

***The Herald and Daily News' Framing of the Leaked Zimbabwean Draft Constitution
and Vice President Joice Mujuru's Fall from Grace***

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Debates in Zimbabwe give the impression that mass media are central to the country's democratization. Focusing on two seemingly unrelated but defining events in Zimbabwe's political life namely, the framing of; the leaked draft constitution (January–February 2012), and Vice President Joice Mujuru's fall from grace (August 2014–June 2015); the paper investigates whether the concern about media's role in Zimbabwe's democratic project is justified. A comparative analysis of *Daily News* and *The Herald* was carried out to ascertain how they framed the two events, and to judge the extent to which they can be said to be informative and educative. Content analysis of the two publications and in-depth interviews with *The Herald News* editor and a senior reporter, and *Daily News'* news editor and political editor were used to establish their perceptions regarding their newspapers' framing of the two events. The paper reveals that the two publications' framing of the two events was polarized and did not assist citizens to make informed decisions. *The Herald* was pro-Mugabe whilst *Daily News* was anti-Mugabe.

Keywords: The Herald, Daily News, ZANU PF, Zimbabwe, Joice

Mujuru, draft constitution.

Introduction

Sometime in late January or early February 2012, a member of the Constitutional Select Committee in Zimbabwe leaked the draft Constitution. Several clauses of the draft constitution elicited a lot of excitement from the media and drew angry responses from the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF). The clauses had to do with age and term limits for presidential candidates, devolution of power, dual citizenship and homosexuality. And in August 2014, First Lady Grace Mugabe, in a move that drew extensive media coverage, formally entered politics after being asked to lead the ruling ZANU PF's Women's League. In preparation for her ascension to the post at the party's congress scheduled for December 2014 she embarked on nation-wide rallies dubbed "Meet the People." During the rallies she publicly accused Joice Mujuru, the then ruling party and state Vice President, of being lazy, corrupt, a gossip, a factional leader and plotting to usurp power from Mugabe. The accusations precipitated the suspensions and dismissals of close to 200 top party and government officials including Mujuru. The two cases were defining events in Zimbabwe's political life.

This paper examines how the privately owned the *Daily News* and the state-controlled (*The Herald*), the two biggest dailies in Zimbabwe, covered the leaked draft constitution and Vice President Mujuru. The two newspapers, as platforms of political communication should communicate "...political views from all groups in a state..." (Lilleker, 2006, p. 4), that is, they should enable political ideas to clash with the dominant idea(s) carrying the day (see Gripsrud, 2002). This clash of ideas leads to enlightenment (Mill, 1860). The media should inform and educate the citizenry on political contestants

and their offerings to enable them to make informed decisions (Moyses, 2009). But they should be a watch dog that holds the elite accountable for their actions (Lilleker, 2006; Mazango, 2005; Moyo, 2005; Moyses, 2009). The two newspapers should ideally lead to enlightenment in Zimbabwe.

The paper investigates how the *Daily News* and *The Herald* framed issues regarding the leaked draft constitution and allegations against Joice Mujuru. It examines whether they adequately educated and informed the citizenry; on the proposed constitution and on the allegations against Vice President Mujuru. The intention is to ascertain which of the two newspapers did more for the public interest; "...the wider and longer-term good of society" (McQuail, 2010, p. 568). Finally, the paper explores journalists' perceptions regarding the usual polarized framing of events by the two newspapers.

Historical Background to *Daily News* and *The Herald*

The *Daily News* was launched by the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ) in March 1999 (Moyo, 2005). By year 2000 it was one of the largest circulating dailies (along with the *Herald*) (Chuma, 2008). It "broke the monopoly of state media in the dissemination of news" (Moyo, 2005, p. 5). It practiced oppositional journalism (Chuma, 2008) and was thus a fierce critic of the regime (Moyo, 2005). Consequently, the *Daily News* was seen as a Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) mouthpiece whilst *The Herald* was viewed as a ZANU PF government mouthpiece (Chuma, 2008; see also Chimedza, 2008; Chari, 2008; Nyamanhindi, 2008).

The *Daily News* was shut down in September 2003 for failing to register with the

Media and Information Commission (MIC) now the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) as required under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) (Moyo, 2005). It was re-launched in 2011 after ZMC issued it a new license.

The Herald was founded in 1891 by W. E. Fairbridge as the *Mashonaland Times*. It changed its name to *Zambesia Times* before becoming the *Rhodesia Herald*. At independence in 1980 it became *The Herald*. During the colonial times it was a subsidiary of the Argus Group-owned Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company (RPPC) (Rusike, 1990). Newspapers under the RPPC were tightly controlled by the colonial regime through a plethora of restrictive laws (Frederikse, 1982; Saunders, 1999). After independence the new government set up the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT) and through a deed of donation from the Nigerian Government, acquired a controlling stake of 51% in the *Zimpapers*, the former Argus Group (Saunders 1999). The ZMMT was supposed to be a buffer between the government and *Zimpapers* but due to financial constraints they became reliant on government funding and this resulted in government sidelining ZMMT (Rusike, 1990). Government started hiring and firing editors (Rusike, 1990; Saunders, 1999).

