

Order and Disorder in Post-colonial Zimbabwean Politics: Debating Patriotism and Heroism

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ABSTRACT: In the first eighteen years of Zimbabwe's independence, notions of patriotism and heroism were not contestable as the socio-economic and political climate was stable and the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) was still popular with the people. However, these notions became contestable when the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) came into the scene in 1999 to challenge ZANU PF's uninterrupted rule which was now being blamed for the economic hardships which people started experiencing from 1999 up to the present. Thus, ZANU PF sought solace in re-defining notions of patriotism and heroism so as to alienate the MDC and portray it as a front for the West. Thus, notions of patriotism and heroism became synonymous with whatever actions promoted ZANU PF's policies. In this article, I critically reflect on the moral abuses of these notions as well as suggest ways in which these notions can re-claim their virtuous status.

*"... Must we hate each other because we are of different parties?
No, we might oppose each other... but must we unleash violence against each other?
No we must not"*

(Robert Mugabe, in New Zimbabwe.com, 2012).

*"He (Mugabe) is committed to this transition (the power-sharing agreement),
once that transition is done, he is committed to ensure we have a peaceful election,»*

Tsvangirai said.

*«That will restore his legacy as the founding father of the nation as well as the liberator,
rather than the villain he has come to be associated with».*

(Morgan Tsvangirai, in the *Guardian* of 16 September 2010).

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Introduction

In a previous work, I have discussed the role and place of *justice* in Zimbabwean politics focusing particularly on the aborted 2008 harmonized elections and I have used the Platonic model of justice to explain how and why Zimbabwe has fallen from grace due to gross human rights violations which have resulted in lack of respect for the principle of justice (Mangena, 2009: 71-87). I have argued that the 2008 election crisis could have been avoided if Zimbabwe had adopted a merit-based approach to democracy where only the enlightened people in terms of education vie for political office. I have also discussed the notion of *patriotism* linking it with the concept of citizenship showing that the concept of citizenship has been the missing link in all deliberations related to the morality (or lack thereof) of the notion of patriotism. To this end, my understanding of patriotism has drawn largely from the works of Alasdair MacIntyre especially his classic chapter: *Is Patriotism a Virtue?* (cf. Mangena, 2010: 35-48). Armed with this background, I now set out to outline and discuss notions of *patriotism* and *heroism* as sites of order and disorder¹ in post-colonial Zimbabwean politics.²

I demonstrate how and why ZANU PF and the MDC formations³ have fought over who should be defined as *a patriot* and *a hero/heroine* ultimately showing how and why these two ideals have become sites of contestation in Zimbabwean politics thereby turning them to vices. Finally, I argue for the fusion of *hunhu* or *ubuntu* as an indigenous philosophy

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¹ I derive the words 'order' and 'disorder' from the theme of the World Congress of COMIUCAP which was held at St. Augustine College of South Africa from the 13th to the 17th of November 2013. The theme was *Order and Disorder in the Age of Globalization(s): Philosophy and the Development of Cultures*. I take this opportunity to thank the President of COMIUCAP Professor João Vila-Chã who made it possible for me to present my paper at this colorful and high profile conference by facilitating my travel to and from Johannesburg and by agreeing to waive my registration fees.

² In this article, I divide post-colonial Zimbabwean politics into four historical epochs, namely; the period between 1980 and 1998 when the ZANU PF government was solely in charge of this country's affairs, the period between 1999 and 2008 whose major highlight was the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) which was going to completely change Zimbabwe's political landscape, the period between 2009 and July 30, 2013 when ZANU PF formed a compromised Government of National Unity (GNU) with the two MDC formations, mediated by South Africa and finally, the period between July 31 and the present which has seen ZANU PF being given a fresh mandate by the 'people of Zimbabwe' to rule the country again.

³ The united MDC split in 2005 when the party became divided over the issue of whether or not to participate in the senatorial elections of that year. Morgan Tsvangirai led the larger formation which became known as MDC-T and Arthur Mutambara led the smaller formation of the party which became known as MDC-M (Later MDC-N as Welshman Ncube took over the leadership of the party from Mutambara).

with the Bernsteinian understanding of heroism in a bid to extricate notions of patriotism and heroism from the world of vices back to the world of virtues where they belong.

