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Abstract

This article explores the framing of First Lady Grace Mugabe's entry into mainstream politics in 2014. It examines press representation of Grace Mugabe's nationwide rallies which consequently led to the purge of former Vice President Joice Mujuru from ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF). The paper then explores purges of Bulawayo Provincial Affairs Minister Eunice Sandi Moyo and Hurungwe East Member of Parliament Sarah Mahoka; as well as National Political Commissar Saviour Kasukuwere. The article demonstrates that factionalism and succession struggles within the ruling party contribute to the purges of members thereby exacerbating divisions in the political party that has been in power since independence in 1980. The paper argues that while party members' alleged ambitions into powerful positions and corruption charges against them, presidential succession seems the biggest challenge behind the acrimonious and brutal purges which leaves the national economy bleeding. The first section of the article analysed *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Daily News* and *The Standard* newspapers, that is, state-controlled and privately owned newspapers respectively. In the second section, the state-controlled daily, *The Herald* and the privately-owned *Daily News* were used to examine how they framed the purges of ZANU PF ruling party members; as well as intriguing succession dynamics. The two newspapers are the most widely read dailies in Zimbabwe. The article concluded that *The Herald*, a national public newspaper was used as a mouthpiece of Team Lacoste [a faction within ruling party, pushing for Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa to succeed President Mugabe; pitying another faction Generation 40 (G40) which is behind Grace Mugabe] while *Daily News* somewhat adopted a middle of the road approach. Both newspapers were, however, rather sensational in their reportage.

Key Words: The Herald, Daily News, ZANU PF, Gamatox, Weevils, Team Lacoste, Generation 40, Factionalism, Mainstream Media, Succession, Purges.

INTRODUCTION

This article is an attempt to understand the causes, factors and motivations influencing the seemingly never ending internal factionalism and succession struggles that lead to purging of ZANU PF members. It examines press representation of Grace Mugabe's nationwide rallies which consequently led to the purge of former Vice President Joice Mujuru from ruling ZANU PF party. The paper then explores purges of Bulawayo Provincial Affairs Minister Eunice Sandi - Moyo and Hurungwe East Member of Parliament Sarah Mahoka; as well as an attempt to oust National Political Commissar Saviour Kasukuwere. Intriguing succession dynamics are also explored.

In 2014, former Vice President Joice Mujuru and her allies were purged out from both government and ZANU PF. Soon after 2013 general elections, two factions within ZANU PF emerged. This paper argues that although there had been denial by the ruling party leadership on the existence of factions; initially manifesting as Gamatox (a faction allegedly led by Joice Mujuru) and Weevils (a faction aligned to one of the Vice Presidents Emmerson Mnangagwa), reality revealed that these factions really existed. The Weevils hatched a plot to purge Gamatox members and the grand scheme was to use First Lady Grace Mugabe to viciously attack Mujuru through her "nationwide rallies".

Following Grace Mugabe's scathing and acerbic attacks of Mujuru, the next strategy of Weevils to annihilate those perceived aligned to Mujuru was purging of Provincial Chairpersons. Matyszak (2015) contends that in order to gain control of the provinces and preclude nominations to the Presidium, the plotters deemed necessary the removal of the nine allies of Mujuru who were provincial chairpersons, elected at the end of 2013, since the Politburo had directed the 'suspensions of suspensions' in early September 2014. After the Provincial Chairpersons had been got rid of their positions, the next move by the plotters was to purge senior officials allegedly aligned to Mujuru faction. Having slandered Mujuru's allies through the public media with increasingly outlandish and unsupported allegations the next move was to expel senior members of the Mujuru faction, including Mujuru herself. All these events were called 'Pre December Epic Congress Purges' (Mungwari, 2016).

This article contends that two days after the end of the Congress, on 9 December, 2014, the dismissal of Mujuru and seven ministers and one deputy minister was announced, not by Mugabe but, by the Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Dr Misheck Sibanda (*The Herald & Daily News*, 10 December, 2014). Considering the purge of ZANU PF officials pre and post December 2014 Congress, the ruling party could be likened to a hen eating its own chicks – a former revolutionary party devouring its own.

Framing of ZANU PF purges and Succession Dynamics

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It should be pointed out that despite the relentless and scurrilous nature of allegations levelled against Mujuru and allies (labelled as 'cabal' and then as 'putschist cabal'), both before and after Congress, they were later cynically brushed aside as inconsequential by Jonathan Moyo, who stated that the allegations were merely normal "political banter" to be expected between rival groups in a pre-election environment (Mungwari, *ibid*).

The 'hope' that purging Mujuru and her allies would get rid of factionalism and succession battles proved a political mirage because fresh internal struggles and fissures immediately reared their ugly heads in ZANU PF post 2014. Two distinct factions, Team Lacoste and Generation 40 (G40) began their fight; and the media became the battleground. This paper argues that there are no permanent friends and enemies in politics, but only permanent interests. This truism is reflected in President Robert Mugabe's Machiavellian leadership over decades. Events since the 1970s have shown that Mugabe's politics is driven by one overriding interest – winning, consolidating and retaining power – and expediency even if it means dumping those who helped him to the top. Mugabe's springboard into the ZANU leadership was what became known as the Mgagao Declaration, signed by young guerrilla fighters at the main ZANLA training camp in Tanzania at the height of the liberation struggle in 1975 (Mazarire, 2011). Mugabe was then elevated to the ZANU leadership at a special congress in Chimoio, Mozambique, in 1977. The congress formally booted out the founding party's leader Ndabaningi Sithole.

As if this was not enough; fast events to independence in 1980 and after: in 1982, Mugabe dismissed his coalition partner, the late Joshua Nkomo and a number of ZAPU ministers from his cabinet accusing them of plotting to overthrow the government. Nkomo's dismissal effectively ended the government of national unity that was established in 1980 at Zimbabwe's independence. However, Mugabe and Nkomo later reunited in 1987 after Gukurahundi, in what became as the Unity Accord. These events show that Mugabe has no permanent friends as he does not hesitate to get rid of those who seem to threaten his interests and power. Ever since Mugabe came into power as ZANU PF leader and President of Zimbabwe he has shown that his politics is all about protecting his interests even if it means betraying those who helped him get into power in the first place. As this article argued earlier, Mujuru was booted out of ZANU PF in 2014 after being accused, on unattested allegations, of plotting Mugabe's ouster and even assassination in order to pave way for her elevation. Her husband – the late General Solomon Mujuru – who helped Mugabe to the top – fell out with him and died in mysterious circumstances in 2011. The long list of political heavyweights dumped by Mugabe include former ZANU PF secretary general Edgar

Tekere (Tekere, 2007); party founding member Eddison Zvobgo, former ZANU PF secretary for administration Didymus Mutasa and former war veterans leader Jabulani Sibanda, among others.

This article argues that unsurprisingly, First Lady Grace Mugabe (Secretary for Women's League) did not take long to learn Mugabe's Machiavellian political style. She spearheaded the purging of Mujuru as she castigated her in almost all of the rallies she held in 2014 ahead of the ZANU PF's acrimonious congress. As this paper postulates, Grace continues to show that she is cut from the same cloth as her husband with her political deception and purges.

In a dramatic move on 22 February 2017, members of the Women's League demonstrated against Hurungwe East Member of Parliament Sarah Mahoka and Bulawayo Provincial Affairs Minister Eunice Sandi-Moyo, her former allies who have been sidelined and purged from the league. Mahoka previously appeared to be one of the untouchables in ZANU PF, spitting venom at Grace Mugabe's enemies, like a true lieutenant. With Mahoka on her side, Grace could choose not to launch direct attacks at her enemies when it suited her, leaving the job to fearless Mahoka. Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa was at the receiving end of Mahoka's acerbic attacks on 10 February 2016: "Do not be like a duck which just quacks as its ducklings perish. Please stand up and speak out..." (*The Herald*, 11 February, 2016). Mahoka lashed out at Mnangagwa while challenging him to open up on his presidential ambitions. The outspoken Mahoka also accused Mugabe's spokesperson George Charamba of promoting factionalism in ZANU PF and advancing Mnangagwa's succession agenda through state media (Mungwari & Vhutuza, 2016).

In this paper and in the context of the foregoing discussion, it argues that Mahoka, who appeared ready to do battle for Grace, has been dumped by the wayside. Mahoka, together with Grace's deputy, Sandi-Moyo, were dumped by the Women's League after being accused of undermining the First Lady in public meetings and corruption charges, among other unattested allegations. Ironically, one of the accusations now being used against Mahoka is that of insulting Mnangagwa and challenging Charamba's work.

This article argues that the problem for the duo can be traced back in 2014 when women forced the change of the ruling party's constitution to adopt a clause that had been abandoned that reserved one VP position to a woman. When the women clamoured for the VP post, their target beneficiary was First Lady Grace Mugabe. The demand was seen as a G40 move to replace Mnangagwa with Grace. Team Lacoste was sceptical about the whole demand but was forced to accept it. Sandi-Moyo pushed hard in 2015 for ZANU PF to adopt a quota system which party insiders argue was

designed to block Mnangagwa's ascendancy. The move would have seen Grace being elevated to become Vice President, putting her at an advantage in the race to succeed Mugabe. The removal of Mahoka and Sandi-Moyo suggests that Grace has perfected her husband's art using and dumping political allies (*The Zimbabwean Independent*, 7 April, 2017).