The Media and Political Communication in Zimbabwe

Political communication involves “a competition for access’ to major communications media of the time, in which the ‘material and symbolic advantages’ of the various advocates; ‘are unequally distributed” (Schlesinger, 1990 as cited by Blumler & Gurevitch, 2000, p. 157). This unequal distribution of ‘material and symbolic advantages’ has been noted in Zimbabwe where the state-controlled media are allegedly used as ZANU PF propaganda tools (Chuma, 2005; Chuma, 2008; Moyse, 2009;

Waldahl, 2005). For example, it is argued that in the disputed June 27, 2008 presidential run-off election, the state media were pro-ZANU-PF and anti-MDC (Moyse, 2009). Contrastingly, the private media are hailed for playing a “critical, skeptical role,” scrutinizing ZANU (PF)’s lies that the MDC was a violent party” (MMPZ, 2002, p. 9). However, others argue that the private media are usually anti-ZANU PF government and pro-MDC-T (Chari, 2008; Nyamanhindi, 2008). As Chuma (2008, p. 3) contends “*The Herald* and the *Daily News* explicitly championed the causes of the ruling party and opposition MDC [respectively] ahead of elections.” The two newspapers’ coverage of issues is polarized.

In light of the above, this paper seeks to investigate how the selected newspapers framed the leaked draft constitution and Vice President Joice Mujuru’s fall from grace. Given that the state media’s pro-ZANU PF and anti-opposition stance and the private press’ anti-ZANU PF and pro-MDC stance are well-documented, (Chari, 2008; Chimedza, 2008; Chuma, 2005; Chuma, 2008; MMPZ, 2002; Mazango, 2005; Moyo, 2005; Moyse, 2009; Nyamanhindi, 2008; Rusike, 1990; Saunders, 1999) the paper seeks to establish how the two newspapers covered Joice Mujuru, a ZANU PF and state deputy president at a time when ZANU PF was at war with itself and she was under vicious attack from the First Lady, the President and some senior party officials. The paper seeks to establish how *Daily News* and *The Herald* framed this far from the ideal ZANU PF versus MDC situation they were used to. The paper also seeks to establish how they portrayed the leaked draft constitution given that ZANU PF and MDC-T were both part of government and the constitution making process. The paper seeks to answer the following questions: In light of the changing political dynamics highlighted above, does their coverage reflect their traditional biases? If yes, how do journalists perceive this polarization? Did the newspapers objectively cover the issues? Did their portrayal of the

issues aid the citizens to make informed decisions regarding the constitution and Joice Mujuru? In whose favor were the debates slanted?

Conceptual Framework

The study is premised on framing theory and agenda setting theory. Framing theory holds that, “an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations” (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 104). Framing enables people to “develop particular conceptualizations” or reorientations about an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 104). A frame “organizes everyday reality” and it helps promote specific views and political agendas (Tuchman 1978 as cited Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 106). Framing theory is closely related to agenda-setting where mass media make use of certain frames to shape political reality and promote preferred positions (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). It is the frames that a media organization uses and the salience it gives them that enables us to identify the agenda it is setting. Through examining the salience or prominence given to certain frames and their positioning, the study seeks to establish the agenda the two newspapers were setting in the draft constitution and Joice Mujuru cases. As McCombs and Shaw point out,

in choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. (1972, p. 153)

The paper identifies the frames used by the two newspapers in the two selected

cases and examines the intentions behind use of such frames and whether they help readers make informed political decisions.

Methodology

I employed qualitative content analysis to analyze the frames used in the selected two cases by *The Herald* and *Daily News*. This is because the paper is interested in meanings (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Schwandt, 2003) attached to the leaked draft constitution and Vice President Mujuru's fall from grace. Qualitative content analysis is flexible and it allowed me to explore meanings in context. It tries, "to learn something about people by examining what they write, produce on television, or make movies about" (Asa-Berger, 1998, p. 23). It involves the study of written or spoken words with the intention of unpacking their meanings. It entails using semiotics, hermeneutics of interpretation, discourse analysis and framing. But meaning is subjective and media texts are polysemous (Krippendorff, 2004). There is no correct reading of text as researchers may reach different readings on the same text (Krippendorff, 2004; Schwandt, 2003). As a result qualitative research findings need not be replicable (Krippendorff, 2004). The paper examines the frames used by the two newspapers in the two selected cases with the intention of exploring their meanings. It seeks to establish whether the frames helped citizens make informed decisions or not.

In the draft constitution case, articles were purposively selected from the *Daily News* (3 stories) and *The Herald* (10 stories) issues of February 01 to February 29` 2012. In the Mujuru case, articles from August 2014 to June 20, 2015 were purposively selected (14 articles from the *Daily News* and 10 from *The Herald*). In-depth face to face interviews were also conducted with the *Daily News*' news editor and political editor on

April 13, 2015, and a *(The) Herald's* senior reporter on April 10, 2015 and the news editor on May 05, 2015 over the telephone. The intention was to find out their perceptions on the framing of the two cases under study. I also wanted to establish whether their framing of issues was still polarized given the changing contexts in which the two selected events happened. In the first case the MDC-T was now part of government whilst in the second case ZANU PF was at war with itself. Studying the framing of the two cases in changing contexts is pertinent when one considers that previously the newspapers were polarized into pro-ZANU PF (*The Herald*) against pro-MDC-T (*Daily News*). I used the interview because it generates great detail and it makes it easy to approach topics that may not be easy to broach (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). For example, in a country in which critics allege the regime deals ruthlessly with opponents, face to face interviews make it easier to discuss topics such as politicians' behind the scenes attempts to influence news content.

