black American feminist and civil rights leader who formulated the theory of "triple oppression" in collaboration with other feminists, locating women within political and national struggles. Claudia Jones identified herself and other women of African descent as engaged in a struggle against capitalism and colonialism. She also synthesized a link between black nationalism and feminism, ultimately linking the black diaspora to the struggles of women in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas (Lynn, 2014). Jones's work identified sites for these different women's oppression, naming them as class, race and sexism. Zimbabwean women, since the advent of colonialism, understood that colonialism was but one form of oppression to defeat. Therefore, when the first war of liberation, that is, the First Chimurenga broke out, they were ready to participate in these struggles in their various identities and capacities.

A very common and historically outstanding example is that of Nehanda Nyakasikana Charwe popularly referred to as Mbuya Nehanda, a female spirit medium who, through her divine powers, led the Shona people into the inaugural battle against colonialism. She commanded respect and her spiritual guidance was revered and valorized (Charumbira, 2015). Charumbira notes that Nehanda met her fate when she was arrested and sentenced to

death for the murder of a white policeman named Henry Hawkins Pollard. Peasant guerrilla relations were very sacred during the liberation struggle and they, among other issues, revolved around the role of spirit mediums giving gravity and legitimacy to the incoming guerrillas. It was also crucial that the participation of women in the Second Chimurenga War (which ultimately led to the liberation of Zimbabwe) was introduced through the spiritual foundations laid by Mbuya Nehanda (O'Gorman, 2011: 27).

One of the few recorded confrontations with the white settler government by women occurred in 1960. Chogugudza (2006) contends that the primary reason for this protest was the decision by the Rhodesian government to instate only fifteen black legislators in a Parliament of about sixty-five legislators. The protest led to the arrest of over 2000 women (Lyons, 2004: 87). Sally Mugabe, who was responsible for mobilizing women as one of the leaders of the protest, stated in an interview that:

> We didn't tell our husbands about our plans. Early one morning, we left our homes and by 7 a.m. we were all assembled in the Prime Minister's office in the city centre to protest in a peaceful manner by means of placards against the new constitution. The placards read, "Women Do Not Accept This Backward Constitution", "Give Us Our Land and Country', and "One Man One Vote" (Lyons, 2004: 87).

This and other events show that women's actions and contributions became part of the major moments that shifted the struggle to a more militant form. Through this protest in particular , women asserted their place in the liberation struggle, giving the male nationalists clarity as to the importance and potential role of women's involvement in the fight for independence and freedom from oppression. Lyons (2004: 87) stated that this protest also signified that women had rejected the identity of victims of patriarchy and tradition, and had now chosen to be pro-active about their position in colonial Rhodesia. The Unilateral Declaration of the Independence of Rhodesia from Britain in 1965 by Ian Smith further exacerbated the grievances of black women, giving them more reason to join the liberation struggle (Chogugudza, 2006). Women were relegated to the rural areas by Ian Smith's government; their husbands were allowed to move into urban areas in search of work while many women remained in communal areas (Hungwe 2006). Single women were not allowed to walk in town without a male relative or husband, otherwise they would be arrested for prostitution (sex work) and related miscellaneous crimes (Hungwe 2006). The men who worked in urban areas were subject to very restrictive living conditions: they lived in areas designated for bachelors, and they were not allowed any visitations by their wives. These conditions fueled

the frustrations of the black Zimbabwean majority that fueled the rebellion against the Rhodesian government by men and women (Hungwe 2006).

Scholars offer contradicting analysis on women's involvement in the liberation war in terms of feminist emancipatory ideologies and understanding, and the motivations which inspired their decisions to take part. (Seidman, 1984; Chogugudza, 2006; Barnes, 2014). According to some accounts, for the Zimbabwean women in the liberation struggle, the war gave them hope of freedom from the rigid patriarchal society which marginalized and oppressed women (Chogugudza, 2006). However, others note that the foundations that led to the inclusion of women in the war, and the eventual formation of the ZANU-PF Women's League, were merely based on a strategy by male guerrillas to harness support from the prospective funders of the liberation struggle (Charumbira, 2015; Barnes, 2014). Charumbira (2015) states that many of the leading men had travelled to Communist as well as Western countries, and had realized that if they ignored the "woman question" it would be to their great disadvantage, since they basically relied on the East and the West, respectively, for financial support.

The way that Zimbabwean women were included, and in the dominant case excluded, in nationalist narratives helps us to understand why nationalist victories were not entirely emancipatory for Zimbabwean women. Seidman (1984) argues that, as much as liberation war movements eventually decided to be inclusive of women in the war efforts, they were not given decision-making roles. Women were recruited into the war primarily with nationalistic victory in mind but not necessarily with the overall emancipation of women as the reason for their inclusion. In 1978, ZANU-PF went as far as specifically bringing women guerrillas to speak to American groups about the role Zimbabwean women were playing to liberate their land and people, in the communities, schools and on the battlefields (Barnes, 2014). Barnes (2014) emphasizes that there was an over-exaggeration by ZANU-PF of the engagement of women in the struggle as a way of luring funders. She states that by 1978-1979, ZANU-PF's publications began to feature resolute gun-toting African women and the language of women's liberation, which had not been featured before.

Politically influential African leaders like Samora Machel, then president of Mozambique, motivated for the inclusion of women in the liberation struggles, after realizing the potential role women had to play. At the Inaugural Conference for Mozambican Women in 1973, in his speech, Machel emphasized that the liberation of women was supposed to be a

prerequisite for the liberation of the nation of Mozambique (Machel, 1973: 21-36). In most of his speeches, Robert Mugabe repeatedly emphasized the saliency of women's incorporation in the war as a pivotal prerequisite for victory against the colonial government. Therefore, the male freedom fighters saw and acknowledged the need for gender equality. In 1973, the admittance of women into the guerrilla training camps began. Women also participated in the war from their homes by cooking for the freedom fighters and providing shelter and hideouts. Therefore, war was not only fought by those on the battlefront, but it was a collective effort from different angles.

Mujuru joined the liberation struggle in the 1970s and before she joined there were women who were already actively involved. Significant women who led the inclusion of women into the liberation struggle include Sally Mugabe, Joanna Mafuyana Nkomo, Ruth Chinamano, Julia Tukai Zvobgo, Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, Olivia Muchena, Fay Chung, and Naomi Nhiwatiwa, among others (Lyons, 2004). The anti-colonial liberation struggle provided a unique opportunity for black women to embark on the path towards citizenship. Comparing the Zimbabwean liberation struggle to that of Mozambique, Ranchod-Nilsson (2006: 53) concludes that FRELIMO had an "ideological commitment" to gender equality, which was the primary reason for its emphasis on gender inclusivity during the liberation struggle, whereas in the case of ZANU and ZANLA, women's participation in the liberation struggle grew out of practical rather than ideological considerations.

While many Zimbabwean female liberationists celebrated the small steps towards women's emancipation, finding themselves in a previously male-dominated war, Lyons (1997:2) argues that many were sexually abused. Stoneman (1988: 157) notes that the senior males treated women as their wives or properties, thus violating their rights. Women militants took on parenting or mothering roles since one of their tasks was to ensure that their "sons", the male guerrillas, did not go out to fight on empty stomachs (Nhongo-Simbanegavi, 2000:19). Rural women were also forced to provide and extend their motherly care to the guerrillas living in the bush. The slogan of the day, according to Nhongo-Simbanegavi, became "forward with the cooking stick", thus glorifying the role of a woman in a way that was encouraging. Women also provided food and shelter for the combatants, smuggled and hid weapons and equipment, and acted as *chimbwidos* (look out messengers) (Nhongo-Simbanegavi, 2000). Scholars like Geisler (1995) seem to believe that gender equality improved during the liberation struggle as men and women divided roles among themselves without considering what was traditionally normalized. In as much as this was a very positive

move, history proved that these developments were largely encouraged only for the attainment of independence, and patriarchy was poised to take over soon after independence.

Different scholars have produced different narrations about women's participation in the Zimbabwean liberation war. (Stoneman, 1988: 157; Geisler, 1995). The tales differ in that some romanticize the steps taken by the military leaders to end the oppression of women; whilst others like Nhongo-Simbanegavi give heart-breaking accounts of what they believe was actually transpiring during the liberation struggle. Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000: 1) in her book, *For Better or Worse: Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation struggle*, argues that during the war, ZANU and ZANLA support for gender equality was stronger in rhetoric than in substance. She notes that ZANU and ZANLA actually misled people through their monthly bulletin via ZANU-PF's official organ Zimbabwe News, which gave the majority confidence in the party's dedication to women's emancipation. The prevalent ZANU-PF newspaper displayed pictures of women taking on roles traditionally associated with males, thus breaking the traditional stereotypes against women. All of this is believed by some to have been specifically done to paint the picture of commitment to women's rights to the international funders of the liberation struggle.

Looked at from a different angle, the war really was the beginning of the struggle for equality for the Zimbabwean women. Women were encouraged to join the liberation struggle from 1972 onwards, and initially their activities were primarily moving weapons from one base to another, and they were only later admitted as combatants (Stoneman, 1988). President Robert Mugabe, opening the first ZANU-PF Women's League Conference after independence stated that:

> The original view of the party shown during the first years following its ban was to recruit only male cadres for military training and female cadres for academic and secretarial courses…….The belief we had then, which was obviously a mistaken belief, was that only male cadres could prosecute an armed struggle (Geisler, 2004: 6).

Stoneman (1988: 157) also contests the romanticization of the role played by women in the liberation war, noting that the narratives about female combatants fighting alongside males in the war were exaggerated. What is not contested is the fact that women believed that, by being involved in the liberation struggle, they were also fighting for their own liberation and emancipation. The formation of the Women's League was a signal that publicly reinforced ZANU-PF's commitment to gender equality.

2.5 Women and the Aftermath of the Independence of Zimbabwe

After the independence of Zimbabwe, there was very little indication that the liberation struggle had been targeted at emancipating women, in addition to nationalism and the liberation of Zimbabweans. Seidman notes that the work that was done by the Zimbabwean government and the Women's League was viewed by critics as shaping women to be better community members and better caregivers within their homes, rather than focusing on emancipating them from stereotypical patriarchal norms (Seidman, 1984). As much as ZANU-PF had displayed a level of interest and commitment to women's emancipation, after independence, structural features of government institutions acted as barriers to the articulation and implementation of gender equality initiatives. After the creation of the Ministry of Community Development and Women Affairs in 1980, Mujuru (who was the Minister) and her Deputy Minister Naomi Nhiwatiwa used their new platforms to prioritise the emancipation of women from patriarchy. However, their goal was met with resistance from the party's seniors (Seidman, 1984: 431). Mujuru and the 'women's ministry' envisioned attacking the institutions that kept Zimbabwean women subordinate and encouraged women's subordination. However, ZANU-PF did not allow for some of the initiatives, which were viewed as going against their culture and beliefs. Structural limitations included gross underfunding of the Ministry of Community Development and Women Affairs; the ministry had to rely on foreign aid to undertake some of its projects (Seidman, 1984).

Efforts by women to rally for rights and equality were disapproved of and ultimately thwarted by the ZANU-PF leadership; women were instructed rather to concentrate their efforts on generating support and votes for ZANU-PF, and to encourage other women to attend rallies and party meetings (Thomas, 2010: 1). Certain stereotypes of female ex-combatants also emerged as soon as the war ended; they were labeled loose women who would not make good wives, and their wearing of trousers was frowned upon (Thomas, 2010; Seidman, 1984; Lyons, 2004: 217). In as much as the war had provided a transformational environment that allowed for women emancipation, after the war, communities regressed into their previous states and women found themselves at the beginning of another liberation struggle for their own inclusion and equality.

Although women comprised 52 percent of the population in 2008, they made up only 10 percent of the parliament (Thomas 2010: 1). In 2018, Zimbabwe had 33.2 percent female representation in the National Assembly, a percentage that was still relatively low considering that independence was attained thirty-eight years prior (Hamandishe, 2018). After the government failed to fully accommodate women, many resorted to women's civic organizations which had been operational for the past three decades.

Gender disaggregated data for the Parliament of Zimbabwe since 1980

Table 2. 1 The Unicameral Parliament

Elections and appointments	Seats	Men	Women	Percentage of Women
1990	150	133	17	11.3
1995	150	129	21	14
2000	150	136	14	9.3
2005	150	126	24	16

Table 2. 2 The Bi- Cameral Parliament

Elections and Appointments	Seats	Men	Women	Percentage of Women
1980	40	37	3	7.5
1985	40	37	3	7.5

Election Year	National Assembly: Men	National Assembly: Women	Senate: Men	Senate: Women
2005	125	25	45	21
2008	178	32	70	23

2013	185	86	42	38
2018	185	85	-	-

Source: Parliament of Zimbabwe Archives, Tshuma (2018)

According to the tables above, there was a very slow growth in the number of women in the Zimbabwean legislature between 1980 and 2018. There is a notably sharp increase in female representation in 2013, as a result of the gender quota system, established in the same year (Tshuma, 2018). The quota system imposed a mandatory reservation of sixty seats for women in the National Assembly while senators were elected on the basis of a party list. Quota systems came as a result of the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), signed at the Beijing World Conference in 1975 to which Zimbabwe became a signatory.

2.6 Government Positions held by Joice Mujuru

Joice Mujuru was appointed to several positions soon after Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980. She was a key actor in women's representation in Zimbabwean politics, both as a liberation combatant and in active politics in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Table 2. 3 Government Positions held by Joice Mujuru

Year	**Position**
1980	Member of Parliament for Mt Darwin West Constituency Parliamentary Seat Minister of Community Development and Women Affairs
1981-1985	Minister of Youth, Sports and Recreation
1985-1988	Minister of State in Prime Minister's Office
1988-1992	Minister of Community Development Cooperatives and Women's Affairs
1992-1996	Governor of Mashonaland Central
1997- 2004	Minister of Water, Resources and Infrastructural Development

2004- 2014	Vice-President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

In 1981, the Zimbabwean government created the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs, which was led by Joice Mujuru (Seidman, 1984). She became the first female minister without any formal educational qualifications, and became the youngest minister in a cabinet full of PhD graduates. One of the programs Mujuru initiated was an adult education scheme, which was an opportunity for former freedom fighters who had been unable to finish their education because of the conflict to complete their schooling. It was through this scheme that Mujuru also acquired her Ordinary and Advanced Level qualifications. Despite having entered the political arena with a basic secondary education (Zimbabwe Junior Certificate or ZJC) in her late teens, Duri notes that eventually Mujuru earned a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Management and Entrepreneurial studies from the Zimbabwe Women's University. She ultimately graduated with a PhD in 2014, from the University of Zimbabwe.

2.7 Vice Presidency - 'I was a nobody'

Scholars have offered different perspectives as to the factors that contributed to the rise of Joice Mujuru to the position of Vice-Presidency. After the death of Vice-President Simon Muzenda in September 2004, the ZANU-PF Women's League pressed for a female candidate to be nominated (Mawere, 2019). Further support came from a ZANU-PF faction led by Joice Mujuru's husband. There was a pressing need for greater female representation in government; Mujuru was appointed to the post instead of Mugabe's presumptive heir, Emmerson Mnangagwa, who was the Speaker of Parliament at the time. Mawere also notes that there was a long-standing rivalry between Emmerson Mnangagwa and the Mujuru's, and Solomon Mujuru mobilised support among the members of the politburo for her to be appointed as vice-president (Mawere, 2019).

The questions that have continued to undermine the legitimacy of Joice Mujuru's political progress include her marriage to Solomon Mujuru in 1977, who was commander of the ZANLA forces during the liberation struggle. It is a seemingly acceptable trend within ZANU-PF for women political leaders to be connected to prominent male figures within the political party. Maphosa, Tshuma and Maviza (2015) argue that this limits the Zimbabwean political arena, and entrenches the view that women enter into politics as an extension of

subservient roles – to which they are accustomed to in their domestic lives as wives – through nepotism. Therefore, Joice Mujuru's marriage to an army general has been cited by scholars as a strong determinant that led to her appointment as vice-President in the year 2004 (Maphosa *et al*, 2015; Mawere, 2019).

After the death of former Zimbabwean Vice-President Simon Muzenda, then President Robert Mugabe delayed appointing a vice-president. It is believed that this delay was as a result of serious political dissension within ZANU-PF, and the fact that people believed that whoever Mugabe was going to appoint would eventually become his successor. The appointment of Joice Mujuru as vice-president in December 2004 was widely interpreted as signaling victory for a party faction led by Solomon Mujuru and a defeat for Emmerson Mnangagwa, as the latter had been identified as Mugabe's likely successor (Maroleng, 2005; Tendi, 2016). Mugabe outflanked Mnangagwa by elevating Joice Mujuru to the position of vice-president, giving way to rumors that she was the heir apparent and was likely to be Africa's first female president (Chan, 2005). Apparently, Mujuru and her husband were some of Mugabe's closest friends and they would likely protect Mugabe in his retirement should she became president, and he would thus be able to propagate Mugabeism through her. These were some of the sentiments in 2004 as Joice Mujuru was sworn to office as vice-president (Tendi, 2016).

2.8 Grace Mugabe versus Joice Mujuru: From Commander to Witch

Sentiments towards Joice Mujuru varied in the course of her political career, reflecting an ambiguous understanding of her personality as a female politician in relation to her autonomous agentic power. Mujuru's once glorious image was tarnished by those who once hailed her for her resilience, and particularly for shooting down a Rhodesian Forces helicopter single-handedly, and eventually reduced her to "the witch from *Dotito"* in 2014, simultaneously accusing her of treason and witchcraft (Duri, 2015). Prior to her ousting from ZANU-PF in 2014, Joice Mujuru was arguably the epitome of successful female political leadership. She was revered for her work within ZANU-PF, and in most parts of the country where ZANU-PF was a stronghold as a political party. Duri (2015) quoted Robert Mugabe in 1978 endorsing Mujuru as well as other female leaders, noting that:

> We have women like Teurai Ropa….in the high command. In the Army, thousands of female cadres gallantly serve.

Events that led to Joice Mujuru's ousting from ZANU-PF date back to the 2004 presidential elections, where she contested the vice-presidency against Mnangagwa. At the time of Mujuru's appointment to the vice-presidency, there was already a stalemate between Mujuru and Mnangagwa, meaning that the first wave of party factionalism began at the onset of Mujuru's vice-presidency. In other words, Mnangagwa and his faction were already interested in Mujuru's ousting even during the time of her appointment (Tendi, 2016). In 2014, Mujuru was unceremoniously ousted from ZANU-PF after being accused of allegedly leading a political faction with the support of senior party officials including Didymus Mutasa, Jabulani Sibanda, Rugare Gumbo and Ray Kaukonde. This faction allegedly purported to endorse Joice Mujuru as the country's president through a coup d'etat. (Duri, 2015; Tendi, 2016; Nyambi, 2015).

In the forefront of Joice Mujuru's ousting was the then First Lady Grace Mugabe, who entered the factional wars on Robert Mugabe's side. Prior to the ousting of Mujuru, factionalism begun to fracture ZANU-PFs previously strong and unified politburo – these fractures centered on succession. ZANU-PF heavyweights Joice Mujuru, Emmerson Mnangagwa, Sydney Sekeramayi and later, Grace Mugabe were all floated as possible successors. Mujuru's removal and attacks from Grace Mugabe served to Mnangagwa's advantage, but the two were not necessarily on the same team. After Mujuru was removed, Grace Mugabe emerged as part of the so-called G40 faction, aided by Saviour Kasukuwere, Jonathan Moyo, Walter Muzembi and others. Mnangagwa was part of an opposing faction, Lacoste, which led to his own termination by President Robert Mugabe. Only after his faction secured military backing did it successfully emerge as the faction to remove Mugabe. This nuance is important, as Mujuru was removed as a response to the Mugabes' fears, the same fears which led to Mnangagwa being attacked in a similar fashion by Grace Mugabe, and subsequently fired. As such, Grace Mugabe was acting on behalf of her husband – not Mnangagwa's faction.

Through a series of campaign rallies, where the First Lady raged about Mujuru's alleged gross incompetence, contradictory facts about Mujuru's political journey began to emerge. Grace Mugabe would boldly state during her national addresses that, "there are many people who can run this country, not Mujuru" (Duri, 2015; Rusvingo, 2015). War veteran Christopher Mutsvangwa was reported as saying that:

Let me finish by putting down the lies about downing an enemy helicopter which were developed by Webster Shamhu in a bid to shove up Mujuru's war credentials and elevate her above fellow cadres (Owen Gagare, The Independent 3 October 2014). Eventually, Joice Mujuru lost the protection she had from ZANU-PF, and a great deal of contradictory information about her past began to emerge. In order to fully articulate and analyze the role played by former Zimbabwean First Lady Grace Mugabe in the ousting of then Vice-President Joice Mujuru, Lubombo (2018) used a collection of Grace Mugabe's speeches to identify the discourses used to legitimize what he called the demonization and elimination of contenders. In an article that appeared in the 17 October 2014 edition of *The Guardian,* under the title "Mugabe's Wife threatened Zimbabwe's Vice-president in ZANU-PF Faction Fight", Grace Mugabe is quoted as saying: "I told the President that if you don't dump that faction leader we will dump her ourselves." Lubombo (2018) notes that Grace Mugabe arguably introduced "a new political culture of overt intolerance to opposing voices" through her mastery of the art of eliminating any potential threat. Note here that the term "arguably" is given gravity by the fact that Zimbabwe has a history of elimination of unfavorable opposition through even the worst means, such as the Gukurahundi Massacre of the Matabeleland people among other examples.

Grace Mugabe was not the only woman who steered the ousting of Joice Mujuru. The Sunday Mail newspaper published a story with the headline: "Mujuru facilitated the abuse of girls and women", reporting that Oppah Muchinguri made this statement as she addressed congregants at a rally in Rusape, a town in northeastern Zimbabwe. Muchinguri could be considered the person in ZANU-PF with a stature comparable to Mujuru's, being a decorated ex-combatant, having been appointed to several cabinet posts (including being Minister of Defence) at the time of writing, and surviving a bomb attack in 2018 (Bulawayo 24 News, 2018). Her stature is relevant to the critiques she raised against Mujuru. She stated that Mujuru was at the forefront of the coercion of young women to sleep with male combatants (Mazire, 2015:1). Muchinguri also went on to note that:

> Let me tell you: we were together during our days in Mozambique; Joice came to the war front accompanied by her husband (before she married General Solomon Mujuru). The man is the one who died during an incursion and then she claimed and lied that she had shot down the helicopter.

The ZANU-PF Women's League was instrumental in the instating of Joice Mujuru as the first female vice-president of Zimbabwe, and was also highly instrumental in her ousting.

