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# Subject Formation, Fundamentalism and Instrumentalist Nationalism in Zimbabwean politics

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# Subject Formation, Fundamentalism and Instrumentalist Nationalism in Zimbabwean politics

## Abstract

This article argues that despite presiding over a failed economy, the Zimbabwe African Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) led by Robert Mugabe, has willing and enthusiastic supporters. There are claims that the large crowds witnessed singing and dancing at ZANU PF rallies are mobilized by force because the attendees do not benefit anything from supporting the regime. In a divergence from the consensus of the literature, this article surfaces other explanations than coercion for the huge turnout at rallies, rented crowds, handouts, and well-articulated election manifestos. The psychological dimension, especially the fundamentalist mindset created by instrumentalist nationalism, is one such other perspective to clarifying why this is the case. It might also explain why some Zimbabweans are so susceptible to compliance with power relations that subordinate them. Thus, a psychological dimension is added to the level of analysis beyond the often resorted to socio-economic and political explanations for political mobilization. Willing and enthusiastic support is not to be necessarily judged by ZANU PF's winning or losing elections, or the number of supporters it has, but more by the effervescence observed at rallies and other political activities. The article interrogates ZANU PF's instrumentalist nationalism through both religious and non-religious lenses, such as the education system, media, church platforms, music, history and culture, galas, and its usual political campaigns.

**Keywords:** *subject formation, fundamentalism, politics, nationalism, Zimbabwe*

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## **Subject Formation, Fundamentalism, and Instrumentalist Nationalism in Zimbabwean Politics**

**Joram Tarusarira**

While many have dismissed the notion that President Robert Mugabe's regime still has enthusiastic supporters (Kriger, 2005), this article argues that indeed it does, as shown by the effervescence at ZANU PF rallies and other events. Far more than coercion, rented crowds, handouts, and well-articulated election manifestos, the fundamentalist mindset created by instrumentalist nationalism is integral to clarifying why this is the case, and further, why some Zimbabweans are so susceptible to compliance with power relations that subordinate them and have mismanaged the economy, thereby making their lives miserable. Deploying the concept of fundamentalism to analyze instrumentalist nationalism is of fresh conceptual value. It brings a psychosocial lens through which to study nationalism—a topic dominated by political economy. The fundamentalist framework illuminates understandings of the workings of beliefs, emotions and attitudes, which are often overlooked in the body politic. The concept of fundamentalism has been applied to religious groups, movements, and discourses, such that it would be anathema to discuss political discourses within the context of fundamentalism. A critical analysis of the psychological nature of fundamentalism, especially its potency to create “apocalyptic” subjects, illuminates understanding on the phenomenon of passionate attachment to power that subjects. ZANU PF instrumentalist nationalist discourse, and its vision and version of a Zimbabwe and Africa that President Mugabe was to deliver, has become an apocalypse that captivates its followers. The resonance of the fundamentalist mind and instrumentalist nationalism intimates that fundamentalism is a concept transcending religious circumscriptions where it has its provenance. This article interrogates ZANU PF's instrumentalist nationalism through both religious and non-religious lenses such as the education system, media, church platforms, music, history and culture, galas, and its usual political campaigns. The argument of this article is not about ZANU PF's winning or losing elections, or necessarily about the numbers of people who attend rallies, but about those people who still support it enthusiastically. The article asks why those who support ZANU PF continue to do so passionately and fervently, despite ZANU PF presiding over a failed economy, and failing to deliver political goods.

### **Fundamentalism and Its Effects**

Though its tenets are contested, some general characteristics of fundamentalism can be identified from within the religious discourse. These include the perception that it is a

reaction to secularism, rationalism, and modernity. However, modernity is accepted where it does not contradict some basic religious principles. Fundamentalism creates boundaries. It has a tendency to form strong identities exclusive of others and thus divide people into them and us; it divides people into friends and enemies, good and evil. It erects boundaries between those who are members and those who are not. These boundaries can be physical, but often the barriers are social, psychological, and behavioural, which is why some have argued that fundamentalism produces a particular intensity of non-rational or irrational passion not subject to the firm control of reason. Fundamentalists are driven by fervor, rage, passion, fanaticism, and zeal—making religious fundamentalism absolutist, self-righteous, arrogant, dogmatic, and intolerant of compromise (Cavanaugh, 2009, pp. 18-26). Members try to associate with their own and avoid outsiders as much as is possible. They may develop particular modes of dress, behaviour, speech (Almond, Appleby, & Sivan, 2003; Marty & Appleby, 1991) enforced in their communities—sometimes violently (Sprinzak, 1991). They develop their own independent social institutions such as traditional religious institutions, schools, community centres, businesses, and burial societies. They tend to have a black and white view of the world. That is, there is right and wrong, good and evil, insiders and outsiders, salvation and damnation. The boundaries are clear and there is no room for shades of grey. Fundamentalists believe in elect membership, with them as the chosen ones. Subsequently, they have exclusive access to truth, and this feeling cements the boundaries between them and others. They believe in the inerrancy of, and focus on, their text. Theological innovation is permitted only when a religion in its old format is challenged by modernity and is no longer defending the group. Hence religion's central tenets and ideologies are reinterpreted to meet the present challenges.

