

Harassment Among People On The Web. An Analysis Of The Netizens' Responses To Patson Dzamara's Facebook Posts With Regards To The Disappearance Of Itai Dzamara.

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA AND SOCIETY STUDIES

DISSERTATION TOPIC:

HARASSMENT AMONG PEOPLE ON THE WEB. AN ANALYSIS OF NETIZENS' RESPONSES TO PATSON DZAMARA'S FACEBOOK POSTS WITH REGARDS TO THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ITAI DZAMARA.

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DEDICATIONS

To the Almighty God whose love never fails, who guides me and watches every step that I take. I am grateful and will always be thankful because he is the author and perfecter of my faith.

To my Father, Mr. Mathias T. Ndabambi, I am grateful for everything, for me to be finish my first degree, it was because of your great support. I am grateful.

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To the entire family, my brothers and sisters, may God increase your territories, Tauya, Nicholas, Cuthbert, Joachim, Regina and Sapientia. I love you all.

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Declaration

I Victoria Kudzanai Ndayambi (R126056X) do declare that this is my original work that has never been submitted to any institution in the world. I also declare that proper citation and acknowledgements is in line with copyright laws and scholarly requirements were strictly adhered to in the writing of this dissertation.

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Abstract

This study set out to explore the discourses embedded in netizens' responses to Patson Dzamara's facebook posts with regards to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara. It sought to describe and explain how the netizens read and interpreted these posts. In other words it explores the issues raised by netizens and the rationality of their discussions. The researcher purposively selected the posts with regards to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara on Patson Dzamara's Facebook page, and their corresponding responses. The posts were subjected to critical discourses analyses and semiotic analysis, whilst the findings were thematically presented. This research found out that the netizens participated extensively in the discussions with regards to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara. Itai Dzamara was portrayed as the selfless gallant son of Zimbabwe while the fellow Zimbabweans were labelled as cowards. President Mugabe and ZANU PF were labelled as Boko Haram whilst the church was castigated for being complicit in the oppression of Zimbabweans. Finally the study established that, the difficulty in establishing respondents' true identity led some of the respondents to be unrestrained in their attacks on President Mugabe and ZANU PF.

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1.0 Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study is an analysis of netizens' responses to the posts by Patson Dzamara with regards to the disappearance of his brother, Itai Dzamara. Itai Dzamara was a Journalist-cum-Activist who advocated for the resignation of President Robert Mugabe. The disappearance of Itai Dzamara has been an issue that received massive attention from netizens on the social networks such as the Facebook, Twitter and you tube to mention a few. This study looked at the disappearance of Itai Dzamara, analyzed and explained the discourses embedded in netizens' responses on the post by Patson Dzamara, the brother to Itai, particularly on *Facebook*.

The notion of people trying to use the Facebook for change in Zimbabwe is not new. There were people who once tried to expose the atrocious things done by the ruling elite. These people were using pseudo names such as Baba Jukwa. However, these people were caught and subpoenaed in 2014, until they were freed on 29 May 2015 (The Herald). This research argues that the role of the new media technologies in Zimbabwe's democracy are quite optimistic especially looking at how people are involving themselves in the political spheres through the social networks. Also to note the way in which new media tools were used during the constitution making process in Kenya, Egyptian Revolution and Tunisia is evidence enough that netizens responses to social network post have the ability to democratize and give space to oppressed voices. Hence this study conceptualized the netizens' responses to Patson Dzamara's posts on Facebook as a milestones fostered by Patson Dzamara for cyber activism and civil engagement of netizens. Through the use of critical discourse analysis and semiotic analysis, this study shall be able to unveil the discourses embedded in the netizens' responses and also explain how the netizens read and interpreted the posts by Patson Dzamara.

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1.2 Background to the study

Itai Dzamara is a Zimbabwean journalist-cum-political activist who advocated for the stepping down of President Mugabe. He is mostly known for his Occupy Africa Unity Square campaign against the government of President Robert Mugabe. Itai became famous through his hand delivered petition to the President of Zimbabwe and the OAUS he started soon after. The occupation of the AUS was a symbol of communicating the dissatisfaction in the citizens towards President Mugabe and his ZANU PF government. The government reacted to this act by deploying police in riot gear to dismiss the demonstrators.

Itai Dzamara wrote an appeal to the president asking for him to resign from office. Itai hand conveyed the letter to the President's office at the Munhumutapa Building in Harare. After that demonstration, Itai and two of his associates were confined at the Harare Central Police station. They were addressed about their motivation for occupying the Africa Unity Square. Dzamara was extremely beaten by the police officers' bolster solidarity and he disappeared on the 9th of March 2015.

Patson Dzamara, the younger brother to the abducted Itai Dzamara opened a *Facebook* page advocating for the return of his brother who was abducted by what people suspected to be state security agents. Facebook has become the tool for netizens to seek and know the truth and voice their opinions publicly, sometimes powerful enough to overcome the power of vested institutions and the government. This has been supported by the Egyptian Activist's words in Khamis (2011) who posit that, 'If you want a free society, just give them internet access'. This has also been proven by the Egyptian Revolution which was informed by the social media as a tool used to foster political change and democratic transformation. Therefore, this study focusses on analyzing the netizens' responses to the posts by Patson Dzamara on his Facebook page with regards to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara.

The traditional media in Zimbabwe have tried to provide a platform through which the audience have access to comment on issues bedeviling the societies in the country. However, because of the monopolistic nature of the government on the media (Moyo, 2002),

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information is heavily censored such that some comments are not published on the letters to the editor forum in newspapers because they are deemed a threat to the elite. The channels of communication are liable to extreme censorship (Mazango, 2005) such that some of the comments that the audiences post through the letters to the editor are not shown in the newspaper editions though the netizens will be willing to air out their opinions.

The Marxian perspective on political economy of the media posits that, the base determines and shapes the superstructure. This implies that those who owns and control the means of production determine the social relations through the enforcement of regulations and ideologies (Marx and Engels, 1886). Thus the determinant factor of whether the responses from audiences are to be publicized are biased towards those who control and own the means of production. However, the social networks are providing a new digital public sphere whose dimensions are quite different from the Habermasian public sphere. It is a platform that allows netizens to participate in the everyday debates without government intervention and sometimes recognition. Therefore, the Facebook as a tool that have been used for civic engagement and cyber activism by the countries in the northern African hemisphere, Patson Dzamara borrowed that idea in advocating the return of his brother.

Howard (2011), defines cyber activism as the act of using the internet to advance a political cause that is difficult to advance offline. The goal of activism is often to create intellectually and emotionally compelling digital artifacts that tell stories of injustice, interpret history and advocate for particular political outcomes. From the above understanding, this study assumes that Patson Dzamara posted articles about his brother as a way for engaging the society. Therefore, since he found some support from netizens who responded to his posts, it is the researcher's interest to analyze and explain how the netizens interpreted the disappearance of Itai Dzamara. This study shall focus on the posts, from the 9th of March 2015 to the 10th of January 2016 where his brother declared him dead after ten months missing.

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1.3 Statement of the problem

Facebook as a new public sphere plays a significant role in providing a platform for people to express themselves on issues bedeviling the society. Hall (1980) cited in Livingstone and Das (2000) notes that encoding and decoding, prioritizes the importance of codes and coding as a process embedded in material circumstances. It generates a cycle of the production and reproduction of meaning with no linear start or end point. This is also supported by Chachage (2010) who posits that online interactive arenas have created new forms of citizenship, (netizens) which are similar to offline grounds in which audiences decode texts according to certain factors. Therefore, it is probable to note that people on the cyber world interpret discourses according to socio-political economic artefacts embedded in their cultural beliefs. In this regard, this study assumes that the discourse in netizens' responses to Patson Dzamara's Facebook posts with regards to Itai Dzamara's disappearance are influenced by their political backgrounds. The problem statement is; to what extent can these discussions be considered to be rationale? The study thus seeks to examine these discourse with the intention of unravelling the rationality of the discussion and the ideological considerations underpinning it.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study is necessitated by the shift towards digitalization that is taking place globally and considerably in Zimbabwe, a third world country. It is an era where new online spaces have challenged the consumption of news and the fear that blogs and social media might supersede conventional media. This study is emanating from other studies by scholars such as Moyo (2012) who looked at the democratic potential of digital media in citizens' participation and also Khamis and Vaughn (2011) on the Egyptian revolution. The researcher is not the first to look at issues like these. Therefore, it is justifiable as it seeks to augment the research by Mano (2009) where he focused on audiences' responses to music scheduling on Radio Zimbabwe. It is also providing new ideas on the discourses embedded in netizens' readings and interpretations of online political posts.

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This study shall conceptualize the *Facebook* as an important tool to counter power. It shall explore the discourses in the netizen's responses and explain the netizens' readings of the posts by Patson Dzamara. This study is going to answer the question to what extent can the discussions be considered rationale?

1.5 Objectives of the study

By the end of the study, the researcher should be able to

- Explore the discourses embedded in netizens' responses to Patson Dzamara's facebook posts with regards to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara.
- Explain how 'freedom' enabled by Facebook influence these discourses.
- Describe how the netizens read and interpreted the posts by Patson Dzamara.

1.6 Research questions

- How are the netizens reading the disappearance of Itai Dzamara?
- To what extent can the discussions be considered to be rational?
- What are the discourses on this platform about Itai Dzamara and his disappearance?

1.7 Delimitations

This study is focusing on analyzing netizens' responses to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara on the Facebook posts by Patson Dzamara. It shall look at them from the day Itai disappeared, which is the 9th of March 2015 to the 9th of March 2016 for a period of a year. The disappearance of Itai Dzamara was an issue that received high volume of coverage from the mainstream media and the alternative media such as the social media. However, this study is focused specifically on the netizens responses to the posts by Patson Dzamara.

1.8 Limitations

On analyzing the netizens' responses to Itai Dzamara's disappearance on the posts by Patson Dzamara, there are challenges that the researcher might encounter in gathering data, because the issue has brought pain in the Dzamara family so there are no interviews. Therefore, the research is informed by textual analysis of online gathered responses only.

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1.9 Assumptions

Facebook is an arena that provides a democratic participatory platform for the netizens. From this understanding, this study assumes that the discourses embedded in netizens responses to the posts were influenced by the inclusive nature of *Facebook*. Considering the fact that it has been used by other African countries, this study assumes that the responses shall bring forth positive outcomes for democracy in Zimbabwe and it shall help the netizens to find Itai Dzamara.

1.9.1 Structure of the study

The chapter 1 of this study is an introduction to the area of research, background of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and assumption of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 is an overview of literature reviewed so as to locate the gap to be filled by the study. It scrutinizes *Facebook* as advocacy for democracy and political purposes, *Facebook* as a tool to counter power and netizens' readings of online text, anonymity and democratic participation. It also looked at the theoretical framework which informed the study hence the theories are; digital public sphere and the concept of cyber activism. Chapter 3 presents the research methods and methodology. It focuses on the research techniques and tools for analysis employed by the researcher. Chapter 4 focuses on data presentation and findings. Chapter 5 are the recommendations to the study and conclusions.

1.9.2 Conclusion

This chapter was an introduction to the study. It looked at the background of the study, the significance of the study, objectives, research questions, limitations and delimitations and assumptions of the study. It highlighted the areas in which this study is going to address.

2.0 Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a review of studies that have been done with regards to analyzing the potential of new media technologies in transforming the democratic role of the internet. This chapter shall also discuss conceptual frameworks through which findings shall be analyzed and interpreted. The main argument in the literature is that the new technology have an accelerating effect on democratic participation and through user generated content, netizens can actively participate in the discussions that take place on the cyberspace without government intervention. Therefore, it seeks to understand how the freedom enabled by *Facebook* is influencing the discourses in netizens' readings.

2.2 The use of Facebook for democracy and political purposes

The development of long range interpersonal communication destinations, such as, *Facebook* has made many people reevaluate how individuals comprehend political activism and citizen engagement. A great part of the level headed discussion of *face book's* conceivable outcomes for activism happens between the poles of 'valuable apparatus that can lead towards an effective social change' (Joyce, 2010) and liberal medium that advances slacktivism. Morozov, (2011) describes *Facebook* alluding to the path in which people can make and join communities of interest. He proposes that the simplicity of enrollment and distinguishing proof diminishes more genuine endeavors to influence social change. The positive feeling connected with affiliating with a development may fulfill one's requirement for social association without them drowning with formal political power.

Lately, there has been a quickly expanding collection of exploration investigating the part of online media in encouraging new types of civic engagement and political support (Bennett and Segerberg, 2013; Carpentier, 2011; Dahlgren, 2013). With the reported decrease long-established, traditional forms of participation, new opportunities for citizens' engagement in legislative issues and public affairs have risen after the developing dispersion of

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computerized data and communication machineries and their increasing existence in the public arena. The claims about the civic and democratic capability of these advancements have been produced using the very onset of the internet in the 1990s. The present-day blast of social networking sites (SNS) and other Web 2.0 applications (John, 2013), for example, Facebook, Twitter or YouTube that empower more prominent intelligence and user participation in the production of online political substance, has reestablished and altogether strengthened these cyber optimistic points of view (Castells, 2012; Shirky, 2008).

Facebook has been viewed as a progressive instrument that has changed the structure of social development activation. The Iranian green revolution, the Arab spring unrest in Egypt and Tunisia and the overall occupy developments in 2012 all utilized online networking sites to some extent, in their political social change endeavors. Hirschkind, (2011) takes note that *Facebook* helped the Arab spring transformation by connecting together Egypt's organized online public sphere. A Facebook group entitled, 'We are all khaled' recalled the tale of an Egyptian businessman killed by police and had more than one million followers (Zhao, et al 2008). While in Tunisia, *Facebook* was used to spread the tale of Mohammed Bouazizi, a vendor who immolated himself subsequently after being harassed by police (Khondker, 2011). These events upset the masses in both Egypt and Tunisia to an extent that they found a way to democracy through the use of social media.

The mere availability of technology, access to internet and social networking sites such as *Facebook* in a nation state is arguably more than a conduit for social change. Through the revolutions that took place in other African countries, this study explores how the *Facebook* is being used by the people in Zimbabwe. Gondo (2014) stipulates that, while in Zimbabwe freedom is guaranteed by the constitution, there is no freedom after expression and the media space is polarized, on the other hand there is a rapid expansion of the Internet access across the country and it has the second highest mobile broadband penetration in Africa. In the same context Gondo 2014: 2 states, "Zimbabwe is seeing the rise of a young tech savvy generation that is hungrily using social media like Whatsapp and Facebook." Given that scenario, it is quite clear that Zimbabwean young generation have been empowered by the social media to challenge political powers. In the analysis of netizens' responses to the posts by Patson

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Dzamara on *Facebook*, this study seeks to discover new dimensions of netizens' readings of the text posted by Patson Dzamara. Joyce, (2010) notes that *Facebook* in repressive regimes serves as a weapon to challenge the ruling elite and challenge power. She also argue that most action of *Facebook* works as purposeful endeavors to advance a social and political change and more as a rambling execution intended to express a political identity.