Case 1: The Leaked Draft Constitution

Contrasting Views on the Origins of the “Mugabe Retirement Clause”

In all the three stories that the *Daily News* carried on the issue above, the origin of what they called the ‘Mugabe retirement clause’ and the 70 years age limit was given as the factional fighting in ZANU PF. The stories which were published on February 14, 2012, February 15, 2012 and February 17, 2012 were titled *Zanu PF Officials in Mugabe Ouster Plot*, *Mugabe Ouster Plot Thickens* and *Factions Want to Kick Out Mugabe* respectively. The stories give the impression that the alleged factionalism in ZANU PF was the reason ZANU PF officials in the Constitutional Select Committee deliberately did not object to the clause that sought to bar the incumbent president who was the party's presidential candidate. The February 17, 2012 story states that,

Factions in Zanu PF opposed to President Robert Mugabe are now using a clause in the draft constitution which blocks him from participating in the next elections to settle the succession issue which has caused divisions in the former ruling party...[the clause states that] a person is disqualified for elections if he or she has already held office for one or more periods, whether continuous or not, amounting to 10 years.”

It argues that the clause automatically disqualifies Mugabe as he has ruled Zimbabwe since 1980. In the February 15, 2012 story the paper claims that the President had summoned his party’s co-chairperson in the Constitutional Select Committee, to explain why he agreed to clauses that bar him from running for presidency, that legalize homosexuality, devolution of power and are silent on the issue of land. The *Daily News* reduced the whole thing to the alleged in-fighting in ZANU PF where factions are jostling to replace President Mugabe as party leader and president of Zimbabwe. In contrast *The Herald* reduced the origins of the clause to Western ‘imperialists’ and their ‘puppets’, MDC-T.

In all the 10 stories in *The Herald*, the MDC and alleged Western imperialists are presented as the originators of the contentious clauses. In a story titled “*Outrage Over New Draft Constitution*” published on February 10, 2012, p.2 then deputy editor, Caesar Zvayi, quotes an unnamed expert saying “The draft is personalized to attack President Mugabe.” Another unnamed expert is quoted saying that, “the Draft constitution is meant to please the MDCs’ Western masters. It totally ignores the views of the people...Drafting must start afresh on the authority of the views of the people captured in the National Report.” In an opinion piece in *The Herald* of February 25, 2012 titled

COPAC the New Frontier, Caesar Zvayi attacks then Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC as puppets of the West and argues that "... Copac is the new frontier for the battle of Zimbabwe." In another article titled *SK Moyo Speaks on New Constitution*, *The Herald* quotes then ZANU PF national chairman, SK Moyo, arguing that the constitution was "now being dictated from some capitals." He further castigates the MDCs for delaying the process allegedly because they know that if there is to be a new constitution and elections they will be out of work. In the two stories and opinion piece mentioned above, *The Herald* does not give the MDC-T space to respond to ZANU PF's allegations. The ZANUPF views are taken as fact.

The two newspapers adopted different frames to look at what the *Daily News* termed the "Mugabe retirement clause." These differences are reinforced by the sources they used: the *Daily News* largely made use of anti-ZANU PF people whilst ZANU PF people such as Didymus Mutasa and Goodwills Masimirembwa were quoted in situations where they gave weight to allegations of factional fighting within the party. For example, in the story *Zanu PF Officials in Mugabe Ouster Plot* Masimirembwa is quoted saying "Yes, I did walk out of the meeting...Those people (Copac) want to write what they believe are best practices not what the people want and I was merely arguing against the whole approach." 'Those people' (Copac) that Masimirembwa was referring to included ZANU PF representatives thus lending credence to the *Daily News*' claim that ZANU PF factional fighting has spilled into the constitution making process. Furthermore, Masimirembwa's statement implies a sinister plot by Copac to subvert the people's will and bring in Western practices as they were allegedly diverting from the National Report in favor of 'international best practices'.

In news framing, sources of news expose a newspaper's ideological leanings as

they help to give salience to a certain point of view at the expense of others. *The Herald* made use of ZANU PF analysts/experts such as Prof. Jonathan Moyo and Dr. Charity Manyeruke. Experts that were known to be against the constitutional making process such as the National Constitutional Assembly's Prof. Lovemore Madhuku were given the chance to tear apart the draft constitution. It is apparent that whereas *Daily News* locates the origins of the 'retirement clause' within ZANU PF, *The Herald* locates it within the MDC and "some [Western] capitals." Furthermore, the *Daily News* attributes everything to factional fighting within ZANU PF and says nothing about Western imperialists whilst *The Herald* is silent on the alleged factional fighting in ZANU PF. *The Herald* is silent on the fact that ZANU-PF and MDC-T had ten (10) members each in COPAC whilst the smaller MDC had two (2) and that these members agreed to the contentious clauses. The silence creates the impression that MDC had more control over the constitution making process. The intention was to justify the criticism against MDC and obfuscate claims of factionalism raised by *Daily News*.

However, the *Daily News* in an article titled *Zanu PF Officials in Mugabe Ouster Plot* quotes an unnamed Constitutional Select Committee member saying "all Select Committee members were agreeable to the clauses. People spoke about term limits not about presidents who had served before, drafters then used international best practices." This was in apparent reference to claims by *The Herald* that the drafters drifted from the National Report. However, the statement and the article's title from the *Daily News*' point of view, imply that ZANU PF members' agreement to the clause on term limits was a calculated move designed to elbow Mugabe out of power. But for the unnamed source it shows that Select Committee members were unanimous and no one was manipulated into accepting the clause. Since the emergence of the MDC on the political scene ZANU PF has been using the threat of recolonization to retain power and that discourse still

pervades the state media. The discourse casts MDC as Western imperialists' puppets.