This shows that the ZANU-PF Women's League has been able to galvanise the appointment of women leaders such as Mujuru into high positions in government, and that women leaders within the same league are able to ostracize women by deploying tropes about their womanhood. This can be seen in Grace Mugabe and Muchinguri's gender specific attacks on Mujuru's character, which focused more on her personhood as a woman and less on her political leadership.

2.9 Joice Mujuru's life after ZANU-PF

Following her fall from power, Mujuru was convinced by colleagues who had also been ousted from ZANU-PF to form and lead a new political formation, called Zimbabwe People First (ZPF) (Mawere, 2019). However, in 2017, following significant differences among the party members, ZPF expelled seven senior members. The expelled members thereafter claimed ownership of the ZPF brand, which led Mujuru's party to be renamed the National People's Party (NPP). In the 2018 elections, Mujuru was one of twenty-three presidential candidates.

Reflecting on the possible reasons for Mujuru's lack of popularity at the onset of her solo political career, Mujuru and Masiyiwa (2018) propose that this was as a result of the problems and shortfalls that had marked Joice Mujuru's political career. Mujuru and Masiyiwa (2018) state that Mujuru was among the list of government officials and stakeholders who were placed on a sanctions list by the United States of America as a result of breaching democratic codes and serving a government that abused human rights. According to Mujuru and Masiyiwa (2018), Mujuru currently owns a farm that was illegally seized from the former white settlers and that she had been named on a list of senior government officials accused of dealing in illegal gold exports to countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo. These factors contributed to her unpopularity when she ran for presidency, as the majority of Zimbabweans were, at that time, very aggrieved about the role corruption had played to the country's economic decay.

However, in 2013, *Nehanda Radio* newspaper reported that Mujuru was favored by the West and that the Western powers had identified Mujuru as a reformer who was not tainted with political violence and deaths. *Nehanda Radio* agreed in their writing that, according to the ZANU-PF constitution, Joice Mujuru was in line to take over from Mugabe since she held the number two in the party's organogram (Nehanda Radio, 2013). Therefore,

over time, newspaper reports gave different accounts about Joice Mujuru during her different political seasons, she was much favored whilst part of ZANU-PF and fell out of favor as soon as she was ousted.

The *Mail and Guardian* reported in 2018 that women were bound to be the biggest losers in the Zimbabwean election because of how they had been vilified and tainted by the media (Coleen Morna, Mail and Guardian, 6 July 2018). Joice Mujuru had been called a witch and an unruly woman. Thokozani Khuphe of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was called a prostitute (*hure*), Fadzai Mahere, a young unmarried barrister, was blasted for contesting for a parliamentary seat while she was not married (Coleen Morna, Mail and Guardian, 6 July 2018).

Joice Mujuru was among twenty-three contestants vying for the presidential seat in 2018. She ran for president while leading the People's Rainbow Coalition (PRC), but realized that she did not stand much of a chance running under her own political party. Thus, she contested the position as the nominated leader of a coalition made up of four political parties (Coleen Morna, Mail and Guardian, 6 July 2018). Mujuru alongside other women active in politics across the political parties in Zimbabwe were the subjects of gendered ridicule and criticism in the 2018 election.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter analyzed Joice Mujuru the girl, the combatant and the politician. In the context of this study, this is important as it sets the scene for subsequent chapters, providing a conceptual analysis and using relevant African feminist theory to account for her rise, the mechanisms she had to employ to navigate national leadership, and her eventual fall. The analysis of how she was ejected from ZANU-PF, the role of Robert and Grace Mugabe, and her unsuccessful campaign for the presidency in 2018, provides an appropriate entrance to begin the conceptual conversation regarding femocracy and elite patriarchal bargaining that the next chapter focuses on.

Chapter THREE

Women and Political Parties: A Femocratic Patriarchal Bargain?

3.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is the position of women within political parties, and how they operate within them to manifest their leadership and perform their agency. For white women in the West, the struggle for women's political participation began with a long struggle for equality known as the suffrage movement. This movement eventually won them voting rights at the beginning of the 19th Century in some Western countries such as the United States of America in 1919 and England, Wales and Scotland in 1928, thus confirming their equal citizenship (Hartman, 2003; Paxton, Hughes and Barnes, 2020: 1). Women in Africa, like women in the African diaspora, have done most of their mobilization and self-actualization for political engagement within national liberation movements that fought against colonialism, slavery and patriarchy. In this respect, Tanya Lyons (2004: 23) connects the development of feminism as to nationalism, arguing that the national liberation wars gave women a taste of equality. When, after independence, they were denied gender equality, this concept of equality generated during the war developed into a sense of feminism, and a greater focus on the struggle for the equality of the sexes in the performance of citizenship. To provide a background of the journey to women's political emancipation, this chapter will make reference to Western political philosophy. This is not done to generalize but to deduce similarities and differences in the road to emancipation for women. In this regard, the chapter will show the differences and specific issues that women have faced in their different race and geographical locations. This chapter will also draw on various African cases because they share common threads with debates about Zimbabwean women in politics.

The chapter first examines the links between political parties and the nation state, and particularly the ways in which political parties frame themselves in preparation to govern, and women's historical location within those parties. The chapter shows that political parties are conceived of and prepared to govern a masculine state that requires the prospective leaders, male or female, to assimilate into its masculine logic. Further, the chapter shows that women's political engagement and substantive representation has been challenged over the years by different sets of constraints, starting from their battles for citizenship, basic political rights of suffrage and enfranchisement. This chapter then details some of the gains and

limitations that emerge during the pursuit for female representation, and those encountered after women take up political positions within the political party frameworks. The chapter shows that, in as much as women have codified their representation in political parties and in state institutions, the patriarchal and masculine structures embedded in said political institutions require them to display their imagined private roles and submissive characteristics in political leadership in order to survive within political frameworks.

I conclude by showing that the African women's experiences in political parties show that the participation of women's political engagement is still determined by their ability to bargain with patriarchal political parties for representation and participation. This patriarchal bargain is based on a continued reproduction of the model of femocratic gender politics as a survival strategy. Thus, I will use the conceptual frameworks of femocracy (Mama, 1995b), patriarchal bargaining (Kandiyoti, 1988), and elite patriarchal bargaining (Makhunga, 2016).

3.2 Masculine Political Theory, the Nation State and Political Parties

3.2.1 Masculine Political Theory and the Nation State

Contemporary political theory is founded on the writings and teachings of classic thinkers like Thomas Hobbes (1651), Niccolò Machiavelli (1532) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762), among others. They believed that one prominent man had to be chosen by society to rule and have a monopoly on violence and state machinery, and to rule over all 'men' (Marriott, 2010). Key foundational texts that have been long used as references in political science include *The Prince* by Machiavelli (1532), *Leviathan* by Hobbes (1651), *Republic* by Plato (1908), *The Politics* by Aristotle (1946) and others works from the likes of John Locke (1689) and Emmanuel Kant (1764), setting up a system that advanced a democracy focused on aggressive masculinity (Yuval-Davis, 1993; McFadden, 1998; Butler, 1990; hooks, 1981).

In the translated book *The Prince*, Niccollo Machiavelli proposes a typically masculine political theory based around gendered definitions of virtue and fortune (Marriott, 2010). Machiavelli, in his attempt to understand society, finds a way of evading the Hobbesian state of nature, where life is said to be 'nasty, brutish and short' because of the violent nature of anarchy (Gardner, 2010). For Machiavelli, *The Prince* is the primary figurehead of the nation state, whose priority is to maintain a hold of power while concurrently prioritizing the interests of the citizens (Gardner, 2010). A much cited part of

The Prince by political realists in International Relations theory is Machiavelli's argument that 'if a Prince is wise, he ought not to fear the reputation of being mean, for in time, he will come to be more considered', which has been used to make sense of the self-interested actions of state leaders who either threaten or use violence to supposedly warn potential enemies under 'anarchy' of the depths to which they will go to protect their sovereignty.

Furthermore, Machiavelli, in a translation of *The Prince* by Marriott (2010: 85), compares fortune or riches to a woman, arguing that to remain fortunate, one should not hesitate to engage in violent acts in order to maintain their position. In this regard, he states that fortune and a woman are the same because to maintain them one needs to take up an abusive character. Here, Machiavelli promotes a violent and controlling masculinity in the position of the Prince and particularly promotes violence towards women, stating that they should be kept even if it meant employing violence to keep them in check. In their writings, Machiavelli and Rousseau depict the idea that the aggressive nature of men and their capacity to reason accounts for the movement from the state of nature into a civilized society which is stable and less dangerous (Yuval-Davis, 1993).

In his book *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes (1651) highlights how men have a dominant nature and indicates that this tends to create conflict as men seek to dominate others. Green (2018) points out that in the *Leviathan* there are three causes for quarrel, namely competition, diffidence and glory. Men therefore invade or engage in violence for gain, safety and reputation. He notes that Hobbes sees men as using violence, firstly to make themselves masters of other persons – namely wives and children – secondly to defend those people, and thirdly for status in the society. When reading Hobbes's *Leviathan,* one notes that the book places women under the control and leadership of men, thus making them second class and relegating them to the private spheres, with the need to be protected. This also explains why women's contributions in wars have been underplayed and erased by the glorification of men's contributions, as women have historically not been considered capable of being in the frontlines (Cohn, 2013; Ashfar, 2003; and Enloe, 1996).

Through social contract theory, the early Greek philosophers developed a social philosophy which was to be the foundation of the notion of citizenship (Yuval-Davis, 1993). From the onset, because of the terms under which the social contract was made, women were excluded from the conversation; men were considered the custodians of democratic

privileges. The political party as an institution is modeled along this male-centered masculine conception of the nation as a patriarchal family unit.

Anderson (1983: 6) defines nations as imagined political communities, arguing that the sense of community and unity only exists in the minds of individuals, as most members of nations are unlikely to meet personally, but they carry a sense of camaraderie as a nation, conceived from the imagination – resulting in this sense of unity. The use of the family image here is meant to cement the bonds of unity, seniority and nationalism. Ebila (2015) quotes Mohanram, who stated that nations are conceived from the imposed geographical demarcated groupings of imagined families, enabling the nation to be united, thus these are identified as paternal or maternal places of origin: the 'motherland or fatherland'. This depiction presents the state in terms of gender power relations, placing females within the state in the same position that they find themselves in the home, which is subordinate.

Ebila (2015) shifts the conversation to the imposition of these paternal and maternal dynamics in the way political parties are organized, identifying the senior males as fathers of the nation and the females as mothers of the nation. This positions women in their caregiving and subordinate roles, likened to the roles they play in their homes but at the same time allows them to receive the respect and benefits traditionally associated with maternality. Ebila (2015) also argues that the concept of father of the nation is used by most African heads of state because they want to present themselves as caring and responsible individuals willing to use their traditional fatherly characteristics to govern the country. The role of the father of the nation is to exercise authority and overarching decision-making in the best interests of the 'family', mirroring similar expectations that are placed on fathers (Ebila, 2015). Ebila concludes that, in the same way a father is expected to ensure food security and human security for his family, a 'political father' is expected to be protective of his 'family' i.e. the nation.

For this reason, political parties favor the trope of political fatherhood, and appoint male leaders more than females because of the gender roles traditionally associated with fatherhood and motherhood. Examples of such African leaders include Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta and Joshua Nkomo, who have all been labelled as father of their respective nations. Perhaps this notion of fatherhood partly informs the common practice in African states of lifetime presidents or leaders who only leave office after 'appointing' their chosen successor or heir. The prominence of political fatherhood in Africa may therefore show that women

politicians are seen as representing weakness and softness, therefore unfavorable for political leadership while male politicians carry the tough male authority.

Doggett (2000) argues that nationalism is advantageous to the nation in that it instills the much-needed unity for progression; however, some aspects of nationalism entrench gender inequality. Historians portray how masculinity influenced and shaped the formulation of colonial policy, nationalist politics and ideology, and thus determined the status and place of women and their rights in African societies (Lyons, 2004). As much as some countries have made remarkable progress towards gender equality, there is still room for improvement, and for women to fully utilize their rights and access the resources of the state (McClintock, 1995 and 1997; UN Women, 2015: 6). Enloe (1996) argues that the foundations of nationalism were created through a highly masculine lens which explains why, after the liberation struggles in most of Africa, women struggled to belong in national politics and realize the gains of the liberation struggles for themselves as a previously marginalized group during colonialism. In this regard, in their construction of the state and understandings of the power dimensions embedded within the state, classical social theorists made gender divisions appear as rigid and unchangeable (Kimmel, 1993). Women's involvement in wars in Africa proved that gender roles are indeed not rigid. However, the masculine foundations of the state have made the field of politics difficult to penetrate for women, as they have to constantly adjust their identities and selves to fit in the masculine structures.

3.2.2 Manly Political Parties

The idea of the formation of political parties originates from the writings of Plato and Aristotle. In *Republic*, Plato suggested that political leadership and other means of political participation were reserved for mature males within the community and the state (Gardner 2010). Plato mentions the direct rule by many through an elected representative. His emphasis is on the type of democracy which is based on the rights to political participation for an adult male. In doing so, he essentializes male rights to hold political office, thus in this historically glorified text, Plato marginalizes women in the political space and promotes that only adult males have the right to compete for public office.

Literature on the political history of the United States of America refers to the "founding fathers" in relation to the formation of political parties and spearheading political

theory, nation building and politics (Asadi 2015: 407; Carrol et al 2021). The argument being raised by these writers is that founder women were excluded from the list of founding fathers, meaning that there were women who certainly contributed to the founding of America, but were systematically erased from the narratives of heroism. Norton (1988: 8) argues that women's citizenship, rights and access to political institutions was not prioritized in the American Constitution of 1787, stating that in those days, the government prioritized a highly functional economy as the most important factor in the society, unlike the contemporary focus on democracy and equal rights. Every family unit was headed by a male, who held a monopoly over the family property. Norton (1988: 9) states that this superior male figure, who was in charge of the economy and welfare of the family, made political decisions and served the community through military services on behalf of the family, and was recognized by the law as the principal overseer of the family with no mention of women. It is at this stage that what Rahn (1993: 474) calls 'political party stereotypes' were developed along gendered lines, promoting and entrenching the normalization of a masculinized political party presence and leadership. These stereotypes have maintained and continuously reinvented male dominance in political parties, thus making political parties and state leadership sites for the reproduction of patriarchy (Bjarnegård, 2009).

White women in the United States formed their own political parties and contested the presidential office from as early as 1872, but received little to no support. An example is the Equal Rights Party, led by Victoria Claflin Woodhull (Kittilson, 2009: 69). It has been a struggle for women's agitation for increased female representation to result in significant leadership positions particularly in the United States and other long-established democracies. A number of leftist political parties with a high proportion of female supporters and members have yet to appoint women to significant political posts in liberal democracies. O'Brien (2015: 1022) argues that, as much as the numbers of women in legislatures have significantly risen, the challenge is that parliament is largely weak and subservient to political parties controlled by men.

Among other countries that are leading industrial and liberal democracies, the British Labor party and the German Social Democrats have not yet selected a woman for the executive posts (O'Brien, 2015). The British Conservative Party and the German Christian Democratic Union have in the past appointed women, Margaret Thatcher and Theresa May, and Angela Merkel, respectively. However even after gaining office, O'Brien argues that these female leaders endured a continued negative focus on their sex. Knuckey (2019), in his

analysis of Hilary Clinton's presidential campaign and defeat in the United States' presidential race, argues that gendered stereotypes are still the greatest barriers to effective female political participation as political party leadership position is still considered a masculine field. This is because there are long standing stereotypes against women as political leaders, which have come to be the norm in American societies and worldwide.

Barnes and Burchard (2012: 768) argue that, from holding political office to fundamental activities such as having political conversations with colleagues and establishing a network with other politicians, women find it much more difficult to find belonging in political leadership settings. The reason why women's political participation at the elite level should continue to be prioritized, is so that by reinforcing and supporting women's symbolic representation, women at grassroots level can be encouraged to participate (Barnes and Burchard, 2012). Bjanegard (2009) argues that studies of masculinity must be done in relation to the feminist pursuit of improving the conditions of women, thus going beyond individual experiences and focusing on social structures and relations between and within the sexes. The idea here is that an understanding of the factors that propel men to dominance is critical in comprehending, and addressing, gender barriers in politics.

Political party structures often fail to initially support or even recognize women's candidacy or potential to win elections (Adler, 1996). When Prime Minister Levi Eshkol had a fatal heart attack in Israel in [year], the ruling Labor Alignment Party called 72-year-old Golda Meir out of retirement and appointed her as interim Prime Minister until the party could elect a new and permanent Prime Minister (Adler, 1996). According to Adler, seven months after she was appointed, Meir was no longer recognized as the interim figure selected by the party leaders, but had instead earned, through her leadership and hard work, the respect and support needed to represent the party in the next elections. Because of the masculine nature and perception of politics and political parties, as well as Meir's position as a woman, for a woman at a senior leadership level previously controlled by men to beat the electoral odds produces powerful public imagery around the possibility of change for the entire nation (Adler, 1996). The basis of political parties is political masculinity – defined by Starck (2014: 6) as "any kind of masculinity that is constructed around, ascribed to and claimed by political players". The significance of Meir's success in the context of these theories of political parties as inherently masculine. Her success produced a different kind of public imagery, but how does that affect how we can understand political parties in general? Why is her success a challenge to political masculinity? Women face resistance in the form

of masculinity in political parties and usually acceptance comes after passing through longer periods than their male counterparts.

The elections of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia and Michelle Bachelet in Chile present cases of women who rose to power by proving themselves worthy of the position and garnering support from the general electorate (Thomas and Adams, 2010). Both Johnson and Bachelet, through their credentials and experience gathered over the years, had to prove themselves to be equally equipped at the same level with the masculine standards traditionally associated with political leadership (Thomas and Adams, 2010: 110). Women across the globe have to prove themselves able to display the traditional masculine traits associated with political leadership in order to gain acceptance.

3.3 Women and the Right to Vote

The founders of Western political theory, Hobbes, Rousseau and Aristotle, in their famous writings argued that if women were to lead, the state would be in danger because women are influenced by extremely subjective, emotional and unpredictable thought processes (Kunovich and Paxton, 2005). In the late 19th century, women could not vote or contest elections anywhere in the world, meaning that they were not represented in politics within recognized formal political structures (Paxton, Hughes and Barnes, 2020: 1). Therefore, in agitating for women political participation and representation, a campaign known as the suffrage movement was launched (McCammon and Campbell 2001: 55). However, an analysis into the struggle for Western female suffrage depicts that the suffragists were engaged in a struggle for the formal-legalistic equality of white women in particular, thus sidelining other races (Elshtain, 1974). This is why the feminist movement has continued to evolve over the years taking many different forms as women and minority groups continue to agitate for equality.

The contemporary participation of women in politics began with the struggle for women to gain voting rights known as suffrage, and the first country to include women in the voting electorate in the 19th century was New Zealand in 1893, followed by Australia in 1902, and eventually states, with Finland being the first European country to grant women suffrage (Paxton, Hughes and Green, 2006). The first country to reach a 10 percent representation of women in its legislature was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1946. Since 1946 the United Nations, through its resolutions, has set a norm for equal rights between men

and women in its member states (Paxton, Hughes and Barnes, 2020: 8). The United Nations held its first conference on women in Mexico City in 1975, which was attended by 133 national delegations (Paxton, Hughes and Green 2006: 900). In Beijing in 1995, at the United Nations World Conference, 189 countries formalised that the world standard for democracy included accepting and accommodating women as equal citizens, thus allowing them full access to their human rights (Paxton, Hughes and Green: 2006: 901.)

As much as the American suffragists' movement was successful, embedded within it were inequalities that resulted in some American women being excluded in the victories. Sojourner Truth, a black woman who was born into slavery and later on became very popular for her powerful and groundbreaking activism for human rights, is well remembered for her famous speech, "Ain't I a Woman" (Women's Rights National Historical Park, 2020). She delivered this speech at a women's rights convention held in Akron, Ohio. Her speech spoke to the rights of African American women, highlighting that, in the fight for women's rights, citizenship and suffrage, black American women were being left out.

> That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me any best place! Ain't I a Woman? Look at me, look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a Woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man….I have borne thirteen children and seen most of all sold off into slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a Woman? (Women's Rights National Historical Park, 2020).

In her book titled after Sojounor Truth's speech, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (1981), bell hooks explains that:

> Black women were placed in a double blind; to support women's suffrage would imply that they were allying themselves with white women activists who publicly revealed their racism, but to support only black male suffrage was to endorse a patriarchal society that would grant them no political voice (hooks, 2015:3).

Staples (2019) recounts that, when middle class white women won their rights of suffrage, black women were being chased away from voter registration offices and threatened with violence. When Mary Church Terrell, a black human rights activist, sought the help and partnership of white female activists from about 1892, she was told that race was a higher priority than gender, meaning that the struggles of black women for emancipation needed to

start by fighting racism and slavery and then addressing gender inequality (Staples, 2019). The "triple oppression theory" developed by Claudia Jones in 1949 was derived from this context, highlighting that black women's mobilization for full citizenship was constrained by the triple factors of race, gender and class (Lynn, 2014).

In the mid-20th century, African women also gained the right to vote. However because of colonialism, the same racial discrimination experienced by black American women in America was experienced by black women in Africa. In South Africa, white women won the right to vote in 1930, followed by Asian women and colored women in 1983. Six decades after white South African women won their voting rights, black South African women were only to vote in April 1994 (Twine and Blee, 2001). Similarly, in Zimbabwe, white women were able to vote from 1950, whereas black Zimbabwean women could only vote in 1980.

Women have largely infiltrated the political landscape across Africa in the past three or four decades. This development has followed a global trend in which governments and political parties are using gender quotas to fast track equal legislative representation (Bauer, et al 2008). Shalaby (2018) asserts that women in the Middle East and North Africa are relative newcomers to political decision-making processes, despite the fact that women won their voting rights in the mid-20th century. Most African countries attained the universal rights of their citizens to vote through the gains of national liberation movements, though some countries attained this after prolonged civil wars.

3.4 From National Liberation to Governing

African women entered the realm of politics through their participation in national liberation movements (McFadden and Tillinghast, 1991; Lyons, 2004). When women took part in the liberation wars, the nature of war obscured male and female traditional roles in a way that politicized the traditional roles associated with women, while opening up opportunities for equality after the war (Molyneux, 1985: 228). In the case of South Africa during the struggle against apartheid, a feminist movement developed and began to influence the character of the nationalist struggle (Seidman, 1993; Hassim, 2006). The position of the ANC in the 1980s was that the primary aim of the struggle was nationalism and victory against colonialism, thus placing women's emancipation as a second priority (Hassim, 2006). Women in the ANC

were tasked with mobilizing for a broader struggle at this point and their demands were clear. Frene Ginwala states that:

> In South Africa, the prime issue is apartheid and national liberation, so to argue that African women should concentrate on and form an isolated feminist movement, focusing on issues of women in their narrowest sense implies African women must fight so that they can be equally oppressed with African men (Hassim 2006: 32).