Svensson, (2009) argues that maybe what is profitable about Facebook as a political medium is not its mobilizing potential, but rather the spaces it gives users to show their identities through social networking sites. The emphasis lies on the talk for collective identity formation. This is where Hall, (1996), pointed out that identity is a production, it is more about routes and less about roots, while Corrigan and Sarco, (1993) states that identities are negotiated and renegotiated, hence they are performances (Mhiripiri, 2010). *Facebook* in countries with repressive governments operates as an activism arena for democracy through providing an arena where political identities and other different identities are performed. *Facebook* does not deliberately intend to deliver social change but rather still constitutes a political demonstration and can have a mobilizing impact. Marichal, (2013) also supports the notion that political Facebook groups give users space for expressive political execution that helps users to present their political identities.

Political affinity is one way individuals interface with others. *Facebook* is continuously attempting to support political movement online as it has already yielded positive results in some African countries. My study focusses on explaining how the freedom enabled by *Facebook* influences the discourses embedded in netizen's responses particularly those responding to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara. What Itai Dzamara was calling for is a change from a Mugabe regime as he demonstrated and wrote a petition to the President to step down. Patson Dzamara took the issue to Facebook where he engages with the netizens advocating for the return of his brother and advancing his brother's political ideas of change.

Political presentations are part of the process of identity formation. People seek to be distinctive and at the same time be identified with the successful group. Those who tried to divulge government secrets in the name of Baba Jukwa failed, however, Patson bring forth

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his own dimension through the same social network site (*Facebook*) to further a political cause. Hirschkind, (2011) points out that the blogosphere that blast into presence in Egypt around 2004 and 2005 from different points of view gave another setting to a procedure that started in the late 1990s. The fact that these online activists existed in repressive governments made them to be unable to revolt easily, meaning they needed a more clean way of engaging the citizens. Online activists have assumed a key part in social and political change of state in Egypt amid the recent decades. However, they needed a viable way of engaging people to participate. Thus they found Facebook which paved way to their democracy.

2.3 Facebook as tool to counter power

People under repressive governments fell on the spell of exploitation through the systems that are employed by the ruling regime to disseminate their ideologies. Castells, (2002) talks of the mass self-communication and counter power, where he appreciates the capacity by social actors to challenge and eventually change the power relations institutionalized in society. He also points out that, the diffusion of the internet, mobile communication, digital media and variety of tools of social software have prompted the development of horizontal networks of interactive communication that connect local and global in chosen time. These forms of social connections are therefore real in accelerating the rate at which people react to issues and debate upon them without fear of government interference.

The idea of *Facebook* being used as a weapon to counter power has been supported much by Castells (2002) on the rise of mass self-communication. He points out that, politics is based on socialized communication, on the capacity to influence people's minds. His argument was based on the fact that the mainstream media chooses what news to give to the world and what to leave behind the scenes. The main issue is not the shaping of the minds by explicit messages in the media. The idea is that, what does not exist in the media does not exist in the public mind, even if it could have a fragmented presence in individual minds.

The media are there to give ideas on what to think about, though they have not been able to change is how people react towards an issue. The privately owned mainstream media have been successful in making people think about the disappearance of Itai Dzamara. However, they have not been able to make people behave and think along the lines of him being hiding himself without something bad happening to him. There are no longer the holders of power,

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but they constitute by a large space where power is decided. In our today society, politics is dependent upon media politics.

The way the media present and represent issues gives the society a certain way of thinking about things. Hall, (1997) deliberates on representation as the production of meaning through the use of images, language discourse. He contends that the procedure of representation itself constitutes the very world it expects to represent, and investigates how the shared culture of a society, its signs and images, give an applied guide that offers a meaning to the world rather than just reflecting it. His worry was centered on the path in which media representation flow replicate types of symbolic power. For example, the image of Itai Dzamara to the ZANU PF people is somewhat biased because of the way he is represented by *The Herald*. The language of the media has its rules and it is largely built upon images. There was a cartoon of Dzamara at Tsvangirai's house in *The Herald* newspaper. The argument in this study is that the new communication technologies are leading to the emergence of a new form of political communication, one that is more citizen-driven but not necessarily "mass-based".

The cyber space are becoming a space for power making, though not a space of power holding. The diffusion of internet, mobile communication, digital media and a variety of tools of social media have prompted the development of horizontal networks of interactive communication that connect the local and global at any given time. Castells (2002) refers to it as the Mass Self Communication because it is self-generated in content, self-directed in emission and self-selected in reception by many that communicate with many. The idea being put forward is based on the user generated content, the ideas posted and the comments that come from netizens are independent from any political party influence. Netizens have access to sharing information that would have been censored in mainstream media. This therefore, deviates from the idea of government intervention in the electronically made information. It supports the potential of the netizens on the Facebook or any social network to counter power.

The limit by social performing artists to challenge and in the long run change power relations is standardized in the general public. It is the task of a society to choose who their leader should be and for how long. Like what Itai Dzamara and his colleagues were trying to do

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through the demonstrations. It is the right of the Human Rights Activists to counter injustices happening from any spheres. However, the only sphere that can provide activists with such freedoms is on the cyberspace. Thus the prevalence of social media particularly *Facebook* has some positive implications on countering power.

2.4 Netizen's readings of online text, anonymity and the democratic participation

Audience studies revealed that audience's readings could not be predicted from the knowledge of the text alone. Liebes and Katz (1993) argue that, if audience's readings are centered at the knowledge of the text alone, it undermines the analyst's authority in presuming a singular underlying meaning of any media text by demonstrating that empirical readers often do not mirror the expectations of the model or implied readers. Far from the above, they can be critical to the text, creative or plain contrary. The netizens' reading of media text is mostly influenced by their cultural background either politically or socially. Therefore, the netizens' political background influences some audiences to be anonymous so that they can democratically participate on the debates taking place on the cyber space.

The idea of netizenship and netizen were introduced by Hauben and Hauben (2007: 13) when they captured the emergence of "citizens of the Net". They postulate that these netizens carry invigorated obligations, and rights towards building the cooperative and collective nature which benefits the larger world. This study then appreciates the freedom being guaranteed by the cyberspace in particularly the Facebook through democratic participation of people who were a minority in political debates. An analysis of the netizens' responses shall help the researcher to explain how the freedom provided by the Facebook is influencing these discourses.

Like citizenship, netizenship reprioritizes rights of access, participation while positioning the individual within a technological common wealth. The argument being that, it is about recognition and legitimation of a technologically bounded public and communities and merges civil, political and social rights through new technologies. Frankenfeld (1992) characterized mechanical citizenship as a general means for establishing defensive measures against hazardous advancements. He contends that science and innovation are pervasive strengths equipped for changing social life, and without a framework for directing these

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powers. Their abilities can welcome debilitating and pessimistic outcomes, for example, badgering of individuals.

Access to information creates netizens who are politically opinionated. Hauben and Hauben (1996) supported this notion as they noted that netizenship was presented as net users who are empowered by collecting, creating, sharing information and knowledge with others. These are the same people who are believed to be the vehicles which make the world a better place. While the above scholars have classified netizens accordingly, MacKinnon, (2012) expresses the netizen as a citizen of a globally connected internet. She argues that, it is no longer sufficient for people to assert their rights and responsibilities as citizens of a nation state, they also need to assert their rights and responsibilities as netizens.

The term netizen refers to a citizen on the internet and suggest that people on the cyberspace are more than just users, but they are still citizens and their civic responsibilities in the real world are maintained (Milson and Wan Chu, 2002). The issue being perpetrated by netizenship is the empowerment of people to participate in the debates that take place in the real world, either socially, economically or politically. For example, BBC can also be used as an example for netizenship. Through its investigation called iCan, it empowers natives to characterize and post their own issues, connection to expansive systems of correspondingly concerned people. They are likewise empowered to discover information about open activities and government reactions and at last push for BBC scope of their worries. Therefore, Patson's posts were meant to probe netizenry debates and deliberations towards the disappearance of Itai Dzamara. It operates as a democratic cyber activism platform for netizens to express their opinions. These technological developments change the nature of political communication and the character of citizenship (Neuman, Bimber and Hindman, 2011). The political communication is now characterized by people who have not studied it at secondary level. This then affects the rationality of the discussions being perpetrated by the Facebook.

According to Garnham, (1997) cited in Mosco, (2000)

'Citizenship in the new electronic age means treating the cyberspace as a public space or new communications. At this platform, everyone has right to access, participate,

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reasonable expectations of privacy and security, and along with these rights is civic responsibility of active involvement and mutual respect of fellow cyber-citizens.'

Patson Dzamara had the ability to broadcast his observations and questions around the world and have the netizens to respond. The netizens who responds on his posts includes the excluded minority and the once marginalized society. It is through the use of pseudo names and maintaining anonymity that some people do not mind the language they use on responding. In support of that argument, Fungai Tichawangana founder of Zimbojam, in Gondo (2014) argues that on the internet, nobody knows you are a dog. Yigit, (2014) notes that, different voices on the net does not point towards an increased quantity of information, but different information and communication opportunities which enhance democracy and contribute to democratic culture. While Lei, (2011) argues that, with access to internet, citizens can have more opportunities to speak out and be heard, so information, communication and viewpoints become diverse.

Subjects of a nation can find out about what is going on inside their governments from different nations through the internet before their government chooses to release the information to its kin by means of the main stream media. Thus government can no longer easily keep information from their people. This therefore gives power to the netizens. Hauben (1995) differs the net society from the offline society through welcoming intellectual activity. It encourages netizens to have ideas in their minds and freely express them.

On looking at the netizens' readings of online text and anonymity, the netizens have been defined as generation Z. Hauben and Hauben (1997) defines the 21st century netizens in the context of e-democracy, nationhood and national identity. He identified them as people born since 1995. While Malone, (2007) identified generation Z as people born after 1991, in the age of terrorism, mobile phones, internet and un-zoned schooling. The difference in these generations is emanating from the argument that these generations use the internet and mobile phones more that the people who were born before those years. However, the way people get exposed to the internet and its characteristics changes the behavior of people regardless of their age and sex.

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The notion of the cyberspace and netizens creates the notion of e-democracy among communities where counter voices and other perspectives can gather momentum at local, national and international level simply through the internet. This literature of netizens' reading of text works in tandem with the digital public sphere theory which gives power to the netizens through the freedom of speech and expression granted by the social networking site. Despite the authoritarian Mugabe regime, technology has contributed to a more critical and politicized citizenry in Zimbabwe's cyberspace. Netizens have constituted a new social force challenging the authoritarian regime. The demonstration led by Patson Dzamara on the 9th of March 2015 constituted the netizens he engaged through his Facebook page, hence colliding with the concept of cyber activism.

Despite government efforts to control content, online users are exposed to freer media and opportunities for independent networking. Milson and Wan Chu, (2002) posits that in cyberspace, there are no central powers, no real territory and no hierarchical structure. Therefore, participation becomes easier because all people are the same. This has been supported by Vickery and Winsch-Vincent, (2007) who said that the internet offers a good opportunity for freedom of speech for political, social and critical aims. It also provides a good opportunity for citizenry to participate in various societal issues and discuss them critically.

The Facebook has been credited a position of a social network networking site that provides an appropriate arena for political purpose by both politicians and ordinary people. Chachage (2010) takes note of that online intelligent stadiums have made a type of citizenship in Tanzania as well, which is liquid and sufficiently adaptable to assemble different individuals online to impact social change offline. However, no matter how the cyberspace encompasses every netizen into discussions, the quality of the discussions need to be considered. While internet supports anonymity, for most users criminal activities such as hacking and privacy conduce are rampant (Milson and Won Chu, 2002). Thus this study seeks to answer the question which asks the extent to which the discussions are rationale, especially looking at the characteristics of Facebook and its various users.

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2.5 Conceptual framework

This section is focusing on the concepts that guides this study which are; the digital public sphere concept and the concept of cyber activism; online activism theory and practices.

2.6 Digital Public Sphere concept

The perception of the media as a public sphere was piloted in by Habermas' insight that the media should be an equal platform of sharing and exchange of meaning. He denoted this conception from the observation of conversations that took place in coffee shops and saloons. People from different professions would discuss topical issues on equal platform. Habermas on *The Structural Transformation of the public sphere* is an immensely rich and influential book that has had major impact in a variety of disciplines. Kellner (1992) points out that it has received detailed criticism and endorsed exceptionally prolific deliberations of liberal egalitarianism, civil society, public life and social changes in the twentieth century among other issues. Though Habermas did not directly address the 'digital add-on' Valtysson (2012) argues that Habermas is attentive towards the need of self-regulating media systems and the importance of audience responses.

Therefore, Habermas (1996: 373) characterized the digital public sphere as an exceedingly complex system that branches out into a huge number of covering international, national, provincial, neighborhood and subcultural enclosures. The study utilizes this theory to explain how the attributes of Facebook are enabling the kinds of discourses in netizens' responses to the posts by Patson Dzamara. The intention is to establish how mediated political communication in the digital public sphere can facilitate deliberative legitimization processes in complex societies. Habermas (2006, 411-412) argues that this happens only if a self-regulating media system gains independence from its social environments, and if anonymous audiences grant feedback between an informed elite discourse and a responsive civil society. However, Habermas' insights still apply as principally 'analogue' and 'digital' public sphere cannot but coexist in this culture of real virtuality (Castells, 2000) where processes of convergence affect technologies, spaces and practices (Papacharissi, 2010) alike. As a result of digital processes, media are by now essentially digital, which means that the mediated public sphere is by now a digital public sphere.

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At stake is delineating a concept of the digital public sphere which facilitate maximum public participation and debate over key issues of the current conjuncture and which consequently promotes the cause of participatory democracy. The participants do not need to fear any governmental interference and harassment. So this theory shall assist in establishing the discourse in the netizens' responses. Habermas (1989) notes that the public sphere is "a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgment." As Kellner (1962) posits that the public sphere presupposed freedoms of speech and assembly, a free press and the right to freely participate in political debates and decision making. This study will look at Patson Dzamara's Facebook page, the objective is to explain what the discourses that enables Facebook to provide freedom to its netizens.

