CRITICAL DISCOURSE AND CONFLICT: DECODING DISCURSIVE PRACTICES WITH PARTICIPANTS PREVIOUSLY EXPOSED TO POLITICALLY MOTIVATED CONFLICT

Thabani ka Sigogo Sibanda
African Centre for Migration & Society
University of the Witwatersrand
P O Box 76, Wits 2050, South Africa
sibandat@wits.ac.za

&

Brandon Hamber
International Conflict Research Institute (Incore)
Ulster University, Northern Ireland
&
African Centre for Migration & Society
University of the Witwatersrand
b.hamber@ulster.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

This article uses critical discourse as a framework for decoding discourses of conflict with participants previously exposed to political violence in Zimbabwe. In this study a new approach was adopted that involved a consultative group (CG). The group served as an advisory group and guides to the research. This group's role was to create a framework of data collection that included follow-up of known experiences, stories from the affected communities in Zimbabwe and documents that informed the researcher of the forms of discourses that developed out of the conflict in Zimbabwe. The preliminary thematic issues for study were derived from this advisory group. The discourses analysed were largely derived from 1982 to 1985 newspaper articles. The materials identified in the newspaper articles for the remaining years, were used in the analysis and interpret the data. The CG has its memory-based version. Conducting analysis and interpretation of the data from newspaper articles and related documents, the CGP demonstrated how the entrenchment of hegemony was developed and maintained.

Keywords: Consultative, Discourse, Exclusion, Fragmentation, Gukurahundi

INTRODUCTION

The study explores political conflict that affected populations in Zimbabwe dividing communities along ethnic lines in the early to mid-1980s. The primary political parties involved in the conflict were Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African People's Union (PF ZAPU).The former liberation military components were Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) for ZANU PF and Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) for PF ZAPU. These two military institutions became pivotal in the conflict along ethnic lines. ZANU PF represented the majority of the population in the country. In the early 1980's the Government formed a military brigade, trained by North Korea would be the arm of the State to quell dissent in the years to follow. The military brigade named The Gukurahundi, also known as Fifth Brigade committed atrocities in Matebele land and parts of Midlands in what the State termed to be elimination of dissidents (The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (1997).

The majority political party had a greater presence and voice in the population, which led to misperceptions adversely affecting the minority groups. The political abuses of the minorities are phenomena that are undisputed in our real world and tend to be taken for granted. Political violence against minorities brings a different form of abuse which adds to the already existing economic exploitation that is endemic in many countries. The oppression and exploitation of the under privileged survives through subtleties of political practices that are historically located. These practices are difficult to uproot as they tend to be normalised and accepted as unwritten laws. However, when overt violence is

engendered, justified and promoted through political discourse, then the burden for survival of the targeted communities becomes too huge to bear. The responses to such attacks on the minorities require adaptive survival tactics. Through critical discourse analysis one sees ways in which communities can be trained in understanding looming violence and be better equipped to deal with politically motivated conflict. The State can be used as a vehicle to promote discourses of violence and exclusion. Because the State is a visible institution through which political influences are propagated, it is feasible that communities engage with discourses that are produced through it.

The Chronicle newspaper, a State funded newspaper was used as the main source of the articles for analysis and interpretation. The conflict was mainly reported by The Chronicle located in Bulawayo as opposed to the Harare based, The Herald. In addition to the data collected purposively selected relevant documents and articles outside the newspaper were used to inform the study.

RELATIONSHIPS THAT ARE FOSTERED

According to Janks (1997, pp. 329-342), critical discourse analysis is derived 'from a critical theory of language which sees the use of language as a form of social practice.' In this case social practice refers to 'political discourse' that is linked to violence against the defenceless. Political discourse then becomes the means through which political hegemony is produced and reproduced. In that way interests of the political powerful are served. Discourses are representations of the world in particular ways (Fairclough, 2003). Discursive practices constitute a collective of actions that are performed such as writing, speaking and communicating which organise the representation of the world (Fairclough, 1995; 2001). Discursive acts are seen in their individual character as incidents or events, sometimes described as signifying gestures, which make the intentions of an individual or system interpretable. The discursive acts give clarity of thought when they are discharged in their singular or chain form to cause effect (Perinbanayagam, 1991). Power can be imposed on minorities through discursive practices. Power and control are embedded in the manner knowledge is used, produced and propagated to influence the events that promote hegemony of the State.

The discourses of State manifest themselves in parliamentary debates, the use of institutions of the State to foster hegemony, loyalty and furthering of subordinate relationships to propagate the aspirations of the elite. Nation formation is used as an exclusionary practice that is intended to foster extended 'family ties' and exclude people who are perceived as outsiders. There is the potential for elites to use the State to meet their ends. The elites are able to control State resources and use them to persecute the Other (Therborn, 1980). Foucault (1979) argues that there is a strong relationship between power and knowledge. Control and power interconnect with ideology and discourse. Given these dimensions, the elite are able to organise institutions of the Sate as strategic apparatus for achieving their intentions (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2006). Within institutions formations that perpetuate dominant discourses are elaborated and refined (Foucault, 1977). The institutions then entrench the powers of the dictators. In pursuit of domination, those who wield power institutionalize legal instruments that subdue and make citizens subservient to the elite (McHoul & Grace, 1993).