Patriotism as a Virtuous Activity

By definition, *patriotism* refers to the love of, devotion to and special concern about one's country or nation (Simpson and Weiner, 1989: 349). Patriotism is a devotion to a particular country and a way of life one thinks best but does not wish to impose it on others (Orwell, 1968: 361-380). The notion of personal attachment is also important when defining patriotism. Elsewhere I argue that personal attachment has to do with one's contribution... to the sustenance of his *patria* (country) (Mangena, 2010: 37). Patriots contribute to this cause in various ways; some as intellectuals, others as politicians, musicians and others as sport personalities to name just a few (2010: 37). It is also important to distinguish *patriotism* from another closely related concept, namely; nationalism. While *patriotism* does not seek to impose itself on others; *nationalism* is about power as its adherent wants to acquire as much power and prestige as possible for the nation, in which he submerges his individuality (Orwell, 1968: 361-380). Please note that *country* and *nation* are first run concurrently, and then *patriotism* and *nationalism* are distinguished in terms of the *love* and *special concern* one feels for his country and the degree of one's identification with it. While *patriotism* is defensive, *nationalism* is aggressive. *Patriotism* is defensive because it is exhibited in a reasonable degree without ill thoughts about others and hostile actions towards them (1968: 361-380).

Nationalism, on the other hand, is aggressive because the strength of *love* and *special concern* one feels for his country is unbridled and can cause one to think ill of others and sometimes act badly towards them (1968: 361-380). *Special concern* means the willingness to make sacrifices for one's country. With *patriotism*, the sacrifices are reasonable while with *nationalism*, the sacrifices are sometimes unreasonable. It is also critical to remark that while it is, to some extent, true that *nationalism* can cause one to think ill of others and sometimes act badly towards them, there are times when people may decide to work for the good of their nation without necessarily being aggressive against other nations. The problem comes when people do bad things in the name of *nationalism*. This means that nationalism is not always about bad motives that bring about good results.

But how does *patriotism* name a virtue? The best way to answer this question would, perhaps, be to define the term *virtue* first. A *virtue* is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. A virtue allows a person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of what he or she can do

(*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2012). Virtuous persons tend toward the good with all their sensory and spiritual powers; they pursue the good and choose it in concrete actions. Thus, human virtues are firm attitudes, stable dispositions and habitual perfections of intellect and will that govern our actions as well as order our passions and guide our conduct according to reason and faith (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2012).

Thus, the term *virtue*, in this understanding, is synonymous with moral excellence which is the quality of the soul that enables an individual to distinguish right from wrong. Thus, the virtuous man is he who freely practices the good (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2012). This definition is only applicable in a context where morality is defined from the perspective of an individual as is common in Western cultures. In such contexts, the individual is at the centre of everything. Thus, virtues become attitudes, dispositions and wills that govern individual actions. In the context of *hunhu* or *ubuntu*, however, virtues have to do with the collective will of the society. Thus, individual virtues only become meaningful if they contribute to the greater good of the society. By the greater good of society is meant unity, peace and harmony.

Patriotism names a virtue if and only if it is balanced or critical. *Balanced* or *critical patriotism* means that one is able to do self introspection, to tolerate people with different views from his or hers and to criticize a system that is working against national development or the general welfare of the public. *Critical patriotism* involves the ability to summon reason to critically and objectively consider the beliefs and projects of one's country without fear or favor and critical patriots know no colour, creed, class, gender or ethnicity (Mangena, 2010: 35-48). As John W. de Gruchy puts it, *critical patriotism* must not be motivated by individual self-interest but by a commitment to the people who comprise the nation and to global society irrespective of nationality and difference. In the spirit of *hunhu* or *ubuntu*, critical patriotism, just like nationalism, must embody the love for peace, unity and harmony. I will now define the term *heroism* in order to buttress the foregoing.

Heroism as a Virtuous Activity

The term *heroism*, like *patriotism*, has moral foundations. As Andrew Bernstein (2002) puts it, *heroism* is primarily a moral concept which requires a rational philosophical system that includes the principle of mind-body integration, as its proper base. Without such a basis the concept can be neither rigorously-defined nor adequately-understood (Bernstein, 2002). Going by this definition, a *hero* or *heroine* must live a morally blameless life. That is to say, he or she must not be of questionable morality.