After the attainment of independence in most of Africa, civil wars broke out in a significant number of these states. Peterson (1998) in Caprioli (2003:8) states that women became involved in intrastate conflicts "as participants in political identity struggles". Adams (2008) also argues that conflicts contribute to the accumulation of female representatives in politics in the sense that in conflict situations, women take on new roles: they become heads of households and also take on new economic responsibilities, join armies, rebel forces and liberation movements, and in some instances even lead civil society organizations. These experiences provide an opportunity for women in post-conflict societies to explore leadership using the skills acquired in the course of the war (Adams, 2008). The African national liberation struggles provided a good foundation for African feminism and the struggle for equality; the realization that women could also contribute equally to attaining a country's independence meant that they could also contribute constructively in the governance and day to day running of a country.

International conventions and resolutions also exerted pressure on African governments to be more inclusive of women. The beginning of the 21st century saw an increased agitation for parity, accounting for the present universal idealization of representative democracy which includes women (Tremblay, 2006). The average number of women in legislative positions worldwide nearly doubled between 2000 and 2010, from 11.7 percent to 19.4 percent. This growth slowed down between 2010 and 2020, increasing up to 22 percent, (Paxton, Hughes and Barnes, 2020; Inter Parliamentary Union, 2019). Consequently, the representation of women in politics has increased over the years in most countries in the world. Today countries that stand out with the best parliamentary representation of women are Bolivia, Sweden and Rwanda. Current statistics from the Inter-Parliamentary Union show that, in the last two decades, Rwanda has maintained its leading position worldwide with the highest number of women in parliament (Inter Parliamentary Union, 2019).

Issues such as religion and government principles still hinder some nations in different parts of the world from fully embracing women's participation in politics. For many years, Sweden led with a high number of women parliamentarians, however, in 2003, Rwanda overtook Sweden (Inter Parliamentary Union 2019). Sweden appointed the first female Prime Minister in 1958, and had 20 percent female representation in parliament by 1975, with the number rising to 30 percent by 1985. Rwanda and Sweden are two countries which have proven to be doing extremely well in women political representation; however these two countries have two extremely different backgrounds. Sweden is a developed Western nation which has known peace for more than two centuries, with a parliament that was established more than 500 years ago. Rwanda is still recovering from a genocide, and ranks 158 out of 189 countries in the area of human rights (Tremblay, 2006). For Tremblay (2006), the two cases show that it is not inevitable that economic development in Western countries engenders much more gender inclusive outcomes than in poor African countries.

The embracing of women's political participation clearly is a matter of how democratic a government chooses to be and how much dedication it has to women's issues and equality between the sexes. Women have managed to scale great heights in education and the labor force. However, their representation in politics and government is still greatly limited. As much as opportunities for women political representation have increased over the years, there are still notable barriers to their full engagement in governing. Obstacles to women in governance are grouped into three main categories, which are cultural, institutional and structural (Childs and Cowley, 2011; Inglehart and Norris, 2003; Paxton and Kunovich, 2003). Women are negatively impacted by structural barriers that have long existed in their societies; traditional stereotypes have placed women in disadvantaged positions in relation to access to education, work opportunities and issues like care-giving. These different factors affect the extent to which women are capable of participating in politics (Paxton and Kunovich, 2003: 89).

National liberation movements indeed paved a way for the emancipation of women from multiple forms of oppression. However, the post-independence political discourses have shown that in as much as women have increased in legislative structures, there are structural and cultural barriers to substantive political participation that still persist.

3.5 Descriptive vs Substantive Representation and Participation

Dahlerup (2007) argues that female political representation is not meant to replace the depiction of feminist ideas. Contemporary female political leadership has not reached satisfactory standards of what political equality entails because female political leaders still struggle to represent women's interests and to stand and act in their individual agency. Feminist theorists hoped that the presence of women in legislative bodies presented possibilities that women will not just stand as women in parliaments but also act for women (Lovenduski and Norris, 2003:87). In her influential book, *The Politics of Presence*, Anne Phillips proposes that the 'politics of presence' justifies the need for those who were previously excluded from politics to engage more in politics as she argues that political equality does carry an equal right to be present (Phillips, 1995). An ideal form of political equality will be that in which all political leaders regardless of their gender, are able to gain the required respect and authority as they carry out their duties with no stereotypes.

Tremblay (2006) argues that normative approaches to democracy see gender equality in governance as a pre-requisite to democracy, because women have an equal claim to citizenship just like men. Women's presence in political office does not equal to women's substantive representation, there are more factors that influence the substantive female political participation (Phillips, 1995). There is a direct relationship between the number of women in politics and their political effectiveness. Referring to Western European cases, O'Brien (2015) notes that both women's procedural and effective political participation are a product of dynamics in political parties especially at primary election level where numbers and quality of women are determined. Muller (2000) in O'Brien (2015) also argues that the control of political parties over candidate selection and their duties is so far reaching and important in how they account and dispatch their democratic mandate. The concepts of women's interests and gender equality are necessary when investigating the saliency of substantive representation (Wangnerud 2009).

Scholars demonstrate that there are three issues that directly affect women's access to legislative roles, which are the culture, the economy and the political trends of a country (Dahlerup, 2007; Tremblay, 2006; Kittilson, 2009; and Barnes and Burchard, 2012). There are intersections of these factors in the way they influence roles for women in politics. Other studies are linked to explanations of women political participation based on culture and electoral processes (Ingelhart and Norris 2003; Tremblay, 2006; Paxton and Kunovich, 2003). For Tremblay (2006) and Dahlerup (2007), positive changes in women's socio-

economic status should have a positive impact in women's numbers and roles in parliament through political parties.

Political factors may still influence the selection and the election of women into political office. Tremblay (2006) argues that in terms of women's representation, there are two dimensions which are women's rights to equality and the prevailing political practices and system. Here, Tremblay argues that the political rights of women refer to their citizenship. Matland and Montgomery (2003) in Tremblay (2006) show that the electoral systems that determine intra-party nomination processes go on to affect female representation in parliament. Farrel, et al (2001) argue that the party selection committees are primarily responsible for the low number of women in politics. Norris and Lovenduski (1989) suggest that in European politics, party selectors choose the ideal political candidate normally defined by educational qualifications which are normally inclined to a political career, which often disadvantages some working class women and other individuals from minority groups.

Affirmative action and political quotas policies have been used as policy instruments to ensure women's representation in political parties and parliaments. In many countries, gender quotas have led to increased numbers of women in politics, a shift to a much more politically inclusive agenda and the growth in gender consciousness by women politicians (Burnet 2011: 2). Gender consciousness (or a lack thereof) is responsible for the importance and validation of men over women when it comes to political leadership, this is defined as the recognition that one's relationship to the political world is shaped by being female or male (Rosenthal 1995: 600).

3.6 A Patriarchal Bargain?

This section turns to a specific characterization of women participation in politics as patriarchal bargains. Using a study of women experiences in the Sub-Saharan region of Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia, Deniz Kandiyoti came to the realization that women maneuver dominantly patriarchal systems using patriarchal bargains as a mode of survival (Kandiyoti 1988:275). Due to the prevalence and dominance of patriarchy in social as well as political systems, Kandiyoti argues that women have adapted and tend to find a way to operate within limitations imposed by patriarchy, thus the need to employ what are called "patriarchal bargains". Patriarchal bargains affect women according to class, race, caste and ethnicity, thereby exerting a powerful influence on the shaping of women's

gendered subjectivity. These patriarchal bargains are affected by time and are mutable, thus opening space for new struggles and opportunities for renegotiating gender relations (Kandiyoti, 1988).

The term patriarchal bargain is used to depict and represent a difficult process of strategizing: "it intends to indicate the existence of set rules, laws and scripts regulating gender relations to which both genders negotiate and agree which are subject to be revised and renegotiated" (Makhunga, 2016: 44). Patriarchal bargains employed by different women in different societies and circumstances determine the nature of the gender ideology which is tailor made for that particular context, thereby influencing the reaction of women in terms of active or passive resistance in the face of their oppression (Kandiyoti, 1988). For Sachett (2005), power bargaining across genders is a result of the ability to aggregate opportunity, actions and resources in ways that increase one's support and ally base.

Makhunga (2016) noted that of paramount importance in the application of the concept of patriarchal bargains is the acknowledgment that "the personal is political" and that there is an inherent, undisputable link between the "public" and the "private" spheres of the patriarchal configurations of power. This particular study focuses on the participation and representation of women in politics.

In a bid to understand the reason why female sports coaches were deciding to quit coaching in colleges in the United States, Kamphoff (2010) learnt from the former female coaches that they had to constantly negotiate their femininity for them to survive in the coaching industry. The women had to particularly negotiate and prove their ability to keep their jobs rather than negotiate their written contracts, whilst being disrespected and undermined for being female. This implied that the contracts were rigid and favored male coaches (Kamphoff, 2010). Kamphoff's study establishes the gendered and patriarchal nature of U.S collegiate coaching. She concluded that women received fewer resources, lower salaries and more responsibilities coupled with less administrative support but were expected to perform equally to men. Kamphoff employed Kandiyoti's concept of patriarchal bargains to understand that her research participants bargained with patriarchy by strategizing and using various coping mechanisms to deal with the gender structure (Kamphoff, 2010: 370).

Women constitute the majority of members in religious groups in the case of Zimbabwe. However, religious leadership is a male dominated terrain, as a result of an array of historical, theological, cultural and socio-economic reasons (Mapuranga, 2013: 1). The

application and use of the concept of patriarchal bargaining in this case determined that women do show up as taking up positions of leadership in the church but most of these female leaders are either closely related or married to the lead pastor. Female leadership in this case is squeezed through the justifiable women who are close to the main male leaders. Patriarchal bargains are therefore most likely to be negotiated by women in the elite class, further entrenching inequality and misrepresentation. In the case of Joice Mujuru and the political women in Zimbabwe, it is imperative to note that bargaining with patriarchy stands as a very critical strategy of affirming the relevance of women within the Zimbabwean political landscape.

3.7 Gender Quotas as a Patriarchal Bargain?

Perhaps the most apt example of patriarchal bargains are governmental gender quotas. The adoption of gender quotas in governments and electoral systems came as part of a global trend where governments began to use electoral gender quotas to accelerate gender parity in parliament (Dahlerup and Friedenval, 2005: 26 in Bauer et al, 2008). Quotas are defined as a method used by political systems and governments to address women's macro and micro level needs in society thereby reserving a specific number of legislative seats for their appointment to parliament (Tshuma, 2020: 1). Okedele (2021) notes that gender quotas have been adopted in several African countries including Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda.

This trend, especially in the developing world, was driven by the dominating development discourse driven by the international organisations and NGOs which linked development aid and credit to particular good governance markers, including gender parity and gender empowerment. It was therefore not necessarily women already in government who introduced and enforced quotas, but many governments, who in order to comply with the requirements of international bodies and lenders, initiated gender empowerment policies, laws and programs.

In as much as progress has been very remarkable on the number of women in African parliaments, Okedele (2021) argues that despite the quantitative increase, progress still needs to be made towards substantially effective women political leadership for the improvement of the lives of ordinary women, a point that had also been made by Makhunga (2016) in her analysis of descriptive representation and substantive representation of women in politics.

Many African countries, like the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, adopted quotas following long and brutal civil wars (Hughes and Tripp, 2015).

In their study, Hughes and Tripp (2015) concluded that the end of violent conflict created space for a much more expansive feminist agenda and program through various dialogue platforms like truth and reconciliation commission. African women also took it upon themselves to agitate for gender quotas to institutionalize their position in future governments, such as the Liberian women (Tripp, 2003). International conventions and resolutions from intergovernmental organisation also exerted pressure on African governments to be more inclusive of women, the likes of those from the United Nations, Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The benefits of gender quotas have been identified as eradicating the marginalization of women in their communities at the same time giving them access to power, control and the distribution of resources (Odeleke, 2019). Gender quotas provide a space for women's interests to be aired and to explore their leadership potential and thereby influencing policy positions and outcomes (Odeleke, 2019). Hassim (2010) shows that despite there being more women in politics in Africa as a result of gender quotas, this has not translated into any significant effect on policy. In the case of Mozambique, democracy and human rights deficits have undermined the effectiveness of gender quotas (Odeleke, 2019; Hassim, 2010). A comparison of the rate of increase of women representatives in parliaments and statistics on women (such as the number of girls in primary and secondary school, the number of women in formal employment, child and mother mortality, GBV incidence and so on) show that, though the number of women in parliament is increasing, the statistics that point to the quality of women's lives are not improving – probably indicating that these women in policy positions are not enforcing policies that focus on women.

About a hundred countries have adopted what is known as the voluntary party quota, which is adopted by political parties out of their own volition regardless of how the government stands on the issue of quotas. The second approach is the compulsory party quota, which has been adopted by 28 countries, through which the constitution mandates political parties to institute quotas for women; this is normally through the reservation of parliamentary seats for women (Tripp and Kang, 2008).

Crocker (2010: 686) identifies three categories of gender quotas: reserving seats in parliaments, legislative quotas, and reserving party-based seats. Through these gender quotas, a certain number of seats are set aside for women in parliament and particular women are nominated into parliament by the president instead of being elected through regular procedures (Crocker, 2010). Legislative quotas mandate all parties presenting candidates for legislative elections to include a certain percentage of women in their candidate party lists. Barnes and Burchard (2012) state that it is important to note that women utilized the opportunities presented to them by political transitions from prolonged conflict in some parts of Africa to assert themselves into political processes and demand equal representation. In the IDEA Report, Professor Dahlerup noted that the type of enforcement mechanism is very important to note when implementing quotas, arguing that many quota laws are merely window dressing as they are not properly enforced in practice. This means that quotas have not quite served the purpose that they were meant to serve due to the selection criteria used for the candidates as well as the way they are enforced; instead of women legislators substantively representing women, they end up becoming a symbolic and numeric representation of women in government.

Dahlerup (2008) argues that the adoption of quotas has met with mixed motives in different countries. Bauer (2020) notes that gender quotas have been successful in Asia, Europe and Latin America. However, Africa has recorded the fastest growth. This inconsistency creates grounds for understanding the reasons for the variations. Gretchen Bauer (2020) in her study, *Fifty/Fifty by 2020: Electoral Gender Quotas for Parliament in East and Southern Africa*, investigates the employment of electoral gender quotas in Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda (Bauer, 2020). She notes that feminist debates in Africa have raised concerns, arguing that political leaders employ gender quotas to elect women who are particularly loyal to their political party agendas. In relation to the Ugandan Parliament, Clayton, Josefsson and Wang (2014) noted that there is discrimination of women who occupy reserved seats in comparison to those elected through open seats as a way of protesting against an unfair means of selecting women representatives which only produces place holders and not independent political agents. In a comparison between authoritarian Rwanda and democratic Botswana, Bauer and Burnet (2013) note that the level of democracy and authoritarianism does not necessarily have an impact on the effectiveness of gender quotas, as there are other factors to be taken into account. Botswana has notably failed to implement the quota systems within the country's

parliament, owing to a First Past The Post electoral system which is argued to be less "women friendly" (Bauer and Burnet, 2013). In the case of Rwanda, robust gender quota systems have been shown to not have convinced citizens of the deepening of a democratic culture (Bauer and Burnet, 2013).

Quotas show that, due to elite patriarchal bargaining, the women in parliament and government are subject to the demands of the patriarchal system they find themselves within. This results in these women often negotiating for their own survival within these structures, rather than advocating for policies and laws that benefit women in general.

3.8 Femocracy

The aftermath of the national liberation wars in Africa has raised questions regarding the position of women in post-colonial societies. Women disappeared from the public spheres of politics soon after independence, particularly in Zimbabwe, leaving only a few. This raised the question of whether women and women's organizations voluntarily opted out of public life after independence. This question leads one to inquire if and how post-colonial states are active sites of gender struggles and what form these struggles take. Mama (1995b) focuses particularly on the role played by women to establish and entrench some structural strongholds that have kept women subordinate and discriminated against. Mama (1995b) argues that to fully comprehend the position of women in independent states, is to consider the ways in which state formation and state practices are all gendered and to analyze the involvement of women in those practices and processes.

Mama (1995b) identifies a form of gender politics dubbed the First Lady Syndrome, through the office of the first lady. Women in Africa have capitalized on this position to assume powerful new roles often placing themselves as women leaders. However, the democratic nature of the use of this position is questionable particularly its impact on the ordinary women citizens. Mama defines feminism as being the agitation for equality and emancipation of women from the various forms of oppression that they have long endured overtime. Stemming from this definition, Mama (1995) coined a conceptual framework which she dubbed femocracy as the opposite of feminism. She defined a femocracy as a powerful "anti-democratic" female elite group that proclaims to be in a position of power primarily to represent female interests, yet is incapable to do so because the majority of these female representatives are married to powerful men, and therefore there is a

conflict of interests between supporting a feminist mandate and supporting what their husbands stand for politically. Mama argues that the femocracy purports to represent the feminist agenda but in reality this establishment distorts the broad feminist agendas and in turn entrenches patriarchy (Mama 1995b). The femocratic ideology is also known as the big brother syndrome, where women in order for them to scale political heights need to be connected to powerful political men. The women advance political agendas at the expense of any female political gains (Goredema and Chigora, 2009:1).

With regard to the Zimbabwean quota system, the women who are appointed by the political parties to represent them in parliament tend to be un-driven and unqualified women who are concerned with toeing the party line (Tshuma, 2020:1). Politics and patronage and "token representation" tend to expose to parliament, women who are toeing the party lines than advancing women's interests and the society at large. This breed of women politicians essentially becomes political proxies for the advancement and entrenching of male political dominance and leadership. Women who stand alone and against wrongdoing within the political regimes normally fall out of favor with the "system" like the likes of Margret Dongo, who was booted out of ZANU-PF for being strong headed and opposing the injustices by Robert Mugabe's government (Lyons, 2004; World People's Blog, 2006). Priscilla Misihairambwi-Mushonga also fell out of favor from the MDC faction which was led by Welshman Ncube for standing against injustice (Ndunduzo Tshuma, 26 February, The Chronicle 2015). The analysis could be extended to first ladies especially as Grace Mugabe then became the issue that ZANU-PF largely used to justify ousting Mugabe. She welded so much power at a time that she was filling up stadiums, running campaigns, took over as president of the ZANU-PF women's league and was instrumental in the firing of several ZANU ministers and MPs. This power was a direct result of her marriage.

This means that women appointed into parliament through the quota system have a little freedom of speech and articulation as well agency as they have to carefully navigate the political terrain to avoid outsmarting the directly elected male parliamentarians. This also proves that the system normally supports and favors women who are loyal to it. In this regard, femocracy is also used as a survival strategy for women in politics to gain relevance and favour.

The idea of elite patriarchal bargains discussed by Makhunga (2016) does help tie together the two frameworks of patriarchal bargains and femocracy. In a sense the two

frameworks work in tandem for women like Mujuru and others in ZANU – they are present and visible due to personal achievements but also through marriage – and then are forced to engage in elite patriarchal bargains in order to survive in the political system.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the foundations of politics were highly gendered. This gendered nature has continued to reproduce itself within political parties, and in attempts by women to substantively exist in the political space and participate equally with men. Several factors continue to reinforce hindrances to full female political participation and these factors continue to evolve and take new shapes as world orders and systems are changing. Women, in their attempts to belong in these political spaces in different ways, are either painstakingly and with dire consequences transforming the political systems to fully incorporate women or working together with patriarchal factors to support political ideologies that further entrench the marginalization of women. This study goes on to examine the extent to which patriarchal bargains and femocracy were played out in the Zimbabwean situation during Joice Mujuru's journey in various political parties.

Chapter FOUR

Biographical Research in a Politically Unstable Society

4.1 Introduction

Every year on the 18th of April, there are Independence Day celebrations throughout the nation of Zimbabwe. These celebrations are usually marked by screening liberation war documentaries that bring to life the days of the liberation struggle. Typically, on this day, political differences are set aside, and celebrations take over. Growing up, I realized there was incredible emphasis on the territorial integrity of our country. There was a shared pride for having won back the land of Zimbabwe. I watched so many documentaries about the Chimurenga Wars that brought forth the independence of Zimbabwe from colonial rule; I even learnt the revolutionary songs that had been popular during the war at a very young age. In fact, war, independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty were the most emphasized terms in the media by politicians and historians. A young Joice Mujuru usually appeared on television screens in black and white fragments of documentaries representing the ZANLA women, showing a resolute and stark determination to claim back the country.

As I satisfied my curiosity through research and reading, I began to realize that in as much as both the men and women of our country took part in the national liberation struggle, most of the writings glorified the contributions made by men. They were the leading subjects and heroes of the revolution. My desire became to locate Zimbabwean women within the liberation struggle, to understand their experience through their own stories. This would also help me understand the intricate details and dynamics of post-colonial women's political leadership. Therefore, I shifted my attention to a historically celebrated liberation war matriarch, whose face and form continued to withstand the masculine terrains of politics long after the liberation struggle. I hoped that through her narration of her political life, I could develop a better understanding of the realities of contemporary female political leadership in Zimbabwe and beyond.

The primary objective for this research was seeking to understand the political life of Joice Mujuru from her participation in the liberation struggle during her youth, to her various duties in government after the independence of Zimbabwe serving under the ZANU-PF government. Ultimately, the goal is to better understand the complex details of female

political leadership and agency within the Zimbabwean political landscape through her eyes, as well as through the experiences and views of others who have encountered both inside and outside of politics. The research also draws from her ousting from the party and vice-presidency as well as her independent political career, thus spanning the years between 1973 and 2018. In order to unravel this, I used political biography as my research design. Rotberg (2010: 2) notes that biography is history and therefore depends on history. It strengthens and enriches history. Thus, for Rotberg, biography is an important aspect of history, as it carries stories embedded with lessons and motivation for readers as they explore how the biographical subject negotiated the meandering terrains of life.

This chapter reflects on the study's research methodology, research design, the fieldwork research process, interviews and the data analysis techniques.

4.2 Biography as a Political Research Method

Biographies are written to keep the memories of an individual alive years after they are gone; they are documentations of life's trajectories, carrying vital lessons from the victories and failures of an individual. Biographical research posits that human beings are the agents of their life courses and social constructions, and depicts the complicated relationship between an individual and their environment (Stroobants, 2005). Biographical research thus stems from the understanding that individual identities are socially constructed (Stroobants, 2005). This form of research also takes into account the past, present and future of an individual (Rieman 2014: 2). The main aim of this form of writing is to document the constructive thinking and way of life of a research subject (Stroobants, 2005). Rieman (2003:2) states that biographical research aims to archive how significant shifts in culture and the functioning of society have been experienced and comprehended by particular social actors, and how this experience has shaped their life outcomes.

