

“Jambanja”: Moral Paralysis and Postcolonial Politics in Zimbabwe

Pascah Mungwini, National University of Lesotho

Abstract

Events that have been unfolding in Zimbabwe in the past decade beginning 1998 to be precise to the present are reminiscent of a nation that has become sick and in need of moral therapy. The malaise or decay has been so constant and perpetual that there appears to be no immediate end in sight. This work focuses on the normative dimension of politics in Zimbabwe over the last decade and draws special interest to the post March 2008 historic harmonised elections, that is, the presidential runoff between president Robert Mugabe of the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front(ZANU PF) and winner of the first round of ballot, Morgan Tsvangirai of the Movement for Democratic change (MDC). The work draws on theoretical consideration of morality and politics in general and African morality in particular to argue for the need for moral rearmament within the country as part of the important process of national healing and reconstruction. The work argues that the blatant disregard for humanity in its diverse manifestations shown over the past decade calls for moral reorientation across the whole country. A regime change in and of itself would never guarantee the peace and tranquillity that once characterised the nation.

Introduction

Events that have been unfolding in Zimbabwe in the past decade beginning 1998 to be precise to the present are reminiscent of a nation that has become sick and in need of moral therapy. The malaise or decay has been so constant and perpetual that there appears to be no immediate end in sight. This work focuses on the normative dimension of politics in Zimbabwe over the last decade and draws special interest to the post March 2008 historic harmonised elections, that is, the presidential runoff between president Robert Mugabe of the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front(ZANU PF) and winner of the first round of ballot, Morgan Tsvangirai of the Movement for Democratic change (MDC). The work examines the geology underlying the political landscape in Zimbabwe and decries the extent to which instrumental rationality has come to replace basic African moral considerations about humanity in the pursuit of positions and power. The post March 2008 election period running into the presidential runoff of June 2008 has been arguably the worst era in Zimbabwe’s postcolonial history outside the *gukurahundi*⁴, reminding one of the famous but hypothetical State of Nature propounded by the British political philosopher of the 17th century, Thomas Hobbes. The beatings, abductions, torture and killings that characterised ZANU-PF’s campaign of terror across the country

⁴ Gukurahundu refers to an ethnic war that was launched by Mugabe in the early 1980’s in Matebeleland to stop what he called dissident activity that was destabilizing the country

are reminiscent of a nation whose social order has broken down and where all kinds of vices become permissible as long as it guaranteed Mugabe's return to power. The work draws on theoretical consideration of morality and politics in general and African morality in particular to argue for the need for moral rearmament within the country as part of the important process of national healing and reconstruction. It argues that the blatant disregard for humanity in its diverse manifestations shown over the past decade calls for moral reorientation across the whole country. A regime change in and of itself would never guarantee the peace and tranquillity that once characterised the nation.

Theoretical framework

This work is situated in the broad area of morality and politics within the African postcolonial context. It draws on important theoretical and practical considerations between the relationship of ethics and politics to argue for the need for moral regeneration or rearmament starting at the level of the political leadership as part of the solution to the current crisis bedevilling Zimbabwean society over the last decade. The work draws on African morality and specifically the philosophy of ubuntu/hunhu to argue for the need for Aristotelian moderation between political expediency and national wellbeing. Drawing from the African philosophical tradition, the work argues that leadership has always been identified with altruism and selfless dedication to the service of others and for the good of everyone. However the experience of the last decade in Zimbabwean politics has witnessed an unprecedented growth in instrumental rationality which threatens to engulf the whole society jeopardising the moral well being of the Zimbabwean society. This work draws on African philosophical ethics to argue for a complete moral reorientation of society in Zimbabwe as a prerequisite for national reconstruction. As Gyekye (1997) aptly captures, in times of wonder, confusion, instability and uncertainty, in times when the definition and articulation of values and goals is most urgent, in times when the search for fundamental principles of human existence become important, the services of the intellectual enterprise called philosophy becomes indispensable. Theorizing about the crisis of postcolonial African states as a precursor to the development of practical solutions to some of the problems has become an important preoccupation of postcolonial African philosophy. The problem confronting Zimbabwe can be philosophically defined as an existential anomaly, a problem of developing and maintaining appropriate social orders within which individuals can exercise their rights, fulfil their obligations and realise their genuine potential as human beings. This work will draw most of its examples from the Shona not only because it is the largest communo-cultural group but also because that is the group the writer is most familiar with. However the horizontal relationships across all the African peoples in Zimbabwe and the fact that they all are geographically bounded together experiencing the same kind of wrath from the same regime allows for a general application of most of the ideas.