Gleicher (2012) takes note of that, Habermas depicts general public sphere as a conceptualization of the domain of individuals' social life in which something drawing closer the public opinion can be informed. This type of a public sphere has been portrayed by the unlimited design of the general population body. It has freedom of expression through the certification of opportunity of congress. Nonetheless, this public sphere was informed by the thoughts of the minority who could join the Habermasian standard for the general public sphere. The approach of the internet has changed the attributes of the general public sphere which was constrained to a little gatherings of individuals. The idea of the Facebook as a public sphere or democratizing space is relatively optimistic especially in Zimbabwe. It is seen as 'contributing to the new ways of knowing, new strategies for gathering news, retrieving and utilizing information'. Dahlgren (2005) points out that the dynamics of communication and changes in relation to new information communication technologies have led to an integrated exchange of information at an accelerated rate across geographic boundaries.

Many scholars have also looked at the internet as a function of the public sphere hence how it is used to empower the netizens. The Facebook is therefore providing a public space which allows for the netizens to express their views towards the issues happening in the country. This has been supported by Dahlgren (2005) and Sarcinelli (1997) that in the long run the internet might

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democratize the public sphere and lead to strengthened political interest and participation among netizens.

During the times Habermas propounded this theory, the use of internet social sites was very limited to the developed countries only. This research is looking at the Facebook specifically as a site or platform for new public sphere where the emphasis of cyber activism, harassment is not centered on women only but also regards the probability of anyone being an enemy from any country'. This study is looking at Patson Dzamara's face book page as a platform which seeks to provide a 'public space' where people debate their issues and in this case focusing at the disappearance of Itai Dzamara.

Dean (2003) throws a question, 'What is the relationship between the idea of the public sphere and computer mediated interaction? His argument was based on the fact that the net is damaging the practices of democracy under conditions of techno-culture. These are the conditions that Castells (2002) theorized as capitalism in the information mode of development and which he referred as communicative capitalism. He defines the public sphere as;

“The site and subject of liberal democratic practices. A space within which people deliberate over matters of common concern, matters that are contested and about which it seems necessary to reach a consensus. The notion of the public sphere should also appear in legal distinctions between public and private spheres, where public refers to the state and private refers to the family and the market.”

As an alternative to the Public Sphere, he considers the potential of a political architecture rooted in the notion of networks where there are legal structures that denies cyber harassment. This brings us back to what Habermas was lamenting on the control of the expert, the voice which in many ways has silenced the voice of the public in a mass media driven pseudo public sphere. Implying that the public sphere before the cyber space was fake because it was dominated by a minority class of the capitalists, those who control and own the means of production.

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While Habermas' analysis of the internet continue to be double barreled, many scholars subscribing to the theory of the multiple public spheres have outlined fundamental criteria that need to be fulfilled if the internet is to function as a public sphere in the traditional definition which is based on the need for rational and critical thought, as opposed to the forum of empty chatter. This study seeks to explain how the freedom provided by *Facebook* enables the discourses in the netizens' responses to Patson Dzamara's posts on Facebook. In the realm of solving problems within communities, *Facebook* has been able to operate as a tool for civic engagement in the Egyptian revolution.

Political theorists have conceptualized the public sphere in various ways. Hannah Arendt anchors her notion of the public sphere in a particular understanding of the politics of the ancient Greece. For her, what is important is that it is a place of freedom and contestations, separate from the demands of work and the necessities of bare life. In contrast, Richard Sennet reads the public sphere more aesthetically in terms of practices of self-presentation and display. And lastly, Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the public sphere*, trace the emergence of the notion of the public in key Enlightenment political theories, but he also looks at the material emergence of a sphere of private persons coming together as a public in the 18th century in Germany.

What Habermas discovered in these new relations are a set of political standards vital for democratic practice. At first, there was disregard for social status, a fundamental parity among all participants such that the authority of the better argument could win out over social hierarchy. These abstractions lead Habermas to conceptualize the public sphere in terms of the public use in reason. The above conception of the public sphere has been profoundly disapproved it never existed, it left out women, it was fabricated on the backbones of the working class. The idea of the public sphere has been reinvigorated in part because of the emergence of new communication technologies. Habermas thinks that, 'The phenomenon of the world public sphere is today 'becoming political reality for the first time in a cosmopolitan matrix of communication.' Computer mediated interactions seem to materialize aspirations long associated with the public

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sphere. The idea being for the inclusion of the minority groups of people which have been excluded in the discussions and debates of the important issues in the country political spheres.

Therefore, *Facebook* is creating a platform for the marginalized groups to air out their views. The concept of a public sphere in Zimbabwe has been a folktale. The government would try to find means through which they intervene. For example, the programs such as Melting Pot. It is aired out through the publicly owned media, implying that there are standards to which the program is expected to end. Also the issue discussed are censored before they are deliberated upon. Thus *Facebook* is a new public sphere which is creating space for the people who have been left out of the political arena to express their opinions and be heard. Netizens who commented on Patson Dzamara's posts find solace in responding to these posts because there is no other platform to do so, thus some of them use pseudo names.

Buchstern, (2011) asserts that, if one accepts the claims of the optimists, the new technology seems to match all the basic requirements of Habermas' normative theory of the democratic public sphere. It is universal, anti-hierarchical complex and demanding mode of interaction. This is on the conception that it offers widespread access, un-constrained correspondence, freedom of expression, an unhindered motivation, and investment outside of conservative political organizations and produces general assessment through procedures of discussions, the internet resembles the best discourse circumstance.

Through the internet, information is no longer a privilege of the elite, people have more opportunities to register their opinions and thoughts in political debates than ever before. According to Dean (2003), and other arguments from Zizek, (2002) the aspect of the internet as a public sphere is a contested terrain. Dean (2003) consider the problem of configuring the internet as public sphere as one that can be addressed through ideology critique. That is the characterization of networked communication as lacking the public sphere norms, on the other hand, and as plagued by a surfeit of these norms, on the other hand tells us a lot about the

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ideology materialized in the internet as an ideology of publicity in the service of communicative capitalism.

2.7 Cyber activism; online activism theory and practice

This study shall conceptualize cyber activism, and online activism through which netizens responses are helpful in creating a democratic participation sphere on the Facebook of Patson Dzamara. Howard (2011: 145) characterizes digital activism as the demonstration of utilizing the internet to propel a political cause that is hard to progress disconnected from the net. He also points out that it helps for civic engagement. In other words, this is what Patson Dzamara was fostering. Civic engagement refers to the process through which civil society is invited to participate in ongoing political, economic and social efforts that are meant to bring about change. According to much contemporary democratic theory, civil society forms the bedrock of good democratic governance...and this sentiment is echoed in more popular political discourses (Browsers, 2006: 5).

The objective of activism is regularly to make mentally and candidly convincing advanced antiques that tell stories of bad form, translate history and backer for specific political results. From the above understanding, cyber activism is an important concept, which even enabled the Egyptian revolution to be a success. Thus Patson Dzamara advocates for the return of his brother and he is using the cyber space as a platform for political change. The social media is being used by activists as an alternative media. Therefore, the main argument embodied in this study is that, the discourses in netizens' responses are being influenced by the nature of cyber interactivity.

The people's participation and what they produce are regarded with the hope to contribute to an informed citizenry and democracy. In this case, the netizens' responses help in the democratic participatory framework where they have to voice their opinions on how innocent people are disappearing due to the ignorance of the ruling elite. Itai Dzamara was one of the Human Rights Activists just like Jestina Mukoko who was abducted because he was advocating justice against the Mugabe regime.

The netizens through the Facebook are being offered an opportunity to make their own judgements and assumptions on the whereabouts of Itai Dzamara. The power is within the

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netizens to choose what to know about what the newspapers were saying about Itai. For example, on the death of the daughter of Professor Jonathan Moyo, people took it as humor as they have been making jokes with the disappearance of Itai.

The goal of activism is often to create intellectually and emotionally compelling digital artefacts that tell a story of injustice, interpret history and advocate for particular political outcomes. Therefore, Patson Dzamara through his Facebook page was trying to engage the virtual netizens to see the injustice that is being done by the ruling government towards Human Rights Activists, in particular Itai Dzamara and others whose names have not been disclosed. Browers, (2006) argues that; 'The most noticeable change has been a distinct shift of focus in discussions of democratization from the state to the society- that is, from the theories that view the state as the locus of political change to theories that see the impetus for change as arising in a non-governmental realm.'

This directs the claim that the internet can lead to a greater democratization of society is founded on the tenets of unlimited access to information and equal participation in cultural discourses. Puttnam (2001) states that, researchers were at first energetic about the capability of the internet to improve civil society, and the mass communications were confronted with cruel feedback for their charged undermining of common society. He encourage said that the range to which the web fits on in supposition is still open to talk about. Through the Facebook, the netizens have a space to let some circulation into their feelings which is reasonable in light of the fact that they are an integral part of the issues being talked about by the first class.

Cyber optimists such as Rheingold (1995), Toffler and Toffler (1995) and Dyson (1998) notes that at first a significant part of the compositions on the web fitted into the "digital idealistic" school of thought, proposing that the internet gave special and energizing chances to enhance society. Digital confident people saw the internet, with its capacity to enable residents to respond to information rapidly and be acquainted with new computerized advances as the key restoration of democracy and native empowerment. Though the prevalence of internet are still optimistic in Zimbabwe, people are gathering momentum towards embracing technological advancements.

For the Egyptian regime, Lynch (2011) put it;

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“It was not a matter of knowing, or not knowing, hoe their fellow citizens felt about the regime, rather it was a matter of calculating the risk involved in protesting and the chances of success, how much people are ready to sacrifice, and whether they are willing to pay the price of freedom.”

Facebook was the tool used to mobilize people. The social network best suited for the task of organizing the protesters was Facebook, ‘where information can be disseminated to thousands of people in an instant and then shared between friends’, and this distribution was faster than leaflets, with the added benefit that those receiving the message were already interested and trusted the source” (Idle & Nunns, 2011, p.20). Khamis (2011) notes that,

‘The new media operates as an effective tool for promoting civic engagement, through supporting the capabilities of the democratic activists by allowing forums for free speech and political networking opportunities; providing a virtual space for assembly, and supporting the capability of the protesters to plan, organize and execute peaceful protests.’

The Egyptian Activist’ said that, ‘If you want a free society, just give the internet access.’ Their argument was thrilled by the effectiveness of the social media in fostering about political change and democratic transformation during the Egyptian Revolution. The social media enabled an effective form of citizen journalism through providing platforms for ordinary citizens to document their protests, to spread the word about the ongoing activities, to provide evidence of governmental brutality and to disseminate information in forms of words and images. In the same manner, Patson Dzamara through the posts was trying to engage the netizens to respond and partner with him. Rahman, 1985; 2002; Boyd, 1999 and Rugh, 2004, contends that in that time, Arab media were most controlled by the government, essentially to keep laypeople clueless, and subsequently unequipped for adequately taking an interest in political discussions and discerning civil arguments. This is what Patson Dzamara was trying to counter through perpetuating a discursive forum through his Facebook page, his aim was focused on civic engagement so that the netizens will bring forth social and political change against the injustices within the ruling elite. Khamis, (2007, 2008), Atia, (2006) argues that;

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‘Overall, it could be said that, the introduction of the satellites television channels and the internet represented an important shift from the monolithic, state controlled and government owned media patterns to a much more pluralistic and diverse media scene, where many diverse and competing voices representing different political positions and orientations could be heard at the same time, adding to the richness of ongoing political debates and the formation of a wide array of public opinion trends.’

The significance of the introduction of the internet stems from the fact that it defies boundaries, challenges governmental media censorship and provides an alternative voice to traditional media outlets, which echo official, governmental policies and views. In other words, it enables the in-flow and out-flow of information simultaneously through the “virtually defined...emerging cyber world that knows no physical boundaries”, (Salman, Fernandez and Post 2010, p159). Therefore it provides invaluable opportunities to public mobilization across borders. The cyber society is filled with diversified ideas and versions of their own story telling which is not biased towards the government or any political party. Through the netizens' responses, Dzamara was trying to create a democratic sphere where everyone can air out their views from their own perspective. Howard (2011,p.182) note that through online networking, national columnists who are disappointed with the conventional media's variant of occasions are telling their own stories and they are these political expressions and learning that are critical in creating democratic discourses.

The social media do not only help start democracies, but also help entrench the existing ones, and at the networked design, the social media is the key factor threatening authoritarian regimes (Howard, 2011, p.11.). This is as a result of the inclusive nature of the cyberspace where people can even use pseudo names, age and sex. It is difficult to know the person you will be interacting with on the internet specifically the Facebook hence they can say whatever they feel comfortable with. Freeland (2011) argues that opponents of a dictator need to feel that their views are widely shared and that enough of their fellow citizens are willing to join them. That is the feeling that this study also assumes, that Itai Dzamara wanted his views of the President overstaying his reign as overdue appreciated by the Zimbabwean society. People needed to revolt against him especially looking at the economic downfall in the country performance that presumably were aligned to his incompetence. However, what stops people that are oppressed by a regime from

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protesting is the fear that they will be part of an unsuccessful protest and also considering the political upheavals in Zimbabwe, people can just disappear for good.

Conclusion

The chapter was a review of literatures that have been carried out by other scholars. The researcher found out that facebook has been used as a tool to counter power in other African countries such as the Arab spring revolution, Tunisia and Egypt, people are finding solace through the use of social media to express their views and gain knowledge on current affairs. The research was guide by conceptual framework, where the digital public sphere concept and cyber activism concepts have been utilized to guide the research.

3.0 Chapter 3 Research Methods and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

A study can be comprehended as an investigation for data through unbiased and reliable strategies for finding clarification to the problem in search. This section describes how the data was gathered, analysed and presented. Researchers agree that a study incorporates describing and redefining problems expressing speculation or prescribed clarifications, assembling, systematizing and surveying information, making assumptions and achieving conclusions (Dawson, 2002, Kothari 1985, Kumar 2005). The research design employed in this research will be deliberated with the unit of analysis, sampling methods, methods of information gathering, data analysis as well as methods of data presentation.

3.2 Research Approach

This study utilizes qualitative research. Qualitative in its nature is for creating meaning and occurrences to be interpreted. This is in line with Benbasat (1985) in Baroudi (1989)'s argument that the choice of research approach depends on the characteristics of the problem being researched. This approach was used to create and interpret meanings from responses by netizens on Itai Dzamara issue. These are the people who responded to the issues pertaining to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara from the 9th of March 2015 to 9 March 2016. Given that aspect, this approach allows the researcher to grasp the point of the respondents (Krauss, 2005). Yin (1994) supports that case studies have been seen as prime examples of qualitative research which adopts an interpretive approach to data studies "things" within their context and considers the subjective meaning that people bring to their situation. This approach helps the researcher to come up with a mode of inquiry for an in-depth examination of a phenomenon. Given that the Zimbabwean political upheavals results in the disappearance or beating up of people and journalists (Moyo, 2000), the researcher suggested to look at the discourse embedded in the netizens responses and how Facebook enables these discourses. Qualitative research places emphasis on analysis of words, images and subjective material. The qualitative research approach was selected for use in this research because of its strength in explaining and interpreting 'behaviours, processes and motivations' (Bassey, 2006).