Biographical research stands out as the suitable research method for my study as it allows the story of an individual to be told from a personal perspective, in relation to socio-political and structural surroundings and developments. Biographical research is a form of life writing, and Riall (2010: 376) notes that, traditionally, life writing has a reputation among historians for being dedicated to the study of powerful men, which she terms 'the heroic model of biography'. There is a notable gap in biographical writing when it comes to documenting life stories of women in order to ensure that the method of writing becomes

more gender inclusive. Biographical writing is defined by Denzin (1989: 27, in Roberts, 2002) as a form of writing that focuses particularly on the personal life experiences of an individual. Materials that are used for biographical research include personal documents, like letters and diaries, family heirlooms and other important materials (Denzin, 1989 in Roberts, 2002). For the purposes of this study, articles and pictures were also accessed from the media.

In her thesis, *Negotiating Public and Private Identities: A Study of the Autobiographies of African Women*, Were (2017) argues that the African woman's political autobiography is a platform for defining and redefining the intricate components of African political womanhood. This genre of writing challenges the male-centered texts that already exist, particularly concerning great African national liberationists such as Julius Nyerere, Robert Mugabe, and Nelson Mandela. African women-centred autobiographies enable us to see how academic literacies silence or illuminate different perspectives of African political womanhood (Were 2017: iv). Here, autobiography allows me to tell the story of African political womanhood through the personal life of an African political woman, from her own words.

Biographical writing is a way of subjectively interpreting personal experiences to give meaning to and shape discourses. Roberts (2002) notes that there are advantages to presenting varied ways of understanding and collecting information about individuals; it helps us to compare and contrast past and the present societies using the experiences of individuals within family and societal groups. In biographical research, individuals are active personal and social content creators, giving meaning to everyday experiences and occurrences. In this case, biographical research will help to develop an understanding of the development of African political womanhood and the narratives that surround the concept. In biographies of great political thinkers, Javangwe (2011) demonstrates how the "political" in autobiography works impinges on processes of constructing the self and nation. In the Zimbabwean context, most political biographies are written with varying aims, such as relating historical and cultural facts, and clearing people's names from accusations and allegations among others (Javangwe, 2011; Smith and Watson, 2010:10 quoted in Nyanda, 2016).

In relation to Pakistani women, Zaidi (2012) argues that biography has been influential in communicating women's experiences, particularly in expressing resistance to different forms of oppressions. She notes that biography gives women a platform to challenge long prescribed gender roles and women-centred behavioural patterns through expressing

their true life stories and experiences. This means that biographical writing offers women a space for freedom of self-expression to challenge long-standing stereotypes and expectations. Zaidi (2012) notes that there is a unique level of truthful depiction of women's experiences and identities in women-centred biographical writings. Zaidi argues that this truthfulness through biography has contributed immensely to identity formation for women. Onley (in Zaidi, 2012) notes that biography details the origins of experiences, the individuality and personal-ness of experiences, and the constructions of personal identities. Women-centred biographies depict the ambiguity of the identity of a woman; centred within this identity are other identities like wifehood and motherhood (Mason in Zaidi, 2012). So, through biography, one is able to understand how women negotiate the multi-layered, ambiguous identifications of womanhood.

In women-centred biographies there is a tendency for the maternal identity to overshadow the core personal identity, which is multi-layered (Davies, 1991). Davies's work highlights three significant models of self-representation through African women's autobiographies. These are a depiction of their liberation struggle experience, their fight against patriarchal and racial forms of oppression, as well as their private lives within family structures. According to Davies, the product of all of these attributes presents a "self which is constantly in dialogue with culture, society and its 'others'" (Davies, 1991: 280). Davies also makes a conclusion that women's autobiography exposes that women's self-discovery runs parallel to the definition of a woman in patriarchal culture, meaning that biography can unveil hidden selves within women. Biography presents an opportunity for women to bring out the repressed and hidden personalities that can only be unveiled in such a space.

A biography is explained to be a historical narrative. Biographical subjects are known to be very hard to access, and their inner motives are seldom projected into some external evidence without remainder or distortion (Carver, 1992: 2). I was fortunate, despite struggling to access my biographical subject Joice Mujuru for over a year, to eventually have a two and a half hour-long interview to hear her life story in her own words. I also believe that writing Mujuru's biography after her ousting from ZANU-PF, meant that she was in a different position, and able to provide responses less biased by political party affiliations, potentially avoiding the distortions mentioned by Carver (1992).

In biographical writing, Scaparo (2005) warns of the danger of the biographical researcher becoming personally attached to the subject, while other researchers are able to

prioritise the biographical contribution to academic research rather than the focus on the person of the subject. Arklay (2006) argues that biographical researchers are tempted to write biographies as a form of revenge, or to settle particular scores, exposing some individuals of their controversial life stories to present them as a lesson for their readers. In as much as this biography is going to focus on some negative aspects of Mujuru's life history, its purpose is not to use them against her, as a way of discrediting her. What is important about this work are the lessons that can be learnt from all of her experiences collectively.

Biographies provide a different point of view which helps the reader to comprehend individuals and different societal groups, thus creating an understanding of the distribution of power (Lasswell, 1936). Biography provides personal experiences which are rare, unique, enriching, and vital to the discourses of political leadership. The biographies of former African National Congress presidents, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains* by Luli Callinicos (2004) and *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred* by Mark Gevisser (2009), are evidence of the profound impact well-researched biographies can have in documenting and theorizing histories of national liberation and post-independence governance. Many biographers choose to use the conventional route of the chronological method, which is also the decision made in this study. This method presents traceable stages of a subject's development from their very early life.

Riall (2010: 380) notes that the greatest crisis in political biography is presented by the challenges of cultural and gender history, arguing "that life-writing, in its traditional form, has largely been discredited by the whole scale questioning of the male-defined categories that have always driven it". In international political histories, auto/biography has been used to tell the stories of great men and women whose work and experiences have continued to impact and inspire lives and narratives for generations. However, because of the highly masculine nature of political theories, the writings of and about men like Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Mahatma Gandhi, among others, dominate the foundations and pillars of politics and political history (Hitler, 2001; Toland 2014; Bosworth, 2014; Desai et al 2011). And because past biographies have been so fixed on political leadership and public reputation, biography seems unable to account for the shape of most women's lives in the past. Most of the work that has been done on women has been primarily focused on subjectivity, the construction of identity and the performance of self. Riall (2010) notes that, as much as biographies have been employed to tell the histories of great men, they are very important across genders, particularly in political leadership as we need not only to

understand the general conditions under which charismatic authority can develop, but also to analyze the historical and cultural context in which an individual can become a leader, irrespective of their gender.

The autobiography of Wangari Maathai (2006), *Unbowed: A Memoir*, has been used extensively to build theory on political activism, grassroots organizing, eco-feminism, and women's political representation. The main difference in this piece is that Maathai wrote her own life-history, making this an autobiography instead of a biography. This work seeks to begin similar work on Zimbabwe and Mujuru, by using her life as an avatar and a guide to create knowledge and theory about African women in political leadership. Through the individual life and political journey of Joice Mujuru, this work seeks to develop an understanding of political leadership through the experiences of women, and an understanding of how those experiences are perceived by other actors within the Zimbabwean political arena.

4.3 Biography and National Liberation Movements

Many African history writings are in the form of biographical writing, thus making biography highly instrumental in documenting the history of African National Liberation Movements. Robins (1996) in Groves (2007) argues that dominant analyzes of nationalist's liberation histories mainly exclude the important conversations on gender dimensions. Groves (2007) argues that in the Zimbabwean liberation struggle, whilst many women made valuable contributions, their primary role was symbolic; there was a manipulation of gender to legitimize the conflict and garner financial support from key nations, and powerful roles were occupied by men resulting in a dominant masculine historical narrative. Biographies of political figures such as Robert Mugabe, Herbert Chitepo and the likes of Josiah Tongogara are treated as authorities when it comes to the liberation war history of Zimbabwe. Musendekwa (2018) talks about the Messianic characterization and depiction of Mugabe as propaganda to legitimize his authority during his rule. While many biographies about prominent male liberationists have been written by scholars in Zimbabwe, very few have surfaced on key women.

Biographies on women in other African countries include writings on prominent women like Winnie Madikizela Mandela and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, among others (Mandela and Benson, 1985; Scully, 2016). The narratives on women and politics however continue to

be affected by the stereotypes associated with females and their political capabilities compared to the masculine standards. Arguments about whether Winnie Mandela became popular because she was married to Nelson Mandela continue to discredit the individual contributions that Winnie Madikizela Mandela made to the political struggles of South Africa.

Unterhalter (2000) uses a study of the autobiographies of South African liberation icons to show relations between gender relations, work and masculinity. She identifies a pervasive depiction of masculinity in heroic terms emphasising dominance and a defining location in history. Zaidi (2012) notes that women use the genre of autobiography to declare their resistance and empowerment, arguing that the crucial concept in women-centred writings is truthful representation of female experience and identity. Unterhalter (2000: 157-178) argues that "heroic masculinity creates a discourse which overshadows the political contributions and interests of women in liberation war histories, thus promoting the narratives that men are the primary heroes of liberation struggles and nation building". Nelson Mandela's life has been seen in many ways as defining the history of the South African National liberation struggle. Through Mandela's political commitment and work, he has come to stand for a distinctive formation of masculinity in South Africa, a heroic and favoured masculinity which somehow overshadows the contributions of women in the South African liberation struggle. Accordingly, this could inversely imply a constructed form of political femininity.

4.4 Conducting Fieldwork in a Politically Unstable Society

I conducted this research in the middle of a political transition from Robert Mugabe's regime to Emmerson Mnangagwa's, between a coup and a very violent election. I became aware of the political violence in my country at a tender age. I have memories of Operation Murambatsvina in 2005, during which people died, and thousands were left homeless. I hold memories of how, in the lead up to all the national elections, civilians would live in fear of the violence that was usually unleashed during this period. People would die, and there were accounts of people having their arms cut off to prevent them from voting – mainly during the 2007-2008 election period, where in certain areas people would be asked whether they preferred short sleeve or long sleeve i.e. if one wanted just the palm to be cut off or the entire arm to be cut off (Chemvumi 2011).

This routine violence made me curious about the type of leaders that were produced by the liberation struggle. In 2000, the United Nations passed Resolution 1325, which encouraged member states to diligently and intentionally include women in conflict resolution processes; this was to ensure gender equality and because the United Nations had concluded that women are very instrumental in conflict resolution. I became keen to understand if the presence of women in the Zimbabwean political landscape is translating into substantive political leadership, as suggested by the UN resolution 1325.

As I searched for participants, I was cognisant of the fact that the volatile political conditions were bound to negatively influence their participation. Stump and Dixit (2012) note that in politically volatile environments, participants are often constrained and afraid to engage in meaningful dialogue with the researcher because of the oppressive system that they find themselves in. Participants also exercise caution when sharing information with the researcher in cases where freedom of expression is guaranteed, but freedom after expression is guaranteed to be absent (Hubbell, 2003: 10). I would make sure to properly introduce myself to a prospective participant and clearly state the intentions of my research in an attempt to gain their trust and undivided participation. These factors persist as hindrances and considerations to fieldwork for qualitative research in dangerous settings.

Nordstrom and Robben (1995) talk about the phenomenon of existential shock, defined as tensions experienced by researchers in situations where one's research choices, respondents and responses could have potential life or death implications for either the researcher, the respondent, or both. In the construction and design of the research, the researcher has to be extremely aware of the security parameters to ensure the safety of those involved in the research. Indeed, in the Zimbabwean case, some people who have questioned anything to do with the governing system have disappeared without a trace in the past, such as Itai Dzamara. Several cases have resulted in people who are identified as political activists being arrested for questioning the ruling regime. I was aware of all these aspects and highly cautious as a result.

There is a tendency in fieldwork research for the researcher to be identified with the research in a way that may be misleading to the subjects and causes alarm. Nordstrom and Robben (1995: 15) also identify the problem of rampart rumours in a violent fieldwork landscape, arguing that a majority of researchers encounter a lot of unverified information which distorts the value of the outcome of the research. Violent events are inherently

uncertain and this uncertainty can put the researcher in an insecure environment. The fear, anxiety and intimidation associated with violent fields can even halt the project. This was the context in which I conducted this research. It is the reason that fieldwork that, under stable political conditions, takes three to six months, took me over a year to complete. Challenges encountered in the study related to difficulty in accessing respondents because of their elite nature as high profile people in politics and society; a hazardous context given tense circumstances surrounding Mujuru's removal from ZANU PF; the forced removal of Robert Mugabe in November 2017; the 2018 Zimbabwean general elections; and a general infamous history of human rights violations and intolerance in Zimbabwe.

4.5 Access to Respondents

I divided my respondents into two groups: Joice Mujuru as the primary respondent, and other secondary respondents. In writing a biography, key informant interviews are very important. Key informants are experts, or people who have experience with or are closely related to the subject under inquiry. This focus on key respondents is a qualitative data collection technique. For the purposes of this research, I needed to interview people with specific, special and direct knowledge of the Zimbabwean political landscape, whether through direct participation or through studying. Key informant interviews entail speaking to a particular group of people with special knowledge about what the researcher is working on (Kumar 1989: 1). Secondly, key informant interviews would require interview guides which provide a detailed list of questions to guide the flow of the interview (Kumar, 1989).

4.5.1 Joice Mujuru

It took me over a year to gain access to Joice Mujuru. It was important to talk to Mujuru as she was key in providing the information that only she could provide. There was a need to hear her side of the story, as it was mostly men who were re-writing and contesting history. It was therefore important to talk to Joice Mujuru so that she could confirm or dispel some of the information that I had read and heard about her. The authenticity of her story is obviously subject to contestation, but her account remains worthy to recount and to be taken seriously academically.

Because Joice Mujuru was my primary respondent, I set out to secure my interview with her. I had been in contact with several people who promised to connect me with her, but was ultimately unsuccessful despite consistently following up. This was also a very complex political season: Mujuru was also campaigning to contest for the presidential position. As a compromise, I closely followed her activities on social media and news reports in an attempt to better understand her election period journey. As usual, there was violence, the political atmosphere was intense and intimidating. I had to stay constantly vigilant and prioritise mine and my family's safety, because I knew that the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) would likely be alert for anyone wanting to probe into political matters, especially at this time.

I identified one of the people that had worked closely with Joice Mujuru during this part of her campaign, and I had been in contact with him while I was planning my fieldwork. He was one of the people I contacted as soon as I arrived in Zimbabwe. Initially, plans to meet progressed as expected, and we were in contact about scheduling the interview. In the following weeks and months, however, he started ignoring my calls. I learned from the news media that the National People's Party (NPP), Mujuru's political party, had been dissolved. Mujuru became leader of the People's Rainbow Coalition (PRC), an amalgamation of approximately twenty smaller political parties. This was a way of buttressing the small opposition parties as a strong force against the main political parties ZANU-PF and MDC. This meant that, unbeknownst to me, my contact had probably ceased working with Mujuru. I was devastated.

The move from the NPP to the PRC meant that I had to change my interview guides drastically, since initially I had three different questionnaires: one for Mujuru, one for people she had worked with in Zimbabwe People First (ZPF), and another for those she was working with in the NPP. Another reality that I had to face at this point was the fact that these individuals were incredibly busy with campaign activities, and were unlikely to have time for interviews.

Ultimately, I waited until long after the 2018 presidential elections to meet Mujuru. During this period, the nation of Zimbabwe underwent a very violent and economically tumultuous time. The military intervened in politics in 2017 forcing Mugabe out of power. Later on, the currency began to collapse and life in Zimbabwe became difficulty. The population became restive and violence broke soon after the 2018 elections in August 2018

and in January 2019. Shortly after these events, in early 2019, I resumed my talks with Mujuru's personal assistant who continued to ignore my emails and calls. I eventually came across Wellence Mujuru, a relative of Joice Mujuru, whom I discovered on social media and he provided me with another assistant's details. When I told Wellence Mujuru how difficult it was to get through to Mujuru, he sent me her personal phone number. A few weeks later, I was to finally meet Joice Mujuru.

We held this interview in Mujuru's farm in Beatrice, small farming town about fifty-four kilometres outside Harare. We drove there in the company of my husband and his work colleague. The farm was heavily guarded: we were met at the gate by a guard, our identification details and car registration numbers were noted. We encountered several staff, implying that we were expected, and I felt very welcome.

In my study interviews would be useful in getting firsthand accounts of a story whose facts are disputed. Interviews would allow for probing and cross-checking information. My respondents were high profile people and thus the study leaned on literature on elite interviews. Elite interviews are a form of interviews that help access information from those with power and privilege (Natow 2020). A problem identified by Natow (2020) is that in elite interviews researchers must know their field and widen their base of sources and respondents to guard against receiving biased and inaccurate information. An extensive literature review by the researcher and inclusion of other respondents in the sample was useful in making the data collected credible. However, a major problem with elite interviews is that the respondents are hard to access and once accessed usually have little time (Harvey 2011). This meant that time with a respondent was priceless and had to be wisely used – thus in this study interview guides were prepared and interviews thoroughly prepared for in advance.

The interview guide that I used had open ended questions, which are important for elite interviews since they leave the respondent with the opportunity to frame responses in their own way (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002). It is important for interviewers to establish a relationship guided by trust and transparency with their respondents in order for them to be trusted with the finer details of the research (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002) The interview was two and a half hours long. Before conducting this interview with Mujuru I had to be as transparent as possible in order to gain her trust.

Figure 4.1. Joice Mujuru and Sisasenkosi Mataruse on 20 February 2019 at Beatrice Farm

4.5.2 Other Respondents

Stump and Dixit (2012: 133) note that researchers in violent areas struggle to get respondents because of the fragile nature of the political landscape, and suggest that snowball sampling is the ideal method to be used. Snowball sampling is a method whereby the first respondent connects the researcher to others through the provision of names and contact information, especially for hard to reach population samples, which is a typical case for conflict zones (Stump and Dixit, 2012). As I approached my prospective respondents, I noticed that most of them were reluctant to participate because of fear. They were not sure if I was who I said I was as the Security Agents, known as the CIO, are known to be very active during election time (Masunungure 2009).

Stump and Dixit (2012) note that accessing informants may also be determined by the insider-outsider dichotomy, where the researcher has to satisfy the respondents that their status, affinity or identity qualifies them to access the sought information. As a Zimbabwean, I had insider status in understanding the political dynamics and the reasons behind possible fear and mistrust that potential informants had about the research. Initially, I had planned to source the rest of my respondents from ZANU-PF, ZIM-PF and the NPP. However, after Joice Mujuru's move to form the PRC, I could not locate the people that used to work closely with her. Some no longer wanted to be associated with Mujuru following the issues surrounding her ousting, and because of their own political affiliation. I therefore changed my interview guides to be inclusive of other party affiliations in Zimbabwe at that time, including the MDC and LEAD, as well as civil society political activists, academics and independent candidates as shown in the table below. I also had a personal communication regarding the work with the celebrated novelist Tsitsi Dangarembga.

I assured my respondents that I would stay within the boundaries of my informed consent form, which everyone signed, and that those who wanted to remain anonymous would be anonymous. Allen and Wiles (2016) emphasize the need to protect participants' identities at all stages of the research.

Interviews with the rest of my respondents took place at the respondent's place of convenience, particularly in Harare. Most took place in their workplaces, and some were at restaurants within the Harare CBD or the industrial areas. However, constant rescheduling was a significant obstacle and made the interview process time-intensive.

Table 4. 1 List of Respondents

Name of participant	**Occupation/Affiliation**
1. Honourable Joice Mujuru	Former Vice-president of Zimbabwe
2. Tsitsi Dangarembga	Award Winning Writer
3. Eve Nyemba Mazando	Academic
4. Dr. Ushehwedu Kufakurinani	Academic
5. Dr. Felistas Mupereki	Academic
6. Misheck Gondo	Civil Society Activist
7. Anonymous 1	Civil Society Activist
8. Riaro Gunguwo	Independent candidate for Member of Parliament
9. Linda Masarira	President of Labor Economists and African Democrats (LEAD)
10. Clive Chiridza	Independent candidate for Member of Parliament
11. Honourable Anonymous	Member of Parliament

4.6 Thematic Analysis

Since the study involved interviews, interview transcripts and data in various documents, thematic and content analysis are more suitable for this research. Anderson (2007) defines thematic analysis as a research method through which collected data is grouped into themes which arise from the data analysis process as patterns or categories of connected characteristics. In practice, this involves making use of interview transcripts and linked texts and identifying the themes. Based on this understanding of thematic analysis, I used the transcribed interviews to group data according to the recurring themes throughout the texts in order to construct a detailed and congruent flow of events and details.

4.7 Content Analysis

Content analysis is defined as a research method for studying written and pictorial sources of information including communication messages, articles, advertisements and political speeches (Cole, 1988, in Elo and Kyngas, 2008). This is known as primary data. Joice Mujuru's speeches, the death of her husband, her ousting from ZANU-PF, the attack by Grace Mugabe: I had to get information about these events from the media – newspapers, websites and YouTube videos from different media houses. I also used the different books and articles with information about Joice Mujuru. In addition, there are also a number of interviews with Joice Mujuru by the BBC and local news networks, which were all useful in my data analysis.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

The Rhodes University Ethical Clearance Committee for Research on Human Subjects reviewed my research questions and research design. I sought the consent of my participants through informed consent. I notified them that these interviews were for academic purposes, and assured them that their names would only be used if they were willing. For some I had to use pseudonyms, and names used in the study were used with consent.

4.9 Conclusion

I initially approached fieldwork with a high level of excitement, hoping to secure participants without much difficulty as I assumed that everyone would understand the importance of this research and be similarly excited to participate. However, I quickly learnt that many

Zimbabweans are wary of the political system, leading to what I perceived as significant apathy and a limited curiosity of the socio-political dynamics that inform and affect policy making i.e. that determine who gets what, when and how.

The data collection process also revealed that the feminist movement in Zimbabwe has been misunderstood and misinterpreted to the extent that some individuals were hostile towards prospective talks about feminism and women.

This chapter has summarised my data collection experiences, and provides an understanding of how the data was interpreted and analyzed. The following chapters will unpack the analyzed data, the life-history of Joice Mujuru, as well as the conceptions of her life history through the perspectives of the other research participants.

Chapter FIVE

"I shot that helicopter": Maternal Dignity for Self-preservation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the themes that emerged from my interview with Mujuru and other respondents, and provides an overview of content analysis of various media sources. As discussed in the previous chapter, biographical writing provides an opportunity for subjects to own their truth and re-write the narratives that have surrounded their lives, as well as give meaning to their own journeys. Through this chapter, I will discuss the multifaceted details of female political leadership as experienced by a seasoned and long-standing female political leader, as well as how other political actors have perceived her life in Zimbabwean political parties.