It is important to note that in 2015 Grace dumped seven youth provincial chairpersons who include Godfrey Tsenengamu and Godwin Gomwe soon after the purging of Mujuru. Other party leaders who have been used and dumped by Grace in her short political career include former Women's League secretary Oppah Muchinguri-Kashiri, who worked closely with Grace to oust Mujuru in 2014, hoping for promotion (Mungwari, 2016).

Given the foregoing revelations of purges, unexpectedly on 3 April, 2017, ZANU PF members demonstrated against the party's national commissar Savior Kasukuwere proving, yet again, that no one is safe in ZANU PF. Kasukuwere – hitherto close to Grace – was accused of fanning factionalism and planning to topple Mugabe (which is a treasonous charge). This paper argues that Joice Mujuru plotters used the same serious allegation in order to purge her.

The first part of the paper analyses press representation purges of Mujuru and her allies' from the ruling party. The article then examines how the state-controlled *Herald* and the privately-owned *Daily News* framed the purges of Sarah Mahoka and Sandi-Moyo as well as the attempt to get rid of Savior Kasukuwere from both his position and the party.

Grace Mugabe's Entry into Main Stream Politics

"People say I want to be president, why not? Am I not Zimbabwean?" The 49-year old said when addressing veterans of the county's liberation struggle at her farm in Mazowe. Zimbabwe's First Lady Grace Mugabe has announced her candidacy to succeed her husband, 90-year-old President Robert Mugabe, when he leaves (Mail & Guardian, October 23, 2014).

First Lady, Grace Mugabe's entry into active politics can be understood from Oppah Muchinguri, the former Secretary of ZANU PF's Women's League's description of the First Lady as "...an Angel, a Queen and the nation's own Cremora" in reference to her near-perfect being, as well as her philanthropic disposition.

Therefore, the ascendancy of Grace Mugabe and her vicious attacks on Joice Mujuru is a manifestation of the resurrection of a historically stated intent by Mugabe to rule till death. Grace Mugabe was introduced into the political terrain to stem perceived and real aspirations, especially by Mujuru and her backers to ascend to the Presidency during Mugabe's life time. A Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition publication titled "Protracted Road

to Transition: Dissecting Zimbabwe's succession Conundrum" (2014) reveals attempts to link current developments and discourses in ZANU PF politics to the late 1980s aspirations by Mugabe for a one-party state, which Zimbabwe seems to be now. In addition, it links this one-party state discourse to the "life presidency" aspirations of Robert Mugabe, and perhaps the possibilities of a matrimonial succession, which would allow Mugabe to rule from both his death bed, and the graveyard (CCZ, 2014:7).

Developments around the succession question actually point to what could be one of the biggest national challenges at the moment; a leadership crisis that is characterised by leadership aspirations that is steeped towards the acquisition of power more than transformation of people's lives. A leadership that is bent on the 'will to power' is preoccupied with its own interests and personal aggrandisement, and instrumentalises the same to promote personal, fraternal and factional interests. While a leadership that is preoccupied with the 'will to transform' seeks power to discipline it, it uses it for the benefit of the masses, and transforms it and the systems that support it, for the good of the people. Could it not be that the challenge that the succession conundrum present is actually an outing of the fact that Zimbabwe is bereft of leaders who are selfless. It can be argued that recent and current developments with regard to the 'succession question' in ZANU PF and Zimbabwean, including the definite entry into Zimbabwe's mired political field of First Lady "DR" Grace Mugabe, and Mugabe's continuous hold of power are denotative of his unfinished quest for a one party-state in Zimbabwe and pursuit of the life presidency project.

Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (2015) argue that the orderly transfer of power from one political leader to another is a litmus test for the stability and legitimacy of a political system and the success to which the transfer is orderly conducted posits the maturity of the political system. Throughout history, succession to power has been one of the trickiest political problems faced by politics, no matter what kind of political infrastructure they run. ZDI (2015) further contends that in prehistoric tribes as much as in modern countries, who becomes the new leader whenever the incumbent paramount dies, the term of office expires, renounces or loses his capacity to rule, has been and is a tough political problem, for it can very easily and frequently cause fights between candidates to ascend to the throne. The transfer of power from one individual to the other has become more of a crisis of stability and survival of the political system particularly in personalised, charismatic and powerful monolithic parties such as ZANU PF. In Zimbabwe, the issue of presidential succession has been a thorny one since independence as the ruling ZANU PF has declared it is the only legitimate party to rule this country.

As mentioned earlier, the second part of the device was to increase Grace Mugabe's political capital by placing her as the Secretary of ZANU PF Women's League. While the league was then headed by Oppah Muchinguri, Muchinguri is likely to have stepped aside willingly (from her confessions) in the hope that Grace Mugabe and by extension, President Mugabe, would elevate her into senior Politburo post then possibly into the presidium as a reward. The then ascending of the Mujuru faction made it probable that Muchinguri would in any event have lost the position to Olivia Muchena a Mujuru ally, who had long coveted the post at the impending Women's League Conference. This was hinted by Muchinguri herself in *The Herald* of 18 October 2014 in the article titled "Why I let post go: Muchinguri". The *Zimbabwean Independent* of 17 September 2014 also published an article titled "Knife-edge tension at Women's League Conference" in which Muchinguri declared surrendering the post. The tension that characterised this conference was reminiscent of 2009 Women's League Congress.

With Muchinguri being part of the plotters (the four leaders were later referred to as the "gang of four") who were hoping to ensure that both Vice-Presidential positions were vacant by the time of the Congress, it should be recalled that the ZANU PF constitution then prescribed that one VP had to be a woman. Muchinguri hoped that the post of the party Secretary for Administration would also become vacant so that she could have been confident that surrendering her position as head of the Woman's League would have been merely a prelude to obtaining higher post. It is also ironic that Oppah Muchinguri played a key role in having Joice Mujuru elevated to the post of Vice-President in 2004, yet she (Muchinguri) was now plotting for the expulsion of Mujuru, her fellow cadre. Within ZANU PF, anything other than the unrestrained eulogisation of Mugabe is considered a blasphemy (Matyszak, 2015). *The Standard* of 8 February, 2015 published an article titled 'Mugabe: a God-given Leader- Kasukuwere.' Kasukuwere depicted Mugabe as divinely appointed – an example of exaggerated outlandish praise in order to gain favours. Accordingly, one means by which each faction within ZANU PF has traded barbs has been to accuse the other of disloyalty towards the party leaders. This attitude resonates with the concept of "We" are right and "They" are wrong. It would seem the ruling party's philosophy is ... if you are not with us, you are against us, which is narrow and fallacious. Few believed that Grace Mugabe would have been elected as Secretary of the Women's League without Mugabe's consent. Matyszak (2015) reckons that the proposal had to be considered as beyond reproach. Criticism directed at Grace Mugabe's ascendancy would be conceived as a criticism of Mugabe, and could be used as a club to bludgeon opponents or to raise complaints about them to

Mugabe. Under the guise of campaigning for Grace Mugabe's appointment and showing support, provincial committees rushed to nominate Grace as their "candidate" for the Central Committee. 'Matabeleland Backs First Lady's Endorsement' and "Harare offers First Lady Key Slot" were headlines that appeared in *The Herald* of 28 July 2014 and 27 August 2014 respectively. The committees were joined in their show of support by numerous other individuals and bodies, the youth league, church groups among others. For example, "Leagues Throw Weight behind Amai (Mother) Grace Mugabe", was the headline of an article published in *The Herald* of 29 July, 2014. *The Herald* of 8 August 2014 had "Youths Endorse Amai Mugabe". The endorsement of the First Lady was expected to be a foregone conclusion within ZANU PF structures, arguably out of fear of "Big Brother." Consequently, the government controlled press represented the first family in positive light. Worth noting was the fact that none of the privately-owned press published similar articles, instead, they heavily criticised the First Lady's conferment of a doctorate which has been a controversial issue in Zimbabwe.

A period of "Grace Mania" was followed by praise singing about the First Lady and numerous vehicles in the cities, particularly Harare were emblazoned with posters carrying her image (Matyszak, 2015). All state institutions, be they universities, colleges, polytechnics, parastatals and even privately owned organisations joined to congratulate the First Lady. It has become a norm and culture in Zimbabwe to express solidarity when President Mugabe makes appointments of similar nature. The Mnangagwa faction controlled state newspapers, *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Sunday News*, *The Chronicles*, and electronic media also set into motion saturation coverage of the First Lady's activities, marked by a slick of obsequiousness (Matyszak, 2015). Every flattery by eager cadres was dutifully reproduced. An agenda was set for the Zimbabwean society. The *Daily News* 9 October 2014 published an article titled "Grace Mugabe for President". In the article, Oppah Muchinguri was reported as referring to Grace Mugabe as the "Queen Mother. The Queen of the Queens...". Such representation is suggestive of a to-be crowned president. Such flattery was a means to gain ultimate recognition for yearned promotion which, when denied, may cause frustration and even deep hate. According to Matyszak (2015), the encomium around Grace Mugabe and her new political prominence may have been overdone by the plotters. It was such that it led to speculation that the public was being prepared for her to be appointed to one of the Vice-Presidential positions at congress, and a prelude to her ascendance to the presidency. I argue in this article that chances are very high for Grace Mugabe to succeed her husband at the end of his term of office by whatever means.