Draft Constitution undermines country's moral values and sovereignty: *The Herald*

Another view that reverberates through *The Herald's* stories is that the draft constitution weakens the country's sovereignty and undermines the values of the liberation struggle through embracing devolution of power and ignoring Zimbabwe's liberation struggle and the land reform in its pre-amble and not granting land its own special rights. In an opinion piece titled *Outrage over New Draft Constitution* (February 10, 2012), the newspaper's then Deputy Editor Caesar Zvayi (now editor) quotes an unnamed expert saying "The Drafters did not write a Preamble to record the liberation history of the country, in particular, the sacrifices of the gallant sons and daughters of Zimbabwe who liberated our country from colonialism and colonial injustices." This implies that the drafters deliberately left out the liberation struggle history in order to erase it from the national memory so that it becomes easier for alleged Western imperialists to recolonize Zimbabwe. It is argued that the draft seeks to leave room for the reversal of the gains of the liberation struggle and the land reform through "property rights."

In another opinion piece on February 25, 2012 titled *COPAC The New Frontier*, Caesar Zvayi castigates especially the "right to property that all...Western sponsored documents [African constitutions] inadvertently call for? Which property always relates to ill-gotten colonial loot." The argument is that property rights, a key principle of capitalism, are an attempt by the West to reverse the economic indigenization drive and land reform program since these are the 'gains of the liberation struggle' in ZANU PF

discourse. In another article on February 13, 2012 titled *New Constitution's Principal Drafters Must be Fired* (pp. 1–2) *The Herald* reporters write “legal experts equating it [draft constitution] to an orchestrated attack on the country’s moral, cultural and revolutionary pillars.” Some of the ‘legal experts’ quoted in the story included ZANU PF members Christopher Mutsvangwa and Prof. Jonathan Moyo and the paper obfuscates the fact that Prof. Moyo is a political scientist. This is repeated again in an article by Felix Share titled *Copac Overhauls Draft Constitution* on February 23, 2012 which states that, “Analysts and legal experts want the principal drafters fired because their initial draft was an “orchestrated” attack on the country’s moral, cultural and revolutionary pillars.” The use of the phrase “orchestrated attack” implies a deliberate, methodical and sophisticated plan by the drafters to undermine the revolution. In an editorial comment on February 11, 2012 titled *Supreme Law Should be People-oriented*, the paper contends that “outsiders have no role at all to play in such an intimately national exercise.” It goes on to argue that the fact that the process is donor funded makes it susceptible to outside influence. The comment concludes by saying “The people’s views are sacrosanct, no matter how unpalatable they may appear to be to some quarters . . . let the people’s voice ring in every chapter, clause, section and sub-section for the people spoke.” *The Herald* argues that since Western donors were funding the process they smuggled their views into the draft constitution. This is a clear reflection of the ZANU PF argument that the drafters drifted from the people’s views as contained in the National Report obtained from the outreach program.

The Herald also argues that the people rejected homosexuality, dual citizenship and opted for decentralization and not devolution of power while also asserting their right to land; things that the draft constitution allegedly subverted due to Western Imperialists’ influence fronted by the MDC. In a story titled *Outrage Over New Draft Constitution*,

Caesar Zvayi (February 12, 2012) charges that the draft uses the phrase “natural difference or condition” to camouflage homosexuality. Section 4.11 (1) (d) [is a] threat to national security because it grants foreigners freedom of expression and access to information held by the state.” It should be noted that President Mugabe is a staunch critic of homosexuality as he has on several occasions described them as “worse than dogs and pigs,” as people who do things that even coach roaches and flies view as abhorrent. The phrase “threat to national security” is in tandem with ZANU PF’s argument that the nation’s sovereignty is at stake from imperialists who are fronted by MDC. *The Herald* stance on issues of land, homosexuality, dual citizenship and devolution of power flows directly from the person of the President and ZANU PF. But the *Daily News* did not give much prominence to these issues. This may be because as a business entity the *Daily News* stands to benefit from MDC’s neo-liberal policies than from ZANU-PF’s policies which at one time saw it being shut down (see Moyo, 2005).

The Herald further argued that devolution of power is meant to weaken the country with the intention of eventually breaking it up as is intended by sections of society calling for secession. It also argued that Western influence seeks to create a weak presidency which would consult parliament on each and every decision; a presidency whose power is reduced to that of a cabinet minister. Furthermore, dual citizenship is rejected on the basis that it gives “Rhodesians” the right to vote even though they left the country ages ago. However, critics argue that ZANU PF outlawed dual citizenship in order to disenfranchise Zimbabweans in the Diaspora whom it perceived as hostile. Dual Citizenship allegedly only became an issue post-2000 when ZANU PF was faced with a strong opposition in MDC. As a result of those contentious issues’ inclusion in the draft, *The Herald* wanted the principal drafters fired. For example in an article titled *Copac Overhauls Draft Constitution* on February 23, 2012, Felix Share writes that, “Analysts

and legal experts want the principal drafters fired because their initial draft was an ‘orchestrated’ attack on the country’s moral, cultural and revolutionary pillars.” This call was repeated in an article on February 13, 2013 titled *New Constitution’s Principal Drafters Must be Fired* (pp.1–2). Their crime is that they allegedly drifted from the National Report and put more than 70% of their own things in the draft constitution.

Contrastingly, the *Daily News* gave less prominence to the issues above and at no time do they call for the firing of the principal drafters. In all articles the *Daily News* placed less prominence on issues considered as outstanding in the draft constitution, that is, devolution of power, homosexuality, dual citizenship and presidential powers. It is arguable that for the *Daily News* to give these issues prominence would have had the effect of; legitimizing ZANU-PF’s claims that the draft is ‘a regime change’ document and, reducing the newspaper to the party’s mouthpiece. In an article titled *Zanu PF Officials in Mugabe Ouster Plot* (February 14, 2012) it is alleged that ZANU PF’s special advisor to the party’s COPAC co-chairperson had accused his fellow party members in COPAC of being sellouts who had allowed an anti-Mugabe clause to be included in the draft constitution. They go on to say hawks loyal to President Mugabe “accuse Zanu PF representatives in the Select Committee of letting the party down on what they view as key issues such as land, homosexuality and the Mugabe “retirement clause.” In another article titled *Mugabe Ouster Plot Thickens* (February 15, 2012) the *Daily News* quotes an unnamed source saying “Those clauses were agreed to by all Select Committee members. No-one opposed these particular clauses, even members of Zanu PF.”