A *hero* or *heroine* for Bernstein (2002) is an individual of elevated moral stature and superior ability who pursues his goals indefatigably in the face

of powerful antagonist(s) and because of his unbreached devotion to the good, no matter the opposition. A hero attains spiritual grandeur; even if he fails to achieve practical victory. The world is awash with examples of men and women who have sacrificed their lives to improve the human condition. These men and women fit the description of “moral champions” and among them are: Martin Luther King (Jr), Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Mother Theresa, Jairos Jiri and Thomas Sankara.

Notice then the four components of heroism: moral greatness, ability or prowess, action in the face of opposition, and triumph in at least a spiritual, if not a physical, form and of these, the hero’s moral stature is unquestionably the most fundamental (Bernstein, 2002). An uncompromising commitment to morality is the foundation of heroism. Although the point can be stated that a hero is a “good guy”, its reasons are philosophical and apply to all instances of the concept (Bernstein, 2002).

The essence of morality is a ruthless dedication to reality and to the factual requirements of man’s life on earth where man’s life requires the achievement of values. For Bernstein (2002), a *hero* is that man who is dedicated to the creation and/or defense of reality-conforming and life-promoting values. Thus, Bernstein not only satisfactorily defines *heroism* but he goes on to show how it names a virtue. Below, I show how and why patriotism and heroism have become sources of moral order and disorder in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Patriotism and Heroism as Sites of Moral Order and Disorder in Zimbabwean Politics

In post-colonial Zimbabwean politics, ZANU PF, as a liberation movement, has monopolized the *patriotic* and *heroist* discourse to the extent that it has become difficult to draw a line between ZANU PF political ideals as defined by its supreme decision making body – *The Politburo* and those of the state. This perhaps explains why all the nationalists, that is, those who fought for the liberation of this country are, to a greater extent, linked to this liberation movement. This also explains why the National Heroes Acre in Harare has always been a burial shrine reserved for cadres of this liberation movement. There are two schools of thought to this and the first school of thought which I have preferred to call ‘the pro-liberation’ school of thought holds that, *patriots* and *heroes/heroines* are men and women who fought to liberate this country and thus their *actions* led to self determination and/or sovereignty.

The *attitude* of these men and women was aggressive because the strength of *love* and *special concern* they felt for this country was unbridled forcing them to take up arms and fight the enemy. According to this understanding only those who have a liberation war background and

have remained loyal to ZANU PF can be named *patriots* and *heroes/heroines*. To give enough weight to this point, Home Affairs co-minister Kembo Mohadi has challenged the two MDC formations to submit names of their members with liberation war credentials to be considered for burial at the National Heroes Acre:

Everyone is entitled to their opinion. If that is what they think, that's their opinion. But we bury people there that have had something to do with the liberation of this country. It is a symbol of liberation, a symbol of the struggle. If they (MDC) have people that have something to do with the liberation of this country, fair and fine, let them bring them for consideration (Chadenga, 2011).

Thus, political polarization⁴ has led to the re-definition of a *patriot* and a *hero/heroine* exclusively by one political party. The definition of *patriot* and *hero/heroine* has also been expanded to include people who have supported the ZANU PF agenda in the period from 1999 to 2008 when Zimbabwe was plunged into one of the worst socio-economic and political crisis in Southern Africa in recent years. Intellectuals and political analysts aligned to the first school of thought have blamed this crisis on economic sanctions imposed by Britain and her allies while intellectuals and political analysts aligned to the second school of thought have blamed this crisis on alleged bad governance by ZANU PF.

It may be reasonable to argue that, in the vocabulary of ZANU PF, those people who worked hard to outwit MDC and later died supporting the ZANU PF struggle but never participated in the liberation struggle are also considered as *patriots* and *heroes/heroines*. This is notwithstanding the fact that these people have no liberation credentials; a clear departure from ZANU PF's founding principles which stipulate that only a veteran of the armed struggle can become a *hero/heroine*. This is also a gross violation of the Bernsteinian principle of moral goodness as a requirement for the conferment of heroism because some of the people interred at the National Heroes Acre have questionable moral credentials, at least, in the minds of those opposed to the first school of thought.