However, with her elevated to the party hierarchy the stage was set for the next act of the plot. A decision was taken that Grace Mugabe would address rallies in each of the country's ten provinces. The central theme of Grace Mugabe's speeches was factionalism within the party. She would be presented as someone who would unify the party and expunge the scourge of factionalism. Her well-meaning efforts in this regard would be treated as spurned by Mujurites (a term coined to refer to those aligned to Mujuru), and the idea appears to have been that she would slowly ratchet up the pressure, and, carefully monitoring any backlash from the Mujurites, gradually increasing both the intensity of the attacks on those claimed to be fanning factionalism (Matyszak, 2015). It is interesting and curious to note that throughout Grace Mugabe's speeches in all ten provinces in which she viciously attacked Joice Mujuru; President Mugabe did not make any comment or restrain his wife. Mugabe was apparently incensed with Mujuru as a result. Mujuru responded by denying that she had any ambition to take over the presidency and countered that the allegations were themselves a plot to remove her from the Vice-Presidency, asking Mugabe "Is this the way you want to remove me from the Vice Presidency?" Mugabe reportedly responded: 'it is the people who elect leaders' in the article titled "Mugabe, Mujuru in Stormy Meeting", *The Zimbabwean Independent* 22.08.14). Mujuru's ally, Webster Shamu, accused the youths of trying to foment a 'Nhari type' rebellion against Mujuru. "Nhari" and others rebelled against ZANU PF Leadership in Zambia; most of the members were killed in 1974 but the purge was downplayed through silence and the ruling party adopted 'patriotic history' discourse (Chung, 2006).

Mugabe did not take any action at the State House gathering, simply referring the matter to the next Politburo meeting for consideration. Despite Mugabe's obvious displeasure with them Mujuru and her allies were not cowed.

Days after Mugabe left Zimbabwe for China, the very next week, on 23 August, 2014; Mujurites proceeded with an immediate attempt to purge the Youth League of some key members considered hostile. Harare Province Youth League leader, Godwin Gomwe was first in the firing line, while Temba Mliswa reportedly led moves to remove Vengai Musengi and his deputy Joseph Nyariri in Mashonaland West. *The Herald* of 27 August 2014 represented this purge in an article titled "Youths Targeted in ZANU PF Purge". This state controlled press intended to instigate emotions so that the President would react on the perpetrators. I can argue that the press was at the forefront in exacerbating and fanning factionalism. On the day of the scheduled Politburo meeting, 3 September 2014, *The Herald* published a significant editorial, which, seemed to be an unprecedented criticism of Mugabe.

The editorial(which reflects the official line) bemoaned the fact that "no heads had rolled" as a result of the "bhora musango"(ball off-target) campaign, no heads had rolled following the provincial elections the previous year despite "vote-buying and manipulation" and no heads had yet rolled over the vote-buying in the Women's and Youth League elective conferences. ZANU PF's inaction on saboteurs since 2008 explains the prevailing problems. 'Unless those behind the Shenanigans are made to answer for their actions, they will continue their nefarious agenda in the knowledge that nothing will happen to them. To this end we hope and we are sure we speak for the generality of Zimbabweans, that the special politburo meeting will not be another talk show. Heads must roll or must be seen to roll to foster discipline down to the grassroots. Where the alleged irregularities are proved, results must be nullified so that intra-party democracy triumphs' (*The Herald*, 3 September, 2014) 'Time ZANU PF Showed Some Teeth' {editorial} and "Politburo Urged To be Decisive" (*The Herald* 3 September 2014).

The Herald took a partisan position dictating to the President Mugabe and the Politburo what decision they should make. *The Herald's* agenda was clear, instigating, exacerbating and fuelling conflict. The editor of this state owned newspaper seemed to be the mouthpiece and conduit of the elite, particularly the Mnangagwa faction which controlled the pro-government newspapers. *The Herald's* allegiance to the ruling party is unquestionable but its reportage fans factionalism and divides the party instead of building peace and fostering unity in the liberation movement, "ZANU PF'S inaction" can only be read to mean that of Mugabe, and *The Herald* could not have been urging or have expected the Mujurites dominated politburo to take action – the call was really for Mugabe to exercise his powers as leader and act "decisively". "Time ZANU PF Showed Some Teeth" and "Politburo Urged to be Decisive" (*The Herald* 3.09.14). The result of the Youth and Women's League Conference elections were allowed to stand. This was represented in *The Herald* of 14 September 2014 in an article titled "Politburo Upholds Conference Results". The *Daily News* of 5 September 2014 published an article with headline "Mujuru Prevails". From the *Daily News* headline, it can be argued the newspaper clearly had an agenda to support Mujurites. It can be argued that the two dailies were opposed on their agenda setting. Although it can be argued that the privately owned press generally supports or is sympathetic to opposition parties, in this scenario, it sympathises with the Mujurites, who in a way represent the "opposition". It is important to examine how the newspapers framed the First Lady's ominous country-wide rallies.

Press Representation of Grace Mugabe's Nationwide Rallies

Zimbabwe's First Lady Grace Mugabe makes her grand entrance into politics following her recent nominations as national secretary of the ruling party's Women's League through a sensational two week-long crusade around the country, whipping supporters into a frenzy and ruffling the feathers of Vice President Joice Mujuru...Tapping into party grievances and adopting the Zanu PF Youth League's anti-factionalist slogans to rally support for her husband, Mrs. Mugabe's movement up the Zanu PF ladder adds a new twist to the battle for the president's succession..."(Zimbabwe – Grace Mugabe's rise to power and pole position in succession race (Tendai Marima in *Daily Vox/all Africa*, October 24, 2014).

Grace Mugabe's first rally was held in Chinhoyi, Mashonaland West on 2 October, 2014. Mashonaland West is President Mugabe's home province. The First Lady reportedly denounced factionalism, stating that, instead of infighting, the ZANU-PF leadership should attend to service delivery (Matyszak, 2015). Throughout her rallies factionalism was the First Lady's leitmotif. With regard to those leading the "factions", Mugabe's wife stated:

We have been hearing that some people have been leading factions for a long time and now we hear that they are receiving money from the US to remove President Robert Mugabe...we see them dancing... here as if they love the President, they are good at chanting slogans in the public, but deep down their hearts don't love him... At night, they are plotting his ouster claiming that he is old hence he must go so that they take over (*Daily News* 14 October 2014).

The *Standard*, 2 November 2014 published an article with the headline 'Mugabe to blame for ZANU – PF fights! (Feluna Nleya).' The article reported that Mujuru's alleged ties with the West were revealed in the whistle-blower website Wiki Leaks cables which suggested that she clandestinely met with former US Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Charles Ray "under cover of darkness" in December 6, 2009, after dodging her security and the Central Intelligence Organisation. The Whistle-Blower website also exposed that other senior ZANU-PF officials such as Jonathan Moyo and Savior Kasukuwere met with officials from the US Embassy. The newspaper article also quoted political analysts Ibbo Mandaza and Charles Mangongera who concurred in accusing Mugabe of propping up a faction and then crushing it when it threatens his interests. The article further claimed that Mujuru fell out of favour with Mugabe because of her "soft spot for the West".

At the second rally, on 6 October, 2014, at the ZANU-PF Conference Centre in Gweru, Midlands Province, Grace Mugabe reportedly made the first reference to the need to remove Provincial Chairmen, whom she

claimed were ineffective, adding that some senior party politicians were conspiring with the MDC-T and Western powers (Matyszak, 2015). The First Lady is also reported to have castigated those whom she alleged were bribing delegates ahead of the December Congress and called on them to desist from the practice. The third ally, in Harare on 8 October, 2014, was billed as a "mini accord" as Grace Mugabe portrayed herself as magnanimously bringing together those who had spoken for and against her ascendancy, and as part of a claimed role as the unifier who would stamp out factionalism in the party. *The Herald* of October 2014 published a story with the headline "Amai Mugabe to nip factionalism in the bud;" which reported on the "Meet the People" rally held at the City Sports Centre in Harare. Oppah Muchinguri was reported to have said "the decision to ask the First Lady, Dr. Grace Mugabe to lead the party organ was meant to stem factionalism that had taken root in the party," (*The Herald*: 2014:2). In another story of the same paper titled 'Unity Accord' struck in Harare, the First Lady told thousands of people at the rally that the day would be historic in the politics of ZANU-PF, before unexpectedly calling Midzi and Gomwe to come to the stage where the latter apologised. She forged a mini Unity Accord between the two. It is yet to be seen whether her mission to 'end factionalism' was accomplished or that the party was further divided by her rhetoric, myth and symbolism. However, the suggestion that "Mujuruites" were to be forgiven and brought back into fold appears to have been abandoned at the rally in Masvingo on 9 October 2014. At this rally, Grace Mugabe inched closer to disclosing that Mujuru herself was a prime target and subject of her excoriation. She claimed that those who wanted to rule in place of her husband were unable to do so and, having been placed in their positions by Mugabe, could just as easily be removed (Matyszak, 2015). She is reported to have warned that:

Some of you here were called (by Mugabe) and were warned, but you did not listen. You know what's next. There are many people who can take the job that you have. You are a crook. If you harden your head, what if the person you are fighting for loses? What will you do? Where will you go...? Most people were being spoon-fed by my husband. He worked for them, yet today you hear them saying they want to rule the country. Are you able to rule? Leave us alone, you are revolting, you are not able to rule the country (I'm Aiming for High Post – Grace Mugabe' (*Daily News*, 10 October 2014).