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3.3 Research design

The research design of this study is an interpretive case study that is analysed through qualitative methods. Kumar (2011) argues that a research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems. A case study as characterized by Crowe et al (2011) is a study approach used to make a thorough, multi-sided perception of an intricate issue in its real life context. There are three sorts of case studies and these includes explanatory, descriptive and exploratory case studies. This study utilizes an explanatory contextual analysis. The choice is in accordance with the study's research questions and objectives, which attempt to explore the discourses embedded in netizens' responses, explain how the freedom enables by Facebook influence these discourses, explain how the netizens read and interpreted the post by Patson Dzamara, and answer the research questions which inquires; to what extent can the discussions be considered rationale? Therefore, the researcher picked the netizens who responded on Patson Dzamara's Facebook page. The use of explanatory research design was premised on the researcher's attempt to describe an apparent fact and conceptualise it inclusive of statements that create a situation that needs to be interpreted and explained.

Virtual ethnography was used to evaluate the responses by netizens on Itai Dzamara's disappearance. Online archival research was also employed to get more information about netizens perceptions on that issue. This study also makes use of semiotic analysis to analyse different levels of anger by netizens about the political situation in Zimbabwe.

3.4 Target Population

The population of this study are the entire posts and comments by Patson Dzamara and the netizens. Fourie (2007) posits that population refers to the pool from which a sample is drawn. It is important that the researcher mentions the level at which the disappearance of Dzamara was captured. The disappearance of Itai Dzamara was an issue that received much attention from Human rights activists and also Zimbabweans in the diaspora on the cyberspace. It is an issue that appeared in almost all national newspapers and it received attention from the audiences. However, the researcher's focus is on the netizens' responses to the posts by Patson Dzamara only, with regards to the disappearance of his brother. Itai was abducted on the 9th of March

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2015. The researcher shall look at the case from the day that Itai disappeared up until a period of a year. Thus the posts from 9 March 2015 to 9 March 2016.

There are many articles that were posted by Patson Dzamara that received attention from the netizens. Almost every day Patson would post something to do with Itai. Therefore, from those posts, the researcher shall use all posts which received much attention and their corresponding responses. To choose these posts, the researcher used purposive sampling considering that Patson Dzamara is a writer so sometimes he posts issues to do with his books, and this has nothing to do with my research.

3.5 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis for this study is each individual post that has something to do with the disappearance of Itai Dzamara and its corresponding comments. For there to be a comment, there should be a post. A unit of analysis refers to a segment which the research is grounded upon. Babbie (2001) postulates that a sample is drawn from a large pool or elements. These elements are also known as units of analysis. This research is interested in netizens responses to their readings of the posts by Patson Dzamara. The researcher is aware that the issue has been covered by mainstream media both online and offline. However, this study focuses on posts that covered Itai's disappearance and their corresponding comments, shares and likes on the Facebook posts by Patson Dzamara from the 9th of March 2015 to 9th March 2016.

3.6 Sampling

The research employed purposive sampling to select the posts and their corresponding responses. Frankel and Warren (2006) notes that sampling is an accurate representation of how the larger group of people act or how they believe. This involves the selection of people from a large group and drawing conclusions from there. This study utilizes purposive sampling through focusing on the posts that received more responses only. Thus the posts that received few posts will not be useful to my study.

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3.7 Purposive sampling

This is when the researcher uses his or her own judgement to select population members who are good prospects for accurate information (Kothari, 1985). This technique is being used to select relevant posts and their corresponding responses. Also considering that some people just wrote abbreviations for Bring Back Itai Dzamara as (BBID) and they are many who did so, purposive sampling serves the purpose of selecting posts that have many responses that are informative. Purposive sampling is useful for coming up with solid artefacts for analysis. The researcher is aware of some netizens who have a behaviour of writing issues that are incoherent with the issue at stake, so she considered them on explaining the irrationality of discussions.

Purposive sampling is also known as judgemental sampling. Babbie (2001) asserts that purposive sampling implies that elements are selected on the basis of knowledge of the population and the aims of the study. Ncube (2010) notes that it has to be heighted that the fact that purposive sampling heavily relies on the subjective considerations of the researcher, this makes it prone to uncontrollable results. The netizens responded to political discourses, therefore, critical analysis is needed. Therefore, this sampling technique is relevant in selecting the posts and their corresponding responses relevant to my study.

3.8 Methods of data gathering

For a research to be successful, there should be methods that are suitable and relevant in gathering data for the study. Ranjit (2005) posits that methods of data gathering or tools for data collection is the most important aspect of a research project. This research is more qualitative in nature, therefore, the researcher uses virtual ethnography and online archival research as methods of data gathering. Instead of doing interviews and other types of data collecting techniques, the researcher took netizens responses on Patson Dzamara's post and analyzed the data.

3.9 Virtual Ethnography

Discussions have been done on the different types of communities that exists in the world (van Dijk 1993). Due to the existence of these types of communities, new methods of gathering data are coming up. The virtual communities that exist on the cyber space cannot be investigated using ethnography which is used for offline audiences. Thus this study used virtual ethnography.

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The researcher liked the page and actively participated in the discussions through liking some posts by Patson Dzamara. Virtual ethnography is a qualitative approach to data collection in virtual communities (Jones, 2005). In this capacity, its purpose is usually to look beyond volumes and distribution and to try to unearth the deeper reason for behaviors and sentiments. The researcher used this data gathering technique to understand the discourses embedded within the social networking sites. The aim was to investigate how these discourses influenced certain netizens' responses and readings of the posts by Patson Dzamara.

Virtual ethnography refers to 'a number of related online research methods that adapt ethnographic methods of the study of the communities and cultures created through computer-mediated social interaction' (Kozinets, 2006: 135). It is also known as Cyber ethnography or digital ethnography. Kozinets, (2006) also notes that, the architecture of online communities and social networks provide a constant stream of information, some superfluous, some meaningful, but all fed to individual users in the online community. The responses of users to such news and information are used to glean an insight to the possibility of authentic mood, response and existence in online communities and social networking sites (Hine, 2000 Jakobson, 2006). The researcher utilized this method by liking the Facebook page so as to follow and be able to gather information from the netizens who responded to the posts by Patson Dzamara.

However, Kozinets (2010) refers to virtual ethnography as "netnography". The term is a combination of the words internet and ethnography. His argument was based on the view that it is ethnography conducted on the internet, a qualitative, interpretive research methodology that adapts the traditional, in-person ethnography research techniques of anthropology to the study of online cultures and communities formed through computer mediated communications (Kozinets, 2006).

3.10 Online archival research

This research utilizes online archival research. Archival research studies is the characteristic of records in their social and cultural contexts and how they are created, used, selected and transferred through time (Gilliland, 2011). Archival research is done through reading the already existing chronicles of information and more often, it is data gathered and collected from documents stored in archives (Rutman, 1984; White, 2005). Online archival research is a method

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of gathering data from the cyber space, and it is secondary data. The study uses this technique to gather the data from Patson Dzamara's *Facebook* page. The research focuses on posts regarding the disappearance of Itai Dzamara and their corresponding responses from 9 March 2015 to 9 March 2016. It is imperative to acknowledge that the data analyzed is largely textual and as a result, it is gathered through this technique. For the execution of this study, the researcher purposively selected posts and their corresponding responses on Patson Dzamara's posts with regards to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara.

3.11 Methods of data presentation and analysis

This research is informed by qualitative methods of data analysis which is viewed more generously as a method of describing and interpreting the artifacts of a social group or society (Lee, 2000). Therefore, methods which borrows from qualitative data analysis were used and these includes semiotic analysis, and critical discourse analysis.

3.12 Semiotic analysis

To study the netizens' responses on the posts by Patson Dzamara with regards to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara, the researcher utilizes semiotic analysis. Fiske (1990) defines semiotics as the study of signs and the way they are expressed leading to communication and understanding between humans and society. He also defined it as the meaning making process. With this kind of understanding, signs refer to words and images that are used to share information with others on the cyber space by netizens. Therefore, the researcher shall make use of this technique to analyse the images that were send by the netizens responding to the posts by Patson Dzamara. Signs also refers to the texts, therefore, semiotic analysis shall be key in unpacking the hidden meanings embedded in netizens' responses.

Semiotics have also been defined by Sebeok (1974:108) as the study of the exchange of any messages whatever and of the systems of signs which underlie them, the key concept of semiotics remaining the sign. This technique is useful in unravelling the denotative and connotative meanings hidden in the netizens responses. Some netizens responded by posting pictures and video clips. Therefore, semiotic analysis is relevant in analyzing the responses and their signification. This has been supported by Baudrillard (2005, 2007) as he argued that the classical Marxian critique of political economy needed to be supplemented by semiological theories of the sign which articulated the diverse meanings signified by signifiers like language

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organized in a system of meaning. His emphasis was grounded upon the politics embedded in science of signs. Meaning is polysemous, thus people read texts differently (Hall 1997). This technique is key in exploring the discourses embedded in netizens' readings and interpretation of the posts by Patson Dzamara.

3.13 Critical discourse analysis

This study also make use of critical discourse analysis as a technique to analyze text, socio-political and economical influences of the discourses and power relations. Foucault, (1998) notes that discourse is power, and power is everywhere. Critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (Van Dijk, 1997). This data analysis techniques is important in my study because it is key in analyzing the discourses embedded in netizens' responses. This type of an analysis was borrowed from Fairclough and Mitchel Foucault discourse. Fairclough and Wodak (1997:271) gives a summary of main tenets of CDA which are;

- ❖ CDA addresses social problems
- ❖ Power relations are discursive
- ❖ Discourse constitutes society and culture
- ❖ Discourse does ideological work
- ❖ Discourse is historical
- ❖ The link between text and society is mediated
- ❖ Discourse is interpretive and explanatory
- ❖ Discourse is a form of social action

The researcher engaged critical discourse analysis as directed by the above tenets to interpret and analyze data on politics and social issues from netizens' responses that were emanating from the posts with regards to Itai Dzamara's disappearance, on *Facebook* page of Patson Dzamara. The focus is on the ways in which the disappearance of Itai Dzamara end up in some form of harassment among the netizens on the web. Van Dijk (1998) points that critical discourse analysis deals with the relationship between discourse structures and those of local and global context. It is seldom made explicit and appears usually in terms of the notions of knowledge and ideology. The transition from mainstream media to social media reveals a paradigm shift of

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discursive spaces. This means that the discourse structures also change. In this understanding CDA is used to critique the choice of words as well as figurative language that have certain meaning in the netizens' responses. Since this research seeks to explain how the netizens read and interpreted the posts, CDA becomes crucial because it shows how language is powerful in countering certain discourses.

3.14 Methods of data presentation

The researcher utilizes thematic analysis to present the findings. In the process of reading netizens' responses, themes popped out, hence the researcher used these themes to present findings. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It minimally organizes and describes data in rich detail. Boyatzis, (1998) supports that notion as he says that thematic analysis is further effective in interpreting various aspects of research topic. The researcher acknowledges key themes and conceptions from netizens' responses analyzed for the purpose of this research. The study utilized descriptive thematic coding. This approach assists in explaining the discourses embedded in netizens' responses and also explaining how the netizens read and interpreted the posts. "Themes capture something important about the data in relation to the research question, and it presents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 10). Therefore, the researcher read the post and their corresponding responses and came up with themes. These themes were later on used to present the finding. To show the authenticity of this study, the researcher extracted some parts of the netizens' responses analyzed to show how the themes were established.

3.15 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the methods of data gathering and analysis that were employed by the researcher and these were; virtual ethnography and online archival research to gather information on the Facebook page of Patson Dzamara. This data was analyzed using semiotic analysis, and critical discourse analysis to unveil the discourses embedded in the netizens' responses. These also assisted the researcher to explain how the freedom being provided by Facebook is influencing these discourses.

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4.0 Chapter 4 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Presentation and analysis of data

This chapter is the core of this study where all the information gathered is presented and analyzed. This research explores the rationality of the deliberations on the disappearance of Itai Dzamara on Patson Dzamara's *Facebook* posts. The ultimate objective is to give solid explanations on the discourses embedded in netizens' responses to these *Facebook* posts. Critical discourse analysis is employed to analyze the data gathered because it is a type of analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2007: 108 and Mazid, 2008). This research also employed semiotic analysis which Sebeok (2008: 108) defines as, "the study of the exchange of any messages whatever and of the systems of signs which underlie them, the key concept of semiotics remaining the sign." A sign is anything that signifies or has meanings in that certain code and a given context (Hall, 1997). Mazid (2008:434) argues critical discourse analysis and semiotic analysis can successfully be used to complement each other during research. The techniques used to analyze this study traces from scholarly arguments and are rich in unbundling and unpacking hidden meanings embedded in netizens' responses. I am presenting and analyzing the data thematically as follows.

4.2 Dzamara: The selfless gallant son of Zimbabwe

Itai Dzamara is saluted by the netizens on Patson Dzamara's *Facebook* page as a selfless gallant son of Zimbabwe. "We salute selfless gallant sons of zimbabwe who do not only rely on what the elders did, but are also willing to stand up for the nation and also justice." By Mambo Clive Munetsi, on March 10, 2015. He is hailed as a hero who fought for the emancipation of Zimbabwean citizens from the despotic regime of Mugabe. 'A hero is a hero. An example is Itai Dzamara, the one standing in the right time for all of us. Indeed he is a man and a Hero, voice of the voiceless, he is a representation of emancipation. #BBID'. Itai was also described as a true leader like Patrice Lumumba and Martin Luther King as some netizens say that, 'True qualities of a leader is selflessness. You may seem small and insignificant, but you are a giant on the

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inside. You have become our Patrice Lumumba and Martin Luther King. Itai Dzamara is described as a father of the nation, husband, and brother. This is seen in netizens' responses on 16-05-15, who claim that 'he is their father...her husband.....our brother and comrade BBID# Edson Mwanangendeve'

Itai Dzamara has been termed the 'selfless gallant son of Zimbabwe' countable times by the netizens responding to the posts by Patson Dzamara with regards to his disappearance. This term is not new in the history of Zimbabwe in the colonial era, the liberation struggle and the post-independence era. It has been used to describe the unselfish character of the people who fought for the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe. It is a cultural artefact in the Zimbabwean society, that when someone who 'fought' the liberation struggle dies, that person is buried at the National Heroes Acre. Those are the typical sons of the soil, gallant sons of *Zimbabwe*. Following the netizens' responses on the disappearance of Itai Dzamara were comments which said that;

The term 'selfless' is mostly used to define the character of someone whose heart is benevolent, self-sacrificing and self-forgetting. It refers to a person who forgets himself or herself for the concern of others more than himself. Selfless is characterized by low levels of self-centeredness and a low degree of importance given to self (Ricard, 2011). It is associated with characteristics such as kindness, respect, empathy, compassion and the search for harmony (Neff, 2003). This term is used to describe personality traits. Itai Dzamara has been described as a 'selfless' gallant son of Zimbabwe. He is selfless in the sense that he devoted himself to the nation, leaving his family, and friends for an idea which a lot of people in Zimbabwe so wished to do, but they did not have the courage to do so. Markus and Kitayama, (1991) recognize a free self and an associated self. They propose that people have strikingly diverse ideas of their self, and these varieties are a capacity of contrasts in social settings. As people grow up they are socially constructed to have a certain character that is acceptable in a society. Therefore, the character that was presented by Itai Dzamara, was a character not acceptable in Zimbabwe. As much as he tried to present himself as a free person, his freedom and the perspective he viewed himself is irrelevant in the physical political spheres of Zimbabwe.

