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THE ETHNIC DIMENSION OF VOTING PATTERNS IN CHIPINGE AND THE IMMORTALISATION OF NDABANINGI SITHOLE (1980-2008)

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DEDICATION

To my wife, Gladys Greater Mangiza and my children Rutendo and Rukudzo, who are my sources of encouragement.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study in which the role of ethnicity in African and Zimbabwean politics in general, and in Chipinge in particular is underscored. It is argued in the study that ethnicity has played a central role in the politics of Africa, Zimbabwe and among the people of Chipinge in Zimbabwe. It is also argued in the study that voting among the Ndau people took an ethnic dimension. Voting for ZANU Ndonga and Ndabaningi Sithole, and the MDC against ZANU PF is argued in this study to be a result of the ethnic consciousness among the people of Chipinge. Ethnicity has also resulted in the immortalisation of Ndabaningi Sithole who has been regarded as a national hero of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle by the Ndau people. The central idea in this study is that ethnicity has influenced the voting patterns among the Ndau ethnic group in Chipinge, Zimbabwe.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ZAPU: Zimbabwe African Peoples Union

ZANU: Zimbabwe African National Union

MDC: Movement for Democratic Change

ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

PF-ZAPU: Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African Peoples Union

ZUM: Zimbabwe Unity Movement

UANC   United African National Congress

INTRODUCTION

Ethnicity is a major problem and a source of conflicts in many African countries in general and Zimbabwe in particular. It has also continued to shape and influence the social, economic and political history of the people of Zimbabwe before and after the attainment of independence. However, there has been a general reluctance among scholars and the government to speak about ethnicity in Zimbabwe[1]. In Africa as a whole, ethnicity has occupied a centre stage in the conflicts that have developed in some countries such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Burundi and South Africa, among other Nations[2]. In some of these African countries, sharp conflicts emerged which created situations characterized by bloody wars; situations which are prevalent even today.

In Zimbabwe, the liberation struggle has ushered in an era in which ethnic tensions and polarization became the order of the day. Such tensions came firstly in the form of the split between the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) in 1963. Members of the two political parties began to accuse each other of tribalism, a situation which later resulted in the assassination of the ZANU Chairman Herbert Chitepo on March 18, 1975[3]. It is such conflicts which gave birth to great enmity between the Shona and the Ndebele in the first place and among the Shona ethnic groups such as Zezuru, Karanga, Manyika and other smaller ethnic groups such as the Ndau later. Such rifts became apparent in ZANU through the wrestling for power which resulted in the ousting of Ndabaningi Sithole from being the President of ZANU and the takeover of the reins of power by Robert Mugabe[4].

This situation was later complicated by the Internal Settlement of March 3, 1978 in which Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole and Bishop Abel Muzorewa negotiated with Ian Smith for what they termed a less painful decolonisation, which resulted in them being labelled sell-outs of the revolution by other nationalists[5].

Since the attainment of Independence in 1980, Zimbabwe's political life has been characterized by ethnic tensions, widely discussed being those between PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF, which is argued to have resulted in the Matabeleland massacres of the early 1980s[6]. It will be demonstrated in this study that ethnicity has been and is still prevalent in Zimbabwe and among some ethnic groups such as the people of Chipinge and has affected the way people have been voting in Zimbabwe since the inception of independence. This helps to shed light on the question which has been kept in the minds of many people for a long time as to why the Ndau people always voted for ZANU-Ndonga since 1980. Although there can be other reasons why they voted in the manner they did besides ethnicity, it is argued here that these have helped to create a strong ethnic bond among the Ndau people.

The paper wishes to demonstrate that the people of Chipinge have remained ethnically conscious before and after the death of Ndabaningi Sithole. Even after the death of Ndabaningi Sithole, ethnicity has continued to dominate electoral politics in Chipinge with the Ndau people, as a group, rallying behind new opposition groups such as the Movement for Democratic change (MDC).

This, however, is not to deny other explanations given or which may be given for such electoral behaviour, besides the factor of ethnicity. Such voting patterns in Chipinge can therefore be explained as resulting from the ethnic tensions of the 1960s and the 1970s which gave birth to opposition movements such as ZANU –Ndonga, among others.

In this study the ethnic dimension of the voting patterns in Chipinge will be explored. It will be demonstrated that the ethnic factor plays a fundamental role in electoral politics in Africa, Zimbabwe in general and Chipinge in particular. It will be revealed that the people of Chipinge, because of a strong ethnic bond among them, have always voted for Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga whenever there were elections. It will be made apparent through this study that the people of Chipinge have always voted using their hearts and not their minds. The ethnic feeling among them has also made the people of Chipinge to vote without choosing. It will be shown in this study, therefore, that when ethnicity is at play, elections are meaningless since people, like those in Chipinge, would have made a unanimous decision to throw their vote on a particular party and on particular political figures. Some scholars might wish to call such a scenario "protest voting", that is not voting voting for ZANU PF. The question why the people of Chipinge voted for ZANU Ndonga and not any other party explains it.

It shall also be demonstrated that with the rise of transitional politics in Zimbabwe, the people of Chipinge rallied behind new opposition parties mainly because the ethnic bond among them had never taught them to vote for ZANU-PF.

It will also be revealed that even though the Ndau people voted for such new opposition parties as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), they did not have a strong passion for such parties as they did with ZANU-Ndonga. The people of Chipinge had and still have a strong nostalgia for Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga.

It shall also be demonstrated that to the Ndau people Ndabaningi Sithole was a hero, a situation which resulted in them worshipping him before and even after his death. The failure by the ZANU PF government to award Sithole a hero status has created resentment and deep seated anti ZANU PF ethnicity. This discussion shall be made to roll on, firstly with a full consideration of the ethnic situation in Africa, Zimbabwe in general and Chipinge in particular. It is this situation of ethnic conflicts particularly in Zimbabwe, which in part has given birth to Ndau ethnicity. This, it has been argued, has hampered the establishment of a one –party state in Zimbabwe.[7]Efforts by the ruling ZANU –PF party to win votes from the Ndau people also yielded disappointing results. In short this study seeks to reveal that ethnicity, which has been prevalent in Zimbabwe since the 1960s, has continued to affect electoral behaviour among some small ethnic groups such as the Ndau people in the eastern part of the country.

Although there is a lot of literature written on ethnicity and political developments, much of this literature is confined to Africa in general. This has created a very wide gap in literature on ethnicity in Zimbabwe in general and on smaller ethnic groups such as the Ndau of Chipinge in particular.

Most of the available literature on ethnicity in Africa and even Zimbabwe has concentrated on the ethnic conflicts, which in some cases, led to full scale fighting. There has been a general reluctance, therefore, among scholars to address such issues as ethnicity and electoral politics on small ethnic groups as the Ndau in the Chipinge district of Zimbabwe. The current study, therefore, is an effort to fill in the gap which has been left by the previous researchers. Where there is a mention of ethnicity and electoral politics in Zimbabwe, this has been generalized around the voting patterns among the Ndebele in Matabeleland and the Shona in Mashonaland. The general picture created is that in independent Zimbabwe the Ndebele have been voting for PF-ZAPU while the Shona have been voting for ZANU-PF. While it is common knowledge that the Ndau are regarded as a Shona ethnic group and that they have been voting for Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga since independence, it is shocking that a lot of literature has failed to address the aspect of the voting patterns in Chipinge. This is more so especially considering that the voting patterns in Chipinge have affected some national policies such as that of the establishment of a one –party state and has followed a known trend. There has not been any interrogation of why Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga had such a popular support among the Ndau. There has also been a general lack of interest among scholars to find out why ethnicity has continued to have influence in elections even after the death of Ndabaningi Sithole. There is, therefore, a need to consider the role of ethnicity in electoral politics among the people of Chipinge.

The year 1980 has been chosen as the starting point in the current study mainly because this is when people started to vote in independent Zimbabwe, although the ethnic factor among the people of Chipinge was already at play before 1980, as reflected in the 1979 elections. While the last elections in Zimbabwe were held in 2008, the year 2010 has been included in this study to give a consideration of the current perceptions of the people of Chipinge about future elections. Having said all this, there is need, therefore, to consider the ethnic dimension of the voting patterns in Chipinge since 1980.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem that has prompted the current study is the general reluctance among scholars to discuss ethnicity in Zimbabwe after the country's attainment of independence in 1980. Ethnicity has continued to shape the social, economic and political history of the country since 1980. While the ZANU PF government experienced political competition and challenges from Ndabaningi Sithole, ZANU Ndonga and the Ndau people during elections, there has not been an effort among scholars to discuss the ethnic inclinations among such smaller ethnic groups as the Ndau. Despite the fact that the Ndau people displayed a unique electoral behaviour by voting persistently for Sithole and ZANU Ndonga against ZANU PF during elections, there has not been an attempt by scholars to interrogate such electoral behaviour. It is therefore argued in the current study that ethnicity has influenced the way the Ndau people voted in elections since 1980.

It is also argued that the Ndau people have continued to be ethnically conscious even after Sithole's. Such high levels of consciousness culminated in the immortalisation of Sithole among the Ndau people.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research is guided by the following research questions:

1 Of what significance was ethnicity in the African and Zimbabwean politics?

2 How did the Ndau people vote in elections during Ndabaningi Sithole's life time?

3 What electoral behaviour has been displayed by the Ndau people since Sithole's demise?

4 What political status did the Ndau people attach to Sithole?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1 To explore the significance of ethnicity in the African and Zimbabwean politics.

2 To document the voting patterns in Chipinge during Sithole's life time.

3 To explore the voting patterns in Chipinge after Sithole's demise.

4 To investigate Sithole's National status.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Ethnicity, which is central to this study, can be defined as a situation where people exist in what Zibusiso Msinga has termed self–conscious groups which are united and closely related to each other through culture, shared experiences, history, language and common interests[8].

Where ethnicity is dominant there is an emphasis among ethnic groups, of belonging together. In most cases this results in ethnic groups defining themselves against others, a situation which normally gives rise to the "us" and "them" concept[9]. This has also led Okwudiba Nnoli to regard ethnicity as a phenomenon associated with competition, exclusiveness and conflict in relations among ethnic groups which are members of a political community[10]. Using the above, therefore, as working definitions, one can regard the Shona and the Ndebele in Zimbabwe as different ethnic groups culturally and more so because they speak different languages. Within these two major ethnic groups, one also distinguishes sub –ethnic groups which have similar characteristics as mentioned above. The Ndau people in Chipinge, for instance, are one such a group within the main Shona ethnic group, who are united through history, common dialect and language, as well as culture, among others. Thus, the above shall be used as working definitions in this study in explaining the development and existence of ethnicity in Africa, Zimbabwe in general, and Chipinge in particular. This will also help to give a better understanding of the subject under discussion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of ethnicity in Africa has been widely discussed a phenomenon by many scholars. Such discussions have also triggered, recently, an interest in research on ethnicity and its place in the history of Zimbabwe. Discussions on ethnicity in Africa and Zimbabwe have been conducted by such scholars as Okwudiba Nnoli, Masipula Sithole, William Ochieng, James Muzondidya and Sabelo Ndlovu – Gatsheni, among others.