Oppah Muchinguri claimed that the First Lady had an important role to play in the party. She stated that:

We realised that there were some who wanted to take over from Mugabe but we plotted against

them and decided to use our mother (Grace Mugabe) to come and take over because she is a worthy candidate... We had to do this because it was the same people who are undermining us and intimidating us to support their cause to replace baba VaMugabe (father Mugabe) but we have put it to an end by the coming in of Amai (mother i.e. Grace Mugabe) (*Daily News*, 11 October, 2014).

Before Grace Mugabe began her rallies, the initial path was cleared for her. This set the tone for her rallies and did not make it appear as if she was promoting maverick policies and discussing factionalism which the party had previously wished left out of the public domain. But I argue that the pretence that there was no factionalism in ZANU PF can be compared to the naivety and in vain attempt by the proverbial ostrich hiding its head in sand in impending danger. Nevertheless, the public was aware of the existence of these factions despite the fact that both Mujuru and Mnangagwa denied, as pointed out earlier. There were three significant developments marking this process according to Matyszak (2015). Firstly trenchant criticism of two prominent Mujurites by President Mugabe himself; an outstanding interview with war veteran Christopher Mutsvangwa, published in *The Herald*; and the meeting with the Youth League at State House already mentioned. The strident tone of the interview is well captured by this opening salvo by the abrasive war veteran in regard to a question referring to "reports" of factionalism within ZANU-PF:

An ambitious coterie of political chancers... has also recruited lumpen elements with criminal intent... pursuing a fascist agenda as they employ Nazi tactics to try to wrestle power and then proceed to resurrect a post-Rhodesian political agenda. The coterie is totally opposed to the revolutionary history of the party whose regalia and banners they are so much wont to flaunt

Now ever the busy-body Mutasa, he has been angling to abuse the illustrious record of another cadre, the Vice President... Mujuru. In a scheme that sidesteps fellow comrades who fought alongside her, there is some coaxing at instigation of Mutasa and cohorts on Vice President Mujuru to make her challenge His Excellency Mugabe. This conspiracy is directed at the man who has given Vice President Mujuru post-independence high offices from the onset of the Republic, an honour and recognition that has not been accorded to any other of her peers (*The Herald*, 16 August 2014).

Mutsvangwa's tone was full of vitriol, mockery, denigration and despire. What is of interest is that state owned press was setting the agenda and taking sides in fuelling factionalism. Mutsvangwa belittled the roles played by Mutasa and, to some extent, Mujuru, in the independence war, maintaining that Mutasa was a coward who had done everything possible to remove

himself from zones of danger and that the legend that Mujuru had downed a Rhodesian helicopter, was manufactured by Webster Shamu. The interview was extremely significant in the sense that any doubt that the party was not deeply divided had been abandoned. And the cause of the division was openly declared to be a plot to oust Mugabe, orchestrated by Didymus Mutasa, and with the intent of placing Mujuru as the head of party and government. The Mutsvangwa interview starkly disclosed the depth of the antipathy between the opposing camps in ZANU PF. Also remarkable was the fact that Mutsvangwa made such comments seemly without fear of many adverse consequences, despite the fact that the party's National Disciplinary Committee was under the control of Mujuru and her allies (Matyszak, 2015). When Mujuru-aligned youths and supporters clashed with Grace Mugabe's supporters at her rallies, they claimed that they were not demonstrating against the First Lady herself, but rather against the use of the 'down with gamatox' slogan. However, the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans leader, Jabulani Sibanda, in a characteristically outspoken manner, refused to be cowed. Sibanda is reported to have said that:

If you want to find me guilty of not attending the First Lady's rallies, I plead guilty on that one and I won't attend unless the programme changes. I can't attend a function where they say 'Pamberi ne (forward with) Mazoe Crush', 'Pasi ne (down with) Gamatox'. That slogan is unknown in Zanu PF---All able-bodied people should stand up --- and block attempts to stage a coup, both in the boardroom and in the bedroom ('Jabulani Sibanda Arrested' (*The Herald*, 29 November, 2014).

Sibanda was suspended from the party shortly thereafter a politburo meeting and was arrested for insulting the President.

Following the First Lady's comments about Mugabe's power of appointments, an article appeared in *The Sunday Mail* on 12 October, 2014, arguing that the election of the Presidium was the root of factionalism in the party. The article quoted plotter, Patrick Zhuwao, and maintained:

Observers said this situation saw the non-appointed officials creating their own centres of power, which resulted in factionalism that manifested itself in vote-buying, violence, intimidation and general disloyalty to the President. They pointed out that the party constitution was at loggerheads with the 1987 Unity Accord as regards to how people could occupy the two VP posts. Article 4 of the Unity Accord states: "That Zanu PF shall have two Second Secretaries and Vice Presidents of the Party" ('President should Appoint VPs, Chair' (*The Sunday Mail*, 12 October, 2014).

This suggests that the plotters were clearly setting the agenda for the December congress. Part of the propaganda techniques was to effect repetition, and the state-owned press published articles on the issue of President's appointment powers. At her sixth rally in Gwanda, Grace Mugabe made reference to Mugabe's appointing powers, but compared the party and state institutions rather than the party constitution and the Unity Accord as the plotters probably intended. As a result, when reporting on the rally, *The Herald* of 14 October, 2014, claimed that the First Lady's remarks concerning appointments reflected "growing demands" that the President's powers in this regard be aligned with the Unity Accord. The media set the agenda based on what the elite intent to decide on so that people are prepared slowly to accept the ultimate outcome. The rally in Mutare on 10 October, 2014, was significantly the most poorly attended and marked by clashes between youths led by Harare leader Godwin Gomwe and those supporting Manicaland supremo Didymus Mutasa. Grace Mugabe chided Manicaland province as being the worst culprit as far as factionalism was concerned and indirectly criticised party leaders in the province by decrying the successes achieved by the opposition MDC-T there. The First Lady's speech was covered in *The Herald* of 11 October, 2014, in a story titled "Count Me Out of factions-Amai".

The Herald of 14 October, 2014, published a scathing story on VP Mujuru headlined: "First Lady Tears into VP aspirants". The newspaper quotes Grace Mugabe saying:

Some people like to ride on the back of the President, they think that being Vice President means sitting in the office and Mugabe working for them....We don't want that, we want people who are capable. We don't want! We don't want! We don't want a liability. We don't want such one who spends time sitting with no ideas... (*The Herald* 14 October 2014).

In addition, Grace Mugabe made repeated and pointed references at this rally to her husband's power to make senior appointments, under both the party and state constitution, stating also that the fact that a person was a Vice-President of the Party did not ensure that they would be a Vice-President of the country.

The MMPZ's (2014) comment on media coverage of ZANU PF factional fights notes that the state media took sides in ZANU PF factional wars. It expressed concern over the increasingly hysterical "news coverage" in the state owned media regarding developments surrounding the feuding factions within ZANU PF. The MMPZ (2014) asserts that while these pro-government media are notorious for denigrating the political opposition, particularly during elections, the intensity with which the ruling-party controlled news outlets turned on a section of ZANU PF was disturbing. Apart

from the publicly owned media having a constitutional obligation to "be impartial" and "afford fair opportunity for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions", they resorted to persecuting Vice-President Joice Mujuru and those who allegedly supported her.

While these events made unsavoury reading for their own crude and offensive assaults on Vice-President Mujuru, the state owned media became willing recruits in amplifying the hatred and intolerance expressed by Grace Mugabe (MMPZ, 2014). Grace Mugabe publicly accused Mujuru of being corrupt, an extortionist, a "sell-out", lazy, devious and deceitful, incompetent, inept, among other grave allegations, but it would seem that this was carefully "choreographed" to prepare for Mugabe's vitriolic attacks on the Vice-President and to convince the public of the "truth" of the allegations once made. However, most of the non-ZANU PF aligned press had little doubt that, although no names had been mentioned, the First Lady's address was an attack on Joice Mujuru. For example, *Daily News* of 14 October, 2014, published an article with a headline; "Grace Savages Mujuru Again". The headline itself depicts a tone of sympathy which is supported by the content.