The hegemonic discourse asserts that, a child is raised in the influence of accepting the status quo through the use of soft power. Hegemony is naturalized so that people feel they are meant to

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be. Therefore, the public sphere discussions are influenced by the political economy of that specific, either, Newspaper Company, radio station or television station. This draws us back to how the term 'selfless gallant sons of Zimbabwe' has been used immemorial. The ruling elite have thrived on using this term from the liberation struggle 'coining' the people who died for this country. The liberation struggle discourse has been key in manipulating people to accept that the people who fought and died for this country are 'selfless', including those who die having a 'political position' in the ZANU PF's monopolistic regime during the post independent Zimbabwe. These diverse self-develops influence the routes in which people experience themselves and others, furthermore influence their insights, feelings, and inspiration.

In short, this phrase, 'selfless gallant sons of Zimbabwe' is used in Zimbabwe to refer to the people who have passed on, with the assumption that they have died for the country to attain its freedom and independence. However, these netizens are advocating the return of Itai Dzamara, while at the same time hailing him for being a 'hero' and it becomes controversial in the sense that, from a Zimbabwean perspective, a hero is someone whose selflessness has been acknowledged by the state and is buried at the shrine at the National Heroes Acre in Harare or in Provincial Heroes Acres. Willems and Ndlovu Gatsheni (2009) considered that,

"Throughout the colonial and post-colonial period, political and cultural nationalism(s) were inextricably intertwined and impossible to disentangle from one another. Culture has been crucial ever since the idea of a Zimbabwean nation first emerged in the 1960s."

Influenced by Gramsci, Willems and Ndlovu Gatsheni (2009) treated culture as central in the reproduction of power. It is a culture that has been adopted in the Zimbabwean setup to commemorate the people who 'died' for this country in remembrance of their 'selflessness' either on the Independence Day or on the Heroes Day. Ever since the history of Zimbabwe, social exhibitions and cultural performances have been a key portion of ZANU-PF's endeavor to promote a type of patriot governmental issues that addressed the heart, 'the nationalistic political issues of effect, feeling and dramatization, which Willems and Gatsheni (2009) called the "politics of performance". Gills (1994) also supported that notion as he contend that 'memorial movement is by definition social and political, for it includes the co-appointment of individual

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and gathering reminiscences, whose outcomes may seem consensual when they are the result of procedures of serious challenge, battle, and, in some examples, destruction.

However, debate comes on how Itai Dzamara has been hailed as a selfless gallant son of Zimbabwe. The idea of netizens deviating from the cultural nationalistic beliefs of the ruling party which is the ZANU PF brings forth a contention on the definition of a *selfless gallant son of Zimbabwe*. There are people who died for this country and were never reckoned for the great job they did in course of the liberation struggle. Some of them it might be because they belonged in the group of the *marginalized* and some were of different views with those who seized power by force, but at the same time, they fought for the liberation of this country. Looking back to the history of Zimbabwe, there are people who were massacred during the liberation struggle and were buried in mass graves without recognition.

The argument is that, the ZANU PF has manipulated the *heroism* and *selfless gallant son of soil* for its party and subordinates. The people who belong to the MDC party when they pass on, are not reckoned as 'heroes' and 'selfless' by the ZANU PF government. These people are regarded as 'sellouts' and 'selfish' because they supported Tsvangirai whose image has been tarnished by immorality. In 2011 when Professor Mukonoweshuro passed on, the then Zimbabwean Prime Minister and president of the Movement for Democratic Change, Morgan Tsvangirai complained that, 'there are millions of unsung heroes and heroines of our painful national story, the ordinary men and women in places such as Nkayi, Bubi, Mandidzudzure, Chimanimani, Muzarabani, Mukumbura, Mudzi, and Nyamaropa who fought our war of liberation struggle.' The argument was that, the ZANU PF government has monopolized the selection of people who are the *selfless gallant sons of the soil*. No political party was supposed to privatize the Independence Day and the National Heroes Day. They people who fought the war essentially did it for the nation and for future generations. They just did it so that each Zimbabwean could taste the genuine substance of opportunity and the arrival of aggregate national nobility.

Soon after the 2000 land reform era, MDC created its own national heroes acre because of the wave of violence that crossed during the election times (Ranger, 2000). He also notes that it was meant for the MDC activists' burial for example Tonderai Ndira. The thrust of the issue was that ZANU PF has monopolized the privileges which are entitled to every Zimbabwean citizen who

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fought the liberation struggle. It is the government that determines who qualifies to be called a national hero and who does not qualify. Ranger (2000) also argued that the ruling elite has contended that it has a set of standards for selecting heroes, which does not apply to 'common thugs'. The MDC are being referred to as common thugs yet some of them also fought for the liberation and freedom of this country. According to the MDC online press (2011), President Morgan Tsvangirai said the Heroes and Defenses Forces Days were critical days in the year when we celebrate and recollect the benevolent devotion of our dead and living legends and champions in the long and convoluted history of our extraordinary country. The idea of someone being *selfless* is the same but these two contesting parties do not view things from the same perspective.

However, contestations on the *gallant son of the soil* do not end there because, just as the late Comrade Rex Nhongo Mujuru, Muzorewa, Chitepo and others were reckoned 'heroes', they were heroes in their own struggle. The netizens refer to Itai Dzamara as a hero because he has fought his struggle different from the former. Itai challenged the cultural discourse of power by writing a petition which he handed to the President's offices at Monomutapa Building in Harare in person, and it was unheard of, in the history of Zimbabwe. He is a *selfless gallant son* because he started something which most Zimbabweans who are tired of the Mugabe regime have always wanted but were scared to do so because of the despotic regime that does not allow for public demonstrations. Following is a response from one of the netizens;

“Itai stood for every forsaken and neglected citizen who is at the bottom of the pyramid, he became famous and a hero, he chose not to capitalize that because he was a **selfless man**. Therefore, I am calling upon all like-minded people to take collective action against these blood-thirsty vampires.” 08-05-15 Prince Isaac Tinashe

From the above response, a pyramid is mostly used to describe the unequal power relations that purported in a capitalistic nation state. This has been supported by Kline (2009) who looked at the political economy of the media as a discourse that looks at various economic classes, how they have different access to technology and how capitalist economic systems affect the media and cultural industries and how corporate ownership affect what the media produces. The base influences the superstructure through the laws and regulations that govern the media and the state

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(Curran and Gurevitch 2005). In this regard, the pyramid is divided into three thirds, the top which comprises of those who owns and control the means of production and it is monopolized by a minority. The middle comprises of the bourgeoisie, these are the working class and the bottom are the majority. The majority do not have a say in the public discourse, therefore, this is the reason which influenced this netizen to describe Itai Dzamara as a *selfless man* who stood for every forsaken and neglected citizen who is at the bottom of the pyramid. He challenged the status quo by breaching the Public Order and Security Act which prohibits government and police criticism. Amnesty International (2002) notes that, the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) was instituted in January 2002 as a component of a general procedure by the administration powers to prevent the battling exercises of the MDC and fix confinements on the free media and give the police clearing powers.

Since its authorization POSA has been utilized by the powers to target resistant supporters, autonomous media and human rights activists and particularly to limit their rights to: uninhibitedly gather; scrutinize the government and President; and take part in, backer or sort out demonstrations of serene common defiance. This law has been effectively used to prosecute people who willingly renounce the president and the police for example, the Members of the Masowe who coincided into a chaos with the police in 2014. It is the same law that was used to sue Jestina Mukoko and was later on abducted. Looking at these laws and how they have been kept intact made the netizens accredit Itai Dzamara a position of a *father* in leading the demonstration, a *son* who demands what belongs to him and a *hero*, who demonstrated defiance where it was not conceivable.

However, the whereabouts of Itai are kept as a secret by the people who abducted him. Therefore, this keeps the assumption of him being alive insignificant, especially when they refer to him as a hero. A hero can be someone either alive or dead, but Itai's return is questionable through the analysis of netizens' responses. In Zimbabwe, anyone who deem to threaten the government is prosecuted, just like what happened to Baba Jukwa. Therefore, Itai's return is anticipated to bring a better country, after the fall of the Mugabe regime which has been long awaited for, (Rotberg, 2011).

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Itai Dzamara has been reckoned selfless by some netizens as a Lumumba of Zimbabwe and Martin Luther King of Zimbabwe. Patrice Lumumba was the first Prime Minister of the Congo government on its independence in 1960 (Pfieffer, 2001). He was brutally murdered on the 17th of January 1961 in Katanga province. In the history of Congo, Patrice Lumumba is reckoned as the late lion of Congo and a hero, (Iguh, 2011), and the greatest man ever to walk the African soil, (Malcom, 1961). Martin Luther King was a Baptist clergyman and social activist who assumed a key part in the American social equality development from the mid-1950s until his death in 1968. Motivated by supporters of peacefulness, for example, Mahatma Gandhi, the King looked for fairness for African Americans, the financially impeded and casualties of bad form through quiet dissent. He was the main impetus behind watershed occasions, for example, the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the March on Washington, which achieved such milestone enactment as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Itai Dzamara was a journalist and a human rights activist. The same is said through the netizens' responses that Itai Dzamara advocated justice on the abuse of power by the ruling elite. In the words of Lumumba, he said that, 'I gave voice to words of freedom and brotherhood, words they could not accept. Just words'. Itai did the same, he gave them a word written on the paper which they could not accept. Therefore, he disappeared. As much as the netizens keep on demanding his return, he is deemed dead because he was a fanatic like the late heroes.

4.3 Zimbabweans as cowards

Zimbabweans have been presented as cowards by the netizens. They are described as people who ignore important issues of life and focus on sexual interactions. They are labelled as people who give prominence to bedroom issues more than the matters that add value to their existence in this world. This is seen through the response which says, "Pakaipa, pakaipa brother! Kana makuudzana chokwadi ndipo paunoona ma true colors ema Zimbabweans, vanopeta muswe, vanototiza post votanga kutoverenga "zvemu bedroom" kkkkkk ayah!" The netizens are being sarcastic on how Zimbabweans articulate political affairs. Fear has engrossed most people in Zimbabwe. They are described as people who abides by the conditions imposed to them by the government. This is revealed through the respond in which one netizens justifying his perspective saying that; "My position and comment is from a panoramic standpoint. That

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Zimbabweans have been conditioned. Very few dare to confront and address domestic affairs and issues because of the fear. That is true my brother and certainly undebatable, it is just blatant.”

The netizens assume that someone in the government knows very well where Itai Dzamara is. However, because of cowardice, people are afraid of attacking the perpetrators of this kind of evilness. “The person who knows where Itai Dzamara is non other than Robert Boko Haram Mugabe...this is the man who bashed Ndebeles in the 80s, now the beast is striking in Mashonaland, the cancer of sucking blood has spread all over.” There are events that reminds people of the brutality of the ZANU PF government, which seems uneasy to forget. The netizens are also contrasting each other on Zimbabweanness as some are presenting them as people who are powerful, determined and resolute. “Tinosvika riini tichitya vamwe varume? I know these guys mean business but just imagine if we stood up, **I mean every Zimbabwean** affected by this type of leadership and we say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! WE ARE THE PEOPLE, POWER TO THE PEOPLE AND THE PEOPLE WILL GOVERN, WE ARE ZIMBABWE.” *Emphasis added.*

Some are denying the fact that some netizens are saying they are cowards as one of the netizens claimed that, “we are not a country of cowards surely by now Itai Dzamara would have been back, but oh...cry my beloved country.” Zimbabweans are described as fighters whose presence make a change in the battlefield.

“I wish I could have been there, as a Zimbabwean male of ‘fighting’ age, I apologize for giving up the fight and shipping my family out instead. Itai Dzamara is a personal hero to me, and if there really is God, may SATANISTS like Savior Kasukuwere one day feel the full wrath of justice for what they did to your brother.” Nikuv Riggington 08-05-15

The above netizen probably described himself as a male of fighting age because he has been one of the ZANU PF party leaders who got booted out because of some mischief. The above netizens' respond was posted by an anonymous character who is actual using a pseudo name, *Nikuv Riggington*,. These netizens are probably people in the diaspora and it is arguable that they

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are the cowards because they ran away from the impoverished status of Zimbabwe instead of facing the truth and fight for democracy.

Music remain a key element in the defining Zimbabweans and is being used for courage and strength. Music lyrics from Leonard Zhakata has been used frequently throughout the discussions on the disappearance of Itai Dzamara. Following are the songs;

- Nyika ino izere mbwende, ukabvunza kuti urikuchemei havataure, zvino richave gomba remarara, kwekukurira kuriko....
- Guungano ramaita iri... pane vamwe vasipo...mavaudza amai vake here? By Simon
- Nyarara kacheche, usachema yawaona iyi hondo wazosanganiswa navo ivo vehutsinye, ivo vanoponda chero nherera...
- Ini ndiri gwayana mumana muno. Asi ndoitwe mutaranganya mbudzi yengozi? Ndofirei mhaiwe kani, ndofireyi ini ndofireyi?