The situation is worsened by the fact that those from the MDC who died during the same period were not accorded the same status as they were deemed to have worked against the nation's cause. They were and still are viewed as agents of regime change. Now, this causes more confusion as both ZANU PF and the MDC formations, ideally, have a mandate to promote the common good of all citizens. Those opposed to the first school of thought would perhaps argue that it is this denial by ZANU PF to recognize the MDC as contributing to the national cause which has forced the later not to identify themselves with 'national events' such as the Independence

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⁴ Political polarization refers to a situation whereby opinion is divided along political party lines and people cannot agree on virtually everything.

celebrations, Heroes Day celebrations and Unity day celebrations where acts of *patriotism* and *heroism* are celebrated and re-lived.

The second school of thought which I call 'the open to all' school of thought holds that, *patriotism* and *heroism* should go beyond political party loyalty and that no party should have monopoly over who should be a *nationalist* and who should be conferred with a hero's status. According to this school of thought, anyone whose *attitude* is to care about his or her nation in ways that put one's country in good standing deserves to be called a *patriot* or *hero/heroine*. This means that people who have excelled in various disciplines such as academia, sport, journalism, works of art and business deserve to be called *patriots* and *heroes/heroines* (cf. Mangena, 2010: 37).

The *actions* of these people must, however, not be morally objectionable because to be a *patriot* or a *hero/heroine* is to be rewarded for doing something good, that is, to be rewarded for moral excellence. To be a *patriot* and *hero/heroine* is to be a virtuous person. This point sits well with Bernstein's (2002) notion of a *hero* or *heroine* as a 'good guy' and not a 'fall guy' while at the same time, if we go by the first school of thought which places an imperative on the importance of participating in the war of liberation in order to be considered a *hero/heroine*, we would then need to do some bit of work to justify why a person who has committed acts of killing even in a war situation can be conferred with a hero's status given that some moral thinkers including absolute pacifists attest to the view that killing is always wrong no matter the circumstances.

Although deontologists such as Immanuel Kant vacillate when it comes to these issues, it is critical to observe that they place an imperative on *intention* as criterion for determining the rightness or wrongness of an act. In Kant's moral thinking, certain acts are right no matter what consequences they will produce, while certain acts are wrong no matter what consequences they will also produce (Pojman, 2002: 134). For Kant, there is something wrong with breaking a promise, lying and killing other fellow human beings. So, one ought never to break a promise, to lie or to kill other fellow human beings (2002: 134). This position, for Kant, is absolute and cannot be overridden by any stronger obligations, it is categorical. In his *Philosophy of Law*, Kant, however, defends the death penalty (Judicial or State killing) for retributive reasons. He thinks that it is a matter of just deserts to kill a murderer (White, 1994: 198).

This vacillation obviously causes confusion but it is probably easy to relate with Kant's idea of the categorical imperative whereby the act of killing becomes immoral especially when the killing is intentional and is motivated by the desire to use the victim as a means to the killer's own ends. In the context of Zimbabwe, for instance, the white settlers killed our forefathers because they wanted to exploit our resources. When ZANU PF and other political parties then fought back, they wanted to defend them-

selves against this white insurgency and so their actions were moral. Kant condemns murderers to death because he thinks that no individual has a right to intentionally take another individual's life. Now this is different from killing in a war situation whereby the soldier is killing under some instructions from his or her superiors and the killing is not intentional. I would say that something is intentional if it is willed by an individual.

Absolute pacifists also join Kant and other absolutists in affirming this same position. For the absolute pacifists, all wars are immoral because no cause can justify the immense suffering they impose to the innocent (Barcalow, 1994: 329). For the absolute pacifists, war violates the most fundamental moral right of innocent people, the right to life (1994: 329). It is easy to see how these Western theories feed into each other and it is also easy to see how, according to these theories, the concept of *heroism* fails to name a virtue. Going by these theories, participating in the liberation struggle would not be good enough to warrant the conferment of the status of a *hero* or *heroine* since this participation also involves killing other people. So, the first school of thought would be found wanting in this regard.