The contentious issues are not given the same prominence in the *Daily News* and are made reference to in order to show the alleged divisions in ZANU PF which led some of its members to agree to clauses that were not only against their own party leader and

presidential candidate, but that were also against what the party considers to be its revolutionary and cultural principles. The *Daily News* sought to deconstruct ZANU PF's Western imperialists discourse by instead showing that the clauses were neither the work of the MDCs nor the so-called Western imperialists. To further buttress its case, the *Daily News* makes reference to Wikileaks which exposed how some top ZANU PF officials allegedly met the President's Western (American) enemies without his knowledge. It also quotes an angry Didymus Mutasa, then ZANU PF secretary for administration, in one of the stories castigating his party's representatives in COPAC and warning them that the party is bigger than them. The *Daily News* did this to drive home the point that factional fighting in ZANU PF had spilled into the constitution making process where factions had allegedly ganged up against Mugabe by agreeing to the 'retirement clause'.

Case Two: Framing Mujuru

Contrasting Frames in the Portrayal of Mujuru: *The Herald* versus the *Daily News*

In its portrayal of Vice President Joice Mujuru, *The Herald* regurgitated accusations leveled against her as fact. It portrayed Mujuru as, dabbling in witchcraft, corrupt, inept, a factional leader and a coup plotter. In all the 10 stories from *The Herald* that I analyzed the allegations are repeated as fact even though Mujuru has never been arrested and charged for the alleged plot to overthrow and assassinate Mugabe. For example, in a front page story on October 17, 2014, titled *Apologise or Face the Boot, VP told*, *The Herald* quotes the First Lady extensively but did not give Mujuru space to respond. On the same front page, it added as an extension to the story, an insert titled *...resign instead, say analysts*. By not giving the Vice President space to reply, *The Herald* implied that the First Lady's accusations were true therefore Mujuru should resign. It quoted analysts that supported that view. One of the analysts, Christopher

Mutsvangwa had recently attacked Mujuru casting aspersions on the widely held belief that she downed a helicopter during Zimbabwe's liberation struggle. The other analyst was Charity Manyeruke, a pro-ZANU PF academic. This selection of analysts that toe the line is deliberate as explained by *The Herald* news editor and one of the senior reporters in interviews with the researcher. They stated that they look for analysts sympathetic to their agenda. It was revealed that even if Mujuru do extra-ordinary things, it is not news. Political news, it is arguable, is shaped by the agenda the media are pushing.

The Herald also portrayed Mujuru as a sellout and a puppet of the West who undermined the ruling party by working with the MDC in efforts to stop the July 2013 national elections. Mujuru was accused of; plotting with the USA to topple Mugabe; aiding the formation of opposition parties Mavambo and MDC, and trying to hire assassins and witches to kill Mugabe. This is evident in stories titled: *Mujuru Hires Nigerian Sangomas [witch doctors]*; *Mujuru Linked to Mavambo, MDC* October 18, 2014; *US Exposes Mujuru Conspiracy* June 19, 2015. In the first two articles *The Herald* merely regurgitated the President and First lady's accusations that Mujuru hired Nigerian witchdoctors to kill Mugabe and that the two opposition parties had been formed in her house. In the article on the opposition parties, *The Herald* tries to link Mujuru to the British by arguing that the MDC was founded in 1999 with the assistance of the UK's Labor, Liberal Democrats and Conservatives under the Westminster Foundation for Democracy. In the same article, *The Herald* blames Mujuru for Mugabe's loss to Tsvangirai in the first round of the March 2008 elections. It claims that Mujuru masterminded the "Bhora Musango/ibhola egan'eni/Kick the ball out" campaign of 2008. In this campaign ZANU PF Parliamentary and Senatorial candidates allegedly told followers to vote them but for president "Kick the ball out" which meant not voting Mugabe. In all these articles Mujuru is not given the right of reply. The intention by *The*

Herald is to create the impression that she is guilty as charged. To lend credence to the accusations, *The Herald* in an article titled *Step Down, War Vets tell Mujuru* November 17, 2014, claims to have carried out investigations that showed that a Minister and alleged Mujuru ally had met assassins in South Africa and Israel. The assassins were allegedly being lined up to assassinate Mugabe should the witch doctors fail to kill him. To lend credence to accusations that Mujuru was working with the Americans, *The Herald* claims in an article titled *U.S. Exposes Mujuru Conspiracy* on June 19, 2015 that a US Senator had revealed that country's links to Mujuru.

The Western imperialists' motif is evident again in an article titled *Mujuru Cabal Sponsors Bye-election Candidates* May 13, 2015. The paper claims that Mujuru was sponsoring independent candidates in bye-elections called to fill parliamentary seats that had fallen vacant due to factional fighting-inspired dismissals of legislators by both ZANU PF and MDC. The article claims that "there is a visible external hand in its [Mujuru camp] programmes (*sic*) and campaign trail" (pp. 1–2). In the article, the paper sought to downplay Mujuru's popularity quoting, Saviour Kasukuwere, ZANU PF's political commissar 'warning' people not to overestimate Mujuru's popularity and saying only Mugabe had 'immeasurable' popularity. Furthermore, *The Herald* sought to criminalize opposition to Mugabe by continuously labeling Mujuru and alleged allies as "the putchist cabal" even though they are constitutionally free to participate in Zimbabwe's politics. Continuously labeling them, the "putschist cabal" creates the impression that the coup allegations were true.