One method of theological innovation is a selective emphasis on doctrines (see Bourdieu, 1991). Fundamentalists tend to focus on a utopian golden age of religion when their belief system was allegedly pure and perfect. There is desire to go back to the mythical age of the past. According to Soloveitchik (1994), “This history filters out untoward facts and glosses over the darker aspects of the past. Indeed, it often portrays events as they did not happen” (p. 82). Fundamentalist leaders have authority over political, economic and personal issues, and their opinion is sought and followed in all major decisions of life. Fundamentalism is often associated with male-dominated societies where women are expected to defer to men. One of the concerns of fundamentalists is that modernity is undermining traditional gender roles (Fox, 2013, pp. 109-115).

Fundamentalism creates subjects who espouse a mind, which *inter alia*, emphasizes certainty and the black and white distinction of worldview, and smacks of absolutisms already suggested. This is the point at which subject formation enters. Absolutist and apocalyptic knowledge produce apocalyptic subjects. Associated with absolutism is the sense of uniqueness and finality. Thus, if particular knowledge is deposited within a people, and it determines their existence, it is power. This is so because people become dependent on that knowledge. Thus, that upon which one depends is considered to have power over him or her. No wonder Butler (1997) points out that “power is not simply what we oppose, but also, in a strong sense, what we depend on for our existence and what we harbour and preserve in the beings that we are” (p. 2). So when a form of knowledge or information is impressed upon a people, an inner life is produced in the process of subject formation through various societal institutions. Subjection produces a radical ambivalence in which the individual emerges through a passionate attachment to his or her own subordination (Butler, 1997). This ambivalence is evident in how the subject may find himself or herself loving the oppressor, who under normal circumstances would be hated. The subject has a passionate attachment with the oppressor, thus feelings of attraction and resentment are existing simultaneously.

### **The Discourse of Instrumentalist Nationalism**

Nationalism is as contested, with various scholars emphasizing different aspects, and possesses different implications for its study. One scholar writes,

Those who define [nationalism] as an idea will focus on the writings and speeches of nationalist intellectuals or activists; those who see it as a sentiment will concentrate on the development of language or other shared ways of life and try to see how these “folk ways” are taken up by the intelligentsia or the politicians; finally those who treat nationalism as a movement will focus on political action and conflict. (Ozickrimli, 2000, p. 58)

It is a discourse that constantly shapes our consciousness and the way we constitute the meaning of the world. It determines our collective identity by producing and reproducing us as “nationals.” It is a way of seeing and interpreting that conditions our daily speech, behaviors, and attitudes (Ozickrimili, 2000, p. 4). Its power comes from its capacity to create an identity based on emotion and the irrational (Langman, 2006). It can already be seen that nationalism, therefore, has the capacity to produce a fundamentalist mind. Hence there is a significant resonance between the two discourses.

In step with theological innovation of fundamentalism, Brass (1991) notes that under nationalism, “cultures are fabricated by elites whose aims are ensuring economic or political advantages for themselves” (p. 8). When nationalism becomes an instrument to gain power, it becomes *instrumentalist nationalism*. According to Hobsbawm (1994), the nation and its associated phenomena, including nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, and histories are a result of social engineering, which are often deliberate and always innovative. He created the concept of “invention of traditions” (Hobsbawm, 2004): a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and rituals of a symbolic nature, which inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, thereby automatically implying continuity with the past. All these are efforts for what Foucault (1977) and Althusser (1971) call “subjectivation” (subject formation) and “interpellation,” respectively. Subjectivation is a Foucauldian philosophical concept that refers to the construction of an individual subject; it is an identity forming process, and nationalism is part of such a process. According to Foucault, the modern era’s forces of disciplinary power and normalization turn individuals into subjects. The individual is a result of strategic power relations (Allen, 2009). “Interpellation” was first coined by Louis Althusser to describe the process by which ideology produces the individual as a subject through “Ideological State Apparatuses” that include religion, education, the family, the law, politics, culture, and the media. These institutions produce the ideologies within which we assume identities and become subjects. When ideologies and ideology work well, they are lived as if they were obvious and natural (Althusser, 1971; Ndlovu-Gathenshi 2009). Thus, in the case of ZANU PF supporters going to rallies, supporting the party, singing and dancing become obvious and natural. Giddens (1985) refers to nationalism as “primarily psychological...the affiliation of individuals to a set of symbols and beliefs emphasising communality among the members of a political order” (p. 116). He proceeds to note that sentiments of group identity at all times and all places are exclusionary. How a group is thought of, and how they define themselves, depends upon the traits attributed to outsiders.