In her Lupane, Matabeleland North (13 October) and Bulawayo (14 October), Grace Mugabe only made covert reference to Mujuru, whom she chided for vying for a vice-presidential position. Before she took to the podium, a spat developed between Philip Chiyangwa and Temba Mliswa who was believed to be a member of the Mujuru faction chanted the "pasi ne (down with) Gamatox" slogan. The last two of Grace Mugabe's rallies signalled a change in tactics. At a closed door provincial committee meeting ahead of the penultimate rally in Bindura, Grace Mugabe reportedly revealed the existence and content of the "spy tapes". The attack on Joice Mujuru then recommenced with renewed vigour (Matyszak, 2015). The "spy tapes" were part of the scheme and propaganda to finally smear Mujuru. The plotters had to spin allegations which had to be covered in the state-owned media, both print and electronic. The repetition of these accusations was craftily engineered for agenda-setting, in order to completely destroy Joice Mujuru. *News Day* of 17 October, 2014, quoted the First lady' saying:

The youths have alerted me about someone who is spearheading factionalism in their (Mashonaland Central) province and I told Baba (President Mugabe) to 'baby-dump' that person. I told him that if he does not dump that person, we will do it ourselves---you can no longer deny that you are a faction leader. Enough is enough, even those men who are being used by this faction leader; we will dump them when we dump that person ...The faction leader is moving around saying Mai

Mugabe has money, yet the (same) person has diamond mines and has about 10% shares in almost every company. That is greed. That is corruption, yet the person goes around saying a lot of rubbish about Amai Mugabe. That is why I am saying to Baba (Mugabe), if he does not dump the person in the street to be devoured by the dogs, we will do it ourselves. Dumping her is the only way forward, dumping the baby so that she can be exposed to the elements. If we expose her, even flies or wild dogs will be repulsed with her corrupt activities, which stink (*News Day*, 17 October 2014).

Contrary to her claims when she began her rallies, the First Lady's speech does not bode well for unity or "stemming factionalism in the bud". Besides, considering the role Vice President Mujuru had played before and after independence, she deserved respect. Even if the allegations levelled against her were true, Mujuru deserved to be given a chance to explain herself. The coarse language and vulgarity used by The First Lady such as "baby dumping" was out of taste. Such crude language was also used at her second rally in Mazowe where she reported to have said:

Do not take unnecessary risks saying you are brave because you will end up being humiliated and have children laughing at you. You will be humiliated and left naked and dogs will not come near you because you stink, if you have put on perfume---.You are not going to heaven because God will not touch your stinking body. And even mosquitoes will not come near you because you stink ("Go now, Grace orders Mujuru": *Daily News*, 18 November, 2014).

The Daily News of 17 October, 2014 published an article whose headline read "Grace Wants Mujuru Out." By the 16 October, 2014, Grace Mugabe's calls for Mujuru's ouster had not only become overt, but she claimed to have made a direct challenge to her husband to expel Mujuru telling thus: "...I said this faction leader must be dumped by you. If you do not do it we will do it ourselves. We will dump her ourselves because she is dividing the party..." The challenge was repeated a few weeks later as reported in *The Herald* of 17 November 2014 in an article with the headline "First Lady Repeats Call for Mujuru Resignation". *The Herald* quoted the First Lady declaring "We are saying to the President you made a mistake (in appointing Mujuru) and now correct that mistake." It is clear that *The Herald* was taking a position and actively participating in widening the feud between Grace Mugabe and Joice Mujuru, thereby worsening factionalism in the party. At her final rally in Marondera, Mashonaland East, Grace Mugabe was particularly acerbic in her attack on Mujuru, though again, refraining from mentioning

her by name (Matyszak, 2015). She claimed that the "demon of factionalism started in Mashonaland Central" (Mujuru's home province), and went on to accuse Mujuru of being behind parties opposed to ZANU PF and in alliance with them, seeking to stop elections in 2013 and to remove President Mugabe accusing him of using his wealth to support Mujuru and factionalism, and that he was supporting an inept leader who could not stand against President Mugabe.

The fall of Mujuru

Two days after the end of the Congress, on 9 December, 2014, the dismissal of Mujuru, seven ministers and one Deputy Minister was announced, not by Mugabe but, by the Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Dr. Misheck Sibanda. *The Herald* of 10 December, 2014 reported on the dismissal of Mujuru in an article with a headline "VP Mujuru and Ministers Fired". *The Daily News* of 10 December, 2014 covered the story under a headline "Carnage! ...as Mugabe sacks Mujuru, 8 Ministers". The *Daily News* article was accompanied by Joice Mujuru's photograph whose caption read: "AXED: VP Joice Mujuru has been fired from government". These headlines show how the state and private media interpreted the fate of a Vice President and other ministers in different ways.

In the study of media discourses, headlines are particularly interesting, Brooks (1995) cited in Willems (2004) asserts that readers often tend to focus on the headlines of articles rather than on the content. Headlines serve as summaries of news articles and emphasise what the journalist considers to be the most important or most remarkable points of an article. Headlines also include the issues that reporters wish their readers to remember. Headlines often appear to be only partial summaries of the news text. Since headlines are usually read more frequently than the articles themselves, they are a powerful way to convey a particular ideological view. Headlines activate and reproduce the knowledge readers already have on the subject and may as a result also reconfirm readers' prejudices.

From the above arguments, *The Herald's* intention was to demonstrate its lack of sympathy towards Mujuru and her allies. I argue in this article that since state-owned press has been instigating and fuelling conflict between Mujuru and Mnangagwa through its reportage, it was celebrating the fall of Mujuru. The content of the article clearly shows the position of this ZANU-PF controlled paper.

On the contrary, the *Daily News's* headline "Carnage!" (10 December 2014) carries connotations of shock and horror at the unprecedented did. The accompanying Mujuru photograph is meant to arouse sympathy as the image depicts gloomy, disbelief and melancholy. Willems (2004) asserts that the choice of vocabulary

also constructs particular ideological representations of events. I also posit that “words” are the “garments” in which we “dress” thoughts. Apart from their descriptive function, words express views and attitudes. The selection of specific words rather than others has clear ideological implications because it often reveals the underlying beliefs of journalists about actors and events.

Another point of interest is how actors were grammatically structured. The roles of subject positions which grammar constructs for the participants have ideological meanings. Participants can be grammatically constructed either as direct agents of processes such as violence and repression or as affected participants, frequently as victims. For example, in the above article, *Daily News* headline “Carnage!...as Mugabe sacks Mujuru, 8 Ministers”. The representation is that Mujuru is a victim of a dictator, deduced from the diction employed “sacks”. Carnage has connotations of perish and destruction. In fact, Zimbabweans were aware of the impending disaster since it had been beckoning for long. The *Daily News* article confirms this in the lead paragraph; “AS EXPECTED, President Robert Mugabe has sacked Vice President Joice Mujuru and eight cabinet ministers perceived to be loyal to her, in a move analysts described ... as “potentially catastrophic” for the country. This paper agrees with the analyst’s projections because internationally, Zimbabwe will be further isolated yet the economy is currently in doldrums.

Newspapers reported on the axed ministers who included Didymus Mutasa (Presidential Affairs), Webster Shamu (ICT and Postal Services), Nicholas Goche (Public Service and Labour), Simbarashe Mudarikwa (Mashonaland East Province), Francis Nhema (Youth Development and Indigenization), Olivia Muchena (Higher & Tertiary Education), Dzikamai Mavhaire (Energy & Power Development) and Munacho Mutezo (Mavhaire’s Deputy).

Mujuru herself confirmed to the *Voice of America’s* Studio 7 Station that she had indeed been fired by Mugabe, adding that she would, however, not quit the ruling party despite the enormous pressure on her to do so. The newspaper depicted that the dismissals would add to the uncertainty that was already bedeviling the country’s ailing economy. On the contrary, state controlled newspapers were silent on how succession struggles were impacting the economy. If anything, they glorified Mugabe’s efforts in securing “mega billion” deals sealed between Zimbabwe and China, Russia, Nigeria among others yet the country continued to reel under economic devastation. Eldred Masunungure, a University of Zimbabwe political scientist said that “...those decisions are not just political but will have serious consequences on the government”. In the same *Daily News* article of 10 December, 2014 referred

above International Crisis Group’s Southern Africa Project Director, Piers Pigou was quoted saying that the economy would remain in a parlous state unless there was a “paradigm shift” in the political sphere.” Pigou also said it was unlikely that the vanquished Mujuru camp would have the courage to form their party. President Mugabe’s actions only mean suffer continue for Zimbabweans. The President is motivated by vindictiveness and the need to get rid of ministers accused of siding with Mujuru and “plotting to kill him”. As usual, President Mugabe sees cabinet as a space for rewarding his loyalists and not as the chief policy-making organ that is supposed to drive government business. It is an extension of his patronage system. It can be argued that Grace’s feud with Mujuru divides ZANU-PF – this chaos has spawned and could split the ruling party and also lead to scores of legislators quitting the liberation movement. Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) Director, Pedzisai Ruhanya was quoted by the *Daily News* saying that “...the congress only served to illustrate that ZANU-PF is a personal project of Mugabe...we are going to see the revival of Mujuru faction. This Grace thing is a passing phenomenon; she can only be here and there during the life of her husband”.

After Mujuru and her alleged allies were fired, the following day, 10 December, 2014, President Mugabe announced the appointment of the Party Presidium, and what *The Herald* of 11 December 2014 reported as a 33 member Politburo, comprising three members of the Presidium, 22 Heads of Department, five committee members (reduced from the 10 previously) and three deputy heads of department. Mugabe exercised his power to add an additional politburo department to the 21 set out in the only recently amended document (Matyszak, 2015).

The Herald 12 December, 2014 headline “President Unveils New Ministers” did not amuse Zimbabweans who knew it was a recycle of the same “deadwood” selected from ‘loyal’ crop. My argument is that ZANU-PF does not reward competence but loyalty. I can argue that allegiance to Mugabe supersedes ability. One would wish that President Mugabe moves with the same speed in addressing the country’s economic problems in the manner in which he fired Mujuru and her allies.