All these scholars have failed to break the pattern of neglect on the influence of ethnicity on voting patterns in Zimbabwe and Chipinge in general and in particular respectively.

Okwudiba Nnoli has focussed on the violent nature of the ethnic conflicts in Africa[11]. Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa, Burundi and Rwanda have experienced the worst forms of ethnic conflicts in history during the period 1989 – 1995[12]. Although Nnoli has focused his writing on Africa in general, his analysis helps the present study by bringing to light the fact that ethnicity in Zimbabwe does not exist as a unique phenomenon. The present study also benefits from Nnoli's presentation in that most of the conflicts that have developed in Africa were a result of electoral politics, an argument which I strongly subscribe to. However, the major difference is that Nnoli has written about Africa in general and has shown that ethnicity has caused widespread fighting in Africa, which is one way through which ethnicity manifests itself. The present study seeks to demonstrate that ethnicity has affected the voting patterns in Zimbabwe and in particular among the Ndau ethnic group of Chipinge. Nevertheless, Nnoli's work lays a foundation on which the present study depends.

Bruce Berman and others have also written on ethnicity in Africa. They maintain that ethnicity in Africa is not a primordial survival of the African culture, but rather a modern product of the African encounter with capitalism during the colonial era. The role of the missionaries in creating ethnic identities has been singled out as a major factor.

This situation is argued to have arisen when missionaries created standardised print versions of tribal languages from certain vernacular dialects and translations of the Bible[13]. They argue that these ethnic groupings did not, therefore, disappear with the attainment of independence in most of Africa. African political leaders have therefore relied heavily on these ethnic divisions to build a support base for themselves. The observations made by Berman and others, although generally presented, are useful to this study since they give a clear background to the development of ethnicity in Africa. This has helped the current study by illuminating on the origins of ethnic differences which have ravaged the political arena of Zimbabwe since the 1960s. The fact that political leaders have been cited as having used the existing ethnic groupings for their power base also presents supportive information for this study, which discusses the power base established by many political leaders in Zimbabwe, but most importantly, Ndabaningi Sithole and the Ndau people. Such arguments have also been maintained by Shulla Marks, writing on the creation of a power base by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi in South Africa[14]. The missionary factor presented by Berman and others also is important as the American Board Missionaries in Chipinge played a critical role in the development of ethnicity in Chipinge. However, this paper has gone further to particularize its focus on a single ethnic group in Zimbabwe. The current study maintains that ethnicity has affected the voting behaviour of some ethnic groups such as the Ndau and some groups like the Ndebele people in Zimbabwe.

With the African democratic credentials being questioned from the 1990s, some scholars such as William Ochieng have argued that ethnicity has emerged as a result of the difficult situations created in many African countries by authoritarian rulers. The various ethnic groups in Africa are viewed by Ochieng as groupings for survival as these have become seedbeds for democracy[15]. Such an argument has been used to explain the existence of many ethnic groups in Africa. While Ochieng's work does not reflect the role of ethnicity in electoral politics, which the present study intends to underscore, its contribution to the present study is of immense magnitude. It brings in another angle of viewing ethnicity as a springboard for castigating anti-democratic systems in Africa. This may be useful in explaining opposition politics in Zimbabwe. Ochieng's work, however, is short –sighted in that it only raises important arguments which it does not fully develop. The present study goes beyond the level of Ochieng's work by giving a particular case study of the Ndau in Chipinge. The present study maintains the argument that ethnicity has helped to shape electoral politics among the Ndau people of Chipinge in Zimbabwe.

One of the most resounding works on ethnicity in Zimbabwe is that presented by Masipula Sithole. While he concurs with some scholars such as Bruce Berman on the missionary factor on ethnicity, he gives a vivid explanation on how ethnicity in Zimbabwe developed from the time of missionary establishments. He singles out the ZAPU – ZANU split of 1963 as the focal point of the ethnicity drama that prevailed in Zimbabwe from that period onwards.

He gives clearly the ripple splits which developed among the Shona tribes of Manyika, Zezuru and Karanga along ethnic lines and the complications it later caused. Masipula Sithole argues that it is out of this complicated web of ethnicity that opposition parties such as ZANU-Ndonga were born[16]. Masipula's work is useful to this study for it lays a strong foundation on the history of ethnic groupings in Zimbabwe. It is this foundation, which the present study leans on in order to fully explain the voting politics in Zimbabwe after independence. His work, however, differs from the present study in that he describes vividly only the situation in Zimbabwe before independence, while the current study pursues some political developments after 1980. His mention of Ndabaningi Sithole after 1980, who is central to the current study, is only in very brief terms. This study, therefore, takes the history of Ndabaningi Sithole further from where Masipula Sithole left it. The way people voted in Chipinge and the role of ethnicity in that voting behaviour is the central concern of this study. Although Sithole has mentioned the 1980 elections as having been conducted along ethnic lines in his other works, this again is not fully developed in line with ethnicity[17]. Masipula Sithole, however, is credited for giving clear definitions of ethnicity, a presentation, which is missing in the works of most scholars who have written on ethnicity. The current study, therefore, benefits from his works.

Antony Farai Masendeke's thesis on ethnicity is also an important work which has shown how ethnicity has influenced political behaviour in Zimbabwe.

While he agrees with many scholars who have concluded that most conflicts and political behaviour in Africa are influenced by ethnicity, his work is remarkable since it gives a critical analysis of the presentations made by Masipula Sithole. Sithole has been criticised for using the ZAPU –ZANU split of the 1960s to conclude that the 1980 and 1985 election results reflect tribal allegiances. This is viewed by Masendeke as a clear contradiction by Sithole who had argued earlier on that neither PF –ZAPU nor ZANU PF involved tribal ideology throughout the election campaign period[18]. Sithole has argued that since PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF won all contested seats in Ndebele and Shona speaking areas respectively, it shows that voting patterns revealed an ever strong manifestation of Shona –Ndebele ethnicity in 1980. Sithole has also been accused of rejecting other factors which may have contributed to the 1980 results such as class, which Masendeke argues, can also be considered to explain ethnic conflicts[19]. Masendeke has accused Sithole of not giving evidence in support of the proposition that voting patterns in Zimbabwe were along ethnic lines. While Masendeke's work is an analysis of earlier works on ethnicity and politics in Zimbabwe, it is quite useful to this study for it maintains that there should be enough evidence for conclusions to be drawn that ethnicity has influenced voting behaviour of particular groups. The present study, by considering a wider period of voting patterns of a single tribe in Zimbabwe from 1980, will not fall into the trap in which Masipula's work has been found. The fact that the current study considers electoral politics among the Ndau, means that conclusions drawn here are only applicable to the Ndau and not Zimbabwe in general until further research is conducted in the rest of the country.

Thus, Masendeke's work has helped to shape and guide the current study, although some aspects such as those of class discussed in his work are not the purpose of this study. It is maintained in this study that voting patterns among the Ndau have been influenced by ethnicity as is reflected in the results of elections in Zimbabwe since 1980.

The fact that little work has been done on ethnicity in Zimbabwe until recently, has been emphasized as well in the work of Jeffrey Herbst. He brings out the fact that this little work presented has not done justice in showing how ethnic class have affected government plans. Although he managed to identify such weaknesses, his work also does not cover adequately that aspect. It is also the purpose of the current study to develop from where he left and show the impact of ethnicity on National policies. Herbst's work emphasizes the existence of many ethnic groups in Zimbabwe which were influenced by the ZANU – ZAPU split of the 1960s. He underscores the fact that there were also intra –Shona splits which developed because of the fact that the Shona, unlike the Ndebele, were never one community. These have grouped themselves into the Manyika in the Eastern region of the country,the Zezuru in the area around Harare, and the Karanga in the South of the country centred around Masvingo. Mention is made in his analysis of the fact that some political leaders have taken advantage of these divisions to gain some ethnic allegiances[20]. Although Herbst's work is also not exhaustive, it has helped the current study through its confirmation of the existence of intra –Shona groups, a situation which has given birth to the Ndau ethnicity which is central to this study.

It is also among the Ndau that some political leaders such as Ndabaningi Sithole have taken advantage of such ethnic divisions as shall be revealed in the ensuing discussion. Thus, Herbst's work lays a foundation which is important to the current study. The major difference is that the current study will take further the aspect of ethnicity into independent Zimbabwe where it will unveil the secret of the voting patterns among the Ndau, a situation which is lacking in many works, including Herbst's.

Although he concurs with the writing of most scholars on ethnicity, especially on the effect of missionary work in creating ethnic divisions, manipulation of ethnic divisions by political leaders, and the treatment of ethnicity as a reality in Zimbabwe, Zibusiso Msinga has gone further in attempting to show the impact of ethnicity on democracy in Zimbabwe. Although he has done it in passing, Msinga has managed to show that ethnicity has derailed attempts at nation building, true unity and the democratisation process[21]. Although this has not been discussed in detail it has given an insight to the present paper whose aim is to show the impact of ethnicity and in this case in relation to voting patterns. The current study will tap on the foundation built by Msinga, especially when considering the lack of unity, which is one of the results of ethnic divisions. In the current study, this scenario is reflected in electoral politics. Thus, Msinga's work will be of great use to this study in as much as it also provides sound definitions of ethnicity, which are of great use to this study.

The period after the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe has also come under scrutiny by James Muzondidya and Sabelo Ndlovu – Gatsheni, whose focus is from the period 1980 to 2007. While it is the same period which the present study is considering, the major difference is that James Muzondidya and Sabelo Ndlovu –Gatsheni have considered the conflicts that developed in the early 1980s between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU which resulted in the Gukurahundi War (1982 –1986). They also maintain that since then ethnic conflicts have continued to exist in Zimbabwe, although they argue that this did not result in full scale fighting as that experienced in the early 1980s[22]. This differs from the current study which considers voting in Chipinge with much interest on the role of ethnicity in determining election results. The two scholars have made an effort as well in explaining why ethnicity has continued to be a problem in independent Zimbabwe. In their analysis they blame some leading nationalists who are not committed tot the practical eradication of ethnicity. These political leaders are said to have condemned ethnicity during the day, but used it by night as a political resource in their battles for power. According to them, this is why the people in Matabeleland have continuously voted for PF-ZAPU while for those people in Mashonaland and other Shona speaking areas the story was different[23].

Muzondidya and Ndlovu –Gatsheni's analysis will also be tested in the current study to establish if the voting patterns in Chipinge and the existence of a strong ethnic character among the people was a result of the leadership which condemned ethnicity during the day, but used it by night to gain political power.