Particular forms of relationships are nurtured between the State and its citizenry. The relationships between the State and the persons, are characterised by subservience the former being the dominant. These subordinate relationships become the basis for perpetuating the values and aspirations of the people in power. Over a period of time the elite invests in establishing certain social values and institutions that are intended to propagate their power. These social values, rules and institutions (Burton, 1990), which now constitutes themselves as governing practice are then used to legitimise the authority of the elite. The State is used as the basis for exerting such legitimacy. Components of legitimating the elites include exclusionary practices that promote personalisation of power. As such, legitimacy is not necessarily founded on good practices. Under such circumstances, coercive practices are established based on the rules of the State that are intended to sustain the authority and power of a particular group of people. The rules and institutions ensure that there is a sustained relationship between the State and the citizenry, with the latter being accorded a subordinate role (Burton & Carlen, 1979).

Due to the complexity of the relationships between the State and the governed, people in power attempt to categorise the relationships into some form of social strata to make the governing of the citizenry manageable. One scenario is that the ruling elite creates several layers of relationships to legitimate authority and maintain power for the ruling elite (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). For example, the stratification of relationships is deliberately produced to continue the programme of hegemony, in terms

of friends of the State, enemies of the State, compatriots, kinsmen, ethnic groups, and comrades. The friends of the State would include comrades, compatriots and kinsmen. The enemies of the State would include activists, political opponents, and any other category that does not support the social values and institutions of the people in power. Through a deliberate discourse, those in power target certain categories that are easy to present in a negative way to the populace to keep them rooted in power. The most easily created and identifiable category is ethnicity. In the consolidation of power and authority, this category would be used as an example of a destabilizing force. It would then be presented as odd, creating a perception that it has antagonistic values against the people. Those in power can create or (re) produce ethnic identity, in this context ethnicity can easily be used as a source of conflict through over - stating its negative attribute (De Vos, 1995; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Laclau & Zac, 1984).

In the process of consolidating power certainly in countries such as Zimbabwe, the elite focus, for example, heavily on ethnicity (tribalism or foreignness) as a threat to a democratic dispensation. The politicization of ethnicity or foreignness and 'other' similar categories, as enemies of the State is then promoted as a key factor that is used to propagate power. Certain ethnic groups or foreignness are labelled enemies of the State as they are made to acquire the symbol of threat to the peace and stability of the country. The government then use any means to promote a socially constructed understanding of the enemies as it (re) create a negative dimension of tribes and caricatures among its citizenry. In this situation, there is an attempt to use every institution to propagate the values and aspirations of the elite. Security apparatus and intelligence agencies can be used to subject ordinary people to torture and repression or the unwanted are left with a sense of insecurity through highlighting the negative differences.

Tileaga's (2006) examines aspects of prejudice and moral exclusion on ethnic minorities in a Romanian socio-cultural space. The article reveals perceptions of the Romani as morally bankrupt and with no nationhood. The article which is written from a critical discursive perspective, addresses the negative construction of Romani. It notes discursive moral exclusion against the Romani. It demonstrates certain ways that delegitimize and dehumanise Romani as the 'other'(Tileaga, 2006). In similar research, Opotow (2010) examines moral exclusion and injustice. She defines moral exclusion as a form of perception that regards other people as beyond the boundaries set for moral values, rules and not worth fair consideration. The people who are morally excluded are regarded as inhuman, nonentities and undeserving. This practice is directed against any situation from mild discrimination to severe contexts such as genocide. However, the same author notes that there is need for further empirical research on moral exclusion to identify causes, predict its course and socially address it (Opotow, 2010). In her earlier work Opotow (2001) argues that lessons from history inform us that human beings can be dehumanising to other human beings. At the time of writing the article, she observed that about 205 million people had died as a result of victimisation. She argues that globally, ordinary people are enslaved, tortured and persecuted for belonging to a particular group. However, in the midst of these abuses, we have not witnessed significant prosecutions. Abuses in politically motivated conflict are prevalent (Reeler, 1995; Lykes, 1997, Martin-Baro, 1994). Discourse study can play a role in exposing such abuses. Psychology and social justice research can be developed to such an extent as to confront the tendency of normalising the abuses (Opotow, 2001). The damage of political discourse on social relations provides room to be explored further. This study contributes to this thinking and the praxis of interventionists working with distressed communities (Lykes, 1994, 1996, 1997).

The role played by the CG allowed different possibilities of using participatory methodologies in the field of conflict studies. The CG permitted the reflexivity in examining descriptions of political events related to the conflict and associated narratives. The process left the study to be done largely through the lens and the narratives of the CG. The discourses of the media were analysed and interpreted with the insightfulness of the group members' intimate knowledge of the conflict, now being examined historically on documents available. The descriptions of representations assisted the CG in understanding the discourses and their political impact on the ordinary people in the regions affected by the conflict. The systems of meaning found in the discourse informed the CG about certain topics in the conflict and how the regulated social relations at the time affected them as individuals exposed to the conflict, thus drawing meanings based on references to other discourses (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). This study was collaborative, seeking to enable silent voices to respond in a small way to the dominant discourses of the State.

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METHOD OF ENQUIRY

The study presented here centred on the conflict that took place in Zimbabwe between 1980 and 1990.The paper explores political conflict that affected populations in Zimbabwe dividing communities along ethnic lines in the early to mid-1980s. The primary political parties involved in the conflict were Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African People's Union (PF ZAPU). The former liberation military components were Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) for ZANU PF and Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) for PF ZAPU. These two military institutions were pivotal in the conflict and its division along ethnic lines. The study was collaboratively conducted with a consultative group (CG) creating a space in which the joint enquiry sought to reflect on the discursive practices and their impact on targeted populations. The process of working collaboratively afforded inclusivity of opinions. The group served asan advisory group and guide to the research.