### **Instrumentalist Nationalism and the Zimbabwean State Since the 1990s**

Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980. The discourse of nationalism soon followed. National unity was the buzz word in the political discourse, such that any move to oppose the ruling regime was confronted in the name of nationalism. The 1982 massacres witnessed in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces exemplified allegations that dissidents there threatened national unity (Catholic Commission for Justice & Peace, 1997), and resulted in the Unity Accord of 1987, when ZANU merged with Zimbabwe People’s Union (ZAPU)

to form ZANU PF. This development was based on Mugabe's advocacy for a one party-state—a position that was contested by ZANU PF's former Secretary General, Edgar Tekere (1937-2011), who challenged a one-party state as never one of the founding principles of ZANU-PF, and further argued that experience in Africa had shown a one-party state brought the evils of nepotism, corruption, and inefficiency (Masunungure, 2004, p. 159). Tekere went on to form his own party called the Zimbabwe Unity Movement. When the 1990 elections, according to the electoral commission, presented a loss for Tekere, he faded out of public view and was later alleged to have reconciled with ZANU PF. When he died he was buried at the national heroes acre, a space reserved only for Mugabe's trusted cadres from the liberation struggle.

ZANU PF encountered an unprecedented electoral challenge by a new political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which emerged in 1999. Faced with this challenge, ZANU PF tilted the goal of nationalism from a focus on national unity to regime security. Nationalism became an instrument for keeping ZANU PF in power. Deliberate strategies were deployed for this purpose, such as the media, religious institutions, musical galas, education, youth (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). The MDC gained popularity, due to ZANU PF's socio-economic and political mismanagement in the 1990s (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Faced with an electorate that had lost trust, ZANU PF resorted to instrumentalist nationalism to stay in power.

In the 1990s, Zimbabwe experienced a declining economy against the global economic liberalization, which prompted it to adopt the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) from international financial institutions. Unfortunately the program resulted in the negative effects of deceleration of economic growth, employment decreases, high inflation, and other issues (Kanyenze, 2004). Its social impact included increased suffering of the ordinary person, loss of jobs, reduced incomes, and the crumbling of social services. This prompted the citizens to be disillusioned with the government. The decline of workers' incomes led to a series of nationwide strikes by the labor movement, represented by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), between 1996 and 1998 (Kanyenze, 2004). The ZCTU was a key member of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), a new umbrella body of non-governmental organizations, that located the Zimbabweans' crisis within the constitution. Out of the NCA was born the MDC in 1999.

As previously pointed out, fundamentalists develop their own independent social institutions, such as traditional religious institutions, schools, community centers, businesses, or burial societies. ZANU PF did not establish its own institutions *per se*, but usurped those



of the state to defend itself from the threat of the MDC. A National Youth training scheme was launched in August 2001 (allegedly) to teach the youth patriotism, unity and oneness, national identity, discipline and self-reliance (Smith, 2005). In actual fact, they were indoctrinated with exclusively ZANU-PF campaign materials and speeches, including an anthology of Mugabe's speeches titled *Inside the Third Chimurenga* (liberation struggle). The system used crude propaganda, violence, and intimidation to manipulate youth into thinking that their own impunity and abuse of power was part of the struggle to protect ZANU-PF and Zimbabwe from foreign influence (Smith, 2005). The youth became in Foucauldian terms (Foucault, 1977, p. 138) a machinery of power—docile bodies compelled to operate under the techniques, speed and efficiency the regime wished. Interviewed youth members revealed:

Our source of power was this encouragement we were getting, particularly from the police and others...it was *instilled* in us that whenever we go out, we are free to do whatever we want and nobody was going to question that. (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2003) [italics my own]

In endorsing the same report of Solidarity Peace Trust (2003), the church leaders of southern Africa lamented:

Having been thoroughly *brain-washed*, the youth militias are deployed to carry out whatever instructions they receive from their political commissars, on the understanding that they will never be called to account by this regime for any of their deeds. (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2003) [italics my own]

A National and Strategic Studies Program was introduced in Teacher's and Technical colleges, purportedly to foster a desire to participate in national development and equip the students with the relevant skills (Ministries of Education Sports & Culture & Higher Education, 2004). To the contrary, the course was fundamentalist, devoid of objective and critical thinking, lacking the ability for students to question things or reason for themselves. Reports have indicated that the militia became one of the most commonly reported violators of human rights, with accusations against them including murder, torture, rape, and destruction of property (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2003).

Reminiscent of fundamentalism's ingroup and outgroup strategy, the racial divide began to emerge. White commercial farmers experienced violent invasion of their farms. They were labelled colonialist enemies of the state and of blacks, cheats, and dishonest people

uncommitted to the national cause (Alexander, 2004; Meredith, 2003). In the rural areas, ZANU PF youths and war veterans convened meetings where huge crowds sang and danced to revolutionary songs in support of ZANU PF. Those who attended were categorized as members of ZANU PF, and those who did not, as opposition members. In a fundamentalist context, members associate with their own and avoid the outgroup. This segues into the politics of inclusion and exclusion, which is a tactic that has been deployed by ZANU PF since pre-independence times. Dissenting voices were simply named and categorized as *vatenges* (sellouts), a term that was used to describe those who collaborated with the colonial Rhodesia Front (RF). The term also referred to anyone in solidarity with Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army or Rhodesian Forces (Dzimiri et al., 2014). The characteristics of a fundamentalist discourse can be identified in the nationalist discourse: creation of boundaries, absolutism, divisiveness, and member inclusion and exclusion—particular forms of behaviour enforced by institutions, eclecticism, and authoritarianism.