In a way their work has a strong bearing on the current study of which reference to it shall constantly be made. Mention has also been made of the Ndau people's voting for ZANU-Ndonga until 2005 when the two Chipinge seats finally went to ZANU-PF[24]. Although some insight has been shed here by the two analysts this has been done in very brief terms. The current study will illuminate more on the Ndau ethnicity and the voting patterns in Chipinge. All the same, credit is given to the two scholars for showing the period when the Ndau voting for ZANU-Ndonga came to an end, information which is relevant to the current study. Their discussion of ethnic divisions in the two MDC factions of Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara, however, has gone too far, beyond the scope of the current study, which focuses mainly on the voting patterns in Chipinge.

In his writing on ethnicity in Zimbabwe, Sabelo Ndlovu –Gatsheni has blamed what he called popular, but not always correct accounts of national history that have percolated into the minds of people thereby spoiling human relations. He singles out the view that Zimbabwe has been treated as having a bimodal ethnicity by many scholars centred on the Ndebele and Shona people who are considered to have conflicts because of ancient hatreds and historical grievances. To Gatsheni, this is not correct, and he sees Zimbabwe as a plural society inhabited by various people who speak different languages as well as some racial minorities. Such and other misconceptions are viewed by Gatsheni as having caused ethnic conflicts among the people of Zimbabwe[25].

Although his analysis tends to differ from the popular view, it is important for this study in that it confirms the fact that there are other minorities who have grouped themselves along ethnic lines of which the Ndau, who are central to this study, are one such group.

Just as many other scholars have done, Ndlovu – Gatsheni has also given a history of the development of ethnicity from the period of the 1960s and 1970s which saw the split between ZAPU and ZANU as well as the formation of what later came to be known as ZANU-Ndonga. It is during this period that enmity was brewed, which spilled over into independent Zimbabwe. Such splits resulted in some nationalist leaders as Ndabaningi Sithole and Abel Muzorewa to be viewed as sell-outs by other nationalist figures[26]. Although Ndlovu –Gatsheni's work does not discuss the voting patterns in independent Zimbabwe, which is the thrust of this study, his work is of immense contribution to the current study since it lays a foundation to the emergence of ethnic divisions. The present study shall also make some references to Ndlovu –Gatsheni's work, although the two works tend to pursue different objectives.

Ndlovu –Gatsheni's work has also gone further by describing racism that is argued to have gripped Zimbabwe from the 1990s, thereby plunging the country into conflicts from that period onwards. This explains the tension that existed between the ruling ZANU-PF government and the white farmers in the country[27]. Although the current study does not go into explaining racism, Ndlovu –Gatsheni's discussion helps to explain the development of ethnic tensions in the country especially over the control of resources such as land.

This in part helps to explain how these political tensions have shaped the voting patterns in the country, especially in Chipinge, which is a case study in this discussion. Thus, Gatsheni's work continues to be relevant in this study of which constant reference shall be made to it. However, his discussion of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)'s vision has gone beyond the voting patterns in Chipinge.

Terence Ranger has also written on the invention of ethnicity in Zimbabwe. In his writing he has considered the origin of the term "Manyika" and "Manicaland" which he explains through the use of D.N. Beach's work on the subject. Thus ranger argues in his writing that the Manyika were a people living under Chief Mutasa, as shown by the Portuguese maps[28]. In his bid to explain the origin of the Manyika ethnic group, Ranger has made a consideration of the role played by Missionary groups in Zimbabwe in the invention of ethnicity. He argues that missionaries were involved in the writing of the shona language and the translation of the Bible and other related readings into Manyika language[29]. He argues that it is such a role of the missionaries which has produced ethnicity through language among the Karanga and Zezuru as well. Ranger has also connected this ethnic development to later politics such as the assassination of the ZANU Chairman, Herbert Chitepo and the inclinations which the Manyika people had with Bishop Abel Muzorewa, especially in electoral politics[30]. Although the current study tends to differ from Rangers work in its objectives, it also benefits from Rangers work. The fact that Ranger has reaffirmed the role of missionaries in the invention of ethnicity gives his work a great level of importance to the current study.

It is this background information which the current study needs in its examination of political events such as the assassination of Chitepo and other nationalist cadres. However, the major difference between the two works is that Rangers consideration of the development of ethnicity in Zimbabwe ends in the 1970s while the current study pursues the influence of ethnicity even in independent Zimbabwe. It is in the current study that the ethnic dimension of the voting patterns among the people of Chipinge is considered. Nevertheless, Rangers work has an important influence to the current study.

In his writing on ethnicity, Simon Bekker has raised the argument that ethnicity is not a widely discussed phenomenon among scholars as well as in public discussions. He emphasises the fact that ethnicity has not been considered as an important issue by many people[31]. He also maintains that ethnicity has influenced political movements in many parts of the world such as Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. It is these ethnic divisions which are said to have affected the unity and peace which most societies are longing for. According to him, ethnicity has led to violence, looting and displacement of people from their homes and countries[32]. Bekker's work has found a place in the present study since it brings to light the fact that ethnicity has influenced political developments in most African societies. It is this information which the current study leans upon in order to build a strong background for the emergence of ethnic conflicts in Africa and in Zimbabwe in general and in Chipinge in particular, especially among the Ndau ethnic group in Chipinge.

However, Bekker's work, although important, differs from the current study in that he has focused on South Africa as his case study, while in the current study, the situation in Zimbabwe among the people of Chipinge is considered. In the current study the contribution of ethnicity in electoral politics in Zimbabwe in general and Chipinge in particular is maintained. In short, it is in this study that an analysis of the voting patterns among the Ndau ethnic group shall be considered during the life time of Ndabaningi Sithole and the period after his death.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

The research has been conducted partly through the use of written materials, both primary and secondary. These have helped immensely in providing information on the development of ethnicity and ethnic tensions, especially during the period of the 1960s and 1970s. Such materials have also provided some information on the period after 1980, a period which is mainly the focus of this study. However, the literature available for the period after 1980 has given scanty information since much research has not been done. Some archival sources have also been used although not much information on ethnicity in Zimbabwe has been found.

In the field, some oral interviews have also been conducted in different communities of Chipinge district. These interviews have been of great use to this research considering the fact that very little information has been written on the history of Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga, especially after 1980.

The interviews, therefore, had to provide the bulk of the information with resounding accounts coming from members of ZANU-Ndonga and other people who understood well the history of the party.

Chapter one is a historical background to ethnicity as it manifested itself in Africa, Zimbabwe in general, and Chipinge in particular. It also regards colonialism as having contributed to the emergency of ethnic groups. Chapter two discusses the voting patterns in Chipinge during the lifetime of Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga, while chapter three considers the period of transitional politics, when such opposition parties as the Movement for Democratic Change became the key participants. Chapter four considers the heroism of Ndabaningi Sithole as perceived by the people of Chipinge. Finally, is the conclusion, which is a summary of the ideas raised and discussed throughout the study.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 THE ETHNIC FACTOR IN AFRICAN AND ZIMBABWEAN POLITICS

In Africa, the ethnic factor has continued to shape and influence events, especially those to do with politics. This, in most cases, has led to the rise of ethnic related conflicts, which in worst situations, resulted in full fighting and bloodshed among ethnic groups. Cases as those in countries such as Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya and South Africa, among others, are worth mentioning[33]. Most of these ethnic differences have been partly a result of an unresolved past which, in most cases, carries within itself a colonial legacy[34]. Zimbabwe has not been spared by such ethnic tensions, which can be traced as far back as the 1960s and 1970s with the split between ZAPU and ZANU. The period also witnessed conflicts along ethnic lines within ZANU, resulting in polarisation developing among the Zezuru, Karanga and Manyika ethnic groups[35]. As shall be discussed fully in this chapter, these ethnic tensions gave birth to great enmity among political leaders, resulting in assassinations such as that of the ZANU Chairman, Herbert Chitepo, among others, and the ousting from the ZANU Presidency of Ndabaningi Sithole. Thus, ethnicity in Zimbabwe continued to show its face after the country's attainment of independence as the experiences of the early 1980s have shown in the ZANU –ZAPU conflicts[36]. This ethnic factor also continued to affect the voting patterns in Zimbabwe in general and Chipinge in particular as shall be discussed in detail in the ensuing chapters.

This chapter focuses on the rise and development of ethnicity in the African and Zimbabwean politics. It unveils how ethnicity has continued to affect the African and Zimbabwean politics in general.

1.1 The Ethnicisation of African politics

The development of ethnicity in Africa has attracted a widespread attention of various scholars who tried to establish the origins of this phenomenon. While different views have been presented to explain its origins, there is a general perception among scholars that ethnicity, contrary to the views of some Eurocentric scholars, is not a product of the primitive African cultures, but rather a modern product of the African encounter with capitalism and colonialism[37]. In other words, although African communities had groupings within themselves before colonialism, these did not develop into defined and concrete ethnic identities until the onset of colonialism. Colonialism, therefore, is blamed for creating certain conditions suitable for the development of ethnic identities and groupings. Ndlovu –Gatsheni also argues that the true picture of what have been called identities before colonialism is that they were very fluid and characterised by the assimilation, incorporation and the conquest of weaker groups by powerful ones. This, in some cases, has led to inter and intra–marriages taking place. He views the groups as more social and moral in character rather than being solid and political. He also blames colonialism for inventing ethnic identities from the existing groups by rigidifying and politicising the groups[38]. It is therefore also maintained here that the onset of colonialism on the African continent ushered in a new era characterised by the invention of ethnic identities and groupings.

The politicisation of ethnicity in Africa also began when missionaries arrived ahead of the colonialists. After the missionaries had established themselves in various regions of the African continent, they began to spread Christianity. In the process, they also began to translate the Bible and other related readings into vernacular languages and dialects for the purpose of education and evangelisation. This helped to create and strengthen new and wider ethnic identities among many African communities. In most cases, these new ethnic identities developed roughly within the region under the influence of particular churches[39]. Thus, the London Missionary Society, the Dutch Reformed Church, the American Methodist Church, among others, planted themselves among certain African communities. These missionary organisations had to establish a lasting mark in Africa in the form of ethnic identities. Such developments did not spare Zimbabwean communities, which saw the establishment of many such church groups, but most importantly, the London Missionary Society in Matebeleland and the American Board Missionaries in Chipinge. This resulted in Ndebele and Ndau versions of the bible and hymns being printed. This, as a result, created conditions suitable for the establishment of strong ethnic bonds among the communities.

With the coming of colonialism, then, people in many African communities found themselves differentiated and grouped according to the missionary groups ministering among them, race and boundaries. Thus, in many African communities people were grouped into Europeans, Asians and coloureds on the one hand, and the natives who were also subdivided into small ethnic identities on the other.