The focus on Joice Mujuru draws the work to biographical research as a research tool in describing and explaining Zimbabwean women's experiences and roles in politics. Roberts (2002) notes that biographical research is a field of study that traces the dynamic lifestyles of different individuals, taking into account what they value and how these various outlooks relate to past, present and future trends. Over the years, much has been written and said about Joice Mujuru through various sources. Narratives on the national liberation movements in Africa have, in most cases mentioned women and the position that they played in the attainment of independence and the position that they continue to hold in post-colonial societies, but only a few biographies have been written to provide a deeper understanding of the place women have held. As shown in Chapter Three, most of the narratives and biographies have been about the great male nationalists who fought for national liberation (Asiedu, 2019; Unterhalter, 2000; Zaidi, 2012). This research is therefore an attempt to shed light on the various outlooks and dynamic lifestyles of political women in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

The first theme of this chapter examines Mujuru's role in the struggle for national liberation. Through her own voice, her record of having shot down a Rhodesian helicopter at the start of her journey as a guerrilla which established her continued rise in ZANLA and ZANU-PF, ultimately leading her to becoming the only woman appointed to a ministerial position in an independent Zimbabwe in 1980. The theme also includes reflections on the

varied roles that women played during the war for liberation. It shows the ways in which Mujuru's journey both departs from and converges with the experiences of other women.

The theme on Joice Mujuru and the ZANU-PF Women's League provides a rare articulation of Mujuru's understanding of the politics of maternal dignity that guide the women's league. The theme covering her marriage to Solomon Mujuru and wartime motherhood demonstrates the ways in which her conceptions of cultural womanhood and marriage, which are understood to be private, clearly shaped her own role as a leader and how she perceives women's leadership within ZANU-PF and beyond. The theme that focuses on Mujuru's leadership roles in independent Zimbabwe speaks to her isolation as the only women leader, who felt undereducated to be a minister. Her accounts of targeting vocal men in her political party to champion her preferred policies, such as education, gives some understanding of her public perception as a silent leader who works from the 'background'. As the findings with other participants of this study show, the weakness of her strategy to speak through vocal male leaders has led to a public perception that her leadership record is unclear, and is associated with patronage politics of ZANU-PF.

The discussion on her life after ZANU-PF shows that her character and political record has enabled her to mobilise small parties as a presidential candidate against ZANU-PF. However, Mujuru argues that these political parties were attracted to her as a leader for their own financial gains and perceptions of her as a 'rich widow'. Ultimately, her experience outside of ZANU-PF shows that it is expensive to run political parties, for women and male leaders. Her experience in two different political parties may show why many women opt to stay within well-funded political parties like ZANU-PF, even when they can see that the party's trajectory is undemocratic and corrupt.

The final section of the chapter analyzes interviews held with the rest of the interviewees. These included political activists, academics and members of parliament. The findings examine whether Zimbabwean women in politics stand for the interests of their constituencies, or partisan interests. I examine the perceptions raised by the interviewees on the weaknesses and strengths Mujuru had as a political leader. The Shona idiom, '*musha mukadzi'* – meaning a woman is the home – was echoed by the interviewees. They were of different views noting that this cultural perspective places women in a subordinate position, while simultaneously acknowledging the industriousness and centrality of womanhood to African communities. The findings show that these views of women as the home, are

translated to public perceptions of women's roles in political parties and broader politics. Importantly, these views are in line with Mujuru's own perceptions of her role as a woman and her expectations of women's actions in political parties.

5.2 The Liberation Struggle: "I shot that helicopter"

Mujuru told the story of her life-altering experience of shooting down a helicopter during the war, killing all of its occupants, a claim which has been challenged over the years. This incident, she believes, was ground-breaking as it earned her a reputation of bravery and resilience. Mujuru relates that some men felt that she had challenged them, as many of them had not done anything as significant and as outstanding as this, and thus started spreading rumours that were based on lies due to their jealousy. The story of the helicopter has been challenged by politicians, who have openly stated in the media that Mujuru fabricated the event (Owen Gagare, The Independent 3 October 2014). She revealed during the interview that this opposition was present even during the war, particularly from some male comrades. She said:

> …those that are reporting about Comrade Teurai are males and they are jealous. And a lot of them did very little; they only came to the war for prestige, that's what happened. They never got chances like the chances some of us had of being exposed to the extremes of the liberation struggle.

She says it rained heavily during the night of the morning of 17 February 1974, and that she was part of a team on a mission to educate villagers about the war,

> February 17 1974, we had visited a village within my home area and we were trying to tell them about how they should behave when the whites visit them, because this terrorizing of communities had already started…We had actually gotten the message that they wanted to build concentrated villages so that it would be difficult for freedom fighters to get support, food-wise, clothes-wise, security, even being given information of how the white Rhodesians were operating.

Mujuru explained that she took the helicopter down by chance and not due to any particular expertise. She had not much experience in handling ammunition at this point.

> So again it started raining, good omen for me, because when they were tracking us, they lost the trace… I don't know what came to mind, this wasn't by training – mine was intuition. I don't know, just don't ask me. Even by downing that, it was like, it was him (Mhembwe- one of the freedom fighters and only remembered as Mhembwe) who was now directing me, please don't shoot exactly where this thing, when it's making a U-turn because it was hitting from the left side that time, they were not yet developed to fire from both sides. So, when it was trying to take an angle to come and attack us, just count, if you can see the helicopter is at this level, just count on to two ahead of it or three ahead of it. Continue shooting. There it will meet the bullet. That's

> what happened. It's not because I was too clever or had too much training, no. And I didn't know it was going to make good history for me. Because it's him, Mhembwe, who then sent a message to Zambia, before I got there, that this girl called Teurai please look after her, this is what she has done.

This was a ground-breaking achievement for Mujuru. It was the making and foundation of her political career. The fact that she shot this helicopter without extensive training, earned her respect from the freedom fighters. As soon as she got to the training camps, she was given leadership roles. She also states that she had a very strong character and strong will, which gained her respect from both male and female comrades.

> Because it was military training, and in military training you are expected and supposed to respect your senior, it doesn't matter gender, respect her. If she is your commander and you are a male junior, respect her...That worked a lot to a lot of us who became girl commanders at a unisex camp.

This demonstrates that military training created a sense of equality for commanders through the disciplines associated with the military, ensuring that all commanders were respected equally. Mujuru stated that, except for a few occasions, she felt there was generally not much discrimination against her as a female leader during the war because of her gender. She attributed this to the strict military rules.

Lower-ranking women, however, had a different story to tell when it comes to their experiences with the opposite sex. The realities embedded in the liberation struggle when it comes to the position of women were that initially, ZANLA did not support women's presence in the battlefield; they were relegated to secluded camps where they tended to wounded soldiers as nurses and took care of children. They were only to be integrated into more traditionally masculine roles later on in the war (Mashingaidze, 2003:1). Cases of sexual abuse of women were rampant in these training camps. Some of the other female leaders who were part of the founding executive of the ZANU-PF Women's League were married to male leaders of the party, such as Sally Mugabe and Julia Zvobgo (Mashingaidze, 2003: 3), which provided them with some protection. Mujuru's position as a leader came with privileges of a certain level of respect and exemption from the negative encounters that other women within ZANLA had. The theme of women's varied roles during the war follows next.

5.3 Women's Roles during the War

Mujuru explained that women worked diligently during the war. She stresses that women were not considered weak or incapable, and that they were given tasks that required them to use a lot of physical strength. They were trusted to be discreet as they transported war

weapons as well as important messages. She emphasized that in some instances, women used more physical strength than men. Women eagerly took up these tasks, thus breaking the normative gender constructs that had certain perspectives of what a woman could do. So, at this point, the war enabled women to redefine themselves and reconstruct their identities, due to this new realization of their capabilities and what they can actually achieve.

> One, we were the carriers of material. When I say material, you know we used a lot of anti-personnel mines, used a lot of mines that would actually take big lorries like these ones, and guns. Guns were being carried in boxes of about, call it 10 kgs, same as bullets, same as grenades, same as anti-personnel mines. So that's when I discovered that a woman is a very strong species. A very strong species in the sense that we have tough resistance than men. Yes, a man can be that strong by pulling that, kicking that and so on, but talk of resistance, a woman is more resistant than a man. And women are forthright and quite straight forward when they want to do their thing, they can do it. Yes, not everyone, males they can as well, but you would see if you try and talk about the way how our communities were being ill-treated and how we should commit ourselves so that we can be seen to be part and parcel of the team which is liberating. You could see women would actually feel it. In the eye, you could see a woman saying ok fine, I know it's difficult to do, but I will try my best. Don't forget our background, from a paternal background, to this level, when you are now trying to wash off that mentality where a woman would say, it's better done by males and seeing Comrade Teurai as one of them who is saying no, you can still do it it's just a matter of are you strong enough than that man.

Mujuru here noted that she observed how resistant and resilient women were during the war, and how as custodians of communities and backbones of society, the thought of the suffering that had led to war fuelled women to work hard. Nhongo-Simbanegavi, in her book *For Better or Worse: Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle* (2000), dismisses the belief that there was gender equality in the liberation struggle, arguing that this belief was mainly portrayed in the media during the war as a strategy to showcase the integration of women into ZANLA. Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000) speaks of images of women strapping AK-47 rifles on their backs while dressed in trousers, an image that was interpreted as breaking the norms of exclusion from the war and the policing of women's dressing. These images symbolically challenged entrenched gender equality in the liberation struggle.

However, in as much as women took on unconventional roles during the war and experienced the possibilities of equality, Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000) noted that there was a gross under-representation of women in leadership and decision-making positions. Mashingaidze (2000) recounts that women in command included Sheba Tavarwisa, noting that out of the 33 members of the ZANU central committee in 1979, only two were women.

These views show us that while the war provided emancipatory possibilities for women, it is important to be cautious and adopt complex and multifaceted analytical lenses. While some women advanced in roles they could attain, the majority were structurally afflicted by structural patriarchy.

5.4 "Women needed some bit of panel beating": Maternal Dignity of the ZANU-PF Women's League

When the Women's League was formed in 1979, Mujuru notes that the idea behind the formation of this space was to ensure women were dignified by themselves and by everybody. The ZANU-PF Women's League provided a space for the mentorship of women for post-colonial Zimbabwe. This space, Mujuru believed, was where women were to be free to express themselves, to counterbalance the ways that women were restricted from contributing in the presence of the male colleagues. This is signified by Mujuru comments on the significance of the Women's League and its contribution as a space for women:

> In Xai Xai [a city in Mozambique], we were not yet in government; we were not liberated anyway. What I really wanted was to see a woman dignified, given her dignity by everybody. Yourself giving yourself, your own personal dignity and those surrounding you, not excluding men. And you know the woman's role in a nation is very much pronounced, and we don't understand that we are the pillars of a nation. Without a woman, the nation is doomed.
>
> I wanted women to have that direct contribution, which will not be questionable. Let's not force men to say, don't you know there is a Women's League? Women are directly and mostly affected by any situation, so my thinking was let's prepare ourselves as women to face any eventualities. In fact, the good thing is don't demand. As women of the Women's League, we don't like to cook throughout the week while you as the man do nothing. No, then don't end there, just say to your husband, if I become pregnant with my first child, the next one is yours. And that will be the end of the matter. And you just don't do that only, you just say, you are paying seven herd of cattle to my father. I am also going to pay nine to your father. Because I love you so much as my husband, when you demand that you don't want your lobola paid, that's not right because our culture, which you and I might have chosen otherwise, but, you did not choose to be born in Matabeleland, in that family, it's by nature. It's not your choice, maybe if you had been given a choice you would say I want to be a white girl.

That Mujuru pinpoints women's unique position in the war in the above excerpts speaks to the intersectional oppression of women referred to in the theoretical chapter. Mujuru's explicit recognition of this gives deeper meaning to her significance as a political leader. In

other words, the fact that a women leader who held such high office took seriously the intersectional nature of oppression is important.

When asked about what exactly the role of women within ZANU-PF was, Mujuru emphasized that they needed to be reminded to maintain their dignity as women all the time. This implies that the role of the leader of the Women's League was to monitor other women, keep them in check, and ensure that they were following the party's agendas and championing them.

> Actually, if the dignity was there, if the role to be played was well understood, we wouldn't have continued to talk about it. So, there was a need to continue reminding young mothers, young women that we need to maintain our dignity, because time and again I would see we were missing it.

From the way she explained it, Mujuru made it clear that the Women's League focused on making sure the women within ZANU-PF understood and stuck to the party's agendas, and remained 'dignified'. She gave the impression that women were not supposed to speak back or oppose party agendas, as doing so was considered undignified party behaviour. Undignified party behaviour was being equated to undignified women's behaviour. So this means there was a certain image of a ZANU-PF woman acceptable within the party, from the way she dressed and carried herself, and to the way she responded or reacted to party-related issues – there was a certain image to be maintained for a woman to remain within the party.

The Women's League was also focused on mentoring women as mothers, particularly in a culturally acceptable way so that they could mirror the older women.

> Time and again I would see, women needed some bit of panel beating, which I think is to do with the upbringing of individuals. And that alone is deterring other women who are genuine who want to do the proper thing for young mothers, who are prepared to do the correct thing for the propping up of a nation with women of good standing, it's very difficult.

This interview made me understand that within the Women's League, women's behaviour in both public and private spheres was policed. .

> Don't lose sight of that root makes you who you are. You don't know the English culture, why would you want to go for it? But if I say Ndebele culture you have a lot of family ties. Borrow something that seeks to perfect our culture, borrow and perfect

> our culture but don't lose it. If you see the taproot of this tree drying, this whole tree will dry. So, don't destroy the taproot.
>
> Some women would just want to carry the title 'am married' but the dignity won't be there. Of course I have a ring, I am married. But it's not a ring, it's yourself. How do you carry the name of your husband, your children, how are they going to be identified, how are they going to be viewed? Let them make their own mistakes but people must attest that the mother is very strict. But maybe its peer pressure. Which you can't defend sometimes but, us let's continue to show our children, because this is the future of our country.

The dignified Zimbabwean woman or the ZANU-PF Women's League woman is imbued in a cultural image; she is not overly ambitious in terms of competing with men for leadership. She does not desire to occupy competitive leadership positions, she is dedicated to serving the interests of the men within the party, as the Zimbabwean tradition requires.

> Our culture as black people, you know what I hate is to just uplift that a Western ideology then just dump it here in Zimbabwe. You see, no, you have just been given this, I don't know what fraction you can call this tip of this toothpick, and then you forget and forsake what your parents and forefathers before your parents gave you, and you want this tip of this toothpick over all that knowledge.

This account of the ZANU-PF Women's League and Mujuru's intimate beliefs on the position of women in the society present the strained relationship between culture and notions of women's emancipation in Zimbabwe. There is a strain and conflict as to who and what defines emancipation for Zimbabwean women and what can be considered the abuse of women's rights and inequality. The ZANU-PF Women's League is presented as a space for women's emancipation and empowerment; however the preservation of culture remains a top priority. As much as women in ZANU-PF longed for emancipation, there were reservations as to what can be considered as undermining women's rights. Issues of marriage and the payment of lobola, for instance, stand out as non-negotiable for the preservation of Zimbabwean culture. Forfeiting lobola payment, according to this understanding, can render a woman undignified.

The other aspect that stood out is the position of a woman in her home. Mujuru believed that a woman within the private spaces of her home should not demand equality with her husband because their roles and positions are already determined for them 'naturally'. This is why during my interview with Mujuru she gives the example that a man

can never carry a pregnancy and by virtue of that, women should maintain their cultural position. The interview with Mujuru also shows that there is a level of expectation and acceptance that these assumed biological and private roles should extend to the public discourses of political leadership.

The next theme focuses on her marriage to ZANU-PF 'Big Man', Solomon Mujuru, and wartime motherhood. The theme shows that, despite Joice Mujuru having served as ZANLA commander and her seniority to her husband in her public roles as a minister in independent Zimbabwe, their private roles as husband and wife have consistently shaped how Mujuru is perceived within ZANU-PF. For one, the theme speaks to perceptions that Solomon Mujuru supported Joice Mujuru for ZANU-PF vice-presidency in order to extend *his* power in the party.

5.5 Marriage to Solomon Mujuru and Wartime Motherhood

Joice Mujuru married her husband in 1977, towards the end of the liberation war in Mozambique. Their marriage was to be formalized constitutionally as soon as they returned from the war in 1979. Solomon Mujuru was himself a commander during the war (Tendi, 2016). He was known by the *nom de guerre* Rex Nhongo during the struggle and became commander of the Zimbabwean Defense Force after the war until he retired in 1994 (Britannica, 2020).

> I met the father of my children during the war. He was a commander and I got with him because he was single and so was I. And so, I thought, I had better get hooked with somebody so that the other men would not put pressure on me. (Lyons, 2004: 338)

Mujuru continued to tell Lyons that:

> When I met my husband, he was already a commander in ZANLA. But it wasn't the first meeting that we fell in love. It was after 1977. That is when we got married. It was close to four years later. We were married in the party. Yes, he paid full *lobola* (bride price) when we came back to Zimbabwe and we had two daughters already. Then we had Chapter 37, the Constitutional marriage (Lyons, 2004: 338).

In our interview, she emphasized that she already had a leadership position in the liberation training camps, which she had attained on her own when she met him.

> Let me be clear, when I married Solomon, I was already a member of the general staff. Mind you, I had a junior post. I married Solomon Mujuru through love. Not through his position, with other situations it might look like it.

Mujuru noted that she got the support she needed from her husband and that, for the majority of her political career within ZANU-PF, she had positions that were superior to the position that her husband held in government.

> I got the support I wanted from Solomon. Mind you I was senior to him. He came into the politburo after me. When he was in the army and I was minister, I was senior because ministers are senior to the army personnel. It ended there. When it comes to Mr and Mrs Mujuru, I played my role as a wife. I never stopped carrying a bucket on my head and cooking. Playing my role as a wife the way I was taught how, traditionally. I believe this made him support, even without me asking him to.

Speculations that surround their marriage include assumptions and suspicions that Solomon Mujuru was the brain behind Joice Mujuru's brand and leadership. Tendi (2016) argues that General Solomon Mujuru controlled a rival faction in ZANU-PF, but there is no evidence suggesting that he wanted to use that clout for his own political enhancement to the position of president or to control ZANU-PF. Tendi hypothesizes that one reason why he never considered himself fit for presidency included the fact that he considered himself undereducated. It is said that he chose to mentor more qualified and younger individuals to aspire to the ZANU-PF leadership and for this reason, Tendi believes that General Mujuru decided to promote and support his wife Joice Mujuru for the presidency. BBC News (2011) argued that Solomon Mujuru did not personally aspire to be president, but was very influential in shaping power politics within ZANU-PF.

Mujuru negotiated motherhood, childbearing and her liberation war duties at the height of the war. She gave birth to her first daughter during the raid of Camp Chimoio in Mozambique (Encyclopaedia.com, 2019).

> I am a mother of four girls. Kumbirai Rungano, Chipo Kudzai Millicent, Nyasha Nyorovai Noreen, Kuzivakwashe LeAnne. Those are the four girls. Kumbirai Rungano is my first, Chipo Kudzai Millicent is my second, Nyasha Noreen Nyorovai is my third, Kuzivakwashe LeAnne is my fourth. Those are the four girls.
>
> I had two of my girls out there. When I was pregnant with my first girl, I broke my waters in battle. And during that day we lost a lot of comrades. I still remember, Saviour (Name of a combatant. Full name not given in interview) and others died that day and it was the 30th or the 31st of July, the 1st of August we lost them because those were the days when a base camp called Mudzingadze was attacked and that's when I broke my waters and I had my first girl, called Rungano. And, you know, like what I've said, war is not just something that you can just piss around or play around and so forth, but those are the causes of the war. And during that time, you know, after giving birth to my daughter, I only had my daughter for 3 weeks because of my responsibilities, and we had other wives of other commanders who were not in the

> battlefield or who were in Zambia. My daughter was then taken by her aunty, Mrs Tongogara, to look after her, so I was free now to remain behind and continue with my responsibility. (Interview with Violet Gonda, 10 October 2016)

The war redefined motherhood and required certain sacrifices of mothering duties. Mujuru found herself in that position where, even heavily pregnant, she could not leave the battle front. As soon as the baby was born, she had to send her away. Mothering, even during the war, was indeed a community effort. Mujuru noted that she brought her children up in a gender-blind way; her daughters were taught to do all household chores, even those traditionally expected to be for males.

> As a girl, as a mother don't you want to nurture your children, nurture them the same, boy, girl, nurture them the same. If it's cleaning plates, scrubbing the floor, if it's making the bed, if there are turns to be given, give them turns, why not. Give them turns, unfortunately I didn't have a male boy or a son, but I am saying let's give them turns.

Mujuru's experience of marriage and motherhood is consistent with the experience of other Zimbabwean women liberation fighters as well as those from other countries, like South Africa. Women across Africa utilized their position as mothers, carers, nurtures and providers in diverse ways for the attainment of independence, providing food and shelter for the guerrilla fighter and transporting weapons, among other things. There is a need for literature on liberation movements to continue to recognize the salient roles women played as the backbone and support system of the war. Magadla (2015: 391) detailed varied ways through which African women participated in the liberation struggles, focusing particularly on South Africa. She noted that factors like age determined whether one could leave the country for training, stating that the women who could not leave encountered and fought the war from their different angles as guerrilla girls, combative mothers and those that fell in between. Makana (2017) utilizes the trope of patriotic motherhood to explicate how women in the Angolan war of liberation used their reproductive roles as mothers to support the liberation struggle, giving their sons to the struggle as well as dealing with the pain of losing their children in the war. Joice Mujuru defended her autonomy while she was married to the powerful General Solomon Mujuru, indicating the extraordinary circumstances under which gender roles and motherhood were performed, enhanced and confined for women liberation fighters, in political parties and their personal lives.

5.6 State Leadership Appointments: 1980-2014

5.6.1 "I went to school, with young boys and girls… reading for their form four"

Mujuru was appointed as a cabinet minister at the age of 25. Her highest qualification was a Zimbabwe Junior Certificate (ZJC) she had obtained before joining the war, equivalent to Form Two (approximately equivalent to Grade 9 in South Africa). According to Mujuru, this certificate used to be considered a high qualification for employment, but she noted that the year she joined the war, this had changed with the introduction of the Ordinary Level certificate. The standards of education had risen during the course of the war, to the extent that, upon her appointment, her initial response was that she was under-educated for this position. Before interviewing Joice Mujuru, my perception was that she had wanted to be part of the first democratically elected cabinet in 1980, but could have, understandably, been nervous. Some argue that Mujuru was the ideal candidate for post-colonial leadership because of her strong foundation in the liberation struggle. Most of the prominent women who were potential candidates for leadership were connected to powerful men within ZANU; Mujuru stood out as one with a self-achieved image and status, despite also being married to a powerful man in ZANU. She was the only female cabinet Minister at the age of 25, which compounded her fears about the responsibility.