African morality and politics

It is not uncommon to here it claimed that morality has no space in politics and that politics is by nature amoral if not immoral. Politics is by nature taken to be a dirty business. Its practitioners are in the eyes of many regarded as unprincipled seekers of power (Billington, 1993). However much has been and can be written to demonstrate that this

myth of amoral politics is mistaken. It is for this reason that this work examines the close synergy that has always existed between morality and politics in traditional Africa. At the foundation of African morality is the concept of ubuntu in Zulu, hunhu in Shona and botho in Sesotho (Ramose 1999). Morality is a set of social rules and norms intended to guide the conduct of people in a society. African moral values derive from the experience of a people living together and trying to evolve a common or harmonious social life. The African moral values are fashioned according to the people's own understanding of the nature of the human society, human relations, human goals and the meaning of human life. What is moral is what promotes social welfare, solidarity and harmony in human relations (Omogbe, 2005). Since the ethics espoused in African morality is a social ethics it repudiates ethical egoism, the doctrine that everyone ought to pursue his or her own self-interests with little or no regard for the welfare of others. This African social ethic revolves around the philosophy of ubuntu that extols the virtues of solidarity, fraternity and equality. Deriving from past conceptions of persons and community the concept of ubuntu is seen as providing a unique African conception of the African moral and political community. Ubuntu is against violence of any kind and places great importance on harmony, social justice, responsibility, obligation and tranquillity within the society. *Ubuntu* involves a sense of responsibility or control over one's instincts; it is connected to one's deeds-*zviito* in Shona. At the heart of African morality is the truth captured by the aphorism *munhu munhu nevanhu, umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu or motho kemotho kabatho* which is aptly captured by Ramose (1999:52) as “to be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognising the humanity of others and on that basis establish humane relations with them”. A humane, respectful and polite attitude towards others constitute the core meaning of this aphorism. As highlighted by Gelfand (1973) *hunhu* is derived from the parents, from community practices and inheritance from the distant past. These are the virtues of character that Aristotle would say are acquired through experience, habituation and practice. The state of being approved of or that quality which causes a person to be appreciated and to give a feeling of pleasure to others is called hunhu. For Gelfand (1973) hunhu is therefore the correct way of living according to the teachings of the Shona elders. An African morality is basically a morality of virtue for the very fact that it emphasises building a character as the basic foundation of sound morality within a community. The morality of virtue or what has come to be called virtue ethics in contemporary philosophy is identified with its outstanding proponent Aristotle and today with such philosophers as Alasdair MacIntyre among others. African morality which is basically a social morality emphasises on character and virtues for the basic reason that people who have developed appropriate virtues are people who can be relied on or counted on that they will almost always act to promote the welfare of everybody else. In Shona the term kuvimbika is used to qualify individuals in community whose characters are stable, honest, and straightforward and therefore can be relied upon. Kuvimbika summarises the basic virtues that characterise a good person among the Shona. People who lack this quality are regarded with suspicion by everyone. The quality of kuvimbika is such an important quality, it is indeed a summation of all the virtues, that it counts as the basic qualification for one to be entrusted with any position of responsibility in society including of course political office. Once one has lost this attribute they are regarded as unfit to hold any position of responsibility or public office for they have become unstable and cannot be relied upon in almost every sphere

of life. Drawing from what just happened in South Africa recently, Thabo Mbeki's own party recalled him from the presidential seat because in their eyes he had now lost this very attribute of *kuvimbika*, he could no longer be relied upon, in other words they felt his character was now questionable.