This was part of creating an ethnic citizenship that was controlled through a regime of ethnic rights[40]. It has been argued elsewhere that these ethnic identities were strengthened by colonialism when it coded and classified people through the introduction of an identity card system. This identity card system assigned Africans to particular villages and districts while at the same time respecting and fixing these areas which became districts of origin[41]. This situation, in the end, strengthened some ethnic identities among the Africans in most African states. This explains why colonialism has been identified as a disguised culprit in the creation of ethnic groups, a situation which later gave birth to ethnic conflicts in Africa.

The ethnic factor did not stop playing a dominant role in many African countries after they attained independence. The situation in Zimbabwe in particular and other African countries in general clearly shows that the ethnic divisions created by colonialism did not die with colonial rule. In fact these ethnic differences were inherited by the new African states as the Zimbabwean experience and that of other nations confirm[42].

This, as shall be seen later, serves to strengthen the argument that ethnicity has continued to be an unresolved problem in African and Zimbabwean politics since the days of colonial rule. In some states in Africa, it actually became fashionable for ethnic related violence to continue dominating the political arena.

While almost the whole of Africa has been and is still characterised by ethnic conflicts, the worst forms of these conflicts have been found in Kwazulu –Natal in South Africa, Burundi and Rwanda, especially from the period 1989[43].

A serious bloodshed has characterised inter-ethnic relations in these countries. In Kwazulu-Natal, the bloody conflicts involved mainly the Zulu ethnic group. The demands of the Inkhata political party (the Zulu culture national movement) to mobilise support from all Zulu speakers beyond the countries of Kwazulu –Natal resulted in clashes in 1990 which led to the death of more than five hundred (500) people in a single day. Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi had made calculations that if he could get the Zulu to identify first and foremost as Zulu, he would have a strong power base to use in any post apartheid situation. This situation is reported to have almost hampered the process of transition from apartheid to black majority rule44. Such a scenario creates room for one to convincingly argue that ethnicity was and is still a reality in African politics.

In Burundi as well, the transition from the military regime of Pierre Buyoya to Multiparty democracy was destroyed by a Tutsi-led military coup d'etat in which the elected President, Melchoir Ndadaye was killed. From the time of his death, Burundi has experienced a serious massacre of ethnic and political opponents, a situation which has continued to drain the energy and power resources of that country to this day. Thus Burundi is one of the African countries which has suffered some of the most horrible and nerve-wrecking genocides in the history of Africa, a situation which will take a long time for her to recover from it[45]. This situation is similar to the one in Rwanda, which has continuously been torn apart by ethnic conflicts. In fact it has been argued that the levels of the ethnic conflicts in countries such as Burundi, Rwanda and Somalia have given Africa a bad name, in the views of the world, as a continent dominated by ethnic conflicts and violence[46].

However, this scenario, although bad, clearly portrays the true picture of how ethnicity has continued to be a factor in the political history of Africa. The few examples cited above can therefore be used as a mirror of what has been and is still happening in Africa.

It is important to mention that while most of the ethnic conflicts in Africa have developed as a result of the colonially designed structures such as the colonially designed boundaries, there are some conflicts which developed in response to the political character of the new leadership in independent Africa. Some of the ethnic groupings have taken shape because of the difficult conditions created in some African states by authoritarian rulers. In this case, some ethnic groupings emerged in Africa as a strategy for survival under the yoke of authoritarianism. These groupings have become seedbeds of democracy. They have also come to shape the plural society, which became an important pre-condition for the development of democratic systems[47]. This also explains why, from the 1990s, most of Africa's single party regimes faced great opposition, a situation which ushered in a new era of multipartysm. In some countries such as Kenya, among others, this new situation has created platforms for the development of a new wave of violence as a result of the failure by the old regimes to come to terms with the new order.

1.2   The Entrenchment of Ethnicity in Zimbabwean Politics

In Zimbabwe, ethnicity has also influenced political developments in both the pre and post independence period.

Ethnic differences in Zimbabwe can be traced as far back as the 1960s and 1970s. As Shamuyarira notes, divisions and suspicion along tribal lines became deeply planted in the minds of both ZAPU and ZANU leaders and supporters from that period. Such ethnic divisions, it is argued, had to follow the political movements like a ghost for the whole period of the liberation struggle[48]. There could also be other reasons for such polarisation, such as the granting of special treatment to ZAPU by the Soviet Union in 1969. This treatment of ZAPU by the Soviet Union left ZANU with the only option as that of seeking support from China[49]. While this strained the relations between ZAPU and ZANU nationalists and followers, it only worsened relations which were already sour. Ethnicity, therefore, remains central to the divisions and polarisation which developed between the two political parties and their supporters in Zimbabwe.

In 1963, ethnicity gripped the nationalist movement in Zimbabwe, resulting in the fragmentation of ZAPU. A core group of the Shona speaking leaders of the party led by Ndabaningi Sithole revolted against the leadership of the Ndebele – speaking Joshua Nkomo and found a new political party – ZANU. This ZAPU –ZANU split also resulted in factions and ethnic fights and violence in the urban areas, a situation which sharply took an ethnic dimension in Zimbabwe's political developments[50]. From this period onwards, the struggle for national independence was dominated by ZAPU on the one hand which comprised Ndebele and Kalanga speaking members and with Joshua Nkomo as the President, and ZANU on the other hand, comprising Shona speaking members, with Ndabaningi Sithole as its President[51].

These political developments are a mirror of the political history of Zimbabwe from that period onwards. Ethnicity continued to dominate the political arena throughout the liberation struggle. This ethnic division also resulted in the political leadership accusing and counter accusing each other of tribalism as is testified by Sithole and his group who accused Nkomo of tribalism and regionalism[52]. These political developments between ZAPU and ZANU became a permanent feature of the political arena in Zimbabwe. As a result of these divisions, ZAPU came to be known as a Ndebele people's party while ZANU was increasingly viewed as the party of the Shona, who provided the party's widest support base[53]. One can argue that the rift that characterised the relationship between ZANU and ZAPU political parties shows how deeply rooted ethnicity was in the history of the country. This ethnic factor, thus, became a permanent mark in the history of the two political parties until the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987.

Ethnicity also greatly affected the ZANU faction of the nationalist movement. Ethnic contestations in ZANU were mainly among the Shona sub ethnic groups of Manyika (easterners), Karanga (southerners) and Zezuru (northerners). Competition for leadership and fighting among members of these ethnic groups resulted in the death of many ZANU cadres and party personnel in exile. Those divisions also resulted in the assassination of the party's first chairman, Herbert Chitepo on 18 March 1975[54]. Such assassinations were greatly condemned by other political leaders such as Abel Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole. Sithole clearly stated that Chitepo was a victim of tribalism within ZANU[55].

The gravity of the levels of the ethnic divisions among ZANU nationalists can also be seen in the ousting of Ndabaningi Sithole from his position as the President of ZANU. Sabelo Ndlovu –Gatsheni argues that if Chitepo's death had to do with a planned action to remove the easterners (Manyika) from ZANU leadership, then Sithole's chances, as one of the easterners, were slim to survive such tribalised politics[56]. This situation clearly shows how the ethnic factor caused havoc in Zimbabwe's political history. It also shows that ethnicity was central a factor in the political history of Zimbabwe.

Sithole's adamancy on the issue of Chitepo's assassination also resulted in him being accused of siding with rebels. It is also amidst these squabbles that Ndabaningi Sithole was also labelled a tribalist and a regionalist, since he spoke on behalf of the easterners and Manicaland[57]. Ndabaningi Sithole is also quoted by Masipula Sithole as having uttered that he had a constituency at home which he represented and would be asked many questions by the people, concerning Chitepo's death[58]. Thus, with these disagreements and accusations, Ndabaningi seized to be a mere political leader, but also became a tribal leader. The people of Chipinge, which is Ndabaningi Sithole's home area, became Ndabaningi Sithole's support base. This relationship continued to exist even after the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe until Ndabaningi's death, as shall be shown in the following chapter. This shows how acute the ethnic factor was in the political history of Zimbabwe.

Ethnic differences, as the ones described above, were inherited by independent Zimbabwe.

Polarisation between ZAPU and ZANU also continued to exist in independent Zimbabwe, especially in the early 1980s. With the attainment of independence, ZANU PF came out of the elections as a victor while PF ZAPU emerged as a looser and as a major opposition party in independent Zimbabwe[59]. This political development continued to charge the political atmosphere around the two political parties to such an extent that enmity continued to grow. This friction was partly the evidence that ZAPU had not accepted the 1980 electoral defeat and that it was planning an overthrow of the elected government[60]. This friction culminated into the Gukurahundi war from 1982 – 1986, a situation which resulted in the death of about 20 000 people. Such conflicts only ended with the signing of the unity Accord between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU in 1987[61]. These incidents clearly show how bad relations were, soon after the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe. This also shows that the ethnic factor continued to influence political developments in independent Zimbabwe. In some instances, this has also continued to affect the voting patterns in Matabeleland and Mashonaland, with the people of Matabeleland voting for PF ZAPU while those in Mashonaland voted differently, but mainly for ZANU PF[62].

Thus, the ethnic factor has also continued to influence the voting patterns among some smaller ethnic groups in Zimbabwe. The ethnic conflicts of the 1960s and 1970s have partly continued to affect the way the Ndau people of Chipinge voted in independent Zimbabwe. As shall be discussed in detail in the next chapter, the Ndau people have always been voting for Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU –Ndonga since the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe[63].

This shows that electoral politics in Zimbabwe has actually been controlled by the ethnic factor for a long time. However, questions have been asked whether it is the political leaders or the party supporters who are to blame for using ethnicity in electoral politics. While it is not the purpose of this discussion to entertain this question, it is important to bring to light the fact that both the political leaders and the masses of the people make conscious calculations for self interest[64]. Ethnicity, therefore, is a resource which, just like any other political resource, is used by some politicians because they perceive it appropriate at particular times for particular objectives. The masses calculate that they stand to benefit in one way or the other from "our leader" or "our son" or "our homeboy", or "our tribesman in power"[65]. With this scenario then, one can perceive that ethnicity will continue to be a determinant factor in the political development of many communities. People would always consider that it is better to elect a homeboy who will deliver the goods as the situation described in the next chapter shows.

So, ethnicity has been and is still a key factor in African and Zimbabwean politics. Ethnicity has been at play through the various groupings which took place in many communities in Africa and Zimbabwe. These ethnic identities, in some situations, have contributed to the bloody and non violent conflicts which gripped Africa since the inception of colonial rule. Such bloody conflicts, as already discussed, could be seen taking place in such countries as Rwanda, Burundi and South Africa, among other nations. In Zimbabwe, ethnic conflicts have developed in the form of the ZAPU –ZANU split in 1963. Since then, conflicts along ethnic lines have become a perennial feature of Zimbabwe's political history.