The consultative group members were selected purposively. The group members were selected based on strategic snowball sampling, a technique used by anthropologists and sociologists wanting to examine particular descriptive aspects of social institutions (Smith, 1975). This technique safeguarded the confidentiality of group members through the use of significant others to connect the researcher to the appropriate source. This strategy was required due to the sensitivity of studying this form of conflict. The consultative group consisted of eight people with an informed background on Zimbabwe, whose informed consent was sought before participation in the study.

The consultative group represented eight Black Zimbabweans, five males and three females from the Matebeleland region, with various backgrounds that included military, journalism and political activists, researchers and conflict management experts with an understanding of Southern African political issues. All the group members had been exposed to the conflict in one form or another directly or through a close family member, who had lost life, detained or subjected to severe assault. The participants had a minimum level of diploma education

This group's role was to create a framework of data collection that included follow-up of known experiences, stories from the affected communities in Zimbabwe and documents that informed the researcher of the forms of discourses that developed out of the conflict in Zimbabwe. The preliminary thematic issues for study were derived from this advisory group. The consultation facilitated a process in which examples of experiences during conflict were identified and examined to enable the study to explore issues of discourse and conflict. The Chronicle newspaper was used as the main source of the articles for analysis and interpretation. In addition to the data collected relevant documents and articles outside the newspaper were purposively selected for study.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was followed in the analysis of the data with the CG engaging directly with the texts derived from the discussion guide, the purposively selected newspaper articles and documents for analysis and interpretation. CDA facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration on issues such as theories, methods, analysis and praxis (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Through CDA we sought to establish linkages between social processes and language, and how political hegemony was engendered and developed.

Thompson (1990) uses a range of concepts to analyse the affairs and strategies of the people in power, namely, reification, legitimation, dissimulation, unification and fragmentation. The terms as detailed below are used in elaboration of the discursive practices embedded in the conflict.

Reification refers to taking social or political conditions as a state of affairs that must be seen as natural, outside and beyond history, social space and processes. Legitimation refers to representing acts as legitimate, therefore worthy of support, acknowledgement and recognition. Dissimulation refers to relationships of domination, which are concealed, obscured, dismissed and denied to give the impression that there is nothing out of the ordinary or sinister. Unification refers to some form of unity that is developed and enforced to establish collective identity regardless of differences and divisions present. Fragmentation is used as strategy to separate people into different groups, to divide and rule in order to maintain the status quo (Thompson, 1990). The analysis identified situations that suggested that ZANU PF used all these strategies in their ideological discourses to monopolise power. Below is a table showing the analytic framework and strategy (Thompson, 1990) that was used. The model is referred to as Thompson's mode of ideological operation.

Table 1: Thompson's modes of ideological operation

Reification	State of affairs presented as natural, outside and beyond history, social space and processes
Legitimation	Represents something as legitimate, therefore worth support, acknowledgment and recognition
Dissimulation	Relationships of domination are concealed, obscured, dismissed and denied
Unification	Some form of unity is developed and enforced to establish collective identity regardless of differences and divisions present
Fragmentation	Strategy to separate people into different groups to divide and rule so as to maintain status quo

OUTCOME OF THE STUDY: HARNESSING DISCOURSE TO LEGITIMATE CONFLICT

The analysis and interpretation was done jointly with the Consultative Group (CG), which considered the role of political power in conflict and its relationship to the maintenance of the status quo. Using Thompson's (1990) ideological framework, the government's power and domination was scrutinised with the help of the CG. The group was involved in the selection of text and using the same texts across in the group processed the discourses.

In analysis and interpretation, the CG was encouraged to be reflective, seeking to understand the contradictions that were inherent in the conflict through referring to other texts for elaboration and other readers to decipher implicit meaning. These discourses were located in time and consequently the CG sought to relate the statements to the historical events of the region built from their own knowledge and experience (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). This meant that the CG had to understand how and where the discourse emerged, how the message was put across, and what institutions supported the discourse. It is understood that discourses produce power and that institutions empower some people at the expense of others. The CG reflected on how particular discourses supported and strengthened particular institutions, and the implications for conflict in Zimbabwe. The Group sought to understand the political positions that emerged behind each set of social activities that characterized the conflict in similar ways seen in other texts (Parker, 1992). Below is an analysis and interpretation of texts extracted from The Chronicle and related documents.

REIFICATION OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION AND LEADERSHIP

In order to normalise and treat the ruling party's leadership as 'natural' (that is as the only party entitled to rule), ZANU PF's 1980 victory was characterised by total rejection of opposition. Several demonstrations and protests by the ruling party supporters against PF ZAPU took place (The Chronicle, 22 September 1980).Anti ZAPU protests continued into mid 1980s with demonstrations being supported openly by some of the senior ZANU PF officials. In 1984, Mr Alexio Mudzingwa, ZANU PF Secretary for Mashonaland West, is reported as having asserted that demonstrations were organised to flush out dissidents and their supporters. Senior party officials indicate that small political parties were vulnerable to penetration by South Africa and therefore it was necessary to have a one party state. In an address to the general Secretaries of Council of Churches of Southern Africa, Mr Nathan Shamuyarira is quoted at the time as saying the parties could receive resources to destabilise the country as they were not nationalist oriented (The Chronicle, 11 October 1984).