A strong relationship has always existed between politics and morality within the African traditional socio-political setup. This nexus between morality and politics can be established by reflecting on a number of traditional sayings, idioms and proverbs that touch on political leadership. Proverbs are short pithy sayings that constitute whole lectures on morality and any other important lessons of life. They constitute an important part of the philosophy of life of a people. It is important to draw on some of these proverbs to bring out that close synergy between politics and morality within Africa. In Shona there is a saying which goes: *ishe vanhu* literally it means to be called chief it is because of the people. This saying emphasises the idea of interdependence between the chief and his subjects. In other words the mandate of being a chief or ruler is directly derived from the people that one is leading. If one is to continue to be called chief or leader then there must be in existence people who are under him and who still recognize him as such. A chief who kills his own people, rather than strengthening his power base, is actually undermining it by reducing the number of subjects that fall under him. To be a chief one owes it to the people. Although traditional leadership in mostly hereditary this saying was a moral call on whoever becomes chief to embrace all his people even those that one may have had differences with especially before one became a chief. Becoming a chief was therefore not an opportunity to fix those that one had differences with.

Another proverb commonly used among the Shona is *Ushe madzoro hunoravanwa* literally it means chieftaincy is like a duty, today it is you, tomorrow it is someone else. In other words those who are in power must recognise and accept change when it comes because nothing remains the same. This saying was also an injunction to those in power not to abuse their positions because they may work up tomorrow as subjects and now having lost their immunity would be as equally vulnerable as any other member of the community. Failure to live by this important moral lesson from our traditional past explains why some political leaders in Africa today are afraid of relinquishing power.

Ishe matare is another common saying used by the Shona. Literally it means no chief can operate without a council and without a palaver. This is a way of trying to curb the abuse of power by making sure that the chief does not become a despot who decides on all matters of the community on his own. This was a way of establishing equilibrium between power and responsibility and at the same time a way of trying to avoid the possibility of the leader slipping down the slope of selfishness as a result of being obsessed with power, for power corrupts.

An analysis of these and other sayings that touched on political leadership and the exercise of power among the Shona does indicate the close connection between politics and morality and in all cases the attempt is to prevent moral bankruptcy within the leadership. Human dignity, justice and a concern for the public good were the central aspects that defined good leadership. The traditional leader was expected to be an epitome of *hunhu* and a custodian of African cultural values. Modern politics is no exception. The last decade in Zimbabwean politics has witnessed the disappearance of morality in the political landscape. The period leading to the presidential runoff is one that represents to

this day a total moral collapse in Zimbabwean politics whose effects would require effort from everyone to try and reverse.

The Jambanja discourse

While so many things may have happened this section has chosen the political discourse leading to the June 27 2008 presidential runoff in Zimbabwe for analysis. It takes special interest in the language expressed in the variety of political slogans that became synonymous with ZANU-PF’s campaign of terror in the presidential runoff. It is important to highlight right from the onset that there was a dramatic shift from the relatively peaceful and more or less open and friendly campaign environment that characterised the March 2008 harmonised elections in the country. From no-where came the hate speech, the ranting and raving that declared everyone who had actively participated and suspected of supporting or even sympathising with the opposition an enemy of the ‘State’. When the ZANU-PF campaign train rolled into action the ground was already set for zero tolerance to the opposition. Armed with the police, army, youth militias and so-called war veterans and the propaganda machinery in the form of the state radio, the television and the state media, ZANU PF literally went on a rampage to destroy and eliminate all active opposition supporters especially in the communal areas and to force them to go underground. The following are among many of ZANU PF political slogans that have been selected for analysis and these punctuated Mugabe’s run for power in June of 2008.