It was evident that the fired ministers were punished because of their poor conduct (association with Mujuru) as party cadres, and not as ministers, who were at fault. Furthermore, the replacement ministers were appointed on the basis of factionalism and not meritocracy as prescribed by the constitution. President Mugabe’s comments during this changing of the guards are of considerable interest and are worth quoting at length (Matyszak, 2015). They appear in the article on the appointments in *The Herald* of 11 December, 2014 in a story with the headline “VPs Appointed: Mnangagwa,

Mphoko Land Posts", where it was reported that, before the President announced the names of the party appointees, he declared that the position of National Chairman of the party had been "abolished". Factionalism and succession struggles had yet again to take another dimension which divided the party.

Framing of Eunice Sandi Moyo and Sarah Mahoka purges

The following headlines in the privately-owned daily, *Daily News*: "Grace cuts allies loose", "It's all over for Mahoka, Sandi", "More chaos hits Zanu PF", "Grace drowns Moyo, Mahoka" and "Cunning Grace controls fallout" were articles of 23, 25, 27, 28, & 29 March, 2017 respectively. The state-controlled daily, *The Herald* carried the following headlines: "Daggers out for Sandi-Moyo, Mahoka", "Youths join anti-Moyo, Mahoka demo", "Sandi-Moyo, Mahoka demos reach crescendo", "Mahoka, Sandi-Moyo to know fate today", "League resolves to fire Sandi Moyo, Mahoka" and "Politburo okays Moyo, Mahoka resignation" 23, 24, 25, 27 & 29 March, & 6 April 2017 respectively.

Daily News & *The Herald* of 23 March 2017 carried headlines "Grace cuts allies loose" and "Daggers out for Sandi-Moyo, Mahoka" respectively. *Daily News* emphasised on ZANU PF's tribal, factional and succession wars whilst *The Herald* is silent on these issues. Both newspapers however, point out the alleged accusations against the pair, that is, of undermining or disrespecting the First Lady Grace Mugabe, embezzling party funds and forming parallel structures, among a raft of other charges. On 22 March, 2017, all 10 provinces held demonstrations against Mahoka and Sandi-Moyo.

Daily News quotes a member of women's league Kasinamunda saying:

As for Mahoka, she attacked VP Mnangagwa and (the Presidential spokesperson) Mr Charamba and we remained quiet and now she is challenging the First Lady even during Meetings and we cannot fold our hands. It is the President who makes appointments And who is she to challenge our one centre of power? They received \$20 000 from Higher & Tertiary education, Science & Technology Development Minister Prof Jonathan Moyo and shared the loot... All the parties involved in this transaction did not tell Amai (Dr Mugabe) about the donation...they also took another \$100 000 from a local prophet and shared it amongst themselves their handlers...

It should be pointed out those representatives of women's league throughout the 10 provinces made similar accusations which were boldly displayed on placards during the demonstrations. *Daily News* further reported that Mahoka and Sandi-Moyo were among the group of women's league members who were

aggressively pushing for the revival of the debate about the need of a woman to become one of ZANU PF two Vice Presidents (VPs). Their call for a woman deputy and ZANU PF's VPs to be elected was seen as directed against Mnangagwa, as the other current VP, Phelekezela Mphoko's appointment was part of the conditions of the Unity Accord which resulted in the post of the second VP being reserved for senior former ZAPU officials. This article argues that demonstrations against the two lifts the lid on the bitter brawl in the women's league which has left deputy secretary Sandi-Moyo and Sarah Mahoka on the blink while exposing deepening succession wars in the embattled ruling party.

The push to oust Sandi-Moyo, it can be revealed, is being spearheaded by Grace and a faction linked to Mnangagwa latched onto the demonstrations without realising that their godfather might lose out if the First Lady's project succeeds. This paper alleges that Mnangagwa was using Sandi-Moyo as a double-edged sword to block the First Lady's ascendancy and oust VP Phelekezela Mphoko with one blow. As stated earlier in this article, the women's league since 2015 has been calling for an amendment of the ZANU PF constitution so that one of the VPs is a woman. According to those behind the plot, it was meant to elevate the First Lady at the expense of Mnangagwa, who is battling on all fronts to remain in the position and stay as a forerunner to succeed Mugabe. Mnangagwa's Team Lacoste, in a bid to checkmate the First Lady and her G40 supporters, took the chance not to oppose the female quota proposal, but argued and plotted to have the female vice presidency reserved for a member of the former ZAPU. The Mnangagwa faction used the pretext that the female vice presidency should rotate, while arguing that ZANU had had its turn during the Joice Mujuru vice presidency.

Team Lacoste proposal unsettled Mphoko, the current ZAPU member in the presidium who was set to lose his post if the Lacoste plan was to be taken up. The implementation of the proposal would also block Grace's path to the top (*The Standard*, 26 March, 2017). According to sources, Sandi-Moyo, as the most high-ranking from the former ZAPU in the current ZANU PF hierarchy, tacitly bought the Mnangagwa faction's proposal since 2015 and she had started to openly entertain ambitions to be VP – much to the dismay of the First Lady and Mphoko. Mnangagwa faction saw it as an opportunity to sow seeds of division in the G40.

As this paper argues, Sandi-Moyo allegedly wanted to discuss the implementation of the women league's resolution for a female VP and asked the First Lady if she would be interested in the job when the constitution is amended, possibly this 2017. Grace told Sandi that she was not interested in the position but then threw the question back at Sandi, who responded by indicating that she would be delighted to accept the appointment

if offered. This set off alarm bells, especially to Grace and Mphoko. Grace's relationship with Sandi-Moyo became strained. In 2016, Grace said she was content with her position as the ZANU PF women's league secretary, fuelling speculation that the VP post was now for Sandi-Moyo to take. However, Grace had been positioning herself behind the scenes and is now eliminating those threatening her ascendancy. It is argued in this paper that Sandi is now paying the price for her indiscretion.

Daily News quotes Gladys Hlatywayo, a political analyst arguing:

The two clearly served a purpose. They were used and are now being discarded. The Machiavellian tactics of the president himself are well documented and he normally uses people and then discards them.

The Herald quotes ZANU PF's Bulawayo women's league provincial chairperson, Eva Bitu asserting:

I can't say much, this is not my meeting, but I will take your concerns to the First Lady Amai Mugabe who will decide way forward...What you're doing here is being done by other provinces throughout the country. On Friday all provinces are going to come to Bulawayo for another similar demonstration.

What is more interesting to note is what the reporter claimed Bitu to have added; "Cde Bitu said no one in the party could insult the First Family and go unpunished". This was clearly setting the agenda and instigates Grace to take a particular action.

"Youths join anti-Moyo, Mahoka demo", "Sandi-Moyo, Mahoka demos reach crescendo", "It's all over for Mahoka, Sandi" and "More chaos hits Zanu PF" were headlines for *The Herald* and *Daily News*, 24, 25 & 25, 27 respectively. The state-controlled newspaper, which is allegedly under Team Lacoste set the agenda in its lead paragraph: "ZANU PF women's League members from across the country are planning a grand demonstration in Bulawayo today against the wing's deputy chairperson Cde Eunice Sandi-Moyo and treasurer Cde Sarah Mahoka to send a clear message to the pair that it's services are no longer needed in the revolutionary party". The newspaper further reported that ZANU PF Youth League subscribed to the position taken by the women's League and had been officially invited to join the demonstrations. National Youth League secretary, Kudzai Chipanga was quoted saying: "Pana Amai ndopane mwana, pane Women's League ndopane mayouths (where mother is also where a child is {First Lady is 'mother'}; where Women's League is also where the youths are).

This article argues that Grace's allies like ZANU PF national political commissar Savoira Kasukuwere and youth league secretary Kudzai Chipanga were kept out

of the loop and were caught unawares or notified too late about the demonstrations. The G40 faction was left in virtual paralysis after the first protests allowed elements of Mnangagwa's Lacoste faction to hijack the demonstrations and smuggle in their own agenda. The paper argues that Lacoste faction tried to use the demonstrations to settle an old score with Mahoka who had publicly embarrassed Mnangagwa and Mugabe's spokesperson George Charamba over ZANU PF factionalism, as highlighted earlier in the introduction. These charges were written on placards of demonstrators during the protests outside Sandi-Moyo office at Davies Hall in Bulawayo. It should be pointed out that placards and language used in the protests had a striking similarity to the tactics Grace used against Mujuru in 2014. The two women allegedly had fallen into the same pit as Mujuru after showing too much ambition and threatening the ambitions of President Robert Mugabe's wife.

Daily News articles reported that the mega demonstrations against the duo was in response to the alleged "disdain" which Sandi-Moyo had shown towards powerful First Lady Grace Mugabe through "ill-advised" press conference which she held after the first protest to respond to the allegations against the duo. Sandi-Moyo said she would only resign or leave the warring ruling party at the express insistence of President Mugabe who had appointed her as minister and politburo member. Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) was quoted by *Daily News* arguing that Mugabe was now increasingly failing to hold ZANU PF together. "The casual ingredients in the disintegration of hegemonic parties such as ZANU PF which could possibly lead to its electoral loss are not primarily predicted on external opposition from other political parties or civil society and international pressure, but internal fissures. It now appears that every organ of ZANU PF is in turmoil...the prevailing fragmentation, especially the fights in the women's league and youth leagues threaten the heart and soul of the party..."