These public utterances had been preceded by bloody 'clashes' in previous years, between ZIPRA and ZANLA forces at Entumbane, Bulawayo, Chitungwiza, Harare and Conemare near Gweru, during the first two years of the independence (Consultative Group Process). Violent attacks against PF ZAPU supporters continued into 1985 (The Chronicle, 21 January 1985; 30 September 1985). Violence increasingly became a strategy, normative in the ruling party's justification for control of power. It was therefore natural to sack the PF ZAPU office bearers from the Government and arrest its senior politicians (The Chronicle, 12 March 1982; The Chronicle, 13 November 1984; The Chronicle, 4 March, 1985; The Chronicle, 5 August 1985). The Chronicle, as noted above, issued warnings on behalf of the Government against PF ZAPU, its leadership and supporters (see The Chronicle, 19 September 1985). These warnings related to PF ZAPU's alleged illicit relationship with dissidents. The editor of The Chronicle supported the Government's military intervention as necessary, as evidenced by editorial comments (see quotation below from The Chronicle, Comment, 29 August, 1987):

> We feel the security measures can be augmented. In June, noting the resurgence of dissident activity in Matebeleland and the Midlands, we made the call in this column for the crack 5 Brigade to be deployed in Matebeleland again and the Midlands. Indeed, the Government has warned of this measure, and with the re-introduction of a curfew in dissident affected areas. We are of the opinion that the time for warnings is over, and the situation now calls for immediate and decisive action.

The editor presents himself as an agent of the government and makes a declaratory statement that commands the Government to take an 'immediate and decisive action' and stop issuing warnings. The editorial referred to above, entitled 'time for warnings is over', is presented as a state of affairs that naturally should be followed by swift action that has never happened before beyond the realm of history and social space.

LEGITIMATING OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE FIFTH BRIGADE

The circumstances for the training of the Fifth Brigade arose out of a need to deal with threats to the consolidation of power and political authority. In the address of over 3,500 former ZANLA forces, Mr Mugabe is reported to have announced that the Fifth Brigade was formed to deal with dissidents and any other political problems in the country. The Prime Minister informed the public that 'only people who plan to be dissidents and indulge in subversive activities should be afraid of the new br(i)gade' (The Chronicle, 27 August 1981, p.1). From the outset the brigade was described as a force to deal with political discontent in the country. The Koreans had come to train the brigade which was 'formed specially to deal with outbreaks of trouble in the country...' (The Chronicle, 22 August, 1981, p.1). Dr Joshua Nkomo, leader of PF ZAPU, queried the creation of the brigade arguing that the country had sufficient law enforcement to deal with internal security problems and that he was not 'consulted on the formation of this brigade which, to me, is for the possible imposition of a one-party state in our country' (The Chronicle, 25 August 1981, p.4). Mr Mugabe argued, when MPs in parliament further questioned the brigades formation, that the brigade was to 'accommodate' the armies that were created in the country after independence, that the country had received donations from North Korea, and the British training team (the British had come to facilitate political transition from the Rhodesian to Zimbabwean army) was not well equipped to train the brigade (The Chronicle, 29 October 1981).

The British Military Advisory Team arrived in Zimbabwe immediately after independence in 1980 to work on integrating the main armies, namely the formerly Rhodesian, ZANLA and ZIPRA forces. The team completed its work in November 1981. The North Korean Military Team arrived in early August 1981 to set up and train the Fifth Brigade (The Chronicle, 13 November 1981). In defence of the Fifth Brigade during the ZANU PF rally in Esiphezini, the then Minister of National Supplies Mr Enos Nkala, asserted that the brigade was created to fight dissidents such as those who killed Chief Mabikwa Khumalo of Lupane, i.e. using an important name (well-known chief in the community) to convince the public that the Government had good intentions in establishing the brigade (The Chronicle, 9 November 1983). Chief Mabikwa Khumalo was the grandson of King Lobengula of the Ndebele, who was the son of Mzilikazi Khumalo who became King of Ndebele after pulling out of Zulu Kingdom in South Africa. Pseudo dissidents (Munkonoweshuro, 1992) had become a known factor in the region, which was used to strengthen a case for the deployment of the Fifth Brigade.

The increase in the presence of dissidents was justification to create and deploy the Fifth Brigade in the civilian dominated areas of Matebeleland and parts of the Midlands. Pseudo dissidents created by the Government (Munkonoweshuro, 1992) inflated the numbers of dissidents, which under normal circumstance could have been dealt with by the police. The support Unit, a branch in the Zimbabwe Republic Police was specialised in handling armed insurgency and had powers to arrest. This made the argument for the creation of the Fifth Brigade unattainable. Therefore there was a need on the part of the Government to create a situation in which the Brigade could be legitimated. People who reported atrocities being committed by the army were branded dissident supporters (The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, 1997, 2007). According to the ZANU PF leadership it was the army's duty to defend the country. The State media reported on instances of the public claiming that the soldiers should remain in their communities to protect them (The Chronicle, 24 April 1984). The editor of The Chronicle observed that it was necessary to deploy the army and the police in reference to the presence of the armed forces in parts of the City of Bulawayo, to curb political violence. This comment followed the sealing by the armed forces of the western areas of Bulawayo. The areas were civilian occupied. The editor supported the clampdown by the forces on civilian occupation. He had this to say:

> The joint army and police clampdown in western areas of Bulawayo may have been an inconvenience to almost everyone in the city. But there will be few sensible minded people who can doubt the necessity of the exercise...The time had obviously come for the authorities to adopt measures which would nip this in the bud...any malcontents bent on violence as a means to power...will be weeded out and dealt with severely...The Chronicle has many times, called for an end to all violence... (The Chronicle, Comment, 4 March 1985, p.4).