1. *Mugabe by ginya! By ginya! Mugabe panyanga!* Literally translated ‘Mugabe by force! By force! Mugabe must be the president’.
2. *Uchida usingadi! Uchida usingadi! Mudhara panyanga!* Literally translated ‘Whether you like it or not the old man shall be president’.
3. *June 27! Mugabe chete chete!* Literally translated ‘June 27 Mugabe only and only him shall you vote for’.

The above slogans have one common message: Come June 27 2008, Mugabe will be in Office by force. The phrase by ginya signifies the penchant use of force by the campaign machinery to force everyone to vote him into office. It is also a declaration of war on anyone who may dare to ‘dream’ otherwise. This is the true essence of jambanja, in other words, the idea of an election, the very essence of an election was denied right from the onset. The people were being told explicitly that they had no option but to vote for Mugabe. Unlike real elections where candidates sell themselves to the electorate this time all people were literally being beaten to rally behind Mugabe. The election was just like a blatant, cruel kind of rape. It was clear from the outcome of the first round of voting that people had lost faith in ZANU PF and the second round to any fair minded person was basically going to be a clean sweep for the opposition and the most humiliating defeat for Mugabe and his party. This is the reason why the sloganeering was in and of itself a declaration of war right from the beginning of the campaign period.

4. June 2008, verse 27: “*handichazofizve ndakafururwa kubva panababa Mugabe*”. June 2008 verse 28: “I shall never again in my lifetime be fooled to betray Mr Mugabe in a vote”.

It is not accidental that this slogan was couched in the form of a Biblical verse. The very essence of this lay in the fact that the statement itself like a Biblical verse represented the absolute truth to which no other equivalent truth could be thought of. It was the revealed truth. There was no other truth that could supersede this given position. Everybody was to receive it and accept it as given without question. Like true religious fundamentalists who view any contrary position as a threat not only to their faith but to the well-being of the entire collectivity the campaign machinery of Mugabe was putting it clear to everyone that they would not tolerate any dissension, not this time. And true to their slogan they went on a cleansing crusade as people were beaten, tortured, forced to burn their party regalia with others being killed and their properties being burnt down or confiscated.

5. Total independence! 100% empowerment! *Vatengesipi pasi navo!* Literally translated it means 'All sell-outs must not be tolerated they must be eliminated'.

This slogan revolved around the idea of the liberation struggle and independence which Zimbabwe got after waging a war against the colonial regime culminating with the country getting its independence on 18 April 1980. The slogan served to remind everyone of the colonial past and to warn people against 'reversing' what the ZANU PF campaign team called the 'gains of independence'. The message was that voting the opposition was like taking back the country to the coloniser and since the gun is mightier than the ballot there was no way it was going to be allowed for people to sell the country by a pen. When this very slogan was played on national television in Zimbabwe it would always be followed by a well known national bereavement song with the face of the opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai portrayed gradually metamorphosing into that of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair purportedly revealing what the opposition was in reality; a colonial incarnate. These are some among many of the slogans that came to characterise the June 2008 presidential runoff. These slogans among many other utterances like any language discourse were meant to serve multiple functions chief among which was to psyche its supporters into the vengeful and ruthless mood against any known and suspected opposition supporters. The opposition party was analogised to a disease that had afflicted people which needed to be dealt with mercilessly with utmost urgency. Armed with their philosophy of *jambanja* the solution was very clear; it was culling; the 'infected' people had to be eliminated.

The State of Nature

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) in his famous work, *the Leviathan*, imagined men in their natural state, the State of Nature which is a state characterised by perpetual strife and conflict with no laws to regulate human conduct and behaviour. Men live in perpetual fear and danger of violent death. Life in the state of nature is short, nasty and brutish. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have no place. Force and fraud are the two cardinal virtues. The state of Nature is the worst possible situation in which men can find themselves, it is a state of utter distrust.