This is testified by the fact that ethnic conflicts also developed among the Shona tribal groups such as Manyika, Zezuru and Karanga, giving birth to the assassinations which characterised the nationalist politics in Zimbabwe. This also resulted in some political leaders as Ndabaningi Sithole loosing the ZANU presidency, a situation which affected him until his death. The people of Chipinge's inclination to Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga clearly shows how ethnicity was at play in Zimbabwe's electoral politics. In short, ethnicity was and is still central a factor in the political history of African and Zimbabwean politics.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 THE IMMORTALISATION OF NDABANINGI SITHOLE AND THE VOTING PATTERNS IN CHIPINGE

With his loss of the ZANU presidency in 1976 and with all the disagreements among political leaders that took place around that time, Ndabaningi Sithole's popularity among the people of Chipinge, which was also his home area, became greatly pronounced. The people of Chipinge, who considered Sithole as having committed no political sin warranting his loss of power in ZANU, strongly rallied behind him. His support, which took an ethnic dimension, became a permanent mark since the elections for the government of National Unity in 1979. Thus, with time, Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga became synonymous. To the people of Chipinge, Ndabaningi Sithole was ZANU-Ndonga and ZANU-Ndonga was Ndabaningi Sithole[66]. As shall be revealed in this chapter, because of their strong passion for Sithole and his party, the people of Chipinge began to vote in all elections using their hearts and not their minds. The strong ethnic bond and feeling among the Ndau people made elections meaningless for them. This is testified by the fact that since the elections of 1979, the people of Chipinge have always been voting for ZANU-Ndonga until Sithole's death. As shall be shown in this chapter, ethnicity has therefore continued to dominate electoral politics among the people of Chipinge. The strong bond established between Sithole and the Ndau people was also in the hope that someday, Ndabaningi Sithole was going to rule the country[67].

This dream, however, did not materialize until his death. What came to be realised is that for all the years the people of Chipinge have been voting along ethnic lines.

This also made Sithole an immortal figure among the Ndau people, making his popularity felt even throughout the country.

2.1   The Political Growth of Ndabaningi Sithole in Electoral Politics

The events of the 1960s and 1970s in Zimbabwe's political history contributed immensely in the creation of the ethnic inclinations that took place between the people of Chipinge and ZANU-Ndonga. One of the factors which helped in the coagolation of ethnicity among the Ndau people was the tension which developed in ZANU among the Zezuru, Karanga and Manyika. These conflicts, which took the form of competition for leadership positions among some ZANU nationalists, as seen in the previous chapter, resulted in the assassination of some political leaders such as the ZANU Chairman, Herbert Chitepo on 3 March 1975[68]. These political developments also led to accusations and counter accusations among political leaders, a situation which also resulted in Sithole being labelled a tribalist and a regionalist[69.] This was mainly because Sithole had identified himself with the easterners and not with the Zezuru and the Karanga nationalists. Thus, this label which Ndabaningi Sithole was given did not disappear in the rest of his life. The relationship between Sithole and other nationalists was also worsened by the fact that Sithole lost his position as ZANU President amidst situations he failed to understand as well[70]. All these conflicts and disagreements resulted in Sithole retreating to his home area in Chipinge, which became a support base for his political aspirations.

Thus, with all these political developments, Sithole ceased to be only a political leader, but also became a tribal leader. ZANU-Ndonga became an ethnic party while Chipinge became a strong support base for him and his party[71]. This leads one to conclude that the development of ethnicity among the Ndau was also aided by the political developments of the period of the liberation struggle.

Evidence for the existence of ethnicity among the people of Chipinge is partly on the groups that Chipinge was the only district where ZANU-Ndonga attracted great support whenever there were elections. It is evidenced that whenever representatives of the party were put to stand in for elections, the people of Chipinge always voted for ZANU-Ndonga. It is therefore among the people of Chipinge that Ndabaningi Sithole became so popular that he and his party became synonymous[72]. The people of Chipinge supported Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga partly on the grounds that they also did not understand the reasons why he was ousted from his position as the ZANU President. Thus, they had to support him because of the strong feeling among them that he was unfairly treated[73]. Most of all, the people of Chipinge supported Sithole and his party because they regarded him as their fellow tribesman since he came from Chipinge. They regarded him in their Ndau dialect as "mwana wekanyi", meaning their homeboy[74]. Thus, they identified themselves with him as one group, a feeling which made them to strongly rally behind him. The people of Chipinge also believed that one day Sithole was going to rule the country, a situation which would bring certain benefits among them[75]. Ethnicity among the people of Chipinge, therefore, revolved around a lot of hope and great expectation for a bright future for them.

As noted by Zibusiso Msinga, and as most political leaders have demonstrated, Ndabaningi Sithole, therefore, manipulated this ethnic element among the Ndau for his political aspirations[76]. Whenever it was election time, Ndabaningi Sithole and his party would always go back to "his people", the Ndau, for support. This situation and the support he gained made Sithole to be an immortal figure among the people of Chipinge. His popularity could be felt as well throughout the whole district as the voting patterns in Chipinge have shown. The popularity and support which Sithole received in Chipinge and other places such as Melsetter (Chimanimani) is also reflected in some of Ndabaningi Sithole's writings. Writing against redetention by the Smith regime in 1975, Sithole hailed the support and popularity he got, not only from the people of Chipinge, but other places as well. Whenever he reached any part of Manicaland and Chipinge during his tours, he was always welcomed by thousands of people. The people always carried him shoulder high in a hysteria of joy in most of the places he passed through. In his home area, Mt Selinda in Chipinge, he found thousands of people from Chipinge District and Chimanimani waiting for him. They also carried him on their shoulders for a distance of two miles[77]. These testimonies show how popular Ndabaningi Sithole was among his fellow tribesmen. It also shows how ethnicity influenced the political behaviour of the people of Chipinge. The people of Chipinge had, thus, immortalised Ndabaningi Sithole whom they supported until his death in December 2000.

The voting patterns in Chipinge, as the experience of the period from 1980 shows, took an ethnic dimension. The people of Chipinge developed a strong passion for Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga to such an extent that for them, elections had become meaningless.

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It became habitual and pre-determined that whenever elections were conducted, the people of Chipinge placed their vote on ZANU-Ndonga. One can also argue that because of a strong ethnic feeling among them, the people of Chipinge were now voting without choosing. Considering the election results for all the elections held during the lifetime of Ndabaningi Sithole, one can argue that the people of Chipinge voted with their hearts and not with their minds. The voting patterns have always reflected a strong passion for Sithole and his ZANU-Ndonga. It became a chorus during elections for the people of Chipinge to always say "pandonga po", meaning that everyone was supposed to go and vote for ZANU-Ndonga[78]. Thus, ethnicity controlled the way people voted in Chipinge.

Although the 1979 elections took place before the period stipulated in this study, it is important to mention that these elections are also worth considering in this study if one is to bring out a full picture of the role of ethnicity in electoral politics in Chipinge. It is important to mention that while the first elections in independent Zimbabwe started in 1980, electoral politics for the vast majority of Zimbabwe started with the so called internal settlement elections of 1979. This is when the franchise was extended to the majority of the African people[79]. The elections of 1979 also marked the beginning of the major voting patterns which came to characterize Chipinge electoral politics in independent Zimbabwe. Due to the increased levels of disagreements and conflicts as seen earlier, and the need to find a less painful decolonisation, some nationalists like Ndabaningi Sithole and Abel Muzorewa negotiated with Ian Smith for a settlement in 1978.

These negotiations culminated into the general elections for a government of National unity in 1979. These elections also show how ethnicity was at play in Chipinge in determining election results. While the United African National Congress (UANC) of Abel Muzorewa won the elections with 51 seats, Ndabaningi Sithole's ZANU-Mwenje, as it was called at that time, came second with 12 seats[80]. Thus, Sithole's ZANU faction polled overwhelmingly in the Chipinge region in which Ndabaningi Sithole had a strong support base. Allegiance to ZANU-Ndonga, thus, was first reflected in these elections, a situation which developed into a pattern in the elections that were conducted in independent Zimbabwe[81]. This also shows that the ethnic factor in elections, in Chipinge, presented itself as early as 1979, making it worthwhile to consider this period.

2.2   Ndabaningi Sithole and Elections in Zimbabwe

The first general elections in independent Zimbabwe, held in 1980, also show that ethnicity continued to be at play in determining election results. The results of the elections show that ZANU PF, represented by Robert Mugabe, was the winner with 57 seats, PF ZAPU, represented by Joshua Nkomo got 20 seats, while the United African National Congress (UANC) of Abel Muzorewa got 3 seats. ZANU-Ndonga, however, obtained no seat, but with a reasonable number of people in Chipinge having voted for it. ZANU-Ndonga recorded 53,343 votes as compared to 1,668,992 for ZANU PF and PF ZAPU 638, 87982. It is interesting to note that all the votes which Ndabaningi Sithole obtained came from the district of Chipinge, while those for ZANU PF and PF ZAPU where a record of votes from many districts in the country.

The people of Chipinge, therefore, continued to show their allegiance to Sithole and his party even though they failed to get a single seat. Such figures, though small, do not eradicate the factor of ethnicity which continued to affect electoral politics in Chipinge. The failure for ZANU-Ndonga to secure a seat in Chipinge is explained by the fact that there was still a lot of confusion in the district as most people were still moving in since the war had just ended. This was a serious situation considering the fact that a lot of people from the district had crossed into Mozambique during the war. Thus, the dust raised by the war situation had not yet settled[83]. This affected voter turnout in many places, but mostly in Chipinge because of its close proximity to Mozambique. The results of the 1979 elections and those of the elections held after 1980 help to illuminate on the fact that 1980 was an unusual year. Nevertheless, the figures of those who voted in Chipinge still show that those who voted did so along ethnic lines.

In 1980, Zimbabwe had a proportional representation system whereby the number of seats won by a party in a province was roughly proportional to that party's popularity there. This did not give room to smaller parties as ZANU-Ndonga to win seats since their support and popularity was confined to a district. This situation, however, changed with the 1985 general elections. From 1985, the common roll was held on a constituency basis[84]. The 1985 general elections, which came a reasonable time after the war, were apparently characterised by ethnicity dominated electoral politics in Chipinge. The election results show that the people of Chipinge continued to vote for ZANU-Ndonga overwhelmingly as they had done in the 1979 elections.

The results of the elections reflected victory on ZANU PF with 64 seats while PF ZAPU has 15 seats. ZANU-Ndonga secured 1 seat in chipinge[85]. It is interesting to note that such a victory by ZANU-Ndonga in Chipinge was secured despite the fact that Ndabaningi Sithole had gone into self imposed exile in America, and his representatives had to stand in for elections[86]. Such developments did not divide the electorate who continued to maintain their voting pattern. Even though some political figures had to represent the party in elections, the people of Chipinge believed that they were still voting for Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga. They also believed that Ndabaningi Sithole would come back one day and continue leading the party[87]. Thus, the Ndau people strongly believed in their fellow tribesman, a situation which led them to vote with their hearts and to vote without choosing. The ethnic factor also continued to influence the way the people of Chipinge voted.