The editor reiterates his call for army intervention on civilian populated areas. According to the editor, it was necessary to call in the Fifth Brigade to deal with the political disturbances in Matebeleland and the Midlands (The Chronicle, Comment, 29 August 1987). This call came as a repeated message according to the editor, thus bringing the brigade to areas identified as violence-ridden. The intervention of the army was thus see, through the eyes of many in the general population, as legitimate and should be supported.

DISSIMILATION OF THE DISCURSIVE ACTS OF VIOLENCE

The actions of the military against civilian populations in Matebeleland and the Midlands were denied in the State media. Any negative reporting from elsewhere was termed fabrication or a foreign press agenda against the government. The editor of The Chronicle described the atrocities of civilians as the 'so-called atrocities', commenting on the report by the editor of the British newspaper, The Observer which confirmed the existence of such violations (The Chronicle, 30 April 1984). The editor of the Chronicle trivialised the atrocities.

The government assigned the army units to lead local and foreign journalists in gathering information on the army atrocities. A total of 54 journalists took part in the tour in search of the evidence in Matebeleland South, in areas of the journalists' choice. The convoy under the leadership of Rex Nhongo (Retired Army General Solomon Mujuru) and then Police Commissioner Wiridzayi Nguruve, got stuck due to poor roads. Instead of using an accessible road the journalists were led to use the most difficult roads in the terrain. The journalists returned to Bulawayo having failed in their assignment, with the retired General reportedly being bemused by the journalists' inability to tolerate the terrain (The Chronicle, 11 May 1984).The incident was noted in a story entitled;

> 'Atrocities: Reporters find no evidence':A full day's intensive tour of Matebeleland South yesterday by about 50 local and foreign journalists failed to established evidence of the allegations of massive atrocities and massacres of civilians by members of the National Army who are currently engaged in a campaign to rid the area of dissidents (The Chronicle, 11 May 1984)..

The words a 'full day's intensive tour' suggests that the investigations were thorough. The army was merely looking for dissidents as the article impresses upon the reader. The article goes on to say:

> The journalists had been allowed to go to any place in the province and speak to people of their choice. The army had only provided security for them...Earlier when the team of journalists arrived at the home of Father Gabriel they saw a group of about 10 women and three men waiting. Father Gabriel, a Catholic priest, had been the original source of the allegations. The Director of Information, Dr John Tsimba who led the newsmen, noted that the villagers had been secretly organised by one journalist, Mr Peter Godwin of the Sunday Times and the author of an article on alleged massive atrocities on civilians. Mr Godwin, who was present, did not dispute Dr Tsimba's remarks.

The journalists were allowed to talk to anyone they pleased under the protection of the army. In the process they discovered, according to the article above, that there were people who were secretly organised to lie about the killing of civilians. They were organised by a White journalist with a Catholic priest as the originator of the story. In other words, there was denial of massacres authenticated by a large number of journalists in the company of the director of information. Thus relations of domination were concealed through distorting information and propaganda through dismissals, denial and obscuring of facts.

LANGUAGE USED IN THE UNIFICATION PROCESS TO ENFORCE ZANU PF RULE

In the context of discursive practices, the language used in trying to unify people began to change once ZANU PF realised that its strategy of hegemony and domination was being implemented successfully. It became a matter of language and power (Fairclough, 1989). The leadership of the government started to address shared purpose in promoting Zimbabwean interests and the background of the struggle as similar. The discourse of 'sameness' was repeatedly cited in the media. This strategy had been used as early as 1980, though not explicitly. Indications for the desire of a one party State began in earnest in the early 1980s. The main political parties debated and strategized on creating a one party State (The Chronicle, 18 January 1982). ZANU PF started to campaign openly for the one party State in 1981, indicating that such a system was democratic in its own right (The Chronicle, 30 September 1981).

The issue of a one party state also started to gain momentum at a popular level. Prior to the Prime Minister's speech in Monash Australia in 1981, The Chronicle reported occurrence of youth demonstrations in favour of the one party State in the then Salisbury. It is reported they carried placards saying,

> Smith declared UDI – why can't we declare a one-party state? (The Chronicle, 21 September 1981).

This event was followed by similar incidents with the Prime Minister taking the occasion to address the public about the one party state agenda. The Prime Minister addressed the elite Presidential Security Guard of over 3, 000 personnel on the one party State and the guard's role in 'flushing out dissidents' and their associated malcontents. He insisted on the creation of 'conditions for one party' (The Chronicle, 30 June 1983). In 1983, claims about the military killings of civilians in Matebeleland surfaced through the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe. A Committee of Inquiry was officially pronounced in September 1983 (The Chronicle, 14 September 1983). At this stage ZANU PF was ready to prepare a resolution in support of the one party State (The Chronicle, 19 November 1983). PF ZAPU leadership suggested that it was too early to adopt a one party state. Dr Nkomo would support the system if it was the will of the majority even though he felt it would not be a good idea, immediately after a protracted war of independence (The Chronicle, 2 April 1981, p.1). The Prime Minister asserted that 'the overwhelming majority of Zimbabweans' favoured a one party State. The Rhodesian Front was opposed to the system (The Chronicle, 2 March 1984). The ZANU PF youth endorsed the one party State (The Chronicle, 28 May 1984). ZANU PF leadership began to vigorously pursue the establishment of the system and executive presidency in 1984, arguing that it was a legitimate move (The Chronicle, 11 August 1984). During the same year ZANU PF adopted the one party State system as part of its political objectives. On 12 August 1984 The Chronicle noted:

> The ZANU (PF) second People's Congress meeting at Borrowdale, Harare has adopted the party's draft constitution which lists the establishment of one party state under the vanguard leadership of ZANU (PF) among the aims and objectives of the party.