The conditions that obtained during the period leading to the June presidential election runoff throughout the country especially in the rural areas to a large extent resembled Hobbes's hypothetical State of Nature. The State of Nature became a living reality in

Zimbabwe. While the indications that the country was receding into a State of Nature date back to the controversial land seizures of the year 2000 that saw not only the appropriation of land but brutal attacks on farmers and farm workers this time it became a reality. Throughout the rural areas the war veterans and the youth militia reintroduced the pungwes typical of the liberation war of the 1970's and bases from which people were purportedly being given 'political re-education' for what ZANU PF called 'wrong voting' in the first round of elections. Honestly we have always heard about voter education to prevent unnecessary spoilt ballots but to be told you voted wrongly because you did not choose Mugabe was something else. The rural populace were especially targeted by these so-called reorientation lessons which included not only sloganeering but various forms of torture and murder as punishment for working with the opposition and for their 'stupid' voting in the March election. Through their activities the army and so-called veterans, youth militias with the blessing of the police and the ZANU –PF leadership led by the presidential candidate himself comrade Mugabe drove the country into the State of Nature. The severity of the crisis was aptly captured by the Human Rights Watch in their report.

Zimbabwe has been in a state of political turmoil since Morgan Tsvangirai and his party, the MDC, defeated incumbent president Robert Mugabe and his party, ZANU-PF, in a general election on March 29. ZANU-PF officials working with their proxy forces of the so-called war veterans and youth militia, backed by members of the armed forces and police launched the infamous Operation *Wakavhoterapapi* (Operation where did you put your vote) to eliminate all sell-outs who had voted for the opposition especially in the rural areas which ZANU-PF regarded as its stronghold. (Human Rights Watch ,June,2008).

Humanitarian operations by non-government organisations were suspended throughout the country and for a country that had not seen a good harvest since the controversial land seizures of 2000 and a nation reeling from the HIV and AIDS scourge this was the worst form of cruelty to hundreds and hundreds of people whose livelihood depended on food and medical handouts from those non-governmental welfare organisations. Fellow villagers were also turned against each other, people who had lived together in peace for their entire lives were incited into a spate of violence against each other, destroying each other's homes, livestock and property in general. Perpetrators of the violence also took the opportunity to settle old scores and it was time for the lazy and the jealousy to bring everyone down into poverty by any means including looting. This precarious environment established and fanned by the ruling ZANU-PF party set out a wave of movements creating the problem of internally displaced people as people left their homes to seek refuge in town and other relatively safer places like their party headquarters, embassies and churches while some skipped the border to escape death. As documented by the Human Rights Watch:

More than 3000 people are known to have fled the violence and are now internally displaced in cities and towns throughout the

country with inadequate access to food and water. An unknown number have fled across the borders to Mozambique, Botswana and South Africa, while about 163 people have been killed with about 5000 having suffered beating and torture before the June presidential runoff. (Human Rights Watch, August 2008).

These developments may not be surprising if one examines some of the political statements made by ZANU-PF top officials at their rallies. In addressing a rally Didymus Mutasa who was himself a minister said to the gathering: "We would be better off with only six million people, with our own people who support the liberation struggle. We don't want all these extra people"(The Zimbabwe Times, June, 25 2008). This was in apparent reference to the other eight million of Zimbabwe's estimated fourteen million people. These are the people that needed to be eliminated. The abuses have created a fragile social environment characterised by intense feelings of hate, mistrust, animosity and simmering emotions of revenge which can easily degenerate into spontaneous outbreaks of war if this transition is not managed properly. With the signing of the historic power sharing deal between the feuding parties, militia bases will be disbanded, the displaced are expected to trickle back home to face the reality of their destroyed homes, graves of their brutally murdered family members and many more who have been maimed all for exercising their democratic right. A number of those returning home would have to literally start life anew having lost everything that they worked for in their entire lives. This is the reality on the ground across much of rural Zimbabwe hence it was not just mere politicking when the opposition leaders immediately highlighted the need for national healing and reconciliation as the first step towards national reconstruction. However the question that remains is how that crucial process can be achieved. It is in light of this that this work calls for moral rearmament among other possible alternatives. The work proposes a model of moral rearmament that draws on the rich indigenous African cultural and philosophical resources to assist in the re-establishment of community bonds built on love and trust that were typical of the pre-election period. The work argues that the crucial element that needs to be restored in the community is what I term *kuvimbana* put narrowly as the ability to trust and count on each other once again. A number of ways may be employed to facilitate a realisation of this feat and avert the potential of full scale genocide which is a real possibility between supporters of the feuding parties and all those brutalised during the campaign period.