Daily News story titled "More chaos hits Zanu PF" referred to aborted demonstrations which had been planned by women's league against Manicaland Provincial Affairs minister, Mandi Chimene. The defiant Chimene never seemed bothered by plans. Women's League were allegedly influenced by Lacoste to also settle a score against Chimene who embarrassed Mnangagwa at ZANU PF Headquarters on 27 July 2016, challenging him to come open on his presidential ambitions (Mungwari & Vhutuza, 2016).

Considering the discussion above, *The Herald* does not mention existence of factions and only quotes ZANU PF officials aligned to Team Lacoste.

"Grace drowns Moyo, Mahoka" and "Cunning Grace controls fallout" were headlines in *Daily News* of 28 & 29 March, 2017. *The Herald* published stories with

headlines “Mahoka, Sandi-Moyo to know fate today” and “League resolves to fire Sandi-Moyo, Mahoka” 27 & 29 March respectively. Both newspapers reported that 10 chairpersons of the Women’s League met with First Lady Grace Mugabe on 27 March and fired Sarah Mahoka and Eunice Sandi-Moyo. When the top 50 office bearers of the ZANU PF women’s league met again on 28 March to endorse the decision taken by the women’s league’s 10 officials who had met with Grace Mugabe and voted for the sacking of Sandi-Moyo and Mahoka, they referred the issue to the politburo and disciplinary committee for final decision. The decision to defer pronouncements on the matter to politburo was consistent with President Robert Mugabe’s insistence that ZANUPF should exhaust all party procedures in such matters, and give a fair hearing to members facing claims of indiscipline. When the politburo met on 5 April it endorsed the resignation of Mahoka and Sandi-Moyo but ordered them to return the loot which the two vehemently deny.

Framing of Savior Kasukuwere

This section of the article attempts to examine how the selected newspapers covered ZANU PF’s national political commissar who is accused of at least 11 alleged charges. In February 2017 ever since an insurrection against his leadership broke out in his home province of Mashonaland Central, with other eight regions throwing their weight behind calls for his ouster, Kasukuwere’s political career has been hanging in the air. Team Lacoste, (his alleged political rivals) accuse the party’s chief organiser and strategist of plotting a bloodless coup against President Mugabe; causing mayhem in the party by interfering with party structures and imposing leaders at various levels. He is also accused of fanning factionalism by setting up parallel structures; accused of trying to grab mines owned by women’s league for personal benefit, among other untested charges (*The Herald*, 1/4/17; *Daily News*, 14/6/17). However, President Mugabe who was unconvinced that Kasukuwere was plotting against him sent a four-member team led by Speaker of Parliament Jacob Mudenda to investigate the allegations.

Before newspaper representation of ZANU PF national political commissar’s purge, it is important to give brief background of some previous national political commissars in the ruling party. A commissar is a communist name given to a person responsible for the political ideological orientation, education and ensuring the existence of proper organisational structures, as well as integration of the civilians to the military wing of the movement (*The Standard*, 30 April 2017). His mandate is to ensure party structures are in place and to mobilise membership and support for ZANU PF. According to the ZANU PF constitution, the commissar is number six on the party hierarchy below the president,

his two deputies, secretary for finance and administration. The commissar’s duties, according to the constitution, include mobilisation, supervision of party structures and preparing for general elections. A commissar is also a key figure in the setting up of and legitimisation of voting structures for any congress. The commissar, according to political analyst Ibbo Mandaza, is the “heart of which its success or failure hinges on...when the party succeeds, the glory is shared among its membership and when it fails, the commissariat, which is the heart and blood of the party, should take the blame” (*The Standard*, 30 April 2017).

This article argues that with factional fights seemingly never ending and Mugabe’s advanced age causing anxiety within the party, the post of political commissar has become the centre of attraction – especially when leadership struggles are involved. It should be pointed out that Webster Shamu was humiliated at ZANU PF’s 2014 congress for allegedly supporting Mujuru, and he was suspended from the party. Other political commissars like Moven Mahachi, Border Gezi and Eliot Manyika paid for the position with their lives when they started restructuring the party. University of Zimbabwe political science lecturer Eldred Masunungure asserted that the political commissar’s office has the potential to make or unmake political careers of many and for that reason; it has been a source of conflict and contestation within the party because the post could be abused (*The Standard*, 30 April, 2017).

The following stories in the state-controlled *Herald* were analysed: “Kasukuwere et al under fire”, “Kasukuwere defiant, attacks *The Herald*”, “Kasukuwere woes mount”, “High noon for Kasukuwere”, “Demos, Kasukuwere: President speaks out”, “Politburo meets”, “Mash Central endorses Kasukuwere, Mafios petition”, “Bring errant cadres to disciplinary fora”, “10 provinces say no to Kasukuwere”, “President to decide on Kasukuwere”, “Crunch politburo meeting today”, “Kasukuwere to know fate” and “Presidium to decide on Kasukuwere” 24 & 25 March, 1, 3, 4, 5, 5, 6,8 & 22 April, 1, 14, 21 & 22 June 2017 respectively.

Daily News published the following headlines: “Fazed G40 in total disarray,” 30 March, “Irritated Grace flexes muscles”, “Zanu PF wars get even hotter”, “Mugabe frets over factions”, “Masvingo defies Mugabe’s pleas”, “Mugabe wants Kasukuwere out”, “Vultures circle wobbly Tyson”, “Only Grace can save Kasukuwere”, “Zanu PF renegades cheer Tyson’s troubles”, “Kasukuwere fate up to Mugabe’s mercy”, “Chiyangwa lays into Kasukuwere”, “No relief for Kasukuwere”, “Zanu PF wars changing gear”, “Chaos, tension at Tyson inquest”, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10,19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, ...April; “Time to cut Tyson loose” 26 May; “Dark clouds hand over Kasukuwere”, “Kasukuwere saga: Mugabe to play balancing act”, “Tyson kept in

suspense", "Judgement day for Kasukuwere", "Tyson survives another day"& "Explosive politburo" 2, 14,16, 21, 22, & 23 June 2017 respectively.

It is important to point out that the damning report from Mudenda and his committee seems to nail Kasukuwere on some of the charges. Part of the report confirms the existence of parallel structures in Mashonaland Central, it also confirms the existence of two contending groups in Kasukuwere's province epitomised by the creation of shadow Members of parliament and a shadow Senator – which the committee said may of necessity create divisions and factions in the province. The report further alleges that the structures in the province were in shambles, and despite being a member of the national leadership of the party, Kasukuwere was a signatory to the provincial party account. The committee recommended therefore that he should stop forthwith from being a signatory to the provincial account and that the politburo finds ways and means to take corrective measures to revamp the ZANU PF structures in the province. Another recommendation was that an audit be carried out through the national secretary for finance to investigate unaccounted funds that should have been banked in the party's national bank account in order to ensure financial prudence in the handling of party funds in the province. Fundamentally, the committee makes the point that it lacks the capacity to prove allegations that Kasukuwere had hatched a plan to elbow Mugabe from power; therefore the committee recommended that the issue be dealt with by the intelligence services, which fall under the office of the President and Cabinet. The report also established the existence of competing mining interest in the province as exemplified in Mukaradzi and Kitsiyatota mining claims, which led to the victimisation of some ZANU PF women's league members.

The Herald set the agenda to attack Kasukuwere by claiming that he wanted to sabotage women's league protests against Mahoka and Sandi-Moyo. It is striking to note that Kasukuwere (and other alleged G40 members like Jonathan Moyo) realised *The Herald* (together with all state-controlled media) have an agenda to destroy him as evidenced in his vicious attack of *The Herald*. The newspaper quotes Kasukuwere challenging it "you write my name, and where is the source? That source must come out in the open...we know of course that some of you are on an agenda, factional agenda, trying to cause regime change. Forget it. ...you are trying to split the party for your own purposes..." Kasukuwere further accused Herald journalists of hiding behind the newspaper by quoting unnamed sources (*The Herald*, 25/03/17). This article argues that state-owned media were being controlled by Team Lacoste, who includes Minister of Information, Media & Broadcasting Services; Christopher Mushohwe. This only illustrates the depth of factionalism in ZANU PF. A

faction in control of the media will attack rival faction as was witnessed in 2014 when Jonathan Moyo was Minister of Information.

The four foregoing discussion emphasise importance of sources in media representation. Journalists rely on sources to write their stories. Ogenga (2010) asserts that sources have the power to decide what information they withhold or give out to journalists depending on the interests they have on a particular issue.

Journalists tend to form symbiotic relationships with sources with authority, credibility and those who are readily available. In this symbiotic relationship, some sources become more utilised than others (McGregor, 1997). The sources mainly utilised are usually government and credible officials since they are recognisable and credible owing to their status of prestige which makes the audiences easily trust them (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The symbiotic relationship between journalists and sources, where journalists constantly use some and not others creates a powerful frame within which news is constructed. The more powerful the source, the more likely he or she will be used in the news production process (Ndelela, 2001; Scudson, 2003). In this article the selected newspapers used different sources to create specific representations.