In contrast, the *Daily News* was sympathetic to Mujuru. In all the 14 articles analyzed the *Daily News* maintained that the accusations against Mujuru remain 'untested claims' since she has not been arrested, charged and convicted. It could be because the

Daily News as stated by the news editor (Interview April 23, 2015), identifies with the underdog. In most articles the *Daily News* uses the phrase “untested allegations” or “untested claims” when referring to the accusations leveled against Mujuru. It argues that they could be the work of her political enemies in ZANU PF. It presents Mujuru as a victim of a rival faction vying to succeed Mugabe as leader of ZANU PF and as President of Zimbabwe. The rival faction, the *Daily News* implies, could be taking advantage of the fact that her powerful husband, Retired General Solomon Mujuru, is dead. It also implies that the rival faction could be responsible for his death in a mysterious fire in 2011. For example, in the following stories, *Ditch ZANU PF, Support Mujuru* May 30, 2015 and *Mujuru Fears for her Life* April 28, 2015, *Daily News* implies that Mujuru’s husband could have been assassinated by the family’s political rivals in ZANU PF who wanted him out of the way in order for them to be able to get rid of his wife. In the story titled “Ditch ZANU PF, Support Mujuru” the *Daily News* has this line, ‘...Mujuru...whose decorated liberation struggle war husband died in a suspicious fire in 2011...’ And in the *Mujuru Fears for her Life*, article, the *Daily News* reporting on the arrest of suspicious people at her farm, writes;

It has not assisted the mood and anxiety in the Mujuru family and the ranks of her supporters that her decorated late husband, Retired General Solomon Mujuru, died after a mysterious fire gutted their house at the same farm in 2011. His charred remains were found after an inferno amid suspicions that he may have been murdered by the family’s political foes in the ruling party. (pp.1-2).

In the same story, the *Daily News* quotes Rugare Gumbo, fired together with Mujuru from ZANU PF, saying her husband’s death was suspicious consequently they feared for

her life. The *Daily News* mostly quoted analysts sympathetic to Mujuru and hostile to ZANU PF and it made reference to the manner in which her husband died. The intention was to create the impression that Mujuru's husband was assassinated and that the allegations against her were the work of her political adversaries.

The *Daily News* also portrayed Mujuru as a moderate and popular politician who could defeat ZANU PF at the next elections in 2018. It praised Mujuru's response to the attacks by the First Lady as dignified. For example, in a story titled *Total chaos in ZANU PF* November 11, 2014, *Daily News* openly applauds Mujuru's 'dignified response' to the attacks by the First Lady whom it describes in another story as 'quarrelsome'. In the same story, the *Daily News* labels the attacks as "extreme provocation" (p. 2) implying the allegations were mere politicking designed to damage her politically. The phrase 'the popular widow' of the late decorated Retired General Solomon Mujuru recurs in most of the stories. This popular-humble-moderate motif is evident in the following stories *Ditch ZANU PF, Support Mujuru* May 30, 2015; *Angry Mujuru breathes fire...and apologises for ZANU PF misrule* June 02, 2015; *Rattled ZANU PF Goes for Broke...Ghost of Mujuru at Heart of Bye-elections* June 09, 2015; *Mujuru Can Slay ZANU PF in 2018* May 29, 2015 etc. The *Daily News* urges Mujuru to form a political party that will take on ZANU PF in 2018 elections. It claims that Mujuru is very popular and her expulsion from ZANU PF has not finished her politically. In the article *Ditch ZANU PF, Support Mujuru* the paper quotes Jabulani Sibanda, also fired together with Mujuru from ZANU PF, urging Zimbabweans to support Mujuru as she was humble. Sibanda is quoted saying "Mujuru...is a patriot. She is a freedom fighter...She is a very humble woman" (p. 2). In another story titled *Rattled ZANU PF Goes for Broke* June 09, 2015, the *Daily News* quotes Rugare Gumbo, another alleged Mujuru ally, saying "People understand her. She is a sober leader, is very humble....Amai Mujuru represents the future and that is what

people aspire for” (p. 2). The *Daily News*’ intention was to legitimize Mujuru’s future presidential candidature.

In order to buttress her liberation war credentials and rebut state media claims that her liberation war exploits were fictional, the *Daily News* constantly points out that Mujuru is a decorated liberation war heroine and is the widow of Zimbabwe’s first black Army General, a celebrated liberation war commander. Implied is that Mujuru not only derives her legitimacy to lead from the fact she was married to a national hero but also from the fact that she is a decorated liberation war heroine. In the story titled, *Mujuru has not Resigned: Govt* November 12, 2014, the following line, “the widowed Mujuru, a decorated liberation war heroine...” is used. Similar phrases such as; “...the widow of liberation icon, the late Solomon Mujuru...” and reference to Mujuru’s late husband is made in the following articles *I am ready-Mujuru* February 02, 2015; *Mujuru Can Slay ZANU PF in 2018* May 29, 2015; *Angry Mujuru Breathes Fire...and Apologise for ZANU P’s Misrule; Ditch ZANU PF, Support Mujuru* May 30, 2015; *Mujuru Imported Nigerian N’angas [witch doctors]* March 01, 2015 etc. The *Daily News*’ framing of Mujuru was designed to dismiss accusations against her as malicious and as the work of her party adversaries. It was intended to deconstruct the state media narrative of Mujuru’s liberation war credentials as questionable, of Mujuru as corrupt, a coup plotter and a person who dabbles in witchcraft. It dismisses the accusations against Mujuru as baseless on account that; she has not been arrested, charged and convicted and; the First Lady accused Mujuru of owning a 10% stake in the *Daily News* which the news editor dismissed as false (Interview April 23, 2015). In an article titled *I Am Ready-Mujuru* February 02, 2015, in which Mujuru was challenging her accusers to arrest and charge her, the *Daily News* describes the accusations against Mujuru as “...an avalanche of unspeakable abuse...” Commenting on allegations that Mujuru owns a 10% stake in the