The state media disseminated propaganda. It spread messages against the opposition MDC, civil society, and non-governmental organizations to further the interests of the ZANU PF regime. Fundamentalist, propagandist, and particularistic messages were repeated in both electronic and print media. The media fueled division and enmity between people and solidified negative beliefs and attitudes between those who harbored different political ideas. Typical of fundamentalism, people were divided into the good and the bad. The ruling party cadres and enthusiasts labelled those who did not agree with their political ideology enemies of the state, allies of western forces, or Western-sponsored traitors seeking a return to white rule. As the people listened to the radio, watched television, and read government controlled newspapers they were “informed” about what it means to be a good Zimbabwean and a genuine African (Raftopoulos, 2004).

The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation launched in 2001 its new mission to “provide world class quality programs and services that reflect, develop, foster and respect the Zimbabwean national identity, character, cultural diversity, national aspirations and Zimbabwean and pan-African values” (Chiumbu, 2004). Nationalist programs such as National Ethos and *Nhaka Yedu* (our heritage) which were meant to reawaken Zimbabweans from colonial nightmare into a more essentialist African consciousness (Raftopolous, 2004) were introduced in the state media. To bolster this strategy, as Tendi (2010) observed, Zimbabwean nationalist “public” revisionist intellectuals branded opposition forces as western “puppets.” While the effectiveness of the media on fundamentalist loyalty cannot be established mathematically, the presence of ZANU PF messages and jingles in the public

sphere, and how the jingles were played at rallies, might be a way to discern the impact of the media. Ordinary party enthusiasts developed their arguments for the party-based propagandist information aired on radio and television. For instance it became common for ZANU PF supporters to blame the poor performance of the economy on sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe. This was the argument endlessly aired on radio or television, or written in newspapers. Many voters take what appears in print and electronic media for the truth.

As has been noted, one of the characteristics of fundamentalism is theological innovation whereby a religion in its old format, when challenged by modernity, reinterprets its central tenets and ideologies to meet the new challenges. One method of theological innovation is a selective emphasis on doctrines. ZANU-PF turned to Zimbabwe's liberation story and Zimbabwe's "golden past." It conscripted elements of history which it believed would generate support and undermine opposition elements. Themes and events which did not serve ZANU-PF's agenda were downplayed or misrepresented (Tendi, 2010). The strategy can be demonstrated by the treatment of former vice-president Joice Mujuru. Since independence Mujuru was said to have downed a helicopter with a machine gun on 17 February 1974. When she fell out of favour with the ruling regime, history was "re-written." That claim was revoked and said to be a hoax (Staff Reporter, 2014). The state broadcaster stopped using the "comrade" honorific and referred to her simply as "Mrs Mujuru." The title "comrade" is reserved for those who joined the struggle to end white rule in the 1970s, and who remain loyal to the party in general, and President Robert Mugabe in particular (Thornycroft, 2015).

Manifesting another classic tactic of fundamentalists, history curriculum in schools began to emphasize the history and pride of Zimbabwe. Ranger (2003) called it patriotic history and has noted its narrowing focus, its resentment of "disloyal" historical questions, its antagonism towards academic history, and that it is highly politically charged.

Instrumentalist nationalism has thus been a form of a fundamentalist religion from a functional perspective. As Gentile posited, "A 'religion of politics' is a system of beliefs, myths, rituals and symbols that interpret and define the meaning and end of human existence by subordinating the destiny of individuals and the collectivity to a supreme entity" (2006, p. xiv). This does not refer to a theocracy where the state subordinates to a traditional religion. A religion of politics creates an "aura of sacredness around an entity belonging to this world" (Gentile, 2006., p. 76). This entity might be an individual leader or a political party. It is of two kinds, namely political and civil religion. Political religion applies to totalitarian regimes, such as the Zimbabwean state, during times of threat from mass democracy. The political

system gets sacralized, founded on an unchangeable monopoly of power, ideological monism, and the obligatory and unconditional subordination of the individual and the collectivity to its code of commandments. Civil religion is defined as a form of sacralization that guarantees a plurality of ideas, free competition in the exercise of power, and the ability of the governed to dismiss their governments through peaceful and constitutional means. The distinction, however, is not hermetic (Cavanaugh, 2009, pp. 109-110). Civil religion can become political religion when regimes are under threat, and political religion can be toned down during times of less or no threat to the regimes. As already intimated, the type of the religion in Zimbabwe is not civil, but political religion. While nationalism itself was political religion, the reach into traditional religions, especially Christianity and African religion, strengthened its fundamentalist character and made the instrumental fundamentalism more conspicuous.