**singing songs by Leonard Zhakata **

The concept of being Zimbabwean has been a contested terrain in the discourse of belonging, identity and acceptance in the country. According to Chiumbu, the redefining of the national agenda has been the in main centre of matching discourses, identity politics and belonging. During the post 2000 era, power and land formed have been utilized to describe the Zimbabwe collective national identity. These formed the basis through which anti-colonial and anti-imperialist rhetoric of ZANU PF are embedded. However, the reportage of the disappearance of Itai Dzamara enticed a contention to the netizens' responses on Facebook. Their arguments reveals a new definition of Zimbabweans. Zimbabweans have been defined as people who are cowards and are filled with fear when truthful political deliberation begin. When discussing on how the police and the government have been silent on the disappearance of Itai Dzamara, below are the responses;

Zimbabweans have been portrayed as people who are ignorant when it comes to political issues. They are described as oblivious citizens whose insatiable appetite for deliberating over *bedroom* issues is unquenchable. It is said that, *vanopeta muswe* meaning they are docile and they ignore

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the post. The idea being fostered here is a description of Zimbabweans who are unconscious of the important issues. They are dead mushrooms.

The statement that says, Zimbabweans have been conditioned refers to the conditions that are imposed by the ruling elite on their definition of one who belongs to the country Zimbabwe. Ncube (2014) states that the discourse of national identity is associated with the media discourses as adjectives, especially from the publicly owned but state controlled media. The media are the conduits through which politicians disseminate their political ideologies, therefore, they create a hegemonic culture which perpetuates acceptance of the status quo. People are manipulated through political communication to accept the prevalence and perpetuation of ZANU PF discourse. Therefore, they are obliged to abide by the law such as AIPPA and POSA which inhibits unlawful publications of the members of parliament and demonstrations. Thus they are filled with fear. The terms undebatable and blatant have been used to express how frank it is, that people are afraid of the Mugabe regime. What influenced the discourses embedded in the netizens' responses is the Zimbabwean which was hijacked by the ZANU PF party from 1980. It is evident that these netizens have testimonials to show that Zimbabweans are really afraid of the Mugabe regime as some netizen also noted that;

The issue reflect back to an event which transpired during the 80s when the Ndebeles were bashed by the ruling party, ZANU PF following suspicions that they were planning to overthrow the government. The movement was in the name of Gukurahundi, which is a Shona word which refers to the rains that washes away the chaff of the harvest time (Ncube, 2015). The assumption was that, the ZAPU forces were a coalition dangerous to the ZANU PF, therefore they could try to overthrow the government anytime. Therefore, Gukurahundi was supposed to lease a new generation that accepts the ZANU PF discourse and power. Foucault (1980) has contended that discourse is always implicated with power and some discourses are meant to justify dehumanization.

The term Gukurahundi is dehumanizing if used referring to human beings. This argument reflects the contention in the definition of national identity. The majority population in Zimbabwe are the Shonas followed by the Ndebeles then other ethnic groups. National identity

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has been defined as the sum total of all identities (Hall 1997). However, Gatsheni et al argues that the Zimbabwean national identity has remained elusive, a question without an answer from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era. This is because national identities are imagined and constructed concepts, therefore, they are subject to contestations (Gatsheni, 2009 cited in Chibwe, 2013). Even though the ZANU PF government bashed the Ndebele in the 80s and the Ndebele questioned their belongingness to Zimbabwe, now that the same government is alleged abducting the Shona people (Itai Dzamara) who is Zimbabwean then?

The response goes further to say that *the cancer of sucking blood has spread all over*. This implies that it is an uncontrollable disease that is spreading among the ruling elite. If a human being is described as someone who sucks blood, it is my argument that, that person has an insatiable appetite and thirsty for power such that he or she over-looks and abandon the other people who should be protected by him. Cancer is a dangerous disease that is caused by the abnormality of cells in a part of the body. When cancer spread, it is difficult to control. The events of people being abducted and dying are recurring in Zimbabwe, therefore, it might be the reason netizens are questioning the Zimbabweanness of the ruling elite and their subjects.

Moreover, the question of Zimbabweanness brings this study to answer the question which says, 'To what extent can the discussions be considered rationale? While some netizens associates Zimbabweanness with ignorance and cowardice, some netizens are of the view of Zimbabweans who are strong and resilient fighters.

Some netizens are of the view that Zimbabweans are strong and powerful. The question posed is an encouraging statement, *tinovvika riini tichitya vamwe varume? (Till when shall we still be afraid of other men?)* It implies that those who are in the act of abducting people are men just like them. There is nothing to be afraid of. Enough is enough, we are the people. Anderson (1983) argues that for a nation to be called a nation, there should be people residing in it. So the netizens are the people hence they should fight against the injustices and exploitation by the government they voted for. Power is given to the people because they are the majority and the ruling elite are the minority, therefore, there should be democracy. Campbell, (2008) defined democracy as rule by the people, culminating in a popular form of government. This is what the

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netizens are calling for. Connotatively, there are implications that the people that are in leadership of the country are not human being. Analyzing the text which is saying, *POWER TO THE PEOPLE*, have negative connotations on the ruling elite. Lately, they have been referred to as *blood thirsty morons, ruthless animals, blood suckers and mbwende* (meaning someone who is reckless). While some netizens are denouncing Zimbabwe as a country full of cowards, some netizens are deviating from that idea.

While different views towards Zimbabwe have been lamented from the different netizens' perspectives, music remain key in the discourses of defining who we are and what our leaders look like. Music has been used to expose the ruthlessness of the leaders while at the same time encouraging the 'lamented and mourned hero', Itai Dzamara to keep fighting wherever he is. Influenced by the wars during the liberation struggle and the history that surrounded him, Leonard Zhakata, sung beautiful songs which retaliated and encouraged people to be strong against the oppressive political structures that were perpetrated by the Smith regime. So the netizens used those same songs to talk back to Itai's abductors. Therefore, it is arguable that the Independence in Zimbabwe is like new wine in an old bottle. The new leaders adopted the repressive leading strategies that were being used by the British colonies, especially the laws such as Broadcasting Services Act, Law and Order Maintenance Act and the Official Secrets Act (Chiumbu, & Moyo, 2009).

In some responses, Zimbabwean male have been associated with the character of fighting, hence it specifies that there are ages that can fight and other ages that cannot fight. Denotatively, yes, a young child at his tender age cannot fight, it needs a certain age. However, connotatively, this might imply that the kind of fight is 'sophisticated', as a result of the type of war which is being fought. The war is against the brutal regime which is being referred to as *SATANISTS*. Satanists are people who worship the devil. In this context, these people are associated with using the ideologies of the devil to manipulate people and suck their blood ruthlessly. These netizens sounds as if they know the people who abducted Itai because they have been mentioning names within their contexts. According to the report given by Kizito Muchemwa in the Cultural Normadic Zimbabwe report (2012), President Mugabe makes no apology for the shedding of

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blood as within the ZANU PFs discourse, killing is made legitimate and even a symbol of national pride. This is what Williams argued saying that power is banal, those in leadership have power within their ZANU PF discourse which denounces the doable and undoable, while the subjects have power to refute their ideologies through the use of text. Savior Kasukuwere has been referred to as a Satanist and his surname is turned to mean a snake called *skukuviri*; "I hope Fidelis Fengu, Savior Kaskukuviri and the C.I.Os who took your brother read this and learn something from it."

Skukuviri is a snake which is said to have two heads. If it sees an enemy, it can attack from any side or run away from any of the sides. The Central Intelligence Office is a sect within the government that safeguards the rights and security of the state against the people who threaten 'national security'. Lahuri argues that, a nation is a country that does not wait for death to change its president. Therefore, this idea might have been the brainchild, which influenced Itai to revolt against Mugabe. The idea of Zimbabweanness has been questioned by Gatsheni in his thesis, 'Do Zimbabweans Exist?' What Gatsheni asked culminates into the questions asked by netizens with regards to the freedom and democracy which is stated in the constitution and which is symbolized by the Independence Day. The discourse being preached through the netizens' responses is powerful and optimistic in finding Itai Dzamara.

4.4 Mugabe and ZANU PF as 'Boko Haram'

Mugabe and ZANU PF have been referred as terrorists. "This country is being ruled by terrorists..."

BBID# never lose hope the blood suckers are sending those messages to rub it in. For now just keep the record of those uncouth messages". They are also pointed as people whose full capacity is filled with Satanists and they are the hands man of the devil. "Satanism is at work but the devil is always a liar". Instead of calling the president as Robert Gabriel Mugabe, he has been referred as Robert Boko Haram Mugabe, 'Bob Haram'. Boko haram is a group of militant extremists battling against Christians in Nigeria. They are the same people who facilitated the abduction of Kenyan students in 2013. Following are strong netizens' responses describing Mugabe;

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“The person who knows where Itai Dzamara is non other than Robert Boko Haram Mugabe. I am not being naïve but actually Itai is alive, my spirit tells me so. The regime of Bob Haram is in a corner on how to manage his release. When the abduction was done, none of them knew it would spread so fast. For if he is dead, all finger are on Bob and if they bring him to court, I see him being charged of stock theft which are all fake charges.....ladies and gentlemen, we are dealing with a satanic regime these people are devil's agents giving up is no option. Giving up is not an option...”

Mugabe and the ZANU PF have also been termed as perpetrators of evil and the agents of the devil. In the description of Itai's abduction, netizens are sounding quiet sure that it is Mugabe and his regime that abducted Itai Dzamara as one said, “We are in no doubt as to the perpetrators of this abduction. We hold Mugabe and his regime responsible for this morbid and senseless act. The President who is the AU and SADC chair, cannot preside over a country where innocent citizens get abducted and disappear.”

Mugabe has also been described as an assassin and a canibalist. The netizens are pleading for the return of Itai Dzamara, and some of them chose to use vernacular language because it is strong and it is able to emulate the actual meaning. “Mugabe please bring back mwana wemumwe munhu iwe, ndidzo **mhondi** dzisina kana nyadzi,... kuda kuzviita bhuru renguruve here rinodya vana varo?Mugabe is a canibalist he feeds on human flesh he is not allowed to live with human beings

Mugabe has failed as leader to look after the people of Zimbabwe, he must call it a day, before we take arms.” He is also called a failure and they are advocating his resignation.

Foucault contests the notion that power is wielded by individuals or gatherings by method for "wordy" or "sovereign" demonstrations of mastery or intimidation, seeing it rather as scattered and pervasive. 'Power is all over the place' and 'originates from all over the place' so in this sense is neither an organization nor a structure (Foucault 1998: 63). Rather it is a sort of "metapower" or 'administration of truth' that invades society, and which is in steady flux and arrangement. Foucault utilizes the term 'power or knowledge' to imply that power is constituted through acknowledged types of learning, experimental comprehension and 'truth'. Through the netizens' responses, it is quiet probable to argue that power is everywhere. On the cyberspace, anyone can

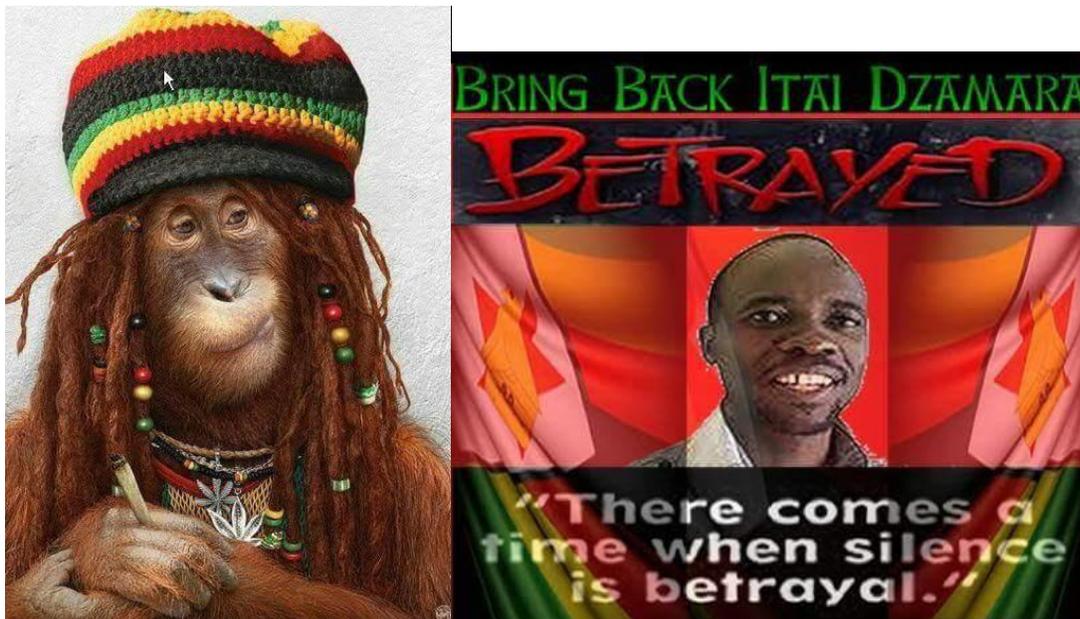
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say anything they think it's worth being heard by the nation. Netizens have been empowered by the internet to say what the ZANU PF discourse used to say its unsayable and undoable. Anonymity is enabling the discourses in the netizens' responses. However, anonymity has a negation because some people who might be part of the Central Intelligence Officers can use pseudo names to probe a debate in which later on they can investigate to find the people who criticize the government physically. A netizen responded as follows;

“Not sure but from the look of it and from my side of view, this is the work of ZANU PF. I have seen most of their accidents since 1962 when they formed their party and how they reduced each other... below is a picture which accompanied the response”.

As the netizens were describing Mugabe and his regime as ruthless people, they are preaching the gospel of beating people because they feel peace is no option anymore. This is seen through the responses which are saying; *Apa hapachadi peace ngatimamisei vanhu*

Fuck on them...BBID



There are some mixed sense of doubt and genuine in the above comment. However, this netizen has witnessed some brutal acts of the ZANU PF from the year it was started to date. This

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comment was corresponding to the accident that Patson Dzamara was involved in, soon after the disappearance of his brother. So the assumption of these netizens was that, the government is the one which is also plotting to kill the brother too, so that they can be able to silence him since he started cyber activism through his Facebook page. On the picture is a dread locked baboon that is wearing a barrette at the same time smoking, most likely weed, because Rastafarians are associated with smoking weed. Also to note that the top of the animal has some weed drawing and the colors of the Zimbabwean flag. Connotatively, this baboon is one of the people in Zimbabwe who is airing out his opinion towards the ZANU PF government. These are the types of spectators in the terraces, but claiming they are party of the game. These people adhere to the rules of the game so that they enjoy the benefits even though they do not give lavish praises to the brutal acts of the same government in power. They know the truth, but they cannot divulge it.

And also someone comments through sending an image of Itai Dzamara covered in red. The image has a caption which is saying that, 'There comes a time when silence is betrayal'. It means that these people have been keeping secrets for a long time so the time to speak out is now. A lot has been done and people were slashed by the spiral of silence. Also to note, the image has a highlight of red and the word betrayed is written in red block letters. Red is mostly used as a symbol of blood. On the Zimbabwean flag, it stands for the blood that was spilled during the liberation struggle. In this case, blood stands for the blood of Itai Dzamara. Behind his image is the national flag. It symbolizes that he is a true Zimbabwean and a genuine revolutionary. The 'motto' Bring Back Itai Dzamara is written in green letters. After all the dark nights, the sun will always rise. The green is a sign for hope in finding Itai Dzamara.