The need for moral rearmament

The concept of moral rearmament presupposes that as a people, we have fallen dawn on our responsibility as moral beings, it also presupposes the existence of a period of moral lapse or moral turpitude that a community has sunk itself into and which calls for effort if the people are to move out of it. Moral rearmament is in this case therefore taken as a process to lift people up through the conscious restoration of community bonds, the revitalization of African traditions of humaneness and the reconstruction of social identities outside partisan lines that can help to restore respect and love and once again hand back universal brotherhood and trust to the peoples. In Southern Africa the concept of moral rearmament has found itself closely expressed in the idea of moral regeneration, a movement or project that has become synonymous with South Africa after independence in

1994. Moral regeneration was an idea that was mooted by their first president and paragon of black emancipation, Comrade Nelson Mandela. The moral regeneration movement was officially launched as a government supported programme in South Africa 2002. To most Afrocentric scholars the project could be seen as part and parcel of the broader vision for an African Renaissance to champion the recovery and renewal of a nation that had suffered years of denigration under the colonial and apartheid regime. The aim of the moral regeneration crusade was to seek solutions to problems of moral decay that had become endemic in society and to build an ethical society, a harmonious society guided by basic human values (Rauch, 2005). The grant plan was to build a humane society premised on the values enshrined in the philosophy of ubuntu where to be human is to recognise oneself as such by recognising the humanity of others. How much South Africans have gone to realise this noble call is not the concern of his paper serve to indicate in passing that some of the people who had been chosen as patrons to this noble project ended themselves being of questionable character with brushes with the law for a range of allegations from rape, fraud and bribery, extortion, money laundering and tax evasion among other not only serious crimes but highly immoral activities. It is paradoxical that the very individuals who had been thrust in the forefront to facilitate the moral regeneration of their society were themselves in need of moral regeneration. However despite these rather unfortunate developments, the writer would like to draw on this noble idea to argue for the need for moral regeneration in Zimbabwe today. The terms moral regeneration and moral rearmament would be used as synonymous in this work. When the custodians of a culture, its norms and values become its worst violators then one can rightfully designate that nation as a sick society, such is the case with Zimbabwe.

Bringing to an end the political impasse between the feuding parties at the level of leadership may be the first step towards national healing but is not the ultimate solution to problems of hate that characterise the rest of the population across the country. Human relations cannot suddenly heal now that there has been an agreement to work together by the political leadership, an agreement that still hangs in the balance. If reports doing the rounds are anything to go by, some members of the opposition who survived the ZANU-PF reign of terror are said to have teamed up in some areas to start revenge soon after the agreement of a unity government that saw what the ZANU-PF supporters vowed would never happen, the installation of Morgan Tsvangirai as the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe. It is against his backdrop that effective programmes of moral rearmament are required urgently as the basis for social transformation. The fundamental element lacking among the people about each other is basically trust. But the important question is how to restore trust among a people who have become so polarised. This work sees the restoration of trust among the communities as the first major step in the restoration of humane relationships. As a foundation to that trust is a need by the political leadership to offer a public apology to the nation and to appeal to people to embrace each other once again as one people. While other bigger projects like the truth and reconciliation commission may be set up alongside efforts to bring to justice all those who are guilty of perpetrating the violence, this work argues for what may appear a small though fundamental moral crusade to remind members of our community about their responsibility to each other as Africans in living together. Just to lift them from that state of turpitude. Lessons for that moral crusade can be drawn from our traditional African wisdom readily available from the very Sages we live with

each day.