President Robert Mugabe urged ZANU PF members to desist from discussing disciplinary issues in the media and engaging in demonstrations against party members, arguing the party has internal forums and mechanisms to deal with errant cadres. Mugabe challenged Christopher Mushohwe not to use media for factional battles. President Mugabe said, "...it's not the Zanu PF way; it was never, ever, ever the way of our party which created us. This is a primitive way of doing things actually..." (*The Herald*, 4/4/17). This article reckons that *The Herald* stories from 5 April to 21 June were only setting agenda for politburo to decide on Kasukuwere much to the disappointment of the state-controlled newspaper as Kasukuwere's fate was to be decided by the Presidium which includes President Mugabe and his two VPs, Mhangagwa and Mphoko. Team Lacoste which is in control of state owned media allegedly abused it by fuelling and exacerbating factionalism with the objective to have Kasukuwere expelled from party and government. *Herald* reportage is crystal clear in its agenda on factional and succession struggles.

Daily News's stories were aimed at providing citizens with news on how factional and succession battles were playing out in ZANU PF. In the article titled "Vultures circle wobbly 'Tyson'" the newspaper depicts how Kasukuwere's political foes are calling for his immediate resignation from his influential position of political commissar ahead of the party's campaigns for 2018 national elections. His home province Mashonaland

Central officially submitted its report to the politburo recommending his censure following ZANU PF structures across the country demonstrated against Kasukuwere. Other provinces except Bulawayo also submitted their dossiers.

This article argues that after politburo set on several occasions President Mugabe set a four member team which was led by politburo member and Speaker of the National assembly, Advocate Jacob Mudenda to look into the Kasukuwere case. It is crucial to point out that there was chaos and tension in Mashonaland Central during the team's inquest. "Tyson kept in suspense" & "Judgement day for Kasukuwere" *Daily News* articles of 16 & 21 June captured factionalism in ZANU PF during politburo meeting when Jacob Mudenda presented a damning report before a tense audience which did not hide their factional leanings. "The report ignited tempers in Zanu PF, with the politburo divided right through the middle, along factional and tribal lines pitting two factions – Team Lacoste and Generation 40 (G40)" (*Daily News*, 21/6/17). This paper notes that the politburo meeting held on 21 June was the most explosive as Kasukuwere allies defended him throughout the proceedings. Mugabe then decided that only the Presidium will make its final ruling on Kasukuwere. Mugabe, in his Machiavellian tactic, may decide to keep quiet on the issue to avoid divisions ahead of 2018 elections.

Succession of ZANU PF President

The issue of succession in the ruling party was taboo; those who had dared to debate the matter faced the wrath of President Mugabe (Mungwari, 2016). Over the years, the question of who should succeed Mugabe has caused rifts in ZANU PF between two factions namely Generation 40 and Team Lacoste camps. Although the two camps have been fighting publicly, none has dared Mugabe in his face to name a successor. However, the First Lady Grace Mugabe had all the audacity to tell her husband to anoint his successor. While addressing ZANU PF's Women's League National Assembly members at the party's headquarters on 27 July, 2017, Grace took the unprecedented step to nudging her reluctant husband to name a successor (*Daily News; The Herald*, 28 July 2017). First Lady Dr Amai Mugabe urged Mugabe to name a successor, saying he (Mugabe) had the final say on who will take over from him when the time comes. She emphasized her narrative of 'Mark my words.' According to the two newspapers, Grace Mugabe urged party members to shun factionalism while avoiding clandestine succession meetings.

Also important to note was that Grace Mugabe cited the example of the late South African President Nelson Mandela who chose President Thabo Mbeki to take over when he retired. The First Lady also reiterated for the implementation of the resolution made at the 2015

Victoria Falls and 2016 Masvingo Annual National People's Conference for the amendment of the party's constitution and reinstate the provision for a female vice president. The President said he would consider the recommendations, urging that the recommendations should be pushed hard to the right organs such as the central committee and politburo for discussion. Grace also formally introduced Cdes Thokozile Mathuthu, Caroline Mugabe and Judith Ncube who had been appointed as deputy secretary for women affairs, secretary for finance and secretary for information respectively.

The Herald, 28 July 2017 headline: 'Steer clear of politics, President tells military' can be argued as foreclosing military factor in succession politics. The newspaper quotes President Mugabe emphasising that the military has no right to interfere in politics and should air their views according to the dictates of the country's constitution. Both *The Herald* and *Daily News* quoted Mugabe saying 'politics leads the gun, not the other way round'. (See Mazarire, 2011). Mugabe unexpectedly attacked the military amid delicate brinkmanship with the army over internal succession struggles, warning them against succession manoeuvres, arguing that it was tantamount to a coup (*Daily News*, *ibid*). Mugabe told the military to remain in the barracks. He further said he would not allow commanders to go around boasting and pretending to be kingmakers. Mugabe first warned security service chiefs against interfering in ZANU PF succession politics at the ZANU PF conference in Victoria Falls in 2015. Mugabe also made it clear that war veterans supporting Mnangagwa, led by the militant and vocal Chris Mutsvangwa, were proxies of the military (*Zimbabwe Independent*, July 28, 2017). This article argues that the succession matrix in ZANU PF is complex and intriguing but if Women's League's quota is adopted then Grace Mugabe will be appointed as Vice President and in that position, she will take over from President Mugabe. Addressing the rally in Chinhoyi at nationwide Youth Interfaces on 29 July, 2017, Grace insinuated her bid to take over from Mugabe. The question to also ask is: Is Sekeramayi the dark horse? Only time will tell.

CONCLUSION

This article concludes that Mugabe is viewed as a clever Machiavellian schemer by admirers and detractors alike to the extent that First Lady Grace Mugabe has quickly learned his tactics. Mugabe is thus often given benefit when none is due. In normal circumstances, the Mujuru plot would have been thought to admit only two possibilities. One was that Grace Mugabe and the plotters were in charge of the party and Mugabe had thus lost control. The other was that Mugabe had hidden his involvement in the plot in order to ensure that even Mujurites retained loyalty to him, believing that Mugabe had merely been misled. This ploy ought, nonetheless, to

have created the impression that Mugabe, in a craven fashion, had used Grace Mugabe to do the dirty work that he did not have the temerity to do himself. Yet, because of the cult which has developed around Mugabe, many political observers were reluctant to see anything other than astute scheming by Mugabe as behind the ouster of the Mujuruites (Matyszak, 2015). However, the plot was most certainly not a coup by Grace Mugabe, positioning herself to take over from the President. The indications are that Mugabe himself believed that Joice Mujuru had become dangerously powerful, and was convinced by the plotters, with his wife as emissary, that immediate action needed to be taken against her ahead of the Congress, thus replicating similar action taken against Mnangagwa, for the same reason, in 2004.

Important to note is the fact that the media played a critical role in fuelling and exacerbating the factional and succession struggles and ouster of Mujuruites. The paper also concludes that the purges of Sarah Mahoka and Eunice Sandi-Moyo from Women' League; and the attempt to purge Kasukuwere are a replay of the 2014 debacle, it is the same script. This article argues that the challenge not to fire Kasukuwere can be seen as President Mugabe's strategy to maintain power and control since he is in charge of the presidium which was meant to decide Kasukuwere's fate. The President's speech on 27 July, 2017 brought an end on Kasukuwere's fate when Mugabe said: 'Provinces cannot pass votes of no confidence on politburo members and those that we appoint. They can do that to provincial chairpersons but not the politburo' (*Daily News, & The Herald*, 28 July 2017). This article argues that this is politics of patronage in the ruling party in order to keep balance of factions. Demonstrations and protests have become standard operating procedure in ZANU PF politics. President Robert Mugabe is on record prohibiting party members from demonstrations although he has no constitutional power to prevent demonstrations or to authorise them. Mnangagwa's remarks that the ruling party was 'fumigating' itself have been criticised by political observers as such inflammatory language has the potential to trigger and fuel violence especially with some of the internal political conflicts becoming violent.

This article has also found out that ZANU PF is a party riddled with factions at any given time; Gamatox versus Weevils in 2014 then Team Lacoste versus Generation 40 (G40) post 2015. The faction in control of the media seems to have an added advantage as the state-controlled media have become weapons to fight the other faction. In this case, the media, particularly government owned has been hijacked by factional leaders to fuel conflict thereby compromising its fourth estate role of impartially and objectively informing and educating readers.

The paper can safely conclude that ZANU PF uses its own people then dumps them when the party feels threatened by the very members. The First Lady Grace Mugabe uses women's league members to achieve her ambitions and then purges those members after accomplishing their 'duties'. It would seem ruling party members will never learn that their relationship with powers that be is that of the 'dog and the hunter'. The plots in the ruling party are ever intriguing as factional and succession battles never seem to end as President Mugabe's age causes anxiety in those angling to succeed him. It would seem Mugabe has lost control of the party evidenced by events analysed in this article. The ruling party does not seem concerned about the nation's economy which has been sacrificed by their never ending wars. The current succession dynamics are complex and intriguing yet healthy for the ruling party and country to have a successor anointed, as this may limit factionalism and succession struggles. Despite President Mugabe's age, he is still conscious of who should be his successor; reading between the lines, behind the scenes, Mugabe is allegedly preparing Grace to succeed him. It is a matter of time before Mugabe declares his wife to be the next president although publicly he says people will decide.

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