newspaper, it says, "...Grace lied maliciously and egregiously that Mujuru owned a 10 per cent stake in the paper..." (p. 2). It describes the claim as "a ginormous fabrication" and the First Lady as "quarrelsome" (p. 2). Implied here is that if the First Lady could lie about Mujuru having shares in the *Daily News* then all the other accusations against Mujuru could be lies as well.

All stories about Mujuru were front page material in the two newspapers.

Ideological inclination. Ownership. Control and Profit. The Causes of *Daily News* and *The Herald's* Polarized Coverage of Issues?

The two newspapers' opposed ideological positioning is the reason why there is polarization in coverage of events. The regime's control over the state media explains *The Herald's* pro-ZANU PF stance in the first case. But with regards to the *Daily News* the paper argues its neo-liberal stance and the hunt for profits explain its anti-ZANU PF and anti-Mugabe stance. However, in the case of Joice Mujuru it is arguable that *The Herald's* framing was influenced by ZANU PF factionalism. As *The Herald's* senior reporter I interviewed observed, the faction in control of the Ministry of Information and by extension the state media dictated state media content (Interview April 10, 2015). He observed that, "even if Mujuru does something extra-ordinary it is not news" (Interview April 10, 2015). It is thus arguable that the frames used by the state media in the two cases were influenced by its control mechanism. For example, *The Herald's* news editor stated that "there are people we do not quote because their views are not in tandem with our editorial policy" (Telephone interview May 04, 2015). The sources the two newspapers utilized were influenced by ownership and control. Government control over *The Herald*, and ZANU PF's factionalism's influence were evident in the frames used.

The journalists may have been sympathetic to different factions but the views of the faction in control of state media carried the day.

Predictably, the *Daily News*' news editor pointed out that the reason their framing of the two cases under study was different from the state controlled media's was because the state media are abused by the ZANU PF regime (Interview April 23, 2015). He further stated that, "we are critical of everyone-we criticize everyone...without fear or favour." For the *Daily News* editor the differences in frames used were because the *Daily News* was an impartial ideal watchdog that holds the elite to account for their actions. However, when I put it to him that the *Daily News* is always anti-ZANU PF, he argued that, "we are for the underdogs; we are against the status quo. We are the voice of the voiceless. The powerful are abusing state media..." (Interview, April 23, 2015). The *Daily News*' political editor expressed the same sentiments. The *Daily News*' sympathetic portrayal of Joice Mujuru, was because she was the underdog. *The Herald* attacked her because the ZANU PF faction opposed to her was in control of the Ministry of Information. It is thus arguable that the differences are because of the newspapers' positioning where *The Herald* is pro-government while the *Daily News* is anti-status quo.

However, the hunt for profit also influenced the *Daily News*' framing of the two cases under study. The news editor stated that consideration of whether the story will sell also influence the slant given to their stories. The differences in the way the two newspapers framed the cases under study is a result of different ideological inclinations/positioning, the hunt for profits, control and ownership dynamics. These factors in turn influence the newspapers' ideological inclinations. For example, on one hand the *Daily News*' motto; "Telling it like it is. Without fear. Without favour (*sic*)" implies that the newspaper will not spare anyone critical scrutiny. But on the other hand,

The Herald's editorial policy stipulates that it should support the government of the day. This positioning ultimately leads to polarization in the two newspapers' portrayal of events in Zimbabwe. The *Daily News'* pro-underdog stance has seen it being pro-opposition and anti-ZANU PF. Similarly, *The Herald's* pro-government stance has seen it being largely pro-the ruling ZANU PF and anti-opposition.

The effects of ideological inclinations can be noted in *The Herald* and the *Daily News'* selection of analysts sympathetic to their respective causes. For example, *The Herald* always selected analysts opposed to Mujuru whilst the *Daily News* selected those sympathetic to her. Responding to what influences selection of analysts, *The Herald* news editor argued that, among other things they consider “*whether they are sympathetic to the cause we are pushing. There are certain people we do not quote...they are functionaries of certain political parties. We will be in trouble if we quote them [emphasis mine]*” (Telephone interview May 04, 2015). It can be concluded from this statement that self-preservation amongst journalists leads them to stick to frames that are acceptable to those who control the media. Failure to toe the line will lead to “*trouble*” which might mean being rebuked, demoted or fired. Similarly, the *Daily News'* political editor grudgingly conceded that they select sources that are anti-ZANU PF. But she then argued that “*an analysis is an analysis...*” and it is easy to pick when an expert is speaking as a party functionary (Interview April 23, 2015). However, the *Daily News'* news editor argued that, “*...experts have political and economic leanings-we talk to those with opposing views; we are not like ZBC*” (Interview April 23, 2015). The paper views itself as the voice of the voiceless/underdogs. This positioning, as explained by the editor, is the reason why the *Daily News'* content is different from state controlled media's content e.g. *The Herald* and *ZBC*.