According to the 2012 census estimate, Zimbabwe has a population of 13 million people. Eighty-four (84) percent of the population is Christian divided as follows: thirty-three (33) percent Catholic; forty-two (42) percent evangelical or Pentecostal; seventeen (17) percent Anglican, Methodist, or Presbyterian, and eight (8) percent apostolic. There are a significant number of independent Pentecostal and syncretic African churches. The majority of the population also adheres to varying degrees to indigenous religions. Approximately three (3) percent of the population is Muslim—primarily immigrants of Mozambican and Malawian descent. The Muslim population is concentrated in rural areas and in some high-density suburbs. Small numbers of Greek Orthodox, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and the Bahai faith make up less than one (1) percent of the population. Political elites tend to be members of established Christian mainstream or Pentecostal churches (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

As Berger (1967) notes “religion legitimates social institutions by bestowing upon them an ultimately valid ontological status, which is locating them within a sacred and cosmic frame of reference” (p. 33). To obey political authority is to be in the right relationship with the world of the gods (p. 34). Society and the cosmos are understood as having a microcosm - macrocosm relationship. The parallel extends to specific roles, understood as mimetic reiterations of the cosmic realities which they represent (p. 38). This helps to maintain the status quo. Religious legitimation involves the transformation of human products, such as political parties or leaders, into supra- or non-human products; the humanly made world is explained in terms that deny its human social production (p. 89). One of the characteristics of fundamentalism as we have observed is absolutism. Thus transforming human products into supra or non-human products is to make them and their decisions and actions absolute. To locate Mugabe within the cosmic frame of reference is to make his decisions and actions and

those of ZANU PF ultimate. To question him would be to question God. In doing this, instrumentalist nationalism becomes a fundamentalism.

Religious organizations sympathetic to ZANU PF, especially mainline church leaders, apex bodies, and African Independent Churches, likened Mugabe to the biblical Moses, who delivered people to the Promised Land. His leadership was depicted as an apocalypse, the fulfillment of a divine prophecy. Bishop Mutendi of the Zion Christian Church remarked that Mugabe was greater than the biblical Moses: “You have managed to do what Moses could not achieve because Moses did not go with the children of Israel to Canaan, but you were with us at independence and you are still with us” (Mawawa, 2016). Invoking indigenous religion, Mugabe was said to be acting in accordance with the demands of the ancestors and obeying ancestral oracles when he took the land away from white commercial farmers (Mukonyora, 2011, p. 137).

Drawing upon an ideological convergence on Africanness, sovereignty and identity with Mugabe and ZANU PF, the African Independent Churches have legitimated Mugabe as a divine leader. Issues of convergence with the AICs have included criticism of homosexuality. Speaking at a gathering of *vapositori*, Mugabe invoked the discourse of homosexuality: “Homosexuality, sodomy and moral decadence should not be allowed to take root in Zimbabwe. The church must preach against these vices” (Staff Reporter, 2014). This rhetoric serves to mobilize the required votes and in the long term it is part of subject formation in which a particular message is transmitted by an authority to create a constituency of subjects.

The AICs share with Mugabe’s regime a totalitarian and fundamentalist tendency (Hastings, 1979, p. 77; Machoko, 2013, p. 4). African churches such as Johane Masowe WeChishanu (*vapositori*) became dependable support bases when ZANU PF’s urban support waned (Mukonyora, 2011, p. 137). They became part of the machinery of nationalism. In one episode Mugabe, a staunch Catholic, even dressed in the *vapositori* costume as a way of identifying with them. During my field research in 2013, in Zimbabwe, I observed that the *vapositori* have had seats reserved for them at state functions and line up at the airport to receive Mugabe on his return from overseas trips. The treatment granted Mugabe is typical of the treatment given to religious fundamentalist leaders.

The nationalist discourse co-opted some leaders of mainline churches such as Ezekiel Guti of ZAOGA, who upheld the notion of African liberation, and Rev. Obadiah Msindo of the Destiny for Africa Network, an organization which was fully funded by ZANU PF and became its conduit to “sacred power” (Zimudzi, 2006, p. 201). On the eve of the 2013

elections, prophet Wutawunashe, founder and leader of the Family of God Church, endorsed President Mugabe's candidacy, describing him as Zimbabwe's messiah due to his spirited drive to ensure people have total control over their God-given natural resources (Maponga 2013). In the same vein Anglican Bishop Jakazi, urged his members to vote for Mugabe: "I want to encourage you to vote for ZANU PF. I am blessing the victory of Mugabe. I call upon people to choose life and consider the future when they vote in the forthcoming elections" (Masekesa, 2013).

The Apostles Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ), a body with direct monetary support from the ZANU PF regime, was created to house and regulate all 350 apostolic and Zionist churches in Zimbabwe (Nsingo, 2012). Former Vice President Joice Mujuru was the matron of this body, despite being a member of the Salvation Army, which is not a member of the apostolic and Zionist churches. Typical of fundamentalist tendencies, especially theological innovation, when Joice Mujuru fell out with the Mugabe regime, the ACCZ also denounced her and a new theology that justified dropping her as the matron was developed. The leader of ACCZ Bishop Johannes Ndanga stated:

The patron's appointment is done to someone who will be representing the president because he is the one who the Holy Spirit through Johanne Masowe in 1934 said will lead the nation. When former VP was the patron, she was representing President Mugabe, so it is now impossible for her to remain as our patron. (Religion in Zimbabwe, 2014)

In the whole saga leading to her dismissal, Mugabe had accused Mujuru of witchcraft, a practice which is a gross aberration from Christian principles and practice:

We managed to know what *Mai* (Mrs.) Mujuru was doing at her house, even consulting *n'angas* (traditional healers). Recently she invited two Nigerian sangomas.