> I wasn't happy, I wasn't prepared to be a minister. I did not understand what it meant to me, to my life, what was expected of me. I took about 3, almost 3 months, without going to the office, refusing to go to the office until President Mugabe – that time, Prime Minister Mugabe – called me, and said ok, you shock me. When I came to Mozambique with Edgar Tekere, it was you Teurai who received us, it was you Teurai who gave us how to go about things, why is it that you are now afraid of doing things that don't even involve death? That don't even involve a bullet, you are just there to go and do your job, what is your problem?

She went on to reveal that one of her challenges was her lack of adequate education, she did not compare to the men, many of whom had acquired degrees abroad during the war:

> I said my problem is language, the little I had learnt up to Form Two had since vanished. Because I had no other means of keeping that within me and so on. As I was occupied with other things, you have to go back to school, call Calverwell, call Dzingai Mutumbuka. He was now asking his secretary so they came, they said please organize books for this lady, I want her to read. By the end of the year she must be something else in terms of educational understanding of what she is supposed to do. So if you go through the clips of Joice Teurai Ropa Nhongo, those years my English language was terrible, terrible, and very little would come out of my mouth, but after a few years and people didn't know what was happening behind the curtains, I wasn't

> sleeping. I was learning and learning. And I went to school, with young boys and girls, those that were really reading for their Form Four, I sat with them, as a minister. They were laughing but I made friends with those little ones, they were now teaching me a lot of things that I didn't quite understand and it pushed me.

Eventually, Mujuru accepted her new position and set out to work on furthering her education. Mujuru gathered her courage and joined youngsters who were reading for their Ordinary Level certificate while at the foundational stages of her career as a Minister. She would go on to obtain her Advanced Level certificate, as well as a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Management and Entrepreneurial Studies from the Women's University in Africa (WUA). She went on to study towards a PhD from the University of Zimbabwe, Faculty of Arts Department of Philosophy (Pindula, 2020).

5.6.2 Strategies and Achievement in Government: "I was my own role model"

Mujuru noted that she struggled with her prestigious position, because she had no one to look up to in terms of female leadership. This is directly after the war, black women were not even allowed to get decent work before, and women's leadership was a topic largely lost within the euphoria of independence. She had no idea what was expected of her. At this point she needed to construct a new identity of who she was and who she was about to become. She realized that she also lacked an image of what she was becoming from within her own people. In this regard, she had to set a standard for women politicians in Zimbabwe by defining what political leadership meant for a Zimbabwean woman.

> You know I had no role model, nobody to learn from. I was my own role model. A role model in the sense of women role models.

For her to remain in her positions that she occupied in politics for so long, Joice Mujuru recounted how she had to be cautious about how she carried herself because powerful women are perceived as a threat to powerful men:

> If you are also a strong-willed person character-wise, some of us we tend to lose it that way because men fear strong-willed women. This is an honest fact...Men are afraid, so their fear eventually puts women in the situation that I ended up in. Mugabe feared me, yes, he feared me because men want women who are shy, who are not confident. When you are being shy it's confusing whether you are trying to get a man to ask you out or what. So, when you are confident, it sets the record straight, the men can see that you are here for work as a woman.

When it came to the issue of speaking, contributing and agency, Mujuru's reflections depicted that this was not easy at all during her reign in ZANU-PF. She noted that it was very difficult to infiltrate decisions of security if one did not belong to that particular wing in government.

> Yes, with isolated situations, you can be out-spoken of a situation; I can give you a good example. I became outspoken in 2008 when people were killed in Chiweshe right? Yes, and I became outspoken, when we were, when people were being ill-treated during Operation Murambatsvina. And people would say, but you were in cabinet when Gukurahundi took place, what did you say? You would want to understand, but because I was never close to security, secrets and briefs, those decisions are done elsewhere. When a report is being brought by a Minister of Defence, he will not bring all those nitty-gritties.

Mujuru explained how difficult it was for her as a woman to make substantive contributions in government during her political career. She noted that women had to implore particular tactics for their voices to be heard. This included befriending vocal men within the party; she stated that the late Edson Zvogbo was an acquaintance of hers, and was very instrumental in championing particular women's issues.

> Some tactics that I used to employ was to look for good vocal men, even the president himself. I could go and mobilize him, and then those days we used to have the likes of Zvobgo. I liked Zvobgo because he did quite a lot. All the legal issues that we are proud of now were done during Zvobgo's tenure when he was Minister of Justice. So, we could identify males who were eloquent with their language to then come to our support. And some of them had actually learnt some of these things from the First World, others had gone to school in America, England where some of these things were taking place.
>
> Right through my political career, I was fortunate enough that at each stage, I used to develop male friends, who would understand who I was, my strength as a human being character-wise, because I don't tolerate nonsense. I don't like that, I am very patient, and once I study that this situation does not need my voice, I keep quiet, to the extent that you can all be boiling but I will just say I don't want to waste my energy, I just retreat.

When it comes to the Zimbabwean economy, Mujuru claims she did voice some recommendations, but these fell on deaf ears.

> We used to tell him industries must be modernized, President Mugabe. They must be modernized because you said education must be developed, it has now developed but it's not matching with the industry. You know we are an agricultural-based economy, strengthen your agriculture, after doing so the few that are knowledgeable about mining, strengthen it as well but value-add. So that those that don't want to farm can go to the industries and so forth. We never understood each other.

She noted that at times, it became tiresome and lonesome to pursue particular issues. She was clearly careful as she bargained and negotiated, but she had boundaries – most likely in order for her to maintain her position.

> Some of these things, when you want to chase them you become a lone voice. That's why I went back to school. In order to understand and convince myself that it's very costly for me to be angry.

Speaking of the achievements she made throughout her time in different offices, Mujuru noted that:

> And when I was Minister of Sports then 1981, that's when I was appointed Minister of Women, Community Development and Women Affairs. So, we were actually asked to develop our own departments that were to be under that new ministry. So, the thing that I fought to have was education. Adult education, and it gave me more opportunity and confidence to then attend adult education lessons in the evening. So when we are talking about over 90 percent of literacy in Zimbabwe, it came from these two little hands, you see, it came from these two little hands, because you see, we took all ages across. We could take poor children who couldn't afford fees, young mothers, old women, old men, through adult education classes. So, I also took a chance and that strengthened my spirit of going back to school.

As the Minister of Women and Community Development in the year 1981, Mujuru notes that her first achievement was to introduce adult education, a need that she saw as crucial, particularly because education had been disrupted by the war for many Zimbabweans. She was able to use her own situation as a woman who needed to further her education to create an education system that could cater to other Zimbabweans who desired to further their education. In the above discussion, Mujuru claims to have been a no-nonsense kind of leader who was feared by former President Robert Mugabe. These claims, however, sit in tension with her claims that she had no voice within the ZANU-PF. Chapter Six will analyze the tensions of Mujuru's perceptions of her own leadership and how others understand her leadership record.

5.7 Expulsion from ZANU-PF: "They used other women to fight another woman"

Mujuru stated that women were instrumental to her ousting and that this was the trend with Zimbabwean women in politics – the failure to stand by each other. The Women's League

that she had built and worked hard within was the key driving force behind her ousting, led by the former First Lady Grace Mugabe. Mujuru urged women to support each other.

> Let's start with respecting each other as women, before we accuse the guys. As women, are we capable of supporting each other, are we capable of minding the community's demands? That is where our problem is because we are not there, we are thinking of petty things.

Mujuru also noted that, in her experience, women always want to embarrass each other instead of building each other up.

> As *Amai* [Mother] Mujuru, if I were to wear a nice outfit and my undergarment accidentally sticks out, even the female journalists will say, she was busy addressing us with her petticoat hanging down. But what has that to do with all the big work, and it might even be you saying that about me, but why didn't you call me aside and say Mum, come here, fix yourself, women don't do that. I am saying you are the young ones, this is excellent, don't end here, this country is hungry about country minders.

Referring to the rest of the people who were behind her ousting from ZANU-PF, Mujuru had this to say:

> I can only say these were evil spirits, people who were envious, were jealous, all those that are there now, they are all junior, they all did virtually not half of what I did as a woman. As a girl child, which I am not pompous about, I am proud that I did this for you and for him as my children.

She revealed that her male opponents within the party feared her rise and were repulsed by the idea of having a female take over from the then President Robert Mugabe.

> And the language that then came back to me was, how we can have a woman to be a head of state in this Zimbabwe.

Referring to the accusations levelled against her about witchcraft she said:

> Because what was said about me was never the truth anyway, just gossip. And they said it yes, in this compound, in their names, so if I did that and you are still alive, what is your problem? Do you want to tell me that with the level that I am at I can keep a clay pot with that water, insect, what for? I am born an Apostolic faith person, this is in my blood, I have never, and gone with a hoe to dig roots. People from church even laughed at all of this mess. We do not believe in these modern prophetic churches, we believe in the old deep prophets who would tell us write this down, it will come to pass. If you can accuse me for believing that African way of praying where you are told to fast and pray, and eventually God answers through dreams.

Mujuru's expulsion from ZANU-PF was affected by different factors, and the different actors who contributed towards her ousting had different motives. She argues that the men in ZANU-PF supported her ousting as they could not stomach the idea of a female head of state. On the other hand, it is believed that Grace Mugabe was also attempting to

pave the way for her own political ambitions. In the interview with Mujuru, she did not speak of Grace Mugabe's specific role in her ousting.

5.8 Politics after ZANU-PF: "They were told about billions."

Shortly after she was ousted from ZANU-PF in 2014, Mujuru announced that she would be running in the next presidential election with her own political party. In the interview, she cited the various factors that she believes contributed to the failure of her political ventures. Mujuru believes that some joined her political party because they believed that she was a rich widow, since her husband had been said to have been involved in a lot of illegal diamond mining which resulted in him leaving behind a large inheritance.

> Yes, I told them if Mujuru had billions of dollars, I am yet to see them, which is very true, I am yet to see them. Ones that I know of, that's why even the executor of my husband's estate is even embarrassed to bring out what Mujuru is worth because they were told about billions, come to think of it there is no million to talk about, it's all debts.

The challenges that she faced when she ran for president included a lack of adequate funding, to the disappointment of some of her new party members. Unfortunately, she also ran at a time when the Zimbabwean economy and labor market were struggling, and many people were unemployed, therefore she believes that some people joined her campaign hoping to find employment and obtain money from her.

> The problem that we still have is that us as women, economically we are not sound (are dependent). Politics is very expensive; it's not a simple thing to be in politics. Like what I said you will meet crooks, those who are gold digging, so if you don't have an economic stronghold, then forget about it.

She also stressed that the men were not doing much during her campaigns after ZANU-PF and were not contributing financially.

> It was political chauvinism, that's the one, the men were doing zero, they never mobilized, they didn't fund rallies, and they even wanted money from me. I'm sure the other thing which they wanted was, when *Mai* Mugabe was, you know, talking about the rich widow *Mai* Mujuru who has lots of diamonds left by her husband, she is a billionaire's widow. They thought that women can't do without men.

She noted that at some point she felt confident in her party, and it was beginning to threaten the country's major political parties.

> So they didn't find that money, now the party had started showing its strengths, even against ZANU-PF. We have days when we threatened ZANU-PF and MDC because

> people would see that we were not a party about gossiping and fighting. In our party [the National Peoples Party] when Jealous and Ndoro fought, Jealous left as he saw that he had no space and no match. It's a party that wanted to show that ZANU-PF had derailed.

Mujuru noted that after she realized the weaknesses in her first party, she had to move away and form a second party in which she hoped to have more loyal individuals:

> I left the party then we formed NPP, but because it was closer to elections and most resources were spent building ZIMPF, the resources were coming from my personal funds, I then had learned that keeping on using my personal funds was not a good idea, running politics requires other types of funding. When you sell a tomato you go to a rally that won't work.

However, the National People's Party was not able to garner enough support or gather enough strength as a party and, when she was offered the leadership of a coalition of all the smaller parties that were running, she accepted the offer. This move by approximately twenty independent political parties indicated that people believed in Joice Mujuru, perhaps even more than she believed in herself. However, she lamented that the smaller parties also came into this agreement with no campaign funds, and all expected to benefit from her party's resources, although she had already exhausted the funding that she had initially set aside for campaigning in her first two political ventures. The formation of the PRC also distorted her initial party agenda.

> The People's Rainbow Coalition, PRC was never a party. PRC was a joint front for the elections because of these other smaller political parties, the biggest mistake was that we didn't know, they wanted to feed on NPP. Those other smaller parties had nothing, no money, no adequate personnel, no adequate set mind, nothing. That cost us a lot, so the bottom line is, I don't want to use a crude word. I think I worked with crooks who came thinking they had come to get money, they would squander campaign money. Others came in search of work, some came for prestige, people came with different ambitions and purposes in their minds which was never my idea, and my idea was to remind ZANU-PF, Mugabe and team, that you are wrong. I was given an opportunity to even tell them, this bond note will hurt. So people may be misunderstood me, people just laughed at it, and said *Amai* Mujuru is busy politicking, I laughed. Nobody from the business community or anywhere contributed a penny to the lawyers that were defending me, as I am telling you, I am still working to make sure that the balance I still hold with Prof [Lovemore] Madhuku I should pay.

When she ran for president as an independent political leader, it was Mujuru's first time experiencing politics without the protection of ZANU-PF. She started to experience what it

was like being an enemy of ZANU-PF, being dragged to court days on end. This experience showed how vulnerable women can be outside of the protection of a strong political stronghold. This was likely because her solo political journey had not been a carefully planned one; she had probably initially expected that her election to presidency would come while she was within ZANU-PF. This experience made her realize the funding challenges that other aspiring women politicians faced, while in ZANU-PF all her endeavours were well funded.

5.9 Interviews from the Rest of the Respondents

5.9.1 Zimbabwean Women and Political Parties: Gendered, and Partisan interests?

After speaking to Joice Mujuru, it was imperative for this research to interview diverse participants to consider their understanding of female political leadership in post-colonial Zimbabwe, using their reflections of Mujuru's political journey. I asked how they regarded Joice Mujuru's role as the first female vice-president of Zimbabwe and how they had understood her positions throughout her political career. The questions also included what kind of qualities they identified in Mujuru as a political leader and how the media portrayed her. These questions were relevant in understanding how fellow politicians, academics and political activists understood female political leadership.

The discussion on the role of women in Zimbabwean politics was met with different views. Overall, participants expressed that women have a place in politics. Eve Nyemba an academic at the University of Zimbabwe believed that women in politics would articulate women's interests and needs better:

> So within Zimbabwean politics and even globally, one of women's roles is to represent the interests of that class because women understand better women issues. So you would think if you bring in women in the political space, there is better representation, this is at least in theory.

Dr Ushehwedu Kufakurinani an economic historian at the University of Zimbabwe noted that women in political parties immerse themselves in supporting the party agendas and rallying behind the founders of political parties, instead of actively using their position to be influential in a life-changing way for the rest of Zimbabwean women.

> I suspect though even without concrete evidence that the very women who are in those spaces are under pressures to champion partisan as opposed to gendered interests. So you are there as a woman but you stand there as ZANU-PF or as MDC. And it suffocates or sidelines the womanness or womanhood in you. This is why women in MDC and ZANU-PF don't co-exist as sisters, because what is being elevated or emphasized is partisanship as opposed to one's gender. In the Zimbabwean context, this is buttressed by polarization; you have to be MDC or ZANU-PF, and you have to go out of your way to demonstrate your ZANU- or MDC-ness. So at the end of the day if you are lukewarm and what you put forward is your being a woman followed by your partisanship, your loyalty is questioned because of that polarization and also because of those intra-conflicts, intraparty politics put certain pressures on these women to exude a certain way of doing things.

The respondents asserted that in the Zimbabwean political sphere, women struggle to stand for themselves as women. Belonging to a political party means that they should champion the agendas of that party, whatever those may be. In Mujuru's case, ZANU-PF believed in women's need to remain dignified and this entailed curbing their ability to speak out. These views by the respondents resonated with Mujuru's experiences from her own interview. The views from the respondents and Mujuru speak to the primacy of political party agendas beyond broader potentially unifying issues, such as so called 'women's issues'. Thus, while there is a public expectation for women to rise above party agendas to advance women's liberation, political party structures do not facilitate such mobilization beyond political party interests.

5.9.2 Gender Equality vs Political Cosmetology and Media Representation

Referring to Joice Mujuru's political journey, respondents seemed to believe that some women who are in politics were or are placed there to fulfil the gender equality requirements. However, because of the ineffectiveness and silence of women in Zimbabwean politics, respondents believed that women are mere 'place holders' and that political appointments of women are simply cosmetics, a cover up of the weaknesses within the political system. Speaking of Mujuru, a participant said:

> I think her role was basically cosmetic, I don't think she achieved much in terms of promoting women empowerment and gender equality. The role was there as the vice-president but in terms of what she actually achieved I am actually struggling to think of really what she achieved in terms of gender parity, it was just a position to appease women. Since you remember during the 1980s, we had the women action group which was advocating for gender equality in terms of political representation. So her

> role was basically cosmetic. It was just males who wanted to be seen as implementing gender sensitive policy since it was just after the Beijing Platform of action, there was a lot of noise about women's representation, so I think it was basically cosmetic.

The appointment of Joice Mujuru as vice-president, respondents also perceived it as a political tool for garnering support from women. Olonisakin, Hendricks and Okech (2015: 377) identify civil society organisations, especially women's organisations, as being central "in advocating for gender equality in the post-Cold War period. Typically, these organisations actively engage policy practitioners to promote gender-sensitive policies or their application where such policies are in existence". Zimbabwean women's organisations among those that have agitated for the increase in women's leadership at the highest levels of the state. This mobilizing for women's representation has been more pronounced in the post-Cold War era. As argued in Chapter Two of this thesis, the continuing debate about women's leadership is whether or not it has been translated to meaningful power of women within political parties and in state institutions.

Anderson, Diabah and hMensa (2011) note that there are biases in the way female politicians are portrayed in the media in the form of the very little media coverage they receive. The media in some cases presents female politicians in unfavourable ways thus raising questions about their viability. Anderson *et al* (2011) also argue that when the media refers female political leaders as mothers, daughters or sex objects, this imagery disparages women and is not compatible with political leadership. When asked about how the media portrayed Joice Mujuru, Dr. Felistas Zimano a political science lecturer at the Midlands State University noted that the narratives changed from when she was vice-president compared to when she was ousted, arguing that the media was more

> During her time as the VP she was treated very fairly. She was presented with the necessary dignity consistent with her level. The problems only came after the campaign to pull her down. That is when the smear and body shaming campaign came. However, I would not say this was purely done on her because of her gender as we have seen the same modus operandi being used for males.

Eve Nyemba had this to say about Mujuru's treatment by the media

> They have not been portrayed as women who can stand on their two feet and actually compete in politics. So I think that media has, not just with Joice Mujuru, but with almost every woman who has wanted to vie for a political position, it's almost like the effort has to be doubled than that of men, men have been given coverage, now we actually struggle to remember when Joice Mujuru was actually given the decent same coverage that her male counterparts were given. And also, I think what could have affected Joice as well would be her position as the wife of Solomon Mujuru. Yes, but that also then relegates a woman to a peripheral position, maybe she didn't want to

> see herself as competing against her husband's position. Her husband was known as the king maker, so maybe she didn't want to look more competitive than the husband and as a result that might also have contributed to her late coming in the political arena…But the fact that she was also corrupt has not done her justice. Many women did not want to be associated with her because of her corruption. The association with the Mugabe regime also, a regime that failed a regime that was brutal, that violated the rights of women and looking up to such a woman who basically others uphold in terms of his style of leadership. People also say that she was present when these human rights violations were being done, being perpetrated against the opposition, and now she wants the sympathy of the public and there was no sympathy to be found. I think maybe that was also her mistake that she also did not speak out when Gukurahundi was being done as a woman, as woman are naturally care givers, peaceful. She didn't rise to the occasion when she was needed the most. She could have objected to it, maybe she could have had some political standing in terms of gaining support.

The case of the representation of Zimbabwean women politicians in the state media shows that what a country's media outlets broadcast normally represent the current gender equality trends in the government and state institutions. The respondents showed that women political representation and participation is still used as a 'cosmetology' tool to give the international community and the citizens a picture that Zimbabwe is democratic through the inclusion and acceptance of women leadership. Furthermore the weaponisation of the media against women in politics comes across as a political strategy to weaken promising women leaders when the need arises. In Mujuru's case the media was used to entrench and legitimise her leadership when she was in favour of the ruling political elites and the same media began broadcasting and publishing contrary information in a name smearing campaign against Mujuru.

5.9.3 Joice Mujuru's Weaknesses in Political Leadership

Dr. Ushehwedu Kufakurinani believed that Mujuru had much to learn from Mugabe, which she could have used to her advantage, arguing that Mujuru was submissive to the point of failing to take action, particularly when she felt that things were going wrong within ZANU-PF. In as much as Mnangagwa's coup could be considered an illegitimate claim to the presidency, Kufakurinani argued that this is exactly what Robert Mugabe had taught his loyal colleagues: his power could only be taken that way and not given. In this regard Mujuru is considered to have been soft and lacking in ambition, she always waited for opportunities to be handed to her.

> Her inability to learn from her mentor: she always said that Mugabe was a father figure, but she failed to learn from her mentor. She could have done something even if the mentor was unwilling. We can actually see with Mnangagwa that even if the mentor was unwilling, Mnangagwa was able to rise to the occasion. So I think that she was not ambitious. She was comfortable, she did not see herself being replaced as the vice-president. She automatically thought that she was being groomed for succession and she became comfortable, yes that comfort zone that she got into is very dangerous for any woman in politics. Maybe she should have had the character of Grace Mugabe minus, uuhmm, the toxic nature of Grace Mugabe's character. I think in Zimbabwe we just need women who are aggressive, women like Thokozani Khuphe, and you know aggressive women who are thick-skinned, women like Jestina Mukoko.

Rairo Gunguwo a female independent political candidate in the 2018 election felt that Mujuru should have spoken and resonated more with rural women as they are the larger demography that actually votes.

> And also in terms of her campaign she also did not go to the grassroots, to the rural areas to campaign, most of her campaigns were in the urban areas, and she also thought that since she was former vice-president, she would garner support, otherwise she could have ridden on the pity that women actually had for her after she was ousted from the political party by Grace Mugabe, she could have ridden on the sympathy, she failed to capitalize or to manipulate or to take advantage if the situation.