The ruling elite has been referred to as terrorists. Laqueur (1999) utilizes the straightforward, wide definition "terrorism is the illegitimate utilization of power to accomplish a political goal by focusing on pure individuals". Bjorgo (2005) states that terrorism is an arrangement of techniques of battle as opposed to an identifiable philosophy or development, and includes planned utilization of viciousness against (essentially) non-soldiers with a specific end goal to accomplish an ideological of apprehension on others than the quick targets. Reinares (2005) recognizes three attributes that characterize terrorism for the reason for scholarly study. Firstly, it is a demonstration of savagery that produces disproportionate enthusiastic responses, for

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example, fear and nervousness which are prone to control states of mind and behavior. Also, the savagery is systemic and rather eccentric and is typically coordinated against typical targets. Thirdly, the brutality passes on messages and dangers with a specific end goal to impart and increase social control. An exceptionally valuable manual for scholarly believed is the study by Schmid and Jongman alluded to by numerous creators (e.g. Hoffman, White, Richardson, Bjorgo)

The netizens are furious as revealed by the terms they are using to describe the Mugabe regime. The use of violence, force and blood shed are characterized within the spheres of the ruling elite to achieve their dirty profits. The netizens have been empowered to name the regime according to their perspective.

Boko Haram was a movement in the Arab spring that was fighting against Christian in the Northern African countries. Walker (2012) notes that Boko Haram is an Islamic order that trusts northern governmental issues has been seized by a gathering of degenerate, false Muslims. It needs to wage a war against them, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the most part, to make an "immaculate" Islamic state ruled by the sharia law. Since 2009 it has been driven by a longing for retribution against government officials, police, and Islamic powers for their part in a merciless concealment of the gathering that year. This group of people employ violence and there have been reports on the death of masses. This is where the Bob Haram Mugabe is culminating from. History serves to remind people of the incidents that took place in the course of life. Netizens have not forgotten the violence that was caused by the ZANU PF during the 2008 elections and other people who disappeared during those times. The netizens have found a discursive platform to deliberate their plight against this regime and expressing their anger on this sphere.

Truth is a thing of this world, it is created just by righteousness of different types of limitation. It impels standard impacts of power. Every general public has its administration of truth, its "general political issues" of truth, that is, the sorts of talk which it acknowledges and makes capacity as genuine; the components and occurrences which empower one to recognize genuine and false articulations, the methods by which each is authorized; the systems and methodology

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agreed quality in the securing of truth; the status of the individuals who are accused of saying what considers genuine' (Foucault, in Rabinow 1991).

The netizens through their comments used strong language to describe and express their anger. The post-modernist approach contends that language is phallic, it reflects male dominance in a society, (Lacan, Christen and Trigaray). Mugabe is described as a thug, a male pig that feeds on its children and also a cannibalist who feeds on flesh. This is what Derrida disapproved in his discourse when he called for the deconstruction of language. These scholars were inspired by Foucault who says that discourse is power yet to be seized. So these netizens are optimistic that through the use of vulgar and strong language they can over power Mugabe and his subordinates. Mbembe (2001) asserts that vulgar should not be interpreted as a sign of 'backwardness' banality exists in unofficial cultures of celebration, carnival and protests. *Kumamisa* is a strong shona word which denotatively mean to make someone go the toilet. Connotatively it is used to tell someone the capacity at which he or she will beat the culprit. It is associated with violence. Normally people who use such type of language on the cyberspace will be using pseudo names so that they do not get to be recognized by other netizens.

The consistence shown by netizens on saying Bring Back Itai Dzamara is resulting in a resistant society which is powerful. This type of a society can even organize a coup against the ruling elite and be successful. These people might have been influenced by the Arab Spring revolution in Egypt. Therefore, they are taking the war home and fighting through the use of language on the cyberspace. Mbembe also argues that vulgar is an expression of power. Netizens express their anger through vulgar, therefore, popular culture in the name of new media becomes an assertion of vulgarity. Foucault (2009) notes that discourse always involve some form of violence in the way it imposes its linguistic orders in the world. Discourse transmits and produces power, it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart (Foucault, 1998: 101-1).

The discourse of freedom enabled by the Facebook platform is reinforcing the capability of netizens to change their leaders. At the same time exposing the ruthless ruling party ZANU PF and its filthy works. Mhiripiri (2008) posits that the media are a site a battle where distinctive

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ideological contestations occur. The mainstream media in Zimbabwe has not been able to provide such a platform where political deliberations could be done without the government interference. This is what Mazango (2005) described as a polarized media fraternity in Zimbabwe, where the publicly owned media is now called ZANU PF media and the privately owned media is MCD media. So the power is in those who control and own then means of production. However, Facebook unlike the mainstream media does not censor any information. The power is in the netizens to share their opinions and views.

The Mozambican examiner Seleti (1997) likewise argues that the new media are platforms through which politicians' articulate debates of national identity. Discourse suggest that power is banal. Therefore, the regimes that have been monopolizing the media are being challenged by the new media. It is a platform that provides freedom of speech. It is therefore a deconstruction of media culture which Mbembe (2009) perceived as an influential model that gives the materials out of which various individuals build their feeling of class, of ethnicity and ... of "us" and 'them'. Media society shapes the pervasive perspective of the world and most profound qualities, it characterizes what is viewed as great or terrible, positive or negative, good or insidiousness. Media stories, pictures give the images, myths, and assets which constitute a basic society for ... people in various parts of the world today. However, the once marginalized society of different ethnic groups, political views and sexuality are now creating communities of interest on the cyberspace.

"Itai stood up to voice the concerns of the voiceless. He spoke on behalf of the orphan dying of an incurable disease. He spoke on behalf of the street kid starving and enduring cold winter nights out in the open. He spoke on behalf of the widows and grandmothers who are walking kilometers to fetch water from the most unlikely places. He may not have spoken on behalf of his critics whose hearts have grown so cold that they cannot see the pain in their fellow man's eyes, but he spoke on behalf of some of their relatives who endure these unnecessary miseries that can be fixed. Above all, he has allowed some of us to come out of the closet and stand for the right thing. I am praying and hoping to meet this man. #BBID"

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Discourse rise above, past language as it sets parameters of what can be said or can't be said in the public arena (Foucault, 1960). Through Facebook, the parameters are being challenged by the netizens. There is no need to be afraid of breaching laws because one can use pseudo names in which they cannot be identified for example, names such as Nikuv Riggington, Dean Bravo, Zim left wing brothers and Umzukulu ka Sitsha etc.

The death of the daughter of Professor Jonathan Moyo was another issue which received much attention through the netizens' responses to the posts by Patson Dzamara. When Itai disappeared, Prof. Moyo responded to the issue in a manner that did not satisfy the Dzamara family. He said that maybe Itai is hiding in Tsvangirai's house or he has gone to Botswana. This disappointed most people on the cyberspace and they started to respond saying that maybe his daughter is not dead. She is hiding in Mugabe's house or she has also gone to Botswana. The netizens have been rendered power to retaliate to the response of Prof Moyo.

4.5 The church as complicit in Zimbabwe's oppression

The netizens are criticizing the position of the church in the nation building discourse. Instead of contributing in the national discourse they are seen keeping quite. They are quiet on the issues which their voices are supposed to be heard. "The church's general stance should be seen, regarding national issues and it is in order for our religious leaders to have their voices contributing in the national discourse, not just interceding. I wait for the day when one of these elite pastors will stand up and speak the truth about the national crisis". The church is seen as an instrument whose presence should contribute to the development of the nation but it is silent. "The voice of the church must contribute to the development of the nation. But there is fear all over...most ministers are afraid to speak and take a stand because of what might befall them, thereby normalizing the abnormal".

The church has fallen in the paradigm of the ordinary citizens of Zimbabwe. It is also afraid of the government, therefore, they are complicit in the oppression of the masses. "Churches are letting down our nation. The pastors will not come open about the state of our nation. Why? Because the moment they do so, they will be labelled state enemies and the next thing they will disappear." The church as ideological state apparatuses are helping the state to hegemonize

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people to consent with the status quo. The religious fibre has also been described as a diluted and contaminated. This is seen through the response which say; "Truth be told, the churches are letting our nation down...period. Our religious fibre has been diluted and contaminated"

Netizens looks back to the history of Zimbabwean and how the churches have been participating in the national discourses and the liberation struggle. It has been appreciated that in its pre-existence in the colonial era, it was key and it played a pivotal role for the emancipation of Zimbabwe from the western forces. Instead, they are presented as money makers and conflict starters. "By looking back tracing history of the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe, and Africa at large, churches played a pivotal role in trying to free us from the western forces. Now on the current Zimbabwe's situation, churches and all other religious organizations are remaining silent. Maybe it is the fear of the unknown or nowadays churches are there for making money??"

On answering the rationality of the discussions, there were some netizens who posts issues that are not coherent with the issues being discussed. For example, someone who popped out asking about the sexuality of Patson and Itai Dzamara. "A person's sexuality does not define their character. It is backward thoughts like that, that will leave Mugabe and his mob mired in the past, Itai is an outstanding man, I hope he is soon reunited with his kith and kin. Keep on your path, the detractors will fall by the way side. They have no serious point's only scurrilous personal comments". Some netizens also took advantage of the netizens who are anti-mugabeism and posted issues to do with Tsvangirai. Someone also said, "I don't see Tsvangirai ruling Zimbabwe, that guy is too soft and afraid of his own life, hopefully a new kid will be born to wipe away those tears, zvimwe zvose kuvaraidza nguva." However, these issues were articulated in an aberrant manner so there discussions were not rationale.

Nation building is a standardizing idea that implies diverse things to various individuals. The most recent conceptualization is basically that nation building projects are those in which broken or shaky or "fizzled states" or economies are given help with the advancement of governmental foundation, civil society, question determination components, and also financial help, to expand dependability (Stephenson, 2005). Dobbins (2003) defines nation building as the use of armed force in the aftermath of a conflict to underpin the unending transition to democracy. For one to understand nation building, a nation has to be defined in some way. Anderson, (1983) defined

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a nation as an imagined community. It is imagined in the sense that it is so big, such that the people in it do not know each other at individual level. These people in a nation become one through the sense of belongingness and also through the fact that they share common language, history and norms. A church is a religious organization that brings people together in a bid to accomplish certain goals through prayer. These are different denominations that might have either same or different goals to achieve. The Church And Civil Society Forum (2012) comments that for the most part, the church in Zimbabwe has made exemplary additions towards the advancement of a peaceful political society, against a foundation where savagery has been celebrated as a sound and chivalrous intends to settle political contrasts.

This has seen a contentious deliberation on Facebook through the posts by Patson Dzamara with regards to the position of the church in nation building especially the aspect of justice and democracy (finding the people who have been abducted by the state). The church in Zimbabwe has been incapacitated by polarization-the contrast between those for regime change (MDC) and those for the status quo. However, a church should be a non-partisan and apolitical organization that preserves the state peace and advocate for justice and democracy. Masunungure in Gatsheni (2009) cautions that nation building; like state building a masterpiece. Various African pioneers have turned out to be great state building craftsman however poor country developers. Nation building shouldn't be described by exclusions as what has been seen in post 2000 Zimbabwe where whites were barred. Gatsheni (2009) further brings up that the Rhodesian state paved way since it neglected to assemble a "nation", it utilized race as a model for barring all dark individuals from the satisfaction in common and political rights. It is the role of the church therefore to make peace with the government on behalf of other racial and ethnical groups.

Regarding the disappearance of Itai Dzamara, the churches have been able to gather with the family, giving the family support through prayer. However, Patson Dzamara was complaining that these churches no longer stand for justice in the country, they are sugar coating the dirty works done by the ruling elite because they are scared that the government will also abduct them. Following are the comments corresponding to the post with regards to the position of the church in nation building;

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Fear is the enemy that has been haunting the Zimbabwean citizen. It has affected even the churches to an extent that they are now partisan. If they receive a message from God, it is difficult to announce it to the nation if it is negative. They are scared of disappearing just like Itai Dzamara. According to the report by CCSF, (2012) given the political polarization, many-sided quality and dynamism of the Zimbabwean political advancements particularly in the previous 10 years, the church's greatest challenge now is to look after its solidarity and remain a fair nonpartisan peace agent. What the church desires most are not ladies and men that are solid, but rather solid organizations that address lawmakers and political brutality without anxiety or support. Zimbabwe needs men and ladies of the fabric who are neither covetous nor looking for political supports however are well ready to pay the cost of talking prophetically to the current political initiative on matters of viciousness.

The churches in Zimbabwe have fallen in the fate of being the source where politicians amass voters. It is in this regard that the churches become docile and obedient to the leaders who will have visited their church to vote for them. At the same time the church loses its stance because of fear and the need to please its members. For example, the desperate times that saw the President years of Mugabe at his 86 years of dictatorship dressed up in white robes and joined the Johanne Masowe sect Passover ceremony. With the elections which were slated for 2011, his party lieutenants were aware that their popularity in the country were diminishing. Foucault is one of only a handful couple of researchers on power who perceive that power is not only a negative, coercive or severe thing that constrains us to do things against our desires, however can likewise be a vital, beneficial and positive power in the public eye (Gaventa 2003: 2). At the same time that power dictates what is thinkable and unthinkable, protects and exposes, the party benefited the votes of these people and the won the elections. The ruling elite operates at the level of hegemony. Hegemony is associated with the Gramscian discourse. He stipulates that hegemony is rule by consent. These leaders visit churches so that the churches become obliged to think that they are flowing in the same realm and spirit. Hegemonic discourse naturalizes situations so that the subject feel they are meant to be. It operates at the level of common sense, so that the unnatural is seen as natural and the vis-à-vis.

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The words we use to talk and compose have been developed by social associations through history and molded by the overwhelming belief system of the times. Subsequently they are stacked with social implications that condition us to think specifically courses, and not to have the capacity to think extremely in different ways, (Gramsci, 1995). The church has been hindered to participate in nation building processes because of the political communication that influence certain discourses and make people think otherwise. Gramsci, (1995) posits that hegemony locks up a general public significantly more firmly due to the way thoughts are transmitted by language. The netizens' responses also neglects the way the church has been manipulated by the state to suit their needs.