We heard they were specialists in the field of witchcraft. (Zimbabwe News, 2015)

While Mujuru's religious background is something to reckon with, her association with ZANU PF at the highest level, the Presidium, as Vice President of ZANU PF and of Zimbabwe, still haunts and taints her reputation as an alternative candidate and pillar of hope for Zimbabwe.

To put the discussion into perspective, it must be not be overlooked that religious organizations also have the potential to deploy religion to challenge the system rather than subjecting citizens. Groups such as the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance and Churches in Manicaland represent religio-political groups that have challenged the government in post-colonial Zimbabwe (Tarusarira, 2016). In the second half of 2016, Zimbabwe witnessed a

notable development when Pastor Evan Mawarire started a popular movement, “#ThisFlag,” which challenged the government of President Robert Mugabe to deliver the promises it made in the 2013 election. It was not difficult for Mawarire’s movement to spread as it rode on the back of the national discontent regarding the economic meltdown the country was, and is still, experiencing. The #ThisFlag movement joined forces with citizen groups and effected a national shut down on 6 July 2016 through the use of social media, especially Facebook. Mugabe’s regime descended on Mawarire, but failed to trump up treason charges against him. He thus fled to South Africa and subsequently to the United States of America. One ZANU-PF functionary and Member of Parliament denounced him in a slogan, saying, “Down with Mawarire! Down with those who read the Bible upside down!” (Rupiah, 2016). This violent response by the government to religious organizations critical of it, threaten peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. However, the emergence of such organizations provide a window of hope. Following Mawarire’s #ThisFlag, organizations such as Tajamuka/Sesijikile and other citizens groups emerged and staged protests and demonstrations. The protests shook the government such that it banned protests for certain periods by invoking the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) (Mhofu, 2016). Demonstrated is the strategic potential for religious and non-religious groups to join and confront ZANU PF’s instrumental nationalism.

Fundamentalism is characterized by an emphasis on one center of power. Witnessed is the effort to make Mugabe the center of power and authority. At the human level, he is the visible Supreme Being in the order of divinity. It is no wonder that top musician Alick Macheso, when invited to perform at a state event, had the opportunity to get a handshake from Robert Mugabe. He went down on his knees, bowed down, his head touching the ground, when he raised his head, tears could be seen running down his cheeks (Showbiz Reporter, 2012). Those who have been expelled from the party in the factional fights linked to the succession debate within ZANU PF, left the party singing praises for Mugabe and the party. None of them, including the former Vice President Joice Mujuru, have uttered any word against Mugabe, but only praise. While some might attribute that to fear, this article argues that it is instead a sense of passionate attachment with Mugabe and the party.

The so-called one million man march in May 2016, in support of 92 year old Mugabe as the party’s Presidential candidate in 2018, was organized by the youths and also exposed how the majority of its supporters are poverty-stricken, especially those in the rural areas, but continue to support Mugabe and ZANU PF. The one million man march gobbled an estimated \$600,000 (USD) at a time when hospitals are dilapidated and without drugs. After

the march some of the party enthusiasts were left stranded in the cold with no transport to take them to their homes. Hordes of hungry and desperate party followers were seen milling around dejectedly after being left on their own (Mashaya & Kamhungira, 2016)—an event that happens repeatedly after ZANU PF rallies. With this treatment one wonders what in the first place prompted them to go to the march. It is not the abandonment and ill-treatment with which I argue that these participants willingly went to the rallies, but that the effervescence observed during the marches and rallies makes it difficult to think the participants were forced to attend. This challenges the received orthodoxy that well-written manifestos, also called programmatic agendas, are the key to mobilizing political support. When political parties appeared, they were based on ideology or programmatic agendas (Fukuyama, 2014). In the election of 2013, ZANU PF had a well-promoted economic blue print, called *Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation* (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013) which was meant to turn around the fortunes of the economy—the most referenced promise being the creation of two million jobs. During the one-million man march, Zimbabwe was experiencing a liquidity crunch, and about 100 000 jobs had instead been lost since the 2013 election, according to Former Finance Minister Tendai Biti (New Zimbabwe, 2016). Despite that, thousands turned up for the march.

### **Instrumentalist Nationalism as a Fundamentalist Discourse**

The discourse of rituals in politics can help us further understand how instrumentalist nationalism is fundamentalist in Zimbabwe. Applying this concept helps to show how the process of subject formation is undertaken. Rituals are defined as symbolic behavior that is socially standardized and repetitive (Kertzer, 1988, p. 9). Through rituals, politicians try to assert, and sometimes make divine, their right and authority to rule as well as carve out a new basis of political allegiance. Rituals provide a way to understand what is going on in the world that must be drastically simplified if it is to be understood (Kertzer, 1988, p. 9). When ZANU PF was at its lowest, as from 2000 to the present, it simplified its instrumentalist nationalism mantra through propagandist and particularistic media jingles that were repeated over and over in both electronic and print media. This impression was so impactful that it seems to have penetrated into the minds of the people, whom we observe dedicating their time and energy for ZANU PF activities and making the propagandist rhetoric their basis of arguments in defense of their political party. The messages were crafted so as to subject a people, create a particular mood in the country, and influence an attachment with the ruling regime. Messages meant to “help Zimbabweans understand what was going on in the world” included *The land is the economy and the economy is the land; Zimbabwe will never be a*



*colony again; Our land is our prosperity; Third Chimurenga; Chave Chimurenga* (It's now war), amongst others. An estimate made in 2003 for one music jingle titled *Chave Chimurenga* showed that it was being played approximately 288 times a day on the four national radio stations, which amounts to 8,640 times per month. It was aired on television approximately 72 times a day, which amounts to 2,160 times a month (Sibanda, 2005). Social science tells us that repetition of propaganda can be devastatingly effective (Chikwanha, Sithole, & Bratton, 2004).