At the opposite end, utilitarians argue that if the killing is done to promote the common good of the majority, namely: peace, stability and sovereignty then only veterans of the armed struggle deserve to be conferred with hero's status since there are the only ones who liberated this country. In the context of Zimbabwe, utilitarians would argue that the liberators were justified since they were fighting imperialist insurgents who had invaded their territory. This appears to me to be the argument that has been used by ZANU PF to justify their decisions to deny hero's status to anyone without liberation war credentials. But that there are some people who never participated in the liberation struggle whose bodies are interred at the National Heroes Acre remains a mystery.

Those who subscribe to the second school of thought, however, have not really contested the role played by veterans of the armed struggle in liberating this country but they believe that ideals such as *patriotism* and *heroism* cannot only be restricted to ZANU PF cadres linked to the armed struggle as these ideals go beyond political party loyalty. They consider this to be a narrow and partisan way of looking at things. They believe that there are many *patriots* and *heroes/heroines* in other sectors of society who should also be recognized. According to this school of thought, people like Leonard Dembo, Marshall Munhumumwe, Tongai Moyo and Jordan Chataika (the pioneer of Gospel Music in Zimbabwe) devoted their time to music which impacted the lives of many Zimbabweans. These, according to this school of thought, are national heroes in their own right.

Even among living musicians, we have legendary figures such as Leonard Zhakata, Thomas Mapfumo, Oliver Mtukudzi and Hosiah Chi-

panga among others, who have fought what they perceive to be oppression through music. According to the second school of thought, these also deserve to be interred at the National Heroes Acre when they pass on or they may still be recognized as national heroes while they are still alive something which the ZANU PF government has not yet done. Others include Shacky Tauro, Joel Shambo, Stanley Ndunduma, Adam Ndlovu, Blessing Makunike, Edward Katsvere, Jimmy Finch, Titus Majola, Benjamin Nkonjera and Joseph Machingura. These people changed the face of football in Zimbabwe and they also deserve national recognition. There is no doubt that this failure by ZANU PF and the MDC to come up with a criteria that has a national appeal regarding who a *patriot* and *hero/heroine* has led to these contestations.

The MDC formations have questioned the criteria used to confer hero's status and the fact that only one political party has monopoly on such decisions. Thus, *patriotism* and *heroism* have become contested ideals with the MDC-T threatening to come up with its own list of heroes and heroines made up of the MDC-T supporters and activists who were victims of political violence during the 'decade of crisis. Nelson Chamisa, former spokesperson of the MDC-T, once said about the conferment of hero's status by ZANU PF:

We do recognize Hero's Acre as being a place that has predominantly been dominated by ZANU PF cadres, but we need to make sure that we develop and move forward with the times. We try to be all-inclusive, we also maintain the relevance of the memorials and heroes commemoration... certainly I must say we have our own heroes. These are people like Isaac Matongo, Learnmore Jongwe and others who have contributed to the democratization process, people like Susan Tsvangirai. People who have played a significant role, who we feel are actually supposed to be part of a leadership that we would acknowledge and indeed recognize as heroes (Madongo, 2010).

The mere fact that the MDC-T wants to come up with its own list of national heroes/heroines in the form of a parallel structure is probably enough to show that notions of *patriotism* and *heroism* are heavily contested in post colonial Zimbabwean politics. There is therefore need to appeal to *hunhu* or *ubuntu* in order to break this impasse since when the philosophy of *hunhu* or *ubuntu* is deployed sincerely, it is able to unite people with different political and ideological differences.

***Hunhu or Ubuntu,* Patriotism and Heroism in Post-colonial Zimbabwe**

In this section, it is important to show how *hunhu* or *ubuntu* can be used successfully to deal with these contestations. For starters, *hunhu* or *ubuntu* calls for a particular mode of being in the world and this mode of being requires each person to maintain social justice, to be empathetic

to others, to be respectful and to have a conscience (Mkhize, 2003). Failure to observe these guidelines disrupts communal unity leading to disequilibrium. Verhoef and Michel (1997: 389-407) refer to this as a circular moral process. In a circular moral process, the community is always in a state of flux: it is strengthened if people fulfill their mutual obligations.