If something is diluted, it means that it is losing its aura. The political communication has diluted the church to an extent that they have forgotten their position in nation building. The church has therefore been adulterated by the ruling elite discourses. In the post independent Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches took an interest in the democratization of the nation generally through its organizations and through Heads of Christian Denominations. By implication, ZCC upheld the arrangement of the Forum for Democratic Reform which was propelled in May 1992 as an influential group in Bulawayo and was later rearranged as a political gathering. The gathering was driven by previous Zimbabwean Chief Justice Enoch Dumbutshena. Christian of Heads sections were unmistakable in this influential amass that was intended to challenge the dominion of the ruling elite. Chiluba (1995:12), accentuates that there are "a few basic qualities that can be relegated to majority rules system, despite the fact that there is no definite concurred meaning of the term." In this regard, a democratic system refers to political frameworks that are portrayed not by dominant part or by minority run but rather or maybe by the opposition for impact among various contending groups that look to grow their impact in respect to each other keeping in mind the end goal to secure a bigger offer of advantages apportioned through open strategy (Nhema, 2002:15). The church has been used during the post 2000 as a tool to protect the so called hard won independence without being objective and critical of the despotic government that rule with an iron fist (Kabudzi, 2000). One netizens said that;

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Dr, I personally understand what you are saying, churches are not playing their part in our societies. In fact, as much as I am proud member of an organized and inspiring ministry, I have discovered that there is more love and peace in the world more than in the churches. Some church members do not even greet each other except when the pastor standing at the pulpit orders them to do so, what more of praying for someone. If churches can stand on their ground of not only preaching about money, 'prosperity' but also raise their voices against evils acts in our societies, the world would be a better place.

Instead of having churches in the country to stand for justice, they have become the cash cows for some politically affiliated pastors. The impact of the church has long been forgotten. It is breeding hatred and competition for wealth in the societies, yet the nation is in need of their voice in the national discourses.

The position of the church is being questioned because they are silent in the deliberations of important issues of democracy. However, we should stop for the last time to depict the impacts of power in negative terms: it 'rejects', it 'stifles', it 'controls', it 'abstracts', it 'veils', it 'hides'. Indeed power produces; it produces reality; it produces areas of articles and customs of truth. The individual and the learning that might be picked up of him have a place with this generation' (Foucault 1991: 194). As much as the church has been used an instrument to amass voters by political parties, it is arguable that its power cannot be underestimated as there are pastors that steal pray for the well-being of the nation and its political structures.

This study has a mandate of looking at the rationality of the discussions that took place on this platform with regards to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara. During that discussion of the position of the church in the nation building process, someone out of the blues said;

This netizen failed to read the text accordingly. He questions Patson and Itai Dzamara's sexuality in the middle of a debate concerning the position of the church in nation building. Literally, this netizen knows the Zimbabwean policy which denies the rights to homosexuality, thus he assumed that, that was the reason Itai Dzamara disappeared into thin air. Hall (1997) notes that cultural background has some effects on people denoting the meaning out of text. The netizen most probably comes from one of the countries from the west where lesbianism and gays have

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equal rights the same as 'straight' human beings. While the issues have been deliberated and the netizens democratically participating hence *Facebook* enabling these discourses, there has been much misunderstanding among the netizens because of difference in opinion. Some netizens with a problem in denoting the preferred meaning ignited some form of 'neo-violence' on Facebook. Neo-violence is a term that I am using to describe the 'new' type of violence that is culminating from the netizens' responses. While there was a discussion with regards to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara, some netizen posted,

Tsvangirai's power is underestimated in the middle of a different discussion. This brought a contention among the netizens, especially those who assumed that Itai Dzamara is somewhere hidden by Morgan Tsvangirai's people so that they can blame the Mugabe regime for such an evil act. They believed that Patson and his brother Itai were seeking fame through Facebook, being an activist to have people that support them and commemorate the return of Itai Dzamara, if he happens to be alive. These types of misconceptions of issues resulted in harassment of some people on the web through the use of strong language. The battle was mostly inflamed by the netizens who use pseudo names as a way of hiding their identities.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter focused on data presentation and analysis. Semiotic analysis and critical discourse analysis have been key in the analysis of the netizens' responses to the posts by Patson Dzamara with regards to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara. *Facebook* has been able to provide fertile grounds for political deliberations where the marginalized political groups could be heard. In some instances, it was difficult for the netizens to denote the preferred meaning from the posts. However, the discussions were rationale to a greater extent.

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5.0 Chapter 5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is a synopsis of the whole research drawing conclusions from the findings. This research focused on the analysis of netizens' responses to Patson Dzamara's Facebook posts with regards to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara. Its mandate was to explain the discourses embedded in the netizens' responses and explain how Facebook enabled these discourses. It also sought to explore how the netizens read and interpreted the posts by Patson Dzamara.

5.2 Summary and concluding remarks

Facebook is a social networking site whose availability has been hailed in the African context in the 21st century. It has been used for regime change by the Arab spring in Egypt and Tunisia. It is a democratic public sphere that provides a participatory framework which offers a discursive arena. While the disappearance of Itai Dzamara has been covered by the mainstream media, there has been less audience interactivity and audience feedback. Many scholars have looked at the attributes of Facebook in providing a new form of public sphere apart from the private and public media and government intervention. It is an alternative platform to the mainstream media. This study took a different stance as it sought to explain how the freedom influenced by Facebook enabled the discourses embedded in netizens' responses. Its aim was to explain the netizens read and interpreted the netizens' responses to the posts by Patson Dzamara with regards to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara.

Before the coming of the internet in the developing countries like Zimbabwe, it had been acknowledged that the laws that safeguard the ruling elite were followed without any negotiations. The laws such as POSA prohibited people to embark on public gatherings or demonstrations without police clearance. AIPPA was used for protecting the president and the elite from criticisms. However, the advent of the internet enabled people to breach these laws. It resulted in the existence of cyber activists such as Patson Dzamara who engaged the netizens on his search for his missing brother who was abducted. Patson Dzamara became popular with the netizens on Facebook hence he has managed to engage them to deliberate on the disappearance of Itai Dzamara. The study was informed by the public sphere theory, focusing on how facebook as a public arena has been able to influence the discourses in netizens' responses.

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Since the mainstream media have not been providing an ideal public sphere anticipated by Habermas, the internet through the social media have been able to provide these discursive spaces. This study therefore took a positive stance in explaining how the netizens read and interpreted the posts by Patson Dzamara. While the media in Zimbabwe have been claimed to be 'polarized' (Mazango, 2005), to the extent that the publicly owned but state controlled media are now called ZANU PF media, and the private media are now called the MDC media, the netizens embraced happiness in supporting Patson Dzamara in the search of his brother and also deliberating other political discourses. The netizens are empowered to counter power through language. The nature of *Facebook* has enabled these discourses through the netizens who are anonymous and keep their identities private.

The other objective of this study was to explore the rationality of the deliberations on netizens' responses to the disappearance of Itai Dzamara. While the deliberations were an on-going process on the web page, some people enthusiastically involved questioned the sexuality of Patson Dzamara and Itai Dzamara. The role of the church in nation building has also been questioned by the netizens. Given that, the researcher successfully engaged with the data which was qualitatively gathered and analyzed the responses in that regard.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Studies

A research done always exposes other problems. After conducting this research, I realized that this research is a broad topic in which justice can be done through looking at the coverage of Itai Dzamara's disappearance in the main stream media. This issue has been given precedence by many Zimbabweans in discursive arenas both in the country and the ones in the diaspora. The people in diaspora are mostly the ones who participate in political issues because they are far away, they are not afraid of the government as compared to the people that are in Zimbabwe.

5.4 Conclusions

This chapter was a summary of the whole research. It gave a brief synopsis and investigating whether it has been able to fulfil its objectives and answer the research questions. It has been successful in bringing out the requirements. Netizens have presented Itai Dzamara as a selfless gallant son of Zimbabwe, Zimbabweans as cowards, Mugabe and ZANU PF as Boko Haram and also the Church as complicit in Zimbabwe's oppression. This has helped the research answer research questions and achieve its objectives.

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Indexes

It comprises of screen shoots of the netizens' responses.

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Mar 12, 2015 • Like •  1



Jeniffer Matambo

Be strong. By the grace of God he will be back alive.

Mar 12, 2015 • Like •  1



Jeniffer Matambo

Be strong. By the grace of God he will be back alive.

Mar 12, 2015 • Like •  1



Tinashe Munjeri

Itai is a force, an idea, a movement that where there is a will there is a way. He represents a hero of this generation, a voice to the voiceless and a servant leader willing to put himself on line for the betterment of the lives of others. He is a manifesting leadership concept. He represents emancipation.....

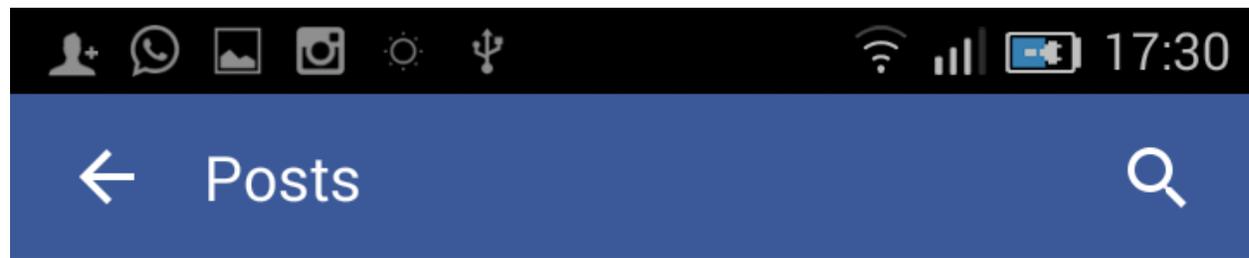
Mar 12, 2015 • Like •  3



Ndinonzi Danho

I am touched and I miss him ,only God knows but we should be strong and keep UP.....

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Patson Dzamara

Yes you are right **Tonderai A Katsande** but you are also missing the point. This post is not about yesterday's prayer session. It is about what i perceive to be the role of the church. I feel the church is not taking a stand in the national discourse.

Mar 20, 2015 • Like •  1



Tonderai A Katsande

Yes i might be lost a bit bt not that much.By looking back to the liberation of Zimbabwe and Africa at large,churches played a pivortal role in trying to free us from western forces.Now on the current Zim's situation,churches and all other religious organisations are remaining silence.Maybe it is the fear of unknown or nowadays churches are there for making money??

Mar 20, 2015 • Like



Tariro Roy Tichareva

#BBID #Bring_back_Itai_Dzamara!!!

Mar 20, 2015 • Like

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Geoff Ruff

A persons sexuality does not define their character. It is backward thoughts like that that will leave Mugabe and his mob mired in the past. Itai is an outstanding man, I hope that he is soon reunited with his kith and kin. Keep on your path, the detractors will fall by the wayside, they have no serious points only scurrilous personal comments.

Mar 18, 2015 • Like •  5



Geoff Ruff

#BBID

Mar 18, 2015 • Like •  2



Patson Dzamara

Besides that **Geoff Ruff** , Itai and i do not fall in that category.

#BBID

Mar 18, 2015 • Like •  2



Geoff Ruff

If you did, it is of no concern to anyone but yourselves and has no bearing on your mission in life.

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Tafadzwa Sambiri

the person who knows where Itai Dzamara is non other than Robert Boko Haram Mugabe..

Mar 16, 2015 • Like •  1



Tafadzwa Sambiri

the person who knows where Itai Dzamara is non other than Robert Boko Haram Mugabe..this is the man who bashed Ndebeles in the 80s now the beast is striking in Mashonaland the cancer of sucking blood has spread all over.

Mar 16, 2015 • Like •  3



Gody Mhofu

Pasi nemhondi..

Mar 16, 2015 • Like



Esnat Rubeni

I didn't know a week could be so long when wishing for something positive to happen.

#BBID

Mar 16, 2015 • Like



 78



Tafadzwa Sambiri

am not being naive but actually Itai is alive my spirit tells me so. The regime of Bob Haram is in a corner on how to manage his release, when the abduction was done none of them knew it would spread so fast. For if his dead then all fingers are on Bob & if they bring him to court it means they knew from word go. I see Itai being charge with stock theft which are all fake charges also. They will try create the story and stick to it but in the END no court will entertain the stupid charges. Ladies and gentlemen we are dealing with a satanic regime these people are devils agents giving up is no option we need to be strong in prayers also hold our ground very well. Not that am seeking attention but am praying for Itai every morning and night, the situation has really affected me am even finding it hard to study as it always hits my mind.

Mar 16, 2015 • Like •  6



Patson Dzamara

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John Peter

Mugabe is a Canibalist he feeds on human fresh he does not allow to live with human being.

Mar 17, 2015 • Like



Patson Dzamara

#BBID

Mar 17, 2015 • Like



Trust Vimbainashe Dzamara

BBID

Mar 17, 2015 • Like



Margareth Nyakambangwe

Bring Back Itai Dzamara please

Mar 17, 2015 • Like



Patson Dzamara

#BBID

Mar 17, 2015 • Like



Joe Jakarasi

#BBID

Harassment Among People On The Web. An Analysis Of The Netizens' Responses To Patson Dzamara's Facebook Posts With Regards To The Disappearance Of Itai Dzamara.



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others were returned.

Mar 15, 2015 • Like •  1



Jovial Given

shame little innocent fellows made to suffer by the brutal, repressive and ruthless regime.....

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Patson Dzamara

Ukauya vakakuonawo, zvingaipei?

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Robina Chombe



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John Peter

Let's help the poor kids please Mugabe has create a country of orphans

Harassment Among People On The Web. An Analysis Of The Netizens' Responses To Patson Dzamara's Facebook Posts With Regards To The Disappearance Of Itai Dzamara.



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Tonderai A Katsande
Marwadzo

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Tarisai Nyamazana
BBID

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Stuart Johanne
I don't see Tsvangirai ruling Zimbabwe that guy is too soft and afraid of his own life hopefully a new kid will be born to wipe away those tears zvimwe zvose kuvaraidza nguva.

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Patson Dzamara
Sir **Stuart Johanne** i do not see where Tsvangirai fits in this matrix n post.

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Thandiwe Jaji
BBID PLIZ

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Gody Mhofu
Fuck on them. Bring back Itai

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Anesu Warpath Ziobwa

Js keep holding strong fam.

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Shelton Zivanai

Zimbabweans we must always keep our voices up when it comes to condemn ubuse and oppression of any kind and on anyone. Power is always in us not in one person or the minority . We shall keep demanding the whereabouts of our galant son and brother Itai Dzamara until and unless we get him back . It's high time we refuse to be intimidated on asking for what is rightfully ours . We are tired of being taken advantage of our peaceful nature nature and our understanding as a people. This should stop now.

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Tendai D Muza

Mar 12, 2015 • [Like](#)



Gift Mambipiri