Events of the past ten years in Zimbabwe indicate also that there has been growing disregard for human life, human welfare and humanity in general and especially what it means to be human and to live with others. Moral teachings that result in relational rebuilding and reconciliation are what is required. Old men and women of integrity who are abound in the communities can be called upon to assist with this moral regeneration. These Sages could be drawn from a wide spectrum of society from both the churches and from our traditional African culture represented by community elders, chiefs and their council of elders. In most of Africa old women, as 'mothers to the community' enjoy a lot of respect as repositories of love, icons of peace and sources of all kinds of spiritual blessings to those who listen to their teachings. These can be organised to give communities important moral lessons about community, living together, the sanctity of life, kinship and forgiving from their arcane wisdom. The widespread violence of the presidential election has just compounded people's problems by straining relations and adding to further isolation. Individualism and instrumental rationality seem to be replacing communalism, kinship and altruism within the context of largely poor communities who by their very economic situation cannot survive without relying on each other on almost a daily basis. Because of the poverty, most of those who are worse off are finding it difficult to make ends meet while their own neighbour who could have been of assistance seem unmoved. Much of the political hatred during the presidential poll easily degenerated into a witch-hunt for mostly those who were better off in their rural communities meting all forms of punishment against them including destroying their property as a way of settling scores and bringing them down. Thus the political violence also involved another dimension in the rural areas; the distribution of equal poverty or misery. As it obtains now in those areas where the violence was so intense most of the rural people who had livestock have lost many of them as they were slaughtered one after the other to feed people who were staying in the bases established all over at schools, clinics and other rural service centres.

For a people who had not seen a good harvest for about a decade and reeling under all forms of hardships, with high levels of unemployment and living each day as it came, the rural better off became the target. They were politically labelled as enemies of the people for they were enjoying a better life when everyone around them was suffering. As the politicians recede to take their positions in office those who suffered torture, beatings, and lost their property or were forced to flee their homes will now be coming face to face with those who were responsible for the wave of destruction and it is inevitable for them to seek revenge thus repeating the cycle of violence. It is against this backdrop that intervention is required. Important moral teachings about reconciliation, kinship, respect for life and property are urgently required. ZANU-PF's ideology of jamba which it launched since the farm invasions has destroyed the element of trust, respect for life and property and has come to haunt society. The basic moral fundamentals are now lacking in a number of people especially the youths and the so-called war veterans.

The chasm created by the politics of 'us' and 'them' needs to be closed down. It now appears that belonging to this or that party has suddenly become more important than kinship relations. But party politics temporary but people's relationships will remain forever. In Shona there is a saying which goes: *ukama haugewe nesipo setsvina* literally it means kinship and being related is not like dirty that you can wash off with soap. In other

no matter how much you despise your relatives they will always remain part of you life. A restoration of ubuntu through community efforts is the only thing that can guarantee social harmony and trust among the communities. As Africans it would be interesting to see how conflict transformation can be achieved at the level of communities drawing from the expertise offered by our own African Sages drawing on a plethora of African wisdom literature to revive the moral fibre of our society.

Conclusion

This work has attempted to examine and highlight the extend to which bad politics in the past decade in Zimbabwe has been at the heart of moral decay. The work draws on traditional African wisdom literature to argue that in traditional Africa politics has always been a moral enterprise and the attempt by ZANU-PF to rid politics of morality through its infamous philosophy of *jambanja* has culminated in hate, mistrust, animosity and high levels of intolerance and disregard for human life and property which threaten to degenerate into further social turmoil with the possibility of war if something is not done to restore basic trust and respect for humanity across communities. The ideology of *jambanja* which dates back to the farm invasions of the year 2000 has seen the nation sink into the primeval State of Nature. Any nation which has lost respect for human life and dignity can only be described as a sick society. A political settlement on its own would never restore the important virtues that ought to characterise our society. It is for this reason that the work proposes the use of African Sages found across the various communo-cultural groups to champion moral regeneration or rearmament as an important step towards national reconstruction.

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