Mutual obligations can only be fulfilled if people do what is good and avoid what is evil. Thus, in politics, mutual obligations are obligations of the state (as opposed to those of the nation) to uphold social justice as well as to respect the voices of other political players with regard to the discourse of nation-building. These are obligations that have a bearing on national identity and belonging as well as a nation's value systems. When these are not handled properly, there are bound to be contestations which may lead to divisions, which divisions may weaken the community's moral fibre. This point is well explained by Verhoef and Michel (1997: 389-407), who argue that moral transgressions weaken the community by causing separation between people.

However, separation resulting from moral transgression could be rectified if the community works interactively to re-establish social connection, interdependence and hence moral community and thus *hunhu* or *ubuntu* is a traditional African philosophy that offers us an understanding of ourselves in relation to the world (1997: 389-407). According to this philosophy, there exists a common bond between us all and it is through this bond, through our interaction with our fellow human beings, that we discover our own human qualities (1997: 389-407).

Hunhu or *ubuntu* is, thus, a useful resource which can be used to deal with political conflicts or tensions such as those that have arisen in Zimbabwe since the formation of the MDC. *Hunhu* or *ubuntu* enable politicians to seek peaceful ways of co-existence and to respect each other in their differences. When decisions are made about the conferment of heroes or heroines, these decisions must not be made by political parties but by an independent council or committee whose members are drawn from all sectors of society. There must be an act of parliament which allows for the establishment of this council or committee. In my view, this is how *hunhu* or *ubuntu* would work. After the conferment of a hero or heroine, the majority of people must agree that the person who has been accorded hero's status is really a *hero* or *heroine* once he or she passes the Bernsteinian moral test and the *hunhu* or *ubuntu* requirement.

Thus, *hunhu* or *ubuntu*, bring unity and solidarity among and between political parties to the extent that they end up speaking with one voice when it comes to issues of national importance such as the naming of a *hero* or *heroine*. To some extent, this was seen during the period of the GNU when the leaders of the three political parties, namely: Robert Mugabe, Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara (and later Welshman Ncube)

would meet on Monday mornings to chart the way forward for the country. After attending one of these Monday morning meetings Mugabe is said to have retorted that he could now share a cup of tea with Tsvangirai without being afraid of anything.⁵ Mugabe has also remarked, thus:

The coalition has enabled us to work together and perhaps cease to see each other as enemies. Must we hate each other because we are of different parties? No, we might oppose each other... but must we unleash violence against each other? No we must not.⁶

This is the kind of *hunhu* or *ubuntu* spirit I am calling for and it is my submission that this kind of spirit should also be extended to debates on patriotism and heroism as these are debates of national importance. This spirit has also been demonstrated in the area of football where the whole nation has come together to support the Zimbabwe National Soccer team. The spirit of *hunhu* or *ubuntu* has also been shown in the way the nation has condemned the Asiagate scandals where some few selfish people have used our senior national soccer team for purposes of match betting in order to make money. This, in my view, is the real meaning of the word *patriotism*. The same spirit must also be seen in the way politicians run this country. This is not to suggest that politicians should not differ but that even if they differ, one thing that should define them – in their areas of difference – is the fact that they are first and foremost Zimbabweans. So, the Zimbabwe project must be prioritized ahead of the ZANU PF, MDC-T or MDC-N project as this, for me, is what it means to be *vanhu* (persons).

Since *hunhu* or *ubuntu* create a common bond between and among political parties, it is only logical to argue that this common bond is capable of breaking the barriers of polarization which is the source of disunity when it comes to the formulation of national policies such as those related to the conferment of hero's status. *Hunhu* or *ubuntu* will remind those bent on creating divisions that they are what they are because of others. John S. Mbiti (1969) sums it up when he says: "I am because we are, since we are therefore I am." When this philosophy is engraved in the minds of politicians and other like-minded people, they will be prepared to forgive those who have hurt them and will not seek retributive ways of dealing with those who have injured them. Thus, forgiveness is *hunhuistic* or *ubuntuistic* and so is acceptance of responsibility for bad actions. From the perspective of *hunhu* or *ubuntu*, a person becomes virtuous if he or she takes responsibility for his or her actions and if the victim of such actions agrees to forgive and forget.