Discussion

News framing in the two publications is influenced by powerful interests in society. *The Herald* is controlled by the ZANU-PF regime and during the era of Mujuru's purging, it was controlled by a faction opposed to her famously labeled "Weevils." In the two cases, *The Herald* for the first time post-2000 attacked senior ruling party officials; a development that is a result of the struggle to succeed Mugabe as ZANU PF's leader and Zimbabwe's president. In both cases the *Daily News* was anti-ZANU PF, specifically anti-Mugabe since it tends to sympathize with anyone who would have fallen foul of Mugabe. The *Daily News*' framing of news is influenced by considerations of whether the story sells the paper and its positioning as a voice of the voiceless/underdogs. The paper is anti-status quo since it views the powerful as abusing the state media. It could be that the *Daily News* realized that being anti-status quo (ZANU PF) is profitable. But for *The Herald* in this era of ZANU-PF in-fighting, it is the ruling party faction in control of the state media that uses it to attack internal opponents such as Mujuru. This positioning leads to polarization between the *Daily News*' and *The Herald's* and it jeopardizes their educative and informative roles.

However, it is arguable that by publishing the leaked draft constitution and the accusations against the Vice President they were fulfilling their informative role. But the two publications' polarized framing raises questions about the extent to which their coverage of the two cases educated the citizenry. Whereas in the Vice President Mujuru case, *The Herald* was anti-Mujuru and pro-the Mugabes and the 'Weevils' ZANU PF faction, the *Daily News* was sympathetic to Mujuru and the ZANU PF faction aligned to her. It is arguable that while *The Herald*, for the first time post-2000, savagely attacked a sitting Vice President and scores of other senior ZANU PF officials, the *Daily News*,

perhaps for the first time since its inception was sympathetic to some ruling ZANU PF officials. The Daily News, instead of criticizing ZANU PF en masse was sympathetic to Mujuru and her alleged faction. However, in the draft constitution case, the two newspapers failed to educate the audiences on the pros and cons of the contentious clauses in the leaked draft constitution instead choosing to take sides. In both cases the two newspapers failed to report in a way that enables the publics to make informed political decisions. But it can be concluded that the two newspapers may be polarized but they have no fixed positions and they have no permanent friends or foes. For example, Mujuru was part of the ZANU PF that the Daily News attacks but once she became the target of attacks by Mugabe and his wife and other ZANU PF officials, the Daily News started giving her positive coverage because she was now the underdog. Contrastingly, The Herald which used to cover Mujuru glowingly was savagely attacking her as a corrupt, coup plotting extortionist who dabbles in witchcraft and whose liberation war exploits were fictitious. Ironically she was still the ZANU PF and state Vice President.

It can be concluded that during the period under study *The Herald* ceased being merely pro-ZANU PF and pro-government while the *Daily News* ceased merely being anti-ZANU PF as had widely been noted by critics such as Moyse (2009); Chuma (2005 & 2008); Moyo (2005); Mazango (20005); and Rusike (1990). Instead it *became pro-First Lady; pro-Mugabe and pro-a specific faction in ZANU PF that had control over state media*. As one of *The Herald's* senior reporters observed, the faction in control of the Ministry of Information is the one “whose views carry the day-this applies only during the Gamatox [Mujuru faction]-Weevils era” (Interview April 10, 2015). Where previously, the state media has been used to attack and de-legitimize the opposition as puppets of the British and Americans, it is now being used to attack perceived Mugabes’ opponents within ZANU PF. From this observation, one can argue that the state media do

not play their educative and informative roles in ways that enhance democracy. They are political tools in the hands of the powerful ruling ZANU PF elite. Their sole purpose in Zimbabwe's political life is to perpetuate President Mugabe's rule. In the era of ruling party factionalism merely being in ZANU PF but without the protection of the President does not shield one from savage attacks by the state media.

The paper concludes that judging by the newspapers' performance in the two cases the citizenry must not expect to be assisted by the Zimbabwean media to make informed political decisions. In the first case, *The Herald* actively promotes ZANU PF ideology while deconstructing MDC's and the *Daily News* promotes MDC's ideology whilst deconstructing ZANU PF's. In the second case, *The Herald* negatively portrays Mujuru whilst presenting those accusing her as upright politicians. It was setting an agenda for the arrest, resignation and/or expulsion of Mujuru from both ZANU PF and government. Contrastingly, the *Daily News* praises Mujuru as a moderate and casts her as a victim of ZANU PF hardliners, as a patriot and a liberation war heroine, as popular and having the potential to defeat Mugabe or any ZANU PF presidential candidate in the 2018 elections. It further casts doubt on the allegations leveled against her, labeling some of them 'malicious lies', 'unspeakable abuse', 'untested allegations' etc. Unlike *The Herald* which did not give Mujuru the right of reply or even consult sources sympathetic to her, the *Daily News* strived to hear Mujuru's side of the story but it, like *The Herald*, sought comments from analysts sympathetic to the agenda it was pushing. It was setting an agenda for Mujuru to form an opposition political party to challenge Mugabe and ZANU PF and to form a coalition with MDC-T's Tsvangirai to challenge ZANU PF in the 2018 election with either Mujuru or Tsvangirai as leader.

Conclusions

The paper concludes that even though the two newspapers are polarized they do not have fixed positions and permanent friends or foes. The differences in framing can be attributed to the differences in ideological positioning between *Daily News* and *The Herald*. However, the *Daily News* may also still have an axe to grind with the ZANU PF government which once banned it. Furthermore, the *Daily News* was probably angered by the First Lady's claim that Joice Mujuru owned 10% shareholding in the paper. Or perhaps its knowledge that the claim was not true, as it claims, made it highly skeptical of all the allegations leveled against Mujuru. Finally, it can be concluded that the two newspapers did inform the public about the contentious draft constitution clauses and the allegations against Mujuru but did not adequately educate the citizenry as shown by the polarized nature of their framing of the two cases.

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