Fundamentalism is related to members associating with their own and avoiding outsiders. To ensure adherence, groups may develop particular modes of dress, behaviour, and speech, which are enforced in their communities sometimes violently, as noted previously. ZANU PF developed new campaign material in various forms—shirts, skirts, t-shirts, and flags. As my observation, during the election of 2008 and 2013, it became common to keep a small Zimbabwean flag which got conflated with the ZANU PF flag, due to their similar colours, for purposes of safety. With that flag one would be shielded from attack by ZANU PF enthusiasts. Thus, national and ZANU PF symbols got conflated. At police roadblocks, suspicion of belonging to the opposition was highly expected if one's car did not have a hanging Zimbabwean or ZANU PF flag.

In terms of speech, there were slogans associated with the party and its President. One was expected to be conversant with these, and failure would intimate that one belonged to the opposition. ZANU PF's culture of slogans derives from the liberation war and as Hove (2013) points out:

Liberation-war guerrillas were masters of sloganeering. The so-called *pungwes* or all-night political education meetings in the mountains were nothing more than chains of slogans, extolling the unproven virtues of Zanu. They were also used as a prelude to the cold-blooded murders of those condemned by Zanu kangaroo courts as witches, sellouts and political opponents.

Invariable and repeated wearing and carrying of party regalia ensured that the party ideology and identity slowly sunk into individuals before their realization they would be victims of subject formation, with a passionate attachment even to their source of domination. In repeating these gestures, the masses found themselves in what Butler (1988) called performativity, meaning they performed and internalized the identities imposed by ZANU PF until it became their second nature or lived subjectivity (pp. 204-205). The materials were accompanied by rallies and galas whose rationale derived from the *pungwes*. Galas and

musical bashes were organized on significant days such as the Independence Day, the heroes and defense forces days, as well as days in honor of the late ZANU PF heroes. The type of music, language and themes were linked to the ruling regime. Thus musicians sympathetic to the regime were invited to perform.

Music is not solely a tool of social entertainment. As Koelsch (2010) has noted, music has an inherent ability to evoke powerful emotional responses in listeners (p. 131). Baumgartner, Lutz, Schmidt, and Jancke (2006) observed that evoked emotions impact and enhance the subjective experience of other sensory stimuli (p. 151) and more closely, music releases oxytocin, and research has shown that oxytocin is critical to generation of trust and affiliation (Missig, Ayers, Schulkin, & Rosen, 2010, pp. 2607-2016). The preceding renders music a powerful social tool. No wonder musicologist Cross (2003) asserts that “music is not only sonic, embodied and interactive; it is bound to its contexts of occurrence in ways that enable it to derive meaning from, and interactively confer meaning on, the experiential contexts in which it occurs” (p. 108). Music elicits inexplicable emotions of joy, awe and ecstasy, while increasing trust, empathy and cooperation among participants. In the case of ZANU PF, nationalist listeners would elicit inexplicable emotions toward, and increase trust, empathy and cooperation with, ZANU PF. It is not surprising that composing party songs became one of the key strategies employed by ZANU PF’s political commissars. In 2001, the late ZANU PF’s national commissar and elections director Elliot Manyika recorded the album *Mwana Wevhu* (Son of the Soil) in which he sang the lead vocals on the “hit” song *Nora*, a praise song for Zimbabwe’s President Robert Mugabe. He also composed an eight track called *Zimbabwe 2005* for ZANU PF’s election campaign. Some of his songs celebrated Black independence, while in others, the MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai is accused of selling out to the former colonial power, Britain (Sibanda, 2005). Webster Shamu, ZANU PF’s political commissar, also recorded a CD *Nyatsoterera* (listen carefully) that he composed with a group called Mbare Chimurenga choir (Sibanda, 2008). It has become a tradition to belt out this music at political rallies.

The deployment of songs in the political discourse derives from the colonial times. Chikowore (2015) observes that during the colonial era, Africans deployed songs as cultural expressions to fight war over their being, to regenerate their selfhoods, and to strive for liberation from the confinements of subjugation. These songs, as Chikowore (2015) notes, emerged from the village and urban-class African consciousness. It is therefore not surprising that songs with a similar framework are deployed in pursuit of instrumentalist nationalism in post-colonial times.

Music embedded in religious rituals transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary, thereby laying the foundation for the creation of the sacred. No wonder religious songs have been imported into the political discourse in Zimbabwe (Chitando, 2002). The deployment of music through musical galas and musical jingles is not for mere entertainment, but is a central part of the fundamentalist nationalist project of ZANU PF. It creates a fundamentalist mind, and the articulated impact of music dovetails with the characteristics of fundamentalism. All these fundamentalist initiatives had emotional and psychological functions, an aspect that is under-researched. Thus huge loud speakers that belt out nationalistic music have become a common feature of ZANU PF's political rituals. To this music dance ordinary people, with little to gain from the political discourse.