Some thought that she had been overly silent during her political reign and that she seldom commented or even spoke in a way that engaged civilians; it was as if she was a shadow of her political colleagues.

> I think she could have spoken more. So her silence was a strength as well as a weakness. She needed a Twitter handle or Facebook account where she was supposed to run the show from, then she could have done more to also clean her name, she was associated so much with corruption, so I don't know if it's the corruption that should end or it's even said to belong to her, people thought that that *Mai* Mujuru had a stake there.

Eve Nyemba had this to say about Mujuru's political leadership:

> I think as a leader I didn't see her being very visible, I didn't see her being her own person as a leader. I can talk about Grace Mugabe, her personality was quite visible. Mujuru was more like in the background, there isn't really much except that she was motherly, she had this motherly personality about her, this welcoming, but she was also, I'm not saying that I don't like her, but she was also said to be the most corrupt woman in Zimbabwe, so I didn't see much about her character, I didn't see much. I only saw her personality when she formed her political party. That's when I saw her political character, and basically I did not see a very strong political player there, and maybe the president didn't groom her or did not have ideas of grooming her…I liked the fact that she formed her own political party, it showed a lot of stamina and it showed that she can be her own person, but I think it was a little too late and also

> because the environment in Zimbabwe doesn't support generally women who are vying for political power. I think that was one of the biggest challenges she was facing, and I think that she needs to be more aggressive as a politician if she is to make it in politics, otherwise she will just have to remain or to be relegated to the periphery, which has already happened. I think Thokozani Khuphe has been faring better because she is actually an aggressive character.

These respondent perceptions of Mujuru's character and leadership differ from her views of herself as a 'no-nonsense' person who stood for what was right. Her own admission that her strategy within ZANU-PF was to persuade vocal male colleagues to speak up and take the right actions, meaning that the public sees her as a silent leader, whose principled views are unclear. Her perceived silence also means that her character and leadership has been connected to the downfall of ZANU-PF and its corrupt patronage politics.

5.9.4 Culture and the Societal Position of Women: *Musha mukadzi* ('A woman is the home')

Views that a woman is the centre of family and the home was expressed strongly by the interviewees. Respondents felt that this administrative role that women play within the home, translated into politics, is crucial. Eve Nyemba noted that:

> In our *Shona* culture it is said that *musha mukadzi,* meaning that a woman is the home, meaning that the woman has naturally nurturing qualities, meaning that women have more development-oriented qualities and our economy will recover because women bear the brunt of poverty in what is called by the UN, the feminization of poverty. *Musha mukadzi,* thus women have got a very critical role to play in peace-building because women are naturally peaceful because even at a global level, UN Resolution 1325 actually recognizes the role of women in peace-building and in promoting international peace and security.

Rairo Gunguwo stated that during her campaign and interaction with the people from her constituency, she felt that they approached her with issues that needed a motherly perception, therefore she felt that motherly gentleness is vital for women political leaders to display and make use of.

> I thought like a mother instead, you know mothers are the ultimate leader no matter what people say, there is no home that can stand without a mother, that's impossible. I think I felt I was a mother because people found me approachable with their issues, they came to me with concerns and I would end up referring them to the correct people. I was there offering guidance; I was a light to them.

Musha Mukadzi shows that, for women in politics, their presence is expected to change the socio-economic conditions of a country the same way women create and nurture the home. This has opportunities for as well as limitations to women political leadership. For Mujuru, I believe that she was able to package and present herself as the kind of woman who was able to represent women in a culturally sound manner. However, the limitations came when she purported to present herself as a woman who could champion her own rights and citizenship. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter has provided details about Joice Mujuru that shaped her political narrative. Mujuru's political journey reveals a woman with conflicting identities, struggling between being an effective political leader and being a good African dignified woman. Most of her statements portray that her African values of maternal dignity were her top priority before effective political leadership. The findings show that, despite her clear record as a former guerrilla leader, Mujuru believes that there are different roles in private and public life for women and men in politics. While she claims that she was senior to her husband, Solomon Mujuru, in political office, her articulation of the role of women in ZANU-PF provides an understanding of how she views women's role within the party as that of maintaining dignity. Her articulated strategy of convincing male leaders to champion certain policy positions has meant that she is perceived as a woman leader who defers to male leaders instead of speaking in her own voice.

The findings from other respondents show the tensions with Mujuru's version of dignity defined as maternal leadership. In spite of her record in the armed struggle and numerous ministerial positions, her leadership role is seen as cosmetic instead of substantive. The next chapter examines what the themes that have defined Mujuru's political leadership mean for women's participation in political parties and beyond.

Chapter SIX

Musha Mukadzi: The Limitations of Maternal Dignity

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the themes developed in Chapter Five. Mujuru's political journey provides an opportunity to discuss the fluidity of women's veteran status and privilege in politics, cultural womanhood, motherhood and political leadership, the ZANU-PF Women's League, voice and agency in political leadership and maternal dignity and its limitations. The findings show that Joice Mujuru's liberation war history set the tone for her continued breaking of boundaries in independent Zimbabwe, from being the only woman in the first ZANU-PF cabinet to eventually being appointed Vice-President of the country. Her liberation struggle history contributed to her ability to build an established political career, breaking patriarchal stereotypes against women. The first section of this chapter will discuss the relationship between Mujuru's strong political background and her ousting from political office. Narratives surrounding Mujuru's political career for over thirty years portrayed a woman of integrity, who as a young woman who bravely shot down a plane and successively championed leadership positions throughout the war, dedicating her youth to the independence of Zimbabwe alongside other heroes of the liberation. The section will show that veteran status, especially as a woman, does not protect one from being slandered and even stripped of it in post-independent party-political life. Even when women participate as combatants in the battle for national liberation, their historical contributions can still be questioned when they seek to challenge post-colonial order and face attacks from their own comrades about their past contributions which aim to undermine their contemporary ambitions to transform an undemocratic political order.

Secondly, Mujuru's case presents a woman who came into the war with her own courage, accomplishments and determination. Yet, for the duration of Joice Mujuru's political career, her marriage to Solomon Mujuru was a point of interest, even after his death. I reflect on what women's continued connection with their spouse's means for women's leadership, and demonstrate that single women are trivialised as political contenders, while married women are bestowed mother status that can be withdrawn when they are seen to challenge patriarchal power. Whether single or married to a powerful man, women can move from motherhood status to being labelled 'prostitutes' and or 'witches.

Thirdly, I examine whether women's political participation is influenced by personal, gendered or partisan interests, using lessons from Mujuru's political journey. I show that post-independence Zimbabwe offers limited space for women's leadership, whether those women have liberation history credentials or not. Ultimately, the chapter shows that the strategy of maternal dignity that Mujuru has used to navigate her political career, is a "patriarchal bargain" (Makhunga, 2016) with limited possibilities for women's meaningful participation and the transformation of political parties and governance in Zimbabwe.

6.2 The Fluidity of Women's Veteran Status and Privilege in Politics

Growing up in post-colonial Zimbabwe, the name Joice Mujuru conjured ideas of liberation war heroism and a woman of high political influence whenever I heard it mentioned across media platforms. There were no questions about Mujuru's political status because her history in the liberation struggle had been well documented and many video documentaries portrayed her as the representative of female resistance and instrumentality in the liberation struggle. Despite this rich historical standing, Mujuru's biography depicts that women's role as combatants does not guarantee them uncontested privileges and status after independence. For over thirty years, as long as Mujuru knew her place was determined by the masculine and patriarchal understanding of women's place in politics, her heroic status was protected.

However, the moment she began to show signs of claiming her citizenship and equality as an opponent and political contestant, her record as a liberation war hero was questioned. Different narratives about her liberation war history started emerging. Mujuru's case shows that while feminists such as Yuval-Davis (1997: 20) argued "that women's access to combat is important because it is linked to women's capacity to access citizenship, as it is believed that 'once women share with men the ultimate citizen's duty – to die for one's country, they would also be able to gain equal citizenship rights to those of men", full and equal citizenship is not guaranteed for women after the war. Bouka (2020) has argued against the veneration of women in guerilla armies. She argues:

> While women serving in armed rebellions captured the world's imagination, they remained a small portion of women's contributions to anticolonial struggles. Second, the emphasis on women in uniform reproduces the primacy of militarized masculinity in anticolonial struggles. It feeds into a perverse idea that soldiering, which assumes and requires masculine traits, is inextricably linked to citizenship. (Bouka, 2020: 10).

Mujuru's experience is an example of the limits of the assumption that women's access to combat will extend to full citizenship. In spite of her achievements, Mujuru did not believe that she could speak as loudly as her male peers. She trusted that her visions for the party and ZANU-PF government would be found acceptable if articulated by a vocal male.

Furthermore, Ncube (2020: 25) in his article, "Eternal Mothers, whores or witches: The oddities of being a woman in politics in Zimbabwe", argues that Zimbabwean politics and decision-making is a masculine affair and women's roles are supposed to be accepting and facilitate the entrenchment of male political dominance. Ncube (2020) argues that Zimbabwean women in politics are either presented as eternal mothers, witches or whores, through an instrumentalization of their sexuality and gender as a means of accomplishing their political ambitions. Joice Mujuru enters the Zimbabwean political landscape through her hard-earned liberation war hero status, while Grace Mugabe emerges as President Robert Mugabe's wife who was labelled a gold digger and a prostitute because of the vast age difference between them (Ncube 2020). However, when both women began to show signs of interest in the presidency, they were treated and displaced similarly, with allegations of prostitution and witchcraft.

Ncube (2020: 26) argues that the Zimbabwean political system has been structured to accommodate women as long as they act 'motherly', thus behaving in a way that entrenches patriarchal interests within a political party. When women begin to assert themselves as potential male opponents, they are labeled as 'witches' or 'whores'. Patricia Hill Collins (1995) argues that black men have promoted a narrative of a "super strong black mother" image, which resonates with the resilience, self-sacrifice and unconditional love mothers have. She argues that this image has been utilized in discourses about motherhood as a 'controlling tool', steering the conversation away from the realities of unpaid care work done by women. These heroic praises of the 'strong black woman' also accounts for the reluctance by black men to be accountable when it comes to questions of gender equality, and when they are faced with a different version of black women showing ambition to lead in the corridors of politics. This has been evident throughout Zimbabwean political history as women who assert their individuality and equal political citizenship face assaults on their character, and the media is weaponized against them. Mujuru's biography has shown how fluid the veteran status can be for women in Zimbabwean politics. Her experience invites feminist scholars to resist the veneration of certain tropes of womanhood which are said to bring women closer to full citizenship.

6.3 Cultural Womanhood, Motherhood and Political Leadership

Motherhood and marriage were central to Mujuru's political career and the development of her political leadership identity. Her marriage to Solomon Mujuru, a significant man in the history of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle, was a defining feature of her political career. She reiterated in the interview how important cultural African womanhood and motherliness were as pillars of her character and leadership. Dr Kufakurinani, Eve Nyemba, Linda Masarira, Tsitsi Dangarembga and Rairo Gunguwo all reiterated the indispensable value of African cultural womanhood through emphasizing the Shona idiom that *musha mukadzi* – a woman is the home. This section will discuss the relationship between motherhood and political leadership as well as the limitations and opportunities presented by being married to a prominent political figure.

6.3.1 Marriage to Solomon Mujuru and Political Leadership

Mujuru made it clear that, when she met her husband, she was already in ZANU-PF leadership as an individual. Before she met Solomon Mujuru, she had already shot down a plane, and been a commander. However, her post-independence political career is not seen as equal to his even though if they were men, one would assume that they would be seen as equals. For women in politics married to men in politics, their political gains are usually credited to their husbands. Women's efforts and contributions become blurred by the position of the man in their lives, which is why narratives about powerful political women in history continue to be submerged in the successes of the men in their lives.

Some scholars argue that some politically significant women married to political figures of great influence ascended the echelons of political leadership using the political power wielded by their spouses (Mama, 1995b; and Chirimambowa, 2016). Joice Mujuru got married four years after joining the liberation struggle, to Solomon Mujuru who was a formative member of ZANU-PF and a celebrated and decorated commander of the ZANLA forces. Mujuru's marriage to Solomon formed a very fundamental part of her political career as scholars have argued that some women politicians get their influence in politics through being married to politically influential men. This has been reflected in political discourses about prominent women like Winnie Madikizela Mandela, Grace Mugabe, and Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma (Chirimambowa, 2016). I argue that the focus on women who benefit from being close to prominent men diminishes the possibility that some men became prominent in politics because of the women in their lives. Women are supposedly there to cheer for,

support and advice as wives, but the pillar of support position assumed by women in the lives of prominent men is often underplayed and overlooked.

Mujuru met her husband during the liberation struggle, she stated that their marriage was born out of the love they had for each other. Mujuru maintained that for her it was not difficult to separate her marital life from her political life because her relationship to Solomon Mujuru was conceived in a political setting. She stated that, when in their home, she was able to occupy the role of wife to her husband as culture denotes. She believed that this was the reason why her husband was able to support her the way he did. Tendi (2016) argues that Solomon Mujuru formed a faction within ZANU-PF focused on elevating his wife as a possible candidate for the succession of former president Robert Mugabe. The rise of Grace Mugabe as a leader of a ZANU-PF faction also raises questions about women's agency in the context of their marriages to powerful men. Following the ousting of Robert Mugabe by Mnangagwa in 2017, Mudiwa (2017) argued that the coup was partially motivated by the fear of an impending Grace Mugabe reign:

> In the eyes of the ZANU old guard, her performances too eagerly displayed her newfound power, her ability to exact revenge at will. That, as they demonstrated with an unprecedented military intervention into civilian affairs, was their role. The phallocracy had to be defended from the loose woman with the loose tongue. As thousands took to the streets to celebrate Mugabe's resignation on November 21, some members of the triumphant crowd chanted, "We won't be ruled by a whore!" On this point, many Zimbabweans were in agreement with the military and the old men of ZANU.

So, while Grace Mugabe was patronized as Mugabe's 'whore', it would seem that the military and various factions in ZANU-PF still feared her power. Mujuru's experience shows that while she certainly had a different trajectory than Grace Mugabe, whose entry into public political life is through her marriage, even when a woman enters politics unattached to a man, her political successes can still be linked to her husband. This is where the idea of elite patriarchal bargain elucidated by Makhunga (2016) becomes relevant. Makhunga draws on Kandiyoti, and their work provides an entry point to understanding gender dynamics surrounding Mujuru. It is clear that many women who have risen in Zimbabwe's ZANU-PF politics are not usually ordinary women but are mainly the wives and children of powerful men, or ex-combatants, and are thus part of the 'elite' in post-independent Zimbabwe. They largely bargain within the nation, party and the government with elite powerful men and patriarchal structures (like traditional leaders). Joice Mujuru has continued to be viewed

through the lens of her husband's political influence even years after he died. It was also argued that Jacob Zuma 'elevated' Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma to continue his patronage, despite the fact that these two had long divorced – an entrapment further extended through motherhood discussed below.

6.3.2 Motherhood and Female Political Leadership

In analyzing the data, I noticed that motherhood played a very crucial role in shaping Joice Mujuru as a political leader. From her experience, she was not only a mother in her home to her children but a mother in the various offices that she occupied in ZANU-PF, and to the nation of Zimbabwe. In a communication with celebrated novelist Tsitsi Dangarembga (personal communication, 7 November 2021) she says "Mujuru appropriates the idea for political purposes."

Laney et al (2015) argue that the process of becoming a mother is one of negotiation between a woman's identity as an autonomous individual and a woman's identity in relationship as a mother. Motherhood in Africa is a social identity, a community responsibility that reconfigures conceptions of women's individuality.

For one, every adult female in a position to foster a child whenever the need arises, particularly in African settings, is considered a mother to children that are orphaned or without a guardian for other reasons within the family circles. In some African languages the equivalent of aunt or mother's female sibling actually means something like *makazi* (in isiXhosa) or *maiguru* (in Shona), referring to someone who is an elder sister to one's mother. This reference or naming actually still connects them to their mothering responsibility to the child which is very different from the English version aunt. The case is the same for male relatives of a father, who are either referred to by their biological seniority as "big father" or "small father", depending on the order of their birth.

Selina Makana (2017) talks about 'patriotic motherhood' in her paper titled, "Motherhood as Activism in the Angolan People's War". Patriotic motherhood was invoked during the Angolan civil war, where women used their motherhood to contribute to the country's liberation through bearing children and encouraging them to go to war, as well as using their pain of losing children in the war to entrench their patriotism. The trope of patriotic motherhood was one of the reasons for the formation of women's leagues in Africa's national liberation movements. Prasch (2015: 201) asserts that the affirmative and gallant use

of African motherhood to implement resistance brought a new approach to women's political agency in Liberia. Liberian women employed the powerful image and symbolism of African motherhood, taking their place to restore peace in Liberia after a long and bloody civil war, as custodians of the communities. The case of Liberian women denotes the potential utility of agency that women have when they decide to use their motherism through their traditional positionality.

Women's political movements have utilized their position as mothers to effect change and entrench their citizenship as a previously disadvantaged societal group. Werbner (1999) argues that women's active citizenship is a function of existing cultural relations and how women are positioned in relation to property rights and responsibility. I argue that the problem arises when the custodians of patriarchy consciously or unconsciously invoke motherism seemingly to promote female political leadership, yet seeking to entrench patriarchal interests. When motherism is invoked in a political setting, the women involved begin to identify as mothers in that setting, which can be simultaneously empowering and disempowering: empowering in the sense that being referred to as a mother carries familiar connotations of respect and honor, but potentially disempowering as that identity may come with certain expectations of how far one can act and how one can behave in a public setting.

Hassim (1993: 11), in her analysis of Inkatha Women's Brigade in relation to the patriarchal and masculine political party, notes that key characteristics of women are perceived as revolutionary patience, strength, suffering, endurance and loyalty; seen as intrinsic maternal qualities. Hassim (1993) argues that these virtues are used to sustain cultural relations rather than to re-define them. Joice Mujuru's biography has shown that, in war situations as well as in politics, women have done well in using their positions as women and as mothers for the attainment of independence. However in post-colonial leadership, women have not been in control of their narratives, due in part to the way motherhood has been instrumentalised by patriarchy.

The findings of this study show that Mujuru saw the ZANU-PF Women's League as a platform to prepare women for political motherhood. She accepts the identity *Amai* as a political category. In everyday understandings of women's experience of political parties and political life in Zimbabwe, political motherhood has meant that women are not imagined as 'kingmakers' of political parties. Instead, they are expected to play a supportive role. When

they do not, their *Amai* status can be taken away and they can become a 'witch' or 'prostitute'.

6.4 Joice Mujuru and the ZANU-PF Women's League

Ahikire (2009) argues that women's leagues can wield substantial influence under the leadership of women with grounded authority structures. Referring to the various women's leagues in Ugandan political parties, Ahikire (2009) posits that these groups are largely symbolic in their structural formations, stating that these establishments are usually powerless within political parties and lack tangible political influence. Women participate quite actively in African political parties through various women's leagues, and through this medium, women are valorized as voters and are often active supporters of political party mobilization and campaigning (Kandawasvika-Nhundu, 2013).

Joice Mujuru was a formative member of the ZANU-PF Women's League. The principles that guided the formation of the ZANU-PF women's league, according to Joice Mujuru, were traditional. When Mujuru stated, "let's not force men to say, don't you know there is a women's league," this was to say this was a space where women could freely deliberate outside of the presence of men. Understandably, many women in 1980 were possibly uncomfortable exchanging ideas equally with men, because the Zimbabwean women's movement did not have a strong feminist base, women still considered themselves subordinate to men in public spaces (Hungwe 2006). The formation of the ZANU-PF Women's League was a compromise, a space where women knew they could talk outside of the predominant patriarchal presence.

The statement, "don't you know there is a women's league" for me reflects that, even as the ZANU-PF Women's League was created as a safe space for women to freely deliberate, its creation was also a patriarchal bargain, where men were left to deliberate 'important' and 'manly' issues and could individually express themselves, and women were provided with a space to mobilize and bring their views out as a collective. Women's leagues also impose the belief that women have the same interests or that they should have the same interests. According to Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000), the ZANU-PF Women's League is the collective voice of women within the party. Tshuma (2020) asserts that the succession politics and factionalism that rocked ZANU-PF illuminated the role of the Women's League in the party. The Women's League was also instrumental in the appointment of Joice Mujuru

as the vice-president after the death of Simon Muzenda, as women collectively resolved to boycott ZANU-PF's meeting in Victoria Falls if a woman was not chosen.

Zimbabwe became a signatory to CEDAW, the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979, a move by the United Nations to enforce the upholding by countries of women's rights – including equal political participation. In 1995, Zimbabwe was also part of and a signatory to the Beijing Platform of Action, through which the countries gathered agreed to champion and promote the goals of gender equality, and to ensure the preservation of the dignity of all women within their countries.

The adoption of Resolution 1325 by the United Nations in 2000 also emphasized the appointment of women into strategic government positions where they can engage in conflict resolution and peace-keeping missions (Tshuma, 2020: 1). Democracy and human rights are principles founded on the idea of equal participation by all citizens universally, thus in the pursuit of these concepts, national liberation movements in Africa created a space for women to strategize in the form of women's leagues. It is, however, also imperative for women to have substantive and meaningful representation and participation in all aspects of governance and this engagement has been fostered through the formation of women's leagues. The power and influence of the ZANU-PF Women's League was instrumental in the appointment of Joice Mujuru to the position of vice-presidency, with the members of the league drawing their inspiration from the above-mentioned international instruments.

In 1999, there was an acute reflection of the marginalization of women within ZANU-PF, with only six female ministers out of a total of 30 and three female deputy ministers out of a total of fourteen (Machipisa, 1991:1). This infuriated members of the ZANU-PF Women's League, who argued that women deserve equal representation as they make up to 52 percent of the Zimbabwean population yet remain grossly underrepresented in politics. The executive members of the ZANU-PF Women's League resolved to boycott the party's congress that year, unless they were assured that women were going to be represented – particularly in the top four posts of the party. These were the events that led to the appointment of Joice Mujuru though other narratives will show that there were other factors that contributed to Mujuru's appointment, particularly factionalism and Mugabe's alleged fear of Mnangagwa as a vice-president.

The league surfaced again in 2017, rallying behind Grace Mugabe for the presidential candidacy in the 2018 presidential elections. Grace Mugabe was the leader of the ZANU-PF

Women's League in 2017, and the members expressed their full support of a woman candidate for the position of presidency. Grace Mugabe then undertook a massive political campaign for presidency which was curtailed by the coup d'état that removed President Robert Mugabe from his position. As argued above by Mudiwa (2017), the coup was, in part, a direct effort to stop Grace Mugabe from ascending to power. Mujuru's biography shows that maternal dignity, combined with codified equality and mobilizing for women's representation through national and international instruments, is able to help women secure seats in parliament but the same dignity is not able to translate these seats into tangible outcomes for female political leadership.