One of the serious challenges faced by ZANU-Ndonga in its electoral history was the experience of the 1990 general elections. This was mainly because the major theme of the elections was the possibility for introducing a one-party state by the ruling ZANU PF party. Efforts were therefore made to make ZANU PF the sole party to which all Zimbabweans could lend their membership and support[88]. Such situations meant that opposition parties such as ZANU-Ndonga were going to experience great challenges from the ruling ZANU PF party. The formation of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) in 1989 also presented one more opposition party and competitor in the electoral politics of Zimbabwe.

Although the two opposition parties, ZANU-Ndonga and ZUM, were not mainly competing against each other, the results of the 1990 elections also show that ZUM was a real threat to ZANU-Ndonga. With the existence of these opposition parties, Manicaland also became a hot bed because, since 1980 the ruling ZANU PF party had to contend with the supporters of Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, Bishop Muzorewa and later Edgar Tekere[89]. Since the ruling ZANU PF party aimed at establishing a one party state, ZUM and other opposition parties were denied permission to hold public rallies. This resulted in the opposition parties resorting to holding small scale meetings rather than rallies. In the case of smaller parties such as ZANU-Ndonga and UANC, meetings were often held in private homes and were rarely announced publicly[90]. This shows that the challenges which opposition movements faced were insurmountable.

However, all the above challenges did not deter the people of Chipinge from voting for ZANU-Ndonga. Ethnicity continued to be an influential factor for the people of Chipinge who rallied behind their traditional party amidst such challenges. Even though Ndabaningi Sithole was still in exile, the support for ZANU-Ndonga remained overwhelming, especially in Chipinge South where the people never voted for any other political party until Ndabaningi Sithole's death. The 1990 election results show that ZANU PF was the overall winner with 97 seats, ZUM 21 seats and UANC 1 seat, ZANU-Ndonga also secured 1 seat[91]. The seat which ZANU-Ndonga scooped was in Chipinge South where Wiseman Zengeni represented the party. The Chipinge North seat, however, was lost to ZUM, represented by Gordon Mushakavanhu.

The loss of the seat was, however, a nerve wrecking experience for ZANU-Ndonga which traditionally had widespread support in Chipinge North, the home area of Ndabaningi Sithole? Some members of ZANU-Ndonga believe that the people of Chipinge North were tricked by Edgar Tekere and ZUM who argued that he was one of them and was only going to stand as the Chairman of ZANU-Ndonga while the party president remained Ndabaningi Sithole. The people of Chipinge North, therefore, voted for ZUM with a strong feeling that the votes were going to ZANU-Ndonga. It was after the elections that they realised their voted had been stolen by ZUM, which won in Chipinge North[92]. Voting for ZUM in 1990 could also be a deliberate move by the people of Chipinge considering that both Edgar Tekere and Gordon Mushakavanhu came from Manicaland. The ethnic factor could have driven the people of Manyika, the Ndau being part of them, to rally behind the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), represented by Gordon Mushakavanhu. While this was a clash of the nationalist opposition giants in Chipinge, it also became another evidence of how ethnicity continued to influence electoral politics in Chipinge. ZUM could also have earned widespread support in Manicaland because of its promises to end corruption which Tekere said had become rampant among senior members of the ruling party[93]. It could also be that the Ndau people, just as their ethnic members in other parts of Manicaland, wanted to present a strong force against the establishment of a one party state, which Tekere was against[94]. Whatever arguments maybe presented, what is clear among the people of Chipinge and Manicaland as a whole is that voting continued to take an ethnic dimension. This "mixup", however, strongly united the people of Chipinge more as the results of the future elections reflect.

Nevertheless, ethnicity continued to play a crucial role in the voting patterns in Chipinge, despite the existence of some challenges. The people of Chipinge developed a strong passion for ZANU-Ndonga and its leader, Ndabaningi Sithole. It is also this continuous voting for ZANU-Ndonga by the people of Chipinge which prevented the establishment of a one party state by the ruling ZANU PF government[95]. This also shows how Ndau ethnicity has affected some national policies.

In 1995, the parliamentary and presidential elections were, for the first time, held separately. The Political Parties Finance Act which stated that parties had to have 15 seats in parliament in order to be entitled to state funding, had been introduced in 1994[96]. This Act left all the opposition parties without funding since they did not have the required seats. This became a major challenge to such parties like ZUM, the Democratic Party, Muzorewa's United Parties and ZANU-Ndonga. While this move was a major challenge to ZANU-Ndonga, as indicated above, it is important to mention that these elections were held at a time when Ndabaningi Sithole had returned from his self imposed exile to the USA in January 1992[97]. This became a major relief for the people of Chipinge. The people were rejuvenated by the coming back of Ndabaningi Sithole, who became the candidate for Chipinge South in the 1995 elections. His presence also made the people of Chipinge to remain strongly inclined to him and ZANU-Ndonga, a situation which made the people to continue voting without choosing. The ethnic factor, thus, continued to influence electoral politics in Chipinge even in 1995, despite the fact that the political ground was sometimes uneven.

In the 1995 elections, ZANU PF was the overall winner with 117 seats out of 120 seats. ZANU-Ndonga won 2 seats in Chipinge North and Chipinge South, while an independent candidate Margaret Dongo, won 1 seat. ZANU-Ndonga was represented by Freddy Sithole in Chipinge North and Ndabaningi Sithole in Chipinge South[98]. ZANU-Ndonga's vote, as already seen, was greatly concentrated in Chipinge, and neighbouring areas such as Chimanimani. This also shows that the support for ZANU-Ndonga remained one which was based on kinship ties among the local Ndau where Ndabaningi Sithole belonged. It is also felt that the significant share of the votes that ZANU-Ndonga attracted in some high density suburbs of Harare was because of the presence there of sizeable communities of workers coming from Chipinge, although no survey has certainly established this. These votes came from Glen Norah, Glenview and Highfields[99]. It can also be concluded from such development that the people of Chipinge were always linked by the ethnic factor, which continued to influence politics there.

Although Ndabaningi Sithole withdrew from the 1996 presidential elections, citing the unevenness of the electoral ground, the people of Chipinge remained strongly committed to him and his party. Even when the withdrawal from the elections had taken place, some people in Chipinge went on to vote for him. This could be that these people did not hear it on the radio that he had withdrawn, but it could also be a gesture of renewed allegiance to Ndabaningi Sithole, who has been considered as the paramount political chief of the Ndau[100].

This can be a testimony that ethnicity continued to play an important role in the electoral politics among the people of Chipinge since they regarded Sithole as their tribesman.

The 2000 elections came amidst other political developments. A new opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was formed in 1999 under the leadership of Morgan Tsvangirai. This came as a major challenge to both the ruling ZANU PF party and to ZANU-Ndonga. Due to the power of the rural vote, ZANU PF was able to win, with a majority of 62 seats out of the 120 contested seats. MDC was able to secure all the urban seats in Harare and Bulawayo with 57 eats. Sithole's ZANU-Ndonga maintained 1 seat in Chipinge South which was represented by Wilson Khumbula. The Chipinge North seat was lost to the MDC represented by Mathias Mlambo[101]. The fact that the people of Chipinge continued to vote for ZANU-Ndonga amidst many challenges shows that the voting patterns in the area were strongly influenced by ethnicity. Such challenges as intimidation in the rural areas did not deter the people of Chipinge from voting for ZANU-Ndonga[102]. Between 1980 and 2000, ZANU PF experienced a strong opposition and competition from ZANU-Ndonga in Chipinge. It is this situation which has led some scholars to conclude that ZANU PF was now compatible with opposition from ZANU-Ndonga because ZANU-Ndonga was easy to castigate as tribalist and to beat in elections[103]. This is also because the threat from ZANU-Ndonga was coming from one area, a situation which ZANU PF learnt to live with. In a way, this "comfort" also came as a failure by the ruling ZANU-PF to eradicate the effects of Chipinge ethnicity, which continued to influence electoral politics in the area even after Ndabaningi Sithole's death as shall be shown in the next chapter.

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It has been demonstrated that electoral politics in Chipinge has been strongly influenced by the ethnic factor among the Ndau people. Since the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe, the people of Chipinge have been voting for Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga. They had immortalised Ndabaningi Sithole to such an extent that he became a popular figure, not only in Chipinge, but also in Zimbabwe as a whole. Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga became synonymous to such an extent that even when Ndabaningi Sithole was in exile the people of Chipinge always voted for ZANU-Ndonga and continued to shout his name. The various challenges in the political arena did not deter the Ndau from voting as they wished. Thus, the voting pattern which developed in Chipinge as far back as 1979 can only be explained in terms of the role played by ethnicity. Such a strong ethnic bond among the people of Chipinge created a difficult time for the ruling ZANU PF party, which also failed to establish a one party state in the country. Ethnicity also continued to influence electoral politics in Chipinge in the years after the death of Ndabaningi Sithole, as shall be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0   VOTING AGAINST ZANU-PF AND NOT FOR THE MDC

The death of Ndabaningi Sithole on December 12, 2000, marked the beginning of another era in the political history of Zimbabwe in general and Chipinge in particular. This roughly coincided with the emergence of another opposition party – the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which was born in 1999. Thus, the new millennium witnessed a rejuvenation of ethnicity which resulted in the people of Chipinge continue to vote against ZANU-PF, while at the same time seeking refuge in the MDC. Thus, the vote which they cast during this period was a protest vote against ZANU- PF, following the antagonism that had taken place over the past years until Ndabaningi Sithole's grave. Voting for the MDC, thus , was not because the people of Chipinge had a passion towards the party, but it was because the MDC was another opposition force just as ZANU- Ndonga was.[104] The Ndau people had nowhere else to place their vote on their   long standing " conflict " with ZANU-PF, but on any opposition party that would have come their way. Due to the strong ethnic force among them, the people of Chipinge , therefore , rallied behind the Movement for Democratic Change , but   with   a strong   nostalgic   feeling   for Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU- Ndonga. It will be argued in this chapter that the ethnic factor made the people of Chipinge to continue voting against ZANU-PF and at the same time not for the MDC, since they strongly believed that soon their " traditional" party could be resuscitated if a new leader for the party was found.

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They also considered the toiling in vain of their leader, Ndabaningi Sithole, who died before ruling the country.[105] This shall be shown in detail in the discussion below.

3.1 The Death of Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU- Ndonga

The death of Ndabaningi Sithole was both a shocking and disturbing incident for the people of Chipinge who had spent the past decades rallying behind him and his party – ZANU- Ndonga. The Ndau people were greatly disturbed especially when they considered that it was going to be difficult , if not impossible , to find another leader such as Ndabaningi Sithole to lead them.[106] They also strongly felt that his effort contributed during the liberation struggle was not rewarded since he died before ruling the country.[107] Thus , because of a strong ethnic bond between them and Ndabaningi Sithole, the Ndau people mourned Sithole with a lot of grief and as a group .