Those deploying political rituals capitalize on the fact that politics is not merely about material interest, but also producing and using symbols. Kertzer (1988) stated, "It is through symbols that people give meaning to their lives; gain full understanding of political allegiances. The power of the ritual stems from its psychological underpinnings. A ritual also serves to link the individual to society" (p. 10). To understand how the various activities described above, undertaken by the ZANU PF, are fundamentalist and subsequently tools for subject formation, we need to understand participation in rituals. Creating the right protocol, behaviors, sitting arrangements, speeches, song, dance, and dressing (think campaign regalia) in everyday politics at rallies and musical bashes, "involves physiological stimuli, the arousal of emotions; rituals work through the senses to structure our sense of reality and our understanding of the world around us" (p. 10).

Furthermore the psychological attributes of ritual are evident in a frequently dramatic character. Ritual provokes emotional response, thereby prompting people to do things they never thought they could do, or to develop a particular fixed position or disposition about certain issues, as well as being ready to act in certain ways they would otherwise not do had they not been part of the ritual (Kertzer, 1988, p. 10). Fundamentalists are clear about the enemy. There is no compromise and their mission regarding the enemy is simply to eliminate the enemy who is the incarnation of the devil. The various nationalistic activities have created a sectarian understanding of the nation Zimbabwe that is not shared by all Zimbabweans, but one that serves a particular section of society and consequently results in conflict and violence in the country. It has created a people that act in ways that are divisive. The case of the aforementioned National Youth Service graduates who underwent fundamentalist training at youth training camps and then perpetrated violence in support of ZANU PF, proves the point.

Instrumentalist nationalism in the case of Zimbabwe is meant to link the individual with the society or community that is created or imagined (Anderson, 1991) by ZANU PF through its nationalism project. Some may consider patriotism a virtue, but the problem lies in that the love and commitment for country in Zimbabwe has been conflated with the love and commitment for ZANU PF. Differently put, patriotism has been conflated with nationalism, and yet the two are distinct. The nationalist discourse is presented under the guise of patriotism; yet these discourses are driven by different socio-psychological processes. Patriotism refers to the noncompetitive love of and commitment to one's country. It focuses on promoting the welfare of one's nation, but is neutral with regard to the evaluation of others. Nationalism on the other hand is related to the superiority of the ingroup over outgroups and implies the exclusion or even domination of outgroups. Consequently it is associated with higher levels of chauvinism, prejudice, militarization, hawkish attitudes, social dominance orientation, and lower levels of internationalization (Kimmelmeier & Winter, 2008, p. 863). The preceding narrative on instrumentalist nationalism attests to that. Experiments have shown that when exposed to nationalistic symbols, individuals are likely to think and act in ways consistent with the worldviews and values with which the symbols are associated (Kimmelmeier & Winter, 2008). Thus exposure to ZANU PF's symbols is expected to form subjects who think and act in ways consistent with ZANU PF's worldviews and values.

### **Conclusion**

Against this background, it can be argued that there still exist people who enthusiastically, passionately, and emotionally support ZANU PF and its leader, Robert Mugabe. This is contrary to the view of much of the literature on political practice in Zimbabwe—that the many people observed as effervescent at ZANU PF's marches and rallies are forced to attend, or are lured with benefits such as food handouts (Kriger, 2005). I have used the concepts of subject formation and fundamentalism here to offer a new explanation often overlooked in discussing politics in Zimbabwe, thus making a new contribution to the discourse and literature of political mobilization. ZANU PF supporters have developed a passionate attachment to the system and its leader. To attribute this support only to the carrot and stick method in the form of rented crowds, food handouts, coercion, and persuasive election manifestos is inadequate because in some cases these have been non-existent. As I have argued, some allegiances have not shifted. This was demonstrated by some participants of the one million march in support of Robert Mugabe, who were left stranded after the event. As for the election manifestos, the blue print ZimAsset promised 2.2 million jobs, but instead

people lost jobs. Thus, while there are pull and push factors, there is also enthusiastic and passionate following without gaining anything from the process. In this article I have argued that instrumental nationalism—thanks to its fundamentalist character with its subject formation potential—provides an explanation, in part. The Zimbabwean context as discussed above has resulted in conflict and violence, which engender the need for peace and reconciliation. The accentuation of the psychological dimension, exemplified by the fundamentalist mind, indicates that people act quickly and decisively on the basis of their emotions, beliefs, and attitudes more than they do on rational reasons presented in favour of a particular position. To facilitate sustainable peace and reconciliation, the psychological repertoires need to be given serious consideration. For the most part, conflict transformation and peacebuilding processes have been dominated by liberalism, which tends to put emphasis on rationality and detailed treatise at the expense of the workings of conflictants' beliefs, emotions, and attitudes. In practical terms, this means that psychosocial methods should be prioritized to facilitate change of minds and hearts, which are fundamental for sustainable peace and reconciliation in times of conflict and violence.

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