This left many politicians and commentators feeling that the system was now inevitable. On 17 August 1984, The Chronicle reported that a:

> A FIVE MAN delegation of the United Kingdom branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association presently visiting Zimbabwe, has accepted the inevitability of a one party state in Zimbabwe. The leader of the delegation, Mr Gay Barnett, said the Prime Minister, C. de Mugabe had briefed them on the one party system when they met him this week.

Protectionism and the importance of unification was one of the stated goals of the one party system. The one party system would then be the vehicle to achieve total domination of the opposition parties in the country. It would secure the needed political influence sought by ZANU PF. Therefore small parties needed to be eliminated or assimilated in order for the ruling party to consolidate and entrench power. It now became a question of master discourse assimilating the other (Conklin, 1997). In The Chronicle, 11 November 1984 it is noted:

> ZIMBABWE's minority parties are prone to South African penetration and this is one of the reasons why the Government intends introducing a one party state, the Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, C. de Nathan Shamuyarira. Speaking at the seventh day meeting of general secretaries of council of churches in the SADCC region in Harare, he said local minority parties were not nationalist and could receive money from outside to destabilise their own country.

Pronouncements for banning PF ZAPU emerged and strengthened with its overt resistance to the one party State. The pronouncements came from the leadership of the ruling party. In resisting the one party state, Joshua Nkomo was quoted in 1982 as saying that 'It is essential at this stage of our development to say little or nothing about a one-party state...' (The Chronicle, 11 January 1982). In 1984, John Nkomo (currently one of the two Vice Presidents in Zimbabwe), ZAPU's then Information and Publicity Secretary was once again quoted by the editor of The Chronicle as saying,

> We strongly reject the current moves by the ruling ZANU (PF) party to turn Zimbabwe into a one party state.

The calls to ban PF ZAPU came through the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Enos Nkala (The Chronicle, 3 June 1985; 21 June 1985) and the Governor of Matebeleland South, Mr Mark Dube (The Chronicle, 21 November 1984). According to the editor of the Chronicle, Mr Mugabe must be praised for being wise, visionary and dynamic. The political actions of people in power were now regarded as sacred. The signing of the unity accord and his assumption of the executive presidency indicated that citizens of Zimbabwe had faith in Mr Mugabe's leadership, as detailed in the editor's comment (The Chronicle, Comment, 1 January 1988). There were strong pronouncements on the unity agreement between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU in 1988, with the ruling party taking majority leadership. Unity brought peace after seven years of atrocities (The Chronicle, 25 December 1988). The unity accord became a symbol of ZANU PF's permanent rule. The unification process consolidated ZANU PF's rule and hegemony. The primary motive in the conflict had been accomplished – the fact that ZANU PF had absolute power. The unity accord meant that the positions of ZANU PF leadership and the party as a political formation could hold reigns of power with minimum threat. Thereafter nothing would really threaten peace.

FRAGMENTATION AS A STRATEGY TO CREATE HOSTILE CAMPS

Fragmentation surfaces in various forms during the emergence and continuation of the conflict. During that time actions that were leading to atrocities became evident and acts associated with fragmentation

increased. In the early 1980s, when arms caches were found, ZANU PF leadership claimed they were able to identify right away who the culprits were, prior to investigations being conducted. PF ZAPU leadership was accused of harbouring arms of war for use against the government of the day. PF ZAPU officials and leadership were ordered to account individually to prove their innocence (The Chronicle, 15 February 1982). The government declared that properties owned by PF ZAPU were not business entities but strategic places for hiding ammunition. The language use during the discovery of the arms suggested that it had been concluded who were responsible for the arms concealment (The Chronicle, 14 February 1982)as indicated below:

> THE PRIME MINISTER, Mr Mugabe, yesterday accused PF-ZAPU of joining the Government "just to string along while planning to overthrow it", Mr Mugabe added that the two ZAPU-owned farms where large arms caches were discovered will be taken over by the Government. Speaking at a mammoth rally at Norton, the Prime Minister said all those who work at the two farms had been arrested.
> Mr Mugabe said he would summon all the ZIPRA commanders to his office today and order them to reveal the location of other arms caches.

All business entities associated with PF ZAPU were confiscated or destroyed to ensure that the party did not have an economic base to finance itself. The PF ZAPU officials are reported to be dismayed at what they believed to be an attempt by ZANU PF leadership to build a criminal case against them. In an attempt to prevent the confiscation of the properties, the PF ZAPU Central Committee after their meeting, issued a statement in response to Mr Mugabe's accusations as follows:

> The meeting was dismayed at the deliberate attempts to build up a case on an issue whose background the Prime Minister knows emanates from a war situation…We wish to categorically deny the allegation of a plot to overthrow the government. On the contrary, PF ZAPU did everything and still does for the consolidation and success of our independence (The Chronicle, 15 February 1982).