However, Sithole's death came at a time when a new opposition party , The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) , had been born in 1999. This marked the beginning of yet another era in the political history of Zimbabwe in general and Chipinge in particular. The ethnic factor among the people of Chipinge , which had never taught them to vote for ZANU-PF, led them to vote for the newly formed opposition party – the Movement for Democratic Change. Thus, ethnicity continued to influence electoral politics in Chipinge as the events of the new millennium have shown.

The Ndau people viewed the MDC as a better alternative than ZANU-PF which was their electoral rivalry for the past two decades. The people of Chipinge therefore, voted in protest against ZANU-PF, while at the same time, voting for a party which they did not like as much as they did with ZANU-Ndonga.[108] The people of Chipinge also realised that an enemy of an enemy is a friend. ZANU-PF was a common enemy for both MDC and ZANU- Ndonga. The Ndau people were still being controlled by a strong feeling of belonging to Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU- Ndonga, even after his death. It is also his death which marked the beginning of the downfall of his party. The Ndau people strongly believed that soon, another leader for their party would be found and that ZANU- Ndonga was going to be resuscitated. To them, voting for the MDC was just a temporary arrangement which would be reversed when ZANU-Ndonga was back on its course. Even today, the Ndau people still believe that a leader shall be found and ZANU- Ndonga shall be a strong party again.[109] This, however, is difficult to conceal considering how electoral politics has come to be dominated by ZANU- PF on the one hand and the MDC on the other.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the events of the 2000 general elections clearly show how the MDC had begun to control electoral politics in Zimbabwe in general and Chipinge in particular. This is shown by the fact that in these elections, the Chipinge North constituency was snatched by the Movement for Democratic Change represented by Mathias Mlambo. This shows how seriously the MDC had come to take a centre stage during the period of transitional politics.

This was the case with the 2008 harmonised elections which showed how the ethnic factor continued to influence electoral politics in Chipinge . While all the constituencies in Chipinge district voted for the MDC, only one constituency , Chipinge central , voted for ZANU-PF.[110] This shows a strong determination by the people of Chipinge to vote against ZANU-PF , but finding an alternative to ZANU-Ndonga , in the MDC .

The scenario above shows that the relations between the people of Chipinge and ZANU-PF have been uneasy for a long time. This is shown by the fact that such voting patterns developed regardless of the great efforts which had been made by the ZANU-PF party to win votes in the area. ZANU PF wanted to win the elections by any means necessary. In some cases it was characterized by the giving out of relief food to the people of Chipinge to sustain them during times of hardships. Some projects were also embarked on , which saw some women in the district receiving equipment such as sewing machines to start businesses. Some political figures and aspiring members of parliament also thronged the district promising the electorate certain favours if they voted for them [111] . The third chimurenga has been considered by other scholars as nothing but a campaign tool used by ZAPU – PF to win votes in the face of strong opposition, especially from 2000. The fall of Zimbabwe into a crisis at the beginning of 2000 is argued to have been the major cause of the development of imaginations of a new Zimbabwe. It is this situation which is argued to have resulted in some members of the Zimbabwean society to adopt a radical stance in their call for a new beginning.

Thus, effort was made amidst these conditions by the ruling ZANU–PF party to employ new tools in order to win elections. Thus the grabbing of land from the white farmers and its distribution among ordinary Zimbabweans was, therefore, conducted in order to lure people to the party.[112] Such moves by the ruling ZANU-PF party characterised the political history of the country from that period onwards. However , such efforts to win votes in Chipinge were not rewarded , for the people of Chipinge continued to vote against ZANU-PF. Voting among the Ndau people, therefore, continued to be along ethnic lines. As already stated , voting for the MDC was also intended to be a temporary arrangement which would create room for the emergence of a potential leader for ZANU- Ndonga [113] Thus , voting in the new millennium among the people of Chipinge , continued to be against ZANU-PF. At the same time it was not for the MDC since the Ndau people felt and still feel that ZANU-Ndonga can emerge at any time.

As already discussed in the previous chapters, the events of the 1960s and 1970s in the history of Zimbabwe created a situation of hatred and antagonism among some nationalists in ZANU and ZAPU. The breaking away of the ZANU nationalists led by Ndabaningi Sithole from ZAPU, led by Joshua Nkomo , laid a foundation for the development of ethnic conflicts among the nationalist leaders. It is this situation which created a ripple of effects resulting in some ethnic tensions developing among the Zezuru , Karanga and Manyika ethnic groups.[114] As already seen , it is these tensions which resulted in the assassination of Herbert Chitepo and the ousting of Ndabaningi Sithole from the ZANU presidency .

While this chapter is not meant to reconsider this issue , it is important to mention here that these ethnic tensions gave birth to a strong ethnic feeling among the Ndau people as well who were not happy about the way Ndabaningi Sithole was treated by other nationalists . This dissatisfaction among the Ndau people continued to have influence on the political behaviour of the people of Chipinge . Thus , voting against ZANU-PF for the past years was mainly because of this long standing friction between ZANU and Ndabaningi Sithole . [115] The ethnic factor among the Ndau people , as well as their political behaviour , were a result of the treatment Ndabaningi Sithole received until his death. ZANU-PF and the people of Chipinge continued to be polarized by the fact that the ZANU-PF led government showed that it did not know Ndabaningi Sithole when he died . This treatment reflected that Sithole had not made any meaningful contribution during the liberation struggle. Thus, Sithole was buried just like an ordinary man at Freedom farm- his homestead at Mt Selinda in Chipinge. This negative treatment of Ndabaningi Sithole gulvanised the ethnic factor among the people of Chipinge .[116] This partly explains why the people of Chipinge have continued to vote against ZANU-PF after the death of Ndabaningi Sithole. Since the MDC was the major opposition movement after the death of Sithole , the people of Chipinge , therefore , found it a better alternative , even though they lacked a strong passion for it, which they had with ZANU-Ndonga.

The people of Chipinge are also convinced that since the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe very little development has been introduced in Chipinge by the government .

They consider Chipinge as one district that has been marginalized by the government , among other areas . This lack of development has been interpreted as a punishment by the government since the Ndau people have always been voting for ZANU- Ndonga and Ndabaningi Sithole. The government is perceived as having viewed this electoral behaviour as an impediment to national development. In 1990, the government failed to introduce a one party state system, partly because the people of Chipinge is one group that had voted for opposition parties when they voted for ZANU – Ndonga [117]. This explains why relations between ZANU-PF and the Ndau people have always been uneasy. The Ndau people, therefore, learnt to live with that political situation surrounding them. They were convinced that as long as God gave them the rains , they would continue to work in the fields so that they do not starve. Thus , they argue that the fact that for all that period in which they were voting for Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga , they never starved . God gave them the rains and the food which made them not to heavily depend on the government .[118] This also explains why the people of Chipinge continued to vote against ZANU-PF even after the death of Sithole. The vote which they cast on opposition parties such as the Movement for Democratic Change was , thus , a protest vote against ZANU-PF for failing to introduce full –time development in Chipinge , among other reasons.

This situation has helped to strengthen the ethnic factor among the Ndau people, making them to continue voting along ethnic lines.

The discussion above has shown that since the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe, the Ndau people have always been voting for opposition parties against the ruling ZANU-PF party. These people have been voting for ZANU- Ndonga during Ndabaningi Sithole's life time and the movement for Democratic Change later. Since the 2008 elections are the last elections in the first decade of the new millennium, and the last elections to be discussed in this   paper, the Ndau people's perception is that in future elections, they will continue to vote in the manner they have been voting in previous elections.[119] As pointed out earlier , voting for the MDC has been considered as a period in waiting for a potential ZANU- Ndonga leader to come forth . The Ndau people hope that one day ZANU – Ndonga shall emerge as a strong party again. Their perception is that they will continue to vote for the MDC in future elections if ZANU- Ndonga is not yet re-born [120]. Such a feeling shows that the Ndau people still have a strong nostalgic feeling for ZANU- Ndonga and Ndabaningi Sithole. It also shows that ethnicity has continued to influence electoral politics in Zimbabwe in general and Chipinge in particular. They strongly feel that if ZANU- Ndonga is resuscitated, they will continue   to vote for their traditional party. [121] However, this dream for a new ZANU-Ndonga is something which is difficult to ascertain considering the fact that the founder of the party is no longer there to direct events . Also, the strong bond which had been built around ZANU- Ndonga has been diluted by the existence of new opposition parties. There is at the moment no any ZANU –Ndonga to continue talking about. What is possible to continue talking about is the ethnic factor which is dominating electoral politics in Chipinge to this day.

In short, electoral politics in Chipinge from the time of Ndabaningi Sithole's death, continued to be strongly influenced by ethnicity. The ethnic factor , which had always led the Ndau people to vote for opposition forces , continued to dominate electoral politics in Chipinge. In the new millennium, the people of Chipinge continued to vote against ZANU-PF since the ethnic bond among them had never taught them to vote for any other party , except ZANU-Ndonga . With the appearance of the Movement for Democratic Change on the political scene , the Ndau people, without Sithole,and as a group, immediately rallied behind it . They saw the MDC as an a alternative to ZANU – Ndonga which had collapsed with the death of Sithole . The history of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, during which some ethnic conflicts developed among ethnic groups has a strong bearing on the voting patterns in Chipinge . The ethnic conflicts which developed during this period made the people of Chipinge to continue voting against ZANU-PF. The relegation of Sithole as a political none-entity has worsened the situation. The fact that he was treated as an ordinary person when he died galvanized the ethnic element among the Ndau people . Thus the Ndau people continued to view ZANU-PF as their rivalry , as was the case during Sithole 's life time . However, voting for the MDC was not because they had a passion for it. They saw it as a better alternative considering the political situation around them. The Ndau people strongly hope that someday, ZANU- Ndonga shall be resuscitated and that is when they will shift their vote from the MDC back to ZANU- Ndonga. Thus the people of Chipinge have continued to vote against ZANU-PF and not for the MDC.

The strong ethnic bond among the Ndau has made them to perceive that they will

Continue to vote in the manner they have been voting in future elections.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 NDABANINGI SITHOLE: A NATIONAL HERO OR SELL-OUT?