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⁵ New Zimbabwe.com (2012). Relations with PM 'good': Mugabe, available at <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news/printVersion.aspx?newsID=7252>

⁶ *Ibid.*

It must be noted that following the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in September 2008, Zimbabwe's coalition government which was comprised of three political parties namely ZANU PF, MDC-T and MDC-N agreed to establish an organ that would heal Zimbabwe's body politic following the blood elections of 2008. This organ became known as the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI). The organ embraced the *hunhu* or *ubuntu* slogan: *Peace begins with me; peace begins with you and peace begins with all of us!* Although this organ could not fulfill its mandate because of some differences in approach within the coalition government, it is important to note that its inception showed that people can come together, bury their differences and have a common vision. This is what *hunhu* or *ubuntu* entails.

However, the appropriation of *hunhu* or *ubuntu*, to break this political logjam obviously faced some challenges. Some liberal thinkers who had influence in the coalition government thought that *hunhu* or *ubuntu* was an age old philosophy meant for primitive Shona/Ndebele societies and that there was need to adopt the modern rationalization of conflict management.⁷ They argued that *hunhu* or *ubuntu* was just an ideal which was moribund and therefore irrelevant to the organization of modern society. They also argued that the world had become one and people were free to borrow philosophies from other parts of the world and still organize their societies.

I am not sure what effect this thinking has on a people's morality but what is clear is that without a philosophy of his or her own, *munhu* or *umuntu* (a person) is lost in the mazy of modernity and cannot discover himself or herself. He or she fails to be a self namer as others would name him or her. Thus, with *hunhu* or *ubuntu* we are able to define ourselves and seek our own solutions to the problems we face. *Hunhu* or *ubuntu* can help us to realize that the Zimbabwe project is more important than self serving interests of political parties. This is not to say that we have to ignore conflict resolution approaches from other parts of the world as doing so will be counterproductive. In fact, reason demands that we should use approaches from other cultures for as long as they can complement our own indigenous approaches. This is why I did not see anything wrong in using the Bernsteinian definition of heroism in this article.

Although *hunhu* or *ubuntu* scholars may not define morality the same way, Bernstein would define this same concept, they both agree that morality has to do with human actions that are good as opposed to human actions that are bad. From this same standpoint, it can be argued that both *hunhu* or *ubuntu* scholars and Bernstein do agree that a *hero/heroine*

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⁷ Roughly speaking, the phrase modern rationalization has a Western origin and it refers to the way reason has been used in Western cultures to organize modern Western societies.

is someone of elevated moral stature, someone who has lived a morally blameless life. Please note that the fact that *hunhu* or *ubuntu* scholars would link moral stature with the expectations of the community or group and that Bernstein would link moral stature with the expectations of the individual does not really matter. What is important is that moral stature has to do with good behavior as opposed to bad behavior. From both a *hunhu* or *ubuntu* perspective and from the Bernsteinian definition of heroism, it is clear that a *hero/heroine* must be someone whose behavior is morally blameless as judged by the society in which he or she lives. So, when people operate within the parameters of *hunhu* or *ubuntu* and Bernstein's theories of heroism, there will know that ideals like *patriotism* and *heroism* are national ideals which political parties cannot lay claim.

Conclusion

This article was an attempt to show that in politics some virtues can be turned into vices if people decide to remain caged in political party loyalism and thereby failing to acknowledge the fact that the national agenda is much more important than the political party agenda. The article began by defining the two ideals of contestation, namely: *patriotism* and *heroism* ultimately showing that these are ideals which are often manipulated by politicians for purposes of political expediency. Zimbabwe was used as a case study where the antagonism between ZANU PF and the two MDC formations was blamed for these contestations. The article noted that ZANU PF as a liberation movement has been at the helm making crucial decisions on who should be defined as a real patriot and who should be conferred with a hero's status. This has been challenged by the MDC formations and the generality of the Zimbabwean population who have argued that such critical decisions should not be left to one political party. This has led to serious contestations with the later boycotting 'national' events organized by ZANU PF such as the Burial of a Hero and to some extent, Hero's Day and Independence Day celebrations. The article also noted that with the formation of the GNU there was a lot of promise as leaders of the three political parties in Zimbabwe could now sit together, share a cup of tea and discuss issues of national importance. The article also noted that only *hunhu* or *ubuntu* philosophy fused with the Bernsteinian model of heroism can bring people together and allow them to work as a group as they strive to preserve a brand called Zimbabwe.

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