The committee further indicated that all PF ZAPU combatants were disarmed during demobilisations. ZIPRA ex combatants denied having bought the properties with intention to hide arms. The editorial comment declared that the arms caches could not have been concealed without the knowledge of PF ZAPU leadership. But at the same time, the editor indicated that people with intention to overthrow the government were few in numbers (The Chronicle, Comment, 18 February 1982). This period was the beginning of the fragmentation and collapse of PF ZAPU as an opposition party.

PF ZAPU, its leadership and supporters were accused of intentions to overthrow his government, when he was at the same allegedly trying his best to unite, reconcile and create peace in the nation. His assertions were made during political rallies that ensured wide coverage of messages to specific target groups. Delineation was continually drawn between the warmongers and those opposed to peace-loving people of Zimbabwe. By electing ZANU PF the people of Zimbabwe indicated that they wanted peace, development and progress and success in elections was a 'foundation for a one party state' (The Chronicle, 18 February 1982).

Immediately, the government outlawed the thirteen companies belonging to PF ZAPU (The Chronicle, 16 July1982). Mr Mugabe went on a tour of rallies to garner support for his opposition to PF ZAPU leadership. During his political rallies, Mr Mugabe was branded as 'life Prime Minister of Zimbabwe' and ZANU PF declared as the only people's party (The Chronicle, 22 March 1982). Shortly thereafter the sacking of PF ZAPU leadership from the Government began including, among others, Dr Joshua Nkomo as Minister Without Portfolio. The Deputy Army Commander, Lt Lookout Masuku, and former PF ZAPU Head of Military Intelligence, Mr Dumiso Dabengwa, were also arrested over arms caches using the country's then Emergency Powers Regulations (The Chronicle, 12 March 1982). Later in 1984, Mr Cephas Msipa and John Nkomo were dismissed as Ministers of State Water Resources and Development in Deputy Prime Minister's Office and Prime Minister's Office respectively.

Calls for banning PF ZAPU as party and jailing its leadership, began to emerge as a continued strategy to fragment the population. PF ZAPU leadership was described as fanning violence and murder. The Chronicle, 23 April 1984 sub-headed 'Minister warns ZAPU on violence' reported:

> IF PF-ZAPU did not stop using violence, there would be gnashing of teeth, the chairman of ZANU (PF) Mashonaland West province, Cde Nathan Shamuyarira warned in Darwendale yesterday. Cde Shamuyarira was reacting to the reward of $2100 allegedly offered by ZAPU to anybody who killed C. de Advance Shamuyarira, a ZANU (PF) youth in the area. The offer was allegedly written on an 'On Government Service' khaki envelope.

> This is a final warning we are giving ZAPU,' he told a mass rally. 'ZANU (PF) fought and defeated Ian Smith, it should be capable of crushing ZAPU'.

In a different scenario during the election campaigns, in The Chronicle, 12 July 1984, sub-headed 'Election plot to kill officials – PM' the following message is presented;

> The killings of ZANU (PF) officials in some parts of the country by dissidents is a ZAPU pre-election strategy to discourage people from joining the ruling party, the Prime Minister said yesterday. C. de Mugabe warned PF-ZAPU that the Government had given that party 'a long rope' and the party should not have any regrets when the end of that rope was reached and Government took action against PF-ZAPU.

The ordinary people were instructed by the government to cooperate with the army during its operations (The Chronicle, 20 April 1984). In the meantime demonstrations by ZANU PF against PF ZAPU to create an impression that it was an illegitimate political party, increased in scale. The party is described as having no direction and not caring for the needs of the people, a consistent theme used to describe the Ndebele and the leadership with which it largely affiliated itself(The Chronicle, 24 June 1984). The negative publicity about PF ZAPU across the conflict period of time as exemplified by the newspaper articles cited in this section demonstrated a persistent view that PF ZAPU leadership was the cause for the destabilisation in the country. The mediainformed the public that Mr Mugabe told Dr Joshua Nkomo to work for peace and stop violence (The Chronicle, 24 November1984). PF ZAPU political meetings or rallies were cancelled by the order of the Home Affairs Minister at his discretion, an act argued to be necessary (The Sunday News, 21 July 1987). These actions left the party leadership and its followers completely fragmented. The fragmentation spread countrywide across political space and ethnic groups. ZANU PF meetings continued with no disruptions from the State. The citations made throughout this thesis span over a long period of time indicating a concerted discursive effort by the ruling elite to ensure the disintegration of the opposition through discrediting it on moral grounds. The fragmentation was more visible within ZAPU itself as a split within the party took place. A number of the PF ZAPU leadership left the party during the conflict and at the time of the unity to join ZANU PF. Some of the senior PF ZAPU and former ZIPRA combatants left for neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Botswana. Other ZAPU members remained in the countries in which they were based, for example Angola and Zambia, and have not returned to date. The conflict created a wider than expected fragmentation among the Ndebele, PF ZAPU and its political base, with part of the generality joining hands with ZANU PF.