6.5 Voice and Agency in Post-colonial Political Leadership

After Joice Mujuru was ousted from ZANU-PF and ran for president as an independent, she was questioned on several media platforms about her silence and perceived inability to be outspoken against political injustices and abuse of human rights during her political career in ZANU-PF (Gonda, 2016; BBC News, 2017). When I asked her why she was not outspoken during our interview, she stated that being outspoken was lonesome, particularly as a woman. Mujuru mentioned several cases where she had attempted to be outspoken against human rights abuses and political murders, particularly during the 2008 elections, to no avail.

History has a record of women like Margaret Dongo who spoke out against corruption and gender equality in the Zimbabwean parliament as a member of ZANU-PF. Dongo's advocacy for democracy and human rights led to her being ousted from ZANU-PF, and her running as an independent in 1995 (World People's Blog, 2006). Even as an independent politician, the election was rigged by ZANU-PF in an attempt to end her political career. She took the matter to court and was able to win and be instated as a member of parliament (World People's Blog, 2006). Mujuru claimed that she offered advice to the president on various occasions about the prevailing political and economic issues in Zimbabwe during the course of her political journey, but her contributions were rarely considered. Her version of events sits in tension with her argument that President Mugabe feared her, and invites questions about whether she was feared or easy to ignore.

The rest of the interviewees argued that women's inclusion in the Zimbabwean political landscape is a political strategy to present Zimbabwe as a democratic country because the 21st century has seen the international community encouraging states to be

inclusive of women. Thus, the interviewees stated that this is a political cover up strategy i.e. political cosmetology. This strategy allows Zimbabwe to appear democratically progressive, while in reality women as mere placeholders in the Zimbabwean political sphere. The case of Joice Mujuru displays that some women politicians remain in their political parties whilst their voices are limited, thus making them accomplices in the perpetration of injustices and abuses of human rights. Outspoken female politicians, on the other hand, risk being labeled 'prostitutes' and 'witches' by the media and de-campaigned.

Participants in this study argued that Mujuru was too silent during her political career. They believed she could have spoken more and been more vigorous as a political individual. Mujuru acknowledged that this silence and invisibility was beyond her control, as she had already noted how lonely being outspoken can be. By 'lonely', I believe she meant that one could easily be on her own and without the support of the party elites. Mujuru, in her political career, was forced to choose between being outspoken and becoming an outcast. Because of the violent nature of Zimbabwean politics and elections, chances of a political career outside of a political party are very slim. Therefore, women interested in politics are forced to choose between being within the political party and supporting its agendas, or being an independent contestant facing the turbulent political landscape without the support and protection a political party offers. The suffocating nature of Zimbabwean political parties for women is the reason why some chose to run as independent candidates but then eventually face the wrath of the media as well as male political contesters who in some instances even hired people to unleash violence on female politicians (Ncube 2020).

Importantly, I argue that this oppressive Zimbabwean political landscape is the reason why the position of vice-presidency seems to be the glass ceiling when it comes to how far Zimbabwean women can go in the echelons of political leadership. Women who have been able to attain the position of head of state in Africa include Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, Joice Banda of Malawi, and currently Sahle-Work Zewde of Ethiopia, along with a handful of others who have occupied the position temporarily as acting presidents (Ohemeng, 2019). In reality, the position of vice-president does not hold meaningful power in the presidency. Presidential power, on the other hand, is intimately linked to political party power and often the leader's closeness to the military. The woman leader who would go beyond vice-presidency would likely need meaningful ZANU-PF power and influence in the military and other militarised institutions. The attainment of such power means that the woman would need to 'play by the rules' of the game, which are anti-woman and anti-feminist.

6.6 "*Musha Mukadzi*": Zimbabwean Women in Politics

From the findings of this study, several challenges stood out to have hindered Mujuru's effectiveness as a female politician. The rest of the interviews also showed that there are many barriers to substantive female political participation that still persist. Mujuru stated that her voice and contributions were not given any leverage. Dr Kufakurinani in Chapter Five also proposed that the Shona idiom *'Musha Mukadzi',* meaning the home is the woman, which identifies the woman's place as being first in the home as a homemaker. For a number of the participants, the gender equality strategies introduced by the government are designed to make Zimbabwe appear to be a progressive democracy, particularly to the international community.

There is a continued over-emphasis in the image of a female political leader as a woman who should be married. As much as strides towards gender equality have been made across African legislative bodies, the cultural conceptions of what qualifies a woman to be a political leader still remains. For Joice Mujuru, a woman needed to be dignified, and this was through her recognition and acceptance of her husband's authority in the household.

In one of my interviews with a young woman who had contested for member of parliament in 2018, Linda Masarira, she stated that Zimbabwean women lack the will to be involved in politics, arguing that at this point in politics women should no longer complain about the political field being unequal but should claim political spaces for themselves and face the challenges associated with politics. Masarira argued that as long as women are still waiting to be given things they will continue to play second fiddle in politics. Because of this shaky position of entry, Zimbabwean female politicians have been criticized for perpetuating personal interests (such as financial gain) as well as partisan interests in politics in a negative way. Masarira herself has been criticized for being a political 'prostitute', because she has contested representing different political parties on separate occasions (Bhatasara and Chiweshe 2021). Thus, the narrative that has surrounded her actions is that she goes where she is offered money meaning that she is motivated by money rather than a passion for politics.

Currently in Zimbabwean politics, Thokozani Khuphe, a female member of the MDC, has claimed that she is the legitimate leader of major MDC factions, the MDC-T as well as the MDC Alliance. Khuphe was the deputy president of MDC-T when the former leader of the party Morgan Tsvangirai passed away in 2018. Consequently, she was next in line for the

position of presidency after Tsvangirai's demise. However, it is alleged that Nelson Chamisa usurped this position and ran for president in the 2018 elections, leading to a split in the party which resulted in Khuphe running for president as a leader of a minority faction called the MDC-T while Chamisa contested under a different faction named the MDC-Alliance. Mateveke and Chikafa-Chipiro (2020: 20) stated that even social media was very hostile to Khuphe, indicating that she must go and get married. Khuphe's treatment was different to the response that Joice Mujuru got in that people had some respect for Mujuru as indicated by the title *Amai* (mother). Mateveke and Chikafa-Chipiro attribute this difference to the fact that some kind of clandestine power was attributed to Mujuru due to her connection to Solomon Mujuru and her status as a former freedom fighter, a mother and now a widow. Khuphe was defeated in the 2019 election, but resurfaced in 2020, taking Chamisa to court and winning the case to assume her position as the MDC Alliance and MDC-T president. This move has resulted in a backlash from the media and social media, with Khuphe and her colleagues being criticized as puppets of ZANU-PF and being part of an agenda to completely destroy the MDCs – understandable given Khuphe's apparent unpopularity with the Zimbabwean electorate. Female political leadership continues to be scrutinized and undermined when it comes to legitimacy.

Joice Mujuru's political career has shown that the future of women in Zimbabwean politics is very uncertain. This has also been cemented by the failure of the new ZANU-PF leadership (that came into power through the coup) to replace Mujuru with another woman. The current Zimbabwean vice-presidents are both male, reversing the gains of the women of the ZANU-PF Women's League. The absence of women leaders in the Mnangagwa regime, which promised democratic transformation, shows that women's leadership in ZANU-PF and in government is still not considered a priority. Again, in spite of women's contribution to national liberation and a record of leadership in post-colonial governance, their leadership is seen as disposable.

6.7 Maternal Dignity and its Limitations

When I asked Joice Mujuru what the role of women within the ZANU-PF Women's League was, she reiterated that no matter what women did within that space, they had to remain dignified in an African perspective.

> Actually, if the dignity was there, if the role to be played was well understood, we wouldn't have continued to talk about it. So, there was a need to continue to remind young mothers and young women that we need to maintain our dignity, because at times I would see we were missing it.

Mujuru continuously evokes the themes of motherhood and dignity such that we can talk of maternal dignity. Maternal dignity entails cultural characteristics which are reinforced by cultural practices that define and identify with an African woman. A maternal figure in African culture is not defined by whether a woman has biological children or not. Rather, a maternal figure is one whose public image fits with the social understanding of maternality or motherliness. A dignified woman is one who Chipo Hungwe (2006) defines as a respectable woman as one who is treated with differential esteem and is perceived as an honorable member of society. Ebila (2015) describes a dignified woman as a proper woman; she is imagined in the African tradition in the context of a family, and she puts family interests before her own. Ebila notes that a proper African woman's respectability and dignity is defined by being respectful to men; good mothers of the nation do not challenge authority in general. In African culture, the silence of a woman is construed to mean respect.

Maternal dignity can be linked to what Makhunga calls maternal feminism, which is the framing of women's political practise as an "extension of their roles as mothers into the public domain" (2016: 227). However, a distinction can be drawn between maternal feminism and maternal dignity as portrayed by Joice Mujuru. Maternal feminism is a patriarchal bargain of choice as a political strategy by women to survive in politics; whereas maternal dignity is a collective cultural expectation for women who want to survive in politics. Maternal feminism would mean deploying the maternal qualities for political purposes by women, whereas maternal dignity would mean the given respect to a woman or motherly figure which circumscribes their behaviour and code of conduct.

Mujuru stated in the interview that she was voiceless for most of her political career and had to bargain and improvise when she wanted to make a contribution. She noted that there were instances where she would be silenced in a situation that needed her contribution as a leader. I believe she was able to do this to maintain her dignity and it's something that she could do because she knew her 'place'. I argue here that there is a tension between the political image that Mujuru has portrayed for the duration of her political leadership and the lament that she was voiceless and sometimes a lone voice, while through her work in the Women's League she advocated for women to be dignified and not to speak back to male leadership. This depicts a conflict of interests in her leadership: on the one hand she appears

to have been conscious of the need to have a voice and the limitations that come with not having a voice in political leadership, yet on the other hand she perpetuated a culture of silence for the rest of the women in ZANU-PF. I believe that this culture of silence will be more entrenched especially because of how Mujuru was ousted after attempting to be bold and ambitious, as well as how Grace Mugabe was removed from political office after seemingly attempting to run for presidency.

At the end of her political career within ZANU-PF, Mujuru exhibited the conscious existence of trying to balance individuality, being outspoken and (what was for her) the importance of a woman maintaining cultural maternal dignity and preserving African culture.

Tsitsi Dangarembga (personal communication, 7 November 2021) argued that:

> I don't see how maternal dignity as such limits women from shaping alternative ideas of respectable womanhood. I would say this is the result when a woman's political identity is built on the (patriarchal) notion of maternal dignity.

This approach is useful in that it does not vilify motherhood or mothers in politics, but rather encourages us to actively conceptualize maternal dignity. In an attempt to develop a concept of maternal dignity, there could be three apparent dimensions from Joice Mujuru's biography: decision, selection, and maintaining or sustaining. The parameters of the decision to participate in politics are defined by maternal dignity. The political party system operates on the basis of selection by party patriarchs; the most 'dignified women' are usually the most pliable, obedient or partisan women. Amina Mama (1995b) calls these women 'femocrats'. The selected women then maintain or sustain their positions through their continued observance of the codes of conduct relating to maternal dignity. Any break of these codes usually results in these women losing their positions and, in some circumstances, publicly shamed.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the limitations and opportunities presently surrounding female political leadership in Zimbabwean political parties, using the biography of Joice Mujuru. The discussion has shown that, in order to maintain the veteran status of women in Zimbabwean politics, there are conditions and expectations which – when they are not met – can lead to the erasure of this status. Women's identity formation is further complicated when women choose political leadership, as the multi-layered different aspects of motherhood and

marriage merge with political leadership to form a political identity. The chapter has shown the dynamics embedded in the formation of the ZANU-PF Women's League, as well as the pillars that maintained and sustained it. What has also been pivotal to this discussion are the societal expectations of women as a collective, pertaining to political participation. This discussion has shown how societal expectations impact women's decision to participate in politics. Joice Mujuru belonged to the first generation of liberated Zimbabweans and this generation of women found ways of bargaining with patriarchy and this discussion has also shown how these patriarchal bargains have affected the younger generation in the form of Thokozani Khupe and Linda Masarira.

The political discourses of great women in politics are very important to the development of a democratic Africa, and for the balancing and enrichment of academic discourses. Motherhood as a social identity comes with significant dignity and respect that women are rightly recognized for. However in political spaces, women should use the trope of motherhood in their own interests. The dignity of women should come with easing them of their social and economic burdens that include poverty and domestic violence. This discussion has portrayed how women politicians maneuver the political landscape and the discourses that lead to their decision making.

Chapter SEVEN

Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of the study and some reflections and recommendations. The aim of this study was to understand Joice Mujuru's political life in various political parties from the time she joined the liberation struggle and throughout her various offices in government until after her ousting, after which she ran for president as an independent candidate. Joice Mujuru occupied very powerful positions in the Zimbabwean government, including cabinet posts and the vice-presidency. Mujuru's political biography is an important addition to the ongoing conversation about women's political leadership beyond numerical representation. The thesis has shown the fluidity of the liberation hero status, for women in particular, in post-independence Zimbabwe.

For this reason, this thesis sought to understand how female politicians make decisions in various political parties Mujuru was active in. Mujuru's political life sheds light on how being an outspoken female politician is a lonesome mission. She stated that she had to identify allies in males that were compassionate towards her to tell them her views so that they could voice them out in an appropriate setting. I argued, from the analysis of collected data, that female political leadership still replicates the subordination of patriarchal systems that women are faced with in the private spheres of their homes. A woman political leader is expected to mirror the private image of a subordinate wife in the public spaces of political engagement.

This study has shown that women politicians within ZANU-PF bargain with patriarchy to remain in their positions. The theory of patriarchal bargains coined by Deniz Kandiyoti (1988) argues that, when women find themselves in patriarchal and masculine dominated situations, they bargain in a way that gets them what they want without damaging the relationship by being rebellious. Amina Mama's (1995b) concept of African political womanhood being femocrats instead of feminists proved correct in Joice Mujuru's case; Mujuru's biography has shown that she limited herself to her party's standards on women and human rights of Zimbabwean citizens. However, this was because she felt that it was very difficult to be radically outspoken and remain in the favor of the party. Therefore, the patriarchal bargains that women in ZANU-PF engaged in involved emphasizing on the need for women to be dignified.

In Chapter Six, I propose a concept of maternal dignity. Maternal dignity extracts the nexus of traditional beliefs of what dignifies a woman in the respected role of motherhood, and the uses and limitations of this dignity. Maternal dignity manifests in three dimensions: decision, selection and maintaining. Women leaders in politics are selected, maintain their offices and make decisions according to the dictates of maternal dignity. In Joice Mujuru's case, this took the form of a patriarchal bargain – respect for her as a mother fed into a behavioral expectation that was both useful in advancing the cause of women and ensuring guided participation. Deviation from the pervasive lines of maternal dignity met the wrath of the party, while compliance was rewarded.

This study has shown how motherhood has stood out as a defining factor in the identity formation of women in Zimbabwean political parties, and politics in general. The social prerequisite for women in politics to be married reflects a societal need for women in politics to be capable of mothering. Mujuru's biography demonstrated that women's political leadership mirrors the duties mothers and wives play in their homes. The discussion in this thesis has argued that this accounts for the challenges faced by women in their political leadership roles, as the same patterns of limitations and the abuse of women's rights associated with domesticity are replicated in female political leadership.

This thesis has shown that maternal dignity was the main reason for the silences of women politicians, particularly in the case of Joice Mujuru. Maintaining a dignified image meant that women's rights to equal expression did not exist. An outspoken woman is considered undignified, rude, and ungovernable. Thus, the political biography of Joice Mujuru shows that in as much as women have joined and continue to join the political table, joining as equal players continues to be an unrealised vision.

Mujuru's biography also has an important lesson and parallel with the gender quota system in political parties and leadership positions in general. Her life in several political parties shows that it is not enough to appoint women through gender quotas into politics, without changing the structure into which women have been assimilated to accommodate women leaders. The mere inclusion of women can easily be instrumentalized for political correctness.

The life of Joice Mujuru in Zimbabwean political parties in pre- and post-independence Zimbabwe shows a complex historical patriarchal exclusionary continuity, whose pervasive tentacles now need to be cut. The biographical form of writing about women

in various political parties could help reveal the various compromises women in politics make, and negotiate beyond the current public culture and academic fixation with numerical representation. Such knowledge helps deepen and identify new conceptual and practical possibilities on gender transformational interventions in politics in Africa and beyond.

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Appendix One: Consent Form for Joice Mujuru

My name is Sisasenkosi Mataruse, I am a student in the Political and International Studies Department at Rhodes University, and Principal Investigator of this project, entitled, **"I was nobody, I had no say, I had no voice", Joice Mujuru and women political participation in Zimbabwe.**

This study is being conducted in order to understand the complexities and challenges of female political leadership in post-independence Zimbabwe. This research seeks to examine the experiences of Zimbabwean women in politics through the study of the political life of Joice Mujuru. I specifically chose to focus on your experiences, as a case study because of the extensive and path breaking political history that you have in the struggle for liberation in Zimbabwe and in the thirty-eight of Zimbabwean independence.

In the interviews, I would like to ask you about your political history, specifically, how you became interested in politics, your joining the liberation movement, and your experiences as a leader in ZANU-PF as a party, and your experiences as a leader in government. I am particularly interested in examining your experiences as a woman leader within a party where most powerful leaders are male. I will also ask you about your positionality regarding gender equality and feminism within political parties and in the Zimbabwean society.

With your permission, I would like to audio-record this interview so I can capture the details accurately. The tapes will only be heard by me and my supervisor. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I, and my advisor, will have access. At any time you can refuse to answer any questions or end this interview.

The product of this research thesis will be developed into publications, such as journal articles, and possibly a book project. I believe that your extensive experience as a leader will provide important insight about the role, opportunities and challenges of women's participation in political parties and government in post-colonial Africa.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at 0749304973, email mairueanita@gmail.com, or my advisor Dr. Siphokazi Magadla, S.Magadla@ru.ac.za.

Thank you for your participation in the study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

I agree to have this interview audio-recorded and (or) video recorded please [circle one]:

Yes No

_____ _____ _____

_____

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered;
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction;
- you understand Rhodes University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study;
- you are 18 years of age or older;
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary;
- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature_____ Date_____

_____

Printed Name_____

Appendix Two: Questionnaire for Joice Mujuru

Historical background: The liberation war:

1. Please tell me about yourself, family history as well as background
2. How did you come to join the Liberation struggle and what motivated you?
3. Describe your position in the liberation struggle
4. In your view, what were the roles of women in the liberation struggle?
4. How did you come to be a commander and how was your experience of the position?
5. Do you feel that your role in the liberation struggle prepared you for the roles you have occupied in post-independence Zimbabwe?

ZANU and Government Positions:

6. At independence in 1980, you were appointed as minister of…., were you happy with this appointment?
7. What were some of your achievements and challenges in this position?
8/ At this time, how influential were you when it comes to decision making in government?
9. Within ZANU, you were the leader of the women's wing, what did this role mean to you at early independence?
10. How did you view your role within ZANU as a party and yourself as a woman leader?11. In your view, what have been the main roles occupied by women within ZANU since independence?
12. Do/did women have agency and power in ZANU?
13. Would you describe ZANU as a patriarchal political party?

Moving from ZANU-PF to independent Politician

13 Did you hope to succeed President Robert Mugabe and become the first woman president of ZANU, and therefore, Zimbabwe?
14. What are your views pertaining to your ousting or movement from ZANU-PF?
15. Do you feel that the way you were ousted from the party was justifiable after all these years?
16. What did your femaleness/ gender have to do with the way you were ousted from power?

Zim PF and NPP:

18. What were your experiences in the first political party that you formed- Zim PF and how did you move away from the party?
19. What are your leadership experiences within your current Political Party NPP?
20. What are your views concerning the future of female political leadership?
18. In your view, what is the future of women's participation in political parties in Zimbabwe and in government?
21. Is Zimbabwe or Southern Africa ready for a female President?

Appendix Three: Consent Form for Members of Parliament, Civil Society Activists and Academics

My name is Sisasenkosi Mataruse, I am a student in the Political and International Studies Department at Rhodes University, and Principal Investigator of this project, entitled, **"I was nobody, I had no say, I had no voice": Joice Mujuru and women political participation in Zimbabwe.** This study is primarily aimed at understanding the dynamics and complexities of female political leadership from a Zimbabwean perspective through the political life and experiences of Joice Mujuru. It seeks to understand the positionality of women in politics concerning gender equality, autonomy and agency among other leadership aspects.

In the interview, I will want to seek your understanding of the political experiences of Joice Mujuru throughout her political life, and the circumstances surrounding her ousting from the party. I would also like to ask you about your experiences as a woman in politics. I will particularly want to understand if women are given equal opportunities as men in the party and how the power dynamics work when it comes to decision making processes. I will also want to understand how far the party has ensured women's access and participation in the party and the country as a whole.

I may publish results of the study, if you wish for your identity to be anonymous, your names or any identifying characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications unless you do not have a problem with identifying yourself. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future. If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at 0749304973, email mairueanita@gmail.com, or my advisor Dr. Siphokazi Magadla, S.Magadla@ru.ac.za. Thank you for your participation in the study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

I agree to have this interview audio-recorded and (or) video recorded please [circle one]:

Yes No

_____ _____ _____

_____

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered; you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction; you understand Rhodes University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study; you are 18 years of age or older; your participation in this research is completely voluntary;you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature and name_____ Date_____

_____

Appendix Four: Interview Guide for Members of Parliament, Civil Society Activists and Academics

1. Can you please explain to me how long you have been (in politics a civil society activist or an academic)?
2. What is the role of women within Zimbabwean politics, particularly in political parties since independence?
3. Please describe your experiences of political leadership as a woman. (For women Members of Parliament)
4. Do you feel more of a woman or a political leader? (For women political leaders).
5. What is your take on the importance of gender equality?
6. Is there gender equality in the allocation of duties, responsibilities and positions?
7. Do you feel that men and women are given equal opportunities within Zimbabwean politics? (If not why?)
8. What do you think was the role of Joice Mujuru within ZANU-PF and as the first female vice-president of Zimbabwe?
9. What are her unique qualities as a leader?
10. What are her shortcomings/weaknesses?
11. Was Mujuru treated similarly or differently as a leader in the Zimbabwean society and in the media?
12. Do you think Zimbabwe is ready for a female president?
13. Is the presence of women in politics historically changing the lives of women for the better?