The events of the 1960s and 1970s in the history of Zimbabwe, which gave birth to ethnic divisions among the existing ethnic groups and nationalist leaders, also gave birth to great enemity among the nationalist   leaders along ethnic lines, as already discussed in the previous chapters. It is this situation which   gave birth to immense polarization among the Karanga , Zezuru and Manyika. The outspokenness by Ndabaningi Sithole over Chitepo's death resulted in him being accused of siding with rebels and was , therefore, labeled a tribalism and a regionalist .[122] It is this label which   characterized the relationship between Sithole   and other ZANU nationalists during that time . When the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole and Bishop Abel Muzorewa reached a settlement with   Ian Smith in 1978, the two were labelled sell-outs of the revolution. It   is from such   political developments   that   Sithole   was continuously viewed as an enemy and sell- out .[123] Contrary to this label given to Sithole by other nationalist leaders, the people of Chipinge did not consider Sithole as a sell-out , but a hero of the nationalist revolution in Zimbabwe . This came as a result of the Ndau   people's consideration of the   role which   Sithole   played during   the liberation struggle . Despite the fact that Ndabaningi Sithole was not regarded as a national hero by the ZANU- PF led government even when he died , it will be shown in this chapter that the people of Chipinge hero worshipped Sithole during his life time and after.

Such a course of action has undermined the label which Sithole received as a sell-out, as shall be shown in this chapter.

The split between ZAPU and ZANU in 1963 occurred when a group of ZAPU executive members led by Ndabaningi Sithole, challenged the leadership of Joshua Nkomo, resulting in the formation of ZANU.[124] This marked the beginning of bad blood among the nationalist leaders which took the form of accusations and counter accusations. Sithole's group is cited as having accused Joshua Nkomo of tribalism and regionalism .[125] Such squabbles continued to dominate the political arena of Zimbabwe throughout the liberation struggle . In the 1960s and after , such ethnic conflicts also gripped the ZANU faction when divisions emerged among the Karanga, Zezuru and Manyika ethnic groups over leadership positions.[126] Enemity was rife among the nationalist leaders. Such conflicts became even more pronounced when Ndabaningi Sithole raised his voice over the death of Chitepo. Sithole saw the death of Chitepo as a result of an element of tribalism that had infested the ZANU political group. It is this outspokenness which resulted in Sithole accused of siding with rebels and with himself labelled a tribalist and a regionalist .[127]Such pointing of fingers at Sithole marked the beginning of the strong polarization that later developed between Sithole and other nationalist leaders , a situation which contributed greatly to the ejection of Sithole from the party. This political development resulted in Sithole taking a desperate stance in which he sought a political settlement with Ian Smith together with Abel Muzorewa, leading to the March 3, 1978 agreement.

Thus, Muzorewa and Sithole were labelled sell-outs of the revolution and puppets that compromised with Ian Smith to produce what other nationalists called false independence .[128] This label put on Sithole in particular became a permanent mark which resulted in total polarization developing between Sithole and other ZANU nationalists. This situation also led to the total denial and rejection of Sithole by other nationalists. But was Sithole a national hero or Sell-out?

While Ndabaningi Sithole was viewed as a sell-out of the revolution by other ZANU nationalists, the people of Chipinge viewed him differently. From the time of his rejection, the Ndau people began to strongly rally behind him, for they saw nothing wrong done by him warranting the loss of the ZANU presidency and the label he was given as a sell-out.[129]. This support given to Sithole , as already discussed in the previous chapters , took an ethnic dimension . The people of Chipinge , therefore , viewed Ndabaningi Sithole as a national hero, after considering the role which he played during the liberation struggle . The Ndau people began to hero worship Sithole whom they supported in the elections held during his life time and after his death. The fact that Sithole was castigated as a sell-out, strengthened the ethnic bond between him and the Ndau people, thereby making the people consider him as a hero . He was referred to as" Shumba yeZimbabwe." meaning the lion of Zimbabwe.[130] This actually shows that Ndabaningi Sithole's heroism was well conceived among the Ndau people, whose support for him was great . This is contrary to the sell-out label which he was given by other ZANU nationalists.

4.1   Ndabaningi Sithole and the Liberation Struggle

As noted by Ndlovu – Gatsheni , whether one subscribes to the popular view of Ndabaningi Sithole as a sell-out and counter revolutionary , this does not justify his exclusion from the history of the nation. Sithole is viewed by Gatsheni as having played a crucial part in Zimbabwe's nationalism drama. Ndabaningi is viewed as having conceived a vision of Zimbabwe to be formed after the revolution , a vision which cannot simply be ignored . [131] In other words Ndlovu – Gatsheni shares the view which the people of Chipinge had , that of viewing Sithole , not as a sell-out, but a true hero of the nation. After looking at the role which Sithole played during the liberation struggle , one is bound to regard him as a hero of the nation as the Ndau   people have maintained.The role which Ndabaningi Sithole played in the history of Zimbabwe is reflected in his books which include the widely quoted African nationalism and Roots   of the revolution . These books reveal a lot about Sithole's conception of the nationalist liberation struggle and his imagination of the Zimbabwe to come . His   contribution is also   seen in his writing in defence of the widely   condemned   internal settlement   in such   books   as   In Defence of the Rhodesian constitutional agreement , in which he stood firm in defence of the settlement which marked a transitional period from colonial rule to majority rule in Zimbabwe . Sithole's importance in the history of Zimbabwe is also seen from the fact that he was a serious contender to the leadership of Zimbabwe until his death .[132]
What this shows is that Sithole made a great contribution to the history of Zimbabwe, a contribution which cannot deny him the hero status.

Thus the people of Chipinge have conceptualised such great contributions made by Sithole, thereby regarding him as a national hero.The label which Sithole was given as a sell-out , serves to show the level of enemity which had gripped ZANU in the 1970s. Such a label serves to justify the castigation which was made on Sithole.

The heroism of Sithole , as perceived by the Ndau people , was also on the grounds that the formation of ZANU in 1963 was largely the brainchild of Ndabaningi Sithole . Sithole was the founder of ZANU as well as the first president of the party.[133] This has left a lot to be desired , especially by the Ndau people , about the contribution which Sithole played during the liberation struggle. ZANU is one such a party that attracted a great support from the majority of the people during the struggle for independence . When Ndabaningi was labeled a sell-out of the revolution , the Ndau people stood by him and continued to support him since they still viewed him as the president and founder of the party. He is considered as having laid a strong foundation on which the liberation struggle came to be built.[134] immediately after the split between ZAPU and ZANU in 1963, Sithole adopted and declared what he termed confrontational politics. He argued that the nationalist struggle had to move away from the petty and ineffective strikes into the phase of the armed struggle. It was out of such a radical stance that Sithole is credited for having revolutionised the liberation movement. Sithole is also credited for having coined a number of slogans that helped to build the momentum needed for the armed phase of the struggle. These slogans include "we are our own liberators and our own saviours". [135] This role he played in the liberation struggle, however, made him a sworn enemy of Ian Smith's government.

It is also the foundation which Sithole built that made ZANU to challenge ZAPU in terms of its commitment to the armed struggle, as seen in the defeat of Ian Smith's forces in the battle field by ZANLA forces. [136] It is out of such contributions that Ndabaningi Sithole earned himself a name as one of the most prominent figures in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle. He is known for having played a key part in the struggle for independence, heading military operations from the bush. [137] The first white person to die as a result of violence linked to the liberation struggle, Pieter Oberhotzer, was killed by a ZANU group called "Crocodile Gang" in Melsetter (Chimanimani) in July 1964. Such military attacks were undertaken after Ndabaningi Sithole had declared a confrontational stance and war to Ian Smith's government. [138] Thus, such considerations made the Ndau people to hero worship Sithole before and after his death, as the experience of the elections in Zimbabwe have shown from the previous chapters.

The fact that Ndabaningi Sithole made full participation during the liberation struggle resulted in him being considered a hero of the liberation struggle. He is credited for his bravery, which made him to declare war against Ian Smith and the Rhodesian Front. Thus, Sithole is known for having the full responsibility of starting the war in Zimbabwe, war in which he fully participated to liberate the country.[139]

Sithole has also been considered as having led other nationalists in consulting spirit mediums (Masvikiro) whose contribution during the war was of immense magnitude.

Ndabaningi is also believed to have been given an ordained wooden rod called "Ndonga" in the Ndau language , which is said to have become instrumental during the liberation war. It is believed that whenever Sithole pointed in the eastern direction with the rod, people would make a stampede into that direction. The rod is believed to have inspired a lot of people to cross into Mozambique to prepare for the war.[140] It is this contribution which Sithole made during the war that led the people of Chipinge to continuously support him , apart from the fact that he was also their tribesmen. Thus, he was regarded as a national hero , and not a sell-out as he was accused by other nationalists ,. Even today, the people of Chipinge have maintained the stance that Sithole is a hero.

Ndabaningi Sithole also tremendously participated in the liberation struggle as he was dispatched to China with some guerrillas to learn guerrilla warfare. It was from there that recruitment for the liberation war began.[141] He began his recruitment among the people of Chipinge, who became the first to cross into Mozambique under the leadership and guidance of Sithole. His recruitment was also characterized by a strong education to the people about the oppressiveness of the colonial system. Sithole is considered to have worked hard to stop such policies as the reduction of the herds of cattle which Africans were allowed to keep in a bid to reduce overgrazing. Sithole enlightened the Ndau and other people of the fact that such a policy by the Europeans was enacted only to oppress them. It became clear, therefore, among the Ndau that Europeans did not want competition from the Africans .[142]

Not only did Sithole contribute in the stoppage of the cattle policy, but also contributed by bringing to an end the slavery going on in Mozambique where the people of Chipinge were taken to cut down trees and prepare sisal. That was one of the most detested colonial policies among the Ndau people since it led to great oppression and displacement of many people. The support which Sithole received , therefore , was partly because he managed to put to an end such oppressive colonial policies.[143]

Ndabaningi Sithole was , therefore , supported and worshipped as a hero , a title which was maintained by the people of Chipinge to the present day. Thus, the accusation which Sithole received as a sell-out did not erode the contribution which he made during the liberation struggle. The Ndau people, instead, have continued to treat him as a national hero. On top of all his contribution , Sithole's heroism has also emanated from the fact that just like many other political leaders and heroes, he also suffered detention in 1964 for a period of eleven (11) years. As part of the preparations for the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (U.D.I) in 1965, Ian smith's government decided to imprison and detain all the leading nationalists and political actors regardless of whether they belonged to ZAPU or ZANU. It was out of these moves by the Smith regime that Ndabaningi Sithole became one of the nationalists imprisoned in 1964. [144] The treatment which Sithole received during this period of detention had a strong bearing on the role he played in the struggle for independence.

It was out of a full consideration of Sithole as a fiery rhetoric and charismatic figure by the smith regime which made him to be considered a very dangerous person by the Smith government. Thus, during his detention period Sithole was kept in solitary confinement, away from the other nationalists. His only visitor was his interrogator. [145]However, it has been argued that it is this total isolation from his colleagues throughout the eleven years of imprisonment which marked the beginning of Sithole's downfall. It was during this period that other nationalists plotted a "coup" to replace Sithole as ZANU leader. It is such moves by other nationalists which has made Sithole's contribution in the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe to be pushed to the peripheries. [146] Thus , he is considered as one person who suffered in a bid to liberate Zimbabwe from British colonial rule .[147] Such a suffering has erased