DISCUSSION

The collaborative effort between the researcher and the Consultative Group enabled a process of reflection that permitted the identification, analysis and interpretation of the processes that supported the hegemonic entrenchment of the governing party while ruthlessly eliminating dissent. It is easier to talk about elimination of opponents than to identify what and how the processes of systematic elimination of resistance are done. In this study, through the use of Thompson's model of discursive practices it becomes evident that certain forms of discourses can be used to mount attacks on opponents by employing the media to institute negative campaigns and follow those campaigns with physical action. The State media created an atmosphere in which the people opposed to the ruling elitewere treated as evil, harmful and threats to peace. As a collective they (those opposed to the government in this case) must be expurgated from normal society (Thompson, 1990). In attributing negative actions, dissidents were described as enemies of the people who acted intentionally and werefully conscious of the deliberate harm they were causing on the nation. Juxtaposed with the horrible attributions, the

government with its military mavericks isreported as saving the people from the bandits and criminals (Thompson, 1990; Riggins, 1997). Using the imagery of bandits / criminals the Ndebeles are portrayed largely as notorious and ready to stab any one. They are presented as constantly wielding knives if they are not planning to destroy national progress. This view of the Ndebele or people associated with PF ZAPU is inter textually linked with prior and after conflict ZANU PF documents that have created stereotypes of Ndebele as violent and cruel. For example, using historically derived incidents in similar ways (Riggins, 1997), crimes against the Ndebele are justified on vague historical facts (Foucault, 1982) about the actions of their ancestors who murdered and stole from the ancestors of the Shona people. The media elaborates on these issues as if they were true probably unwittingly or possibly with the knowledge that such ZANU PF documents exist. Documents have been produced under the banner of ZANU PF to perpetuate hold on power and strengthen hegemony. The Grand Plan of 1979 is one such document. In the review of the 1979 Grand Plan, Anonymous (2003) says;

> Anyone who disputes that this was conquest needs medical examination. For some sixty long years, the Shona people were brutalised, insulted and abused by the Ndebeles. Their wealth was ravenously plundered and economic life left to bleed to death in the cruellest manner. The Ndebele subjected the Shona people to the worst forms of barbarism and tyranny. They imported violence to Zimbabwe and it is a well-known fact that violence was a virtue in Zululand and perhaps continues to be to this day. No one doubts the assertion that violence flows in Ndebele blood. The redefinition of our relationship with the settlers, black or white, is long overdue! We therefore salute the launch of the third phase of our struggle (THIRD CHIMURENGA) and invite the reader of this article to join us in celebrating the manner in which this fight is being conducted (Progress Review of 1979).

Historically, there are authors that argue the Ndebele under Mzilikazi were violent against the Shona people(Edwards, 1972). The media used this myth to create a sense that the Ndebeles were still capable of terrorising the 'peace loving' Shona people, in particular under the fantasy of their long gone commander and 'terrorist successor' Lobengula Khumaloargued to have caused havoc in the Shona territories. The journalists appear wanting on creating a sense of illegitimacy for the dissidence as just one of those situations in which disgruntled remnants of war were causing havoc. The approach discredits any person who may have genuine reasons in opposing the ZANU PF Government.

With the theme of the Ndebeles as settlers the journalists are clear about the messages they want to convey. The 'othering' is effectively used to dehumanise and diminish the Ndebele on the basis of their foreignness as shown in similar texts (Riggins, 1997). In the newspaper articles, declarative speech is frequently used in which harshly dealing with the Ndebele or dissidents is emphasized. The ordinary Ndebele is lumped together with dissidence. The inter textuality is striking in the sense that the writings were done several years apart starting from 1979 during the period of intense assault on civilians (1982 - 1985) and years after. In order to make this assault on civil liberties, the State media had to facilitate falsification of information, disguising it as objective rationality in ways observed in preceding writings (Dryzek, 1990).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are made at four key levels namely; roles played by practitioners of peace building; practitioners working with the media, conducting appropriate research and consultative processes with conflict affected communities. Roles played by practitioners of peace building: In conflict, practitioners can work by analysing, decoding, writing and giving evidence in matters related to construction of information that engender and perpetuate conflict. In analysing discourses of conflict in the media, early warning can be developed to moderate communication that has a potential to engender conflict.

Practitioners working with the media: Practitioners can target and work with editors and journalists of both private and public media to sensitize and train them in writing about conflict so they do not in cite directly or indirectly violence in their articles.

Conducting appropriate research: There is paucity of research in the area of discourse of conflict narrated through the media that has a direct bearing and benefit to the ordinary person in the community. More research is needed in the field of discursive political conflict. Consultation with conflict affected communities: Communities affected by conflict need to be involved in knowledge production about conflict that affect their wellbeing. Communities will be better prepared to deal with forms of violence perpetrated through the media if they are sensitized, trained and involved in understanding the language of violence. In this study the community members were able to identify language that amplified the conflict better than at the time the conflict took place. Communities would be able to protect themselves better had they known how language was used to fuel violence.

CONCLUSION

In this study we see how a particular theoretical framework enables one to understand how conflict is influenced through the use of language. The state is reified, violence is legitimated, and atrocities are denied. Communities are left fragmented and political elite work in unison. Ordinary people lack the framework of understanding such political strategies that are used against them or are too intimidated to think practically about ways of surviving the discursive onslaught of the state. Creating an enabling environment in which members of communities are trained to decipher violent messages in the media will facilitate a situation in which they are not drawn into becoming perpetrators themselves or falling easy victims of violence. In this study, the descriptions of representations assisted the CG in understanding the discourses and their political impact on the ordinary people in the regions affected by the conflict. The systems of meaning found in the discourse informed the CG about certain topics in the conflict and how the regulated social relations at the time affected them as individuals exposed to the conflict. At the end of the study the group members were more discursively aware and sensitive to use of language of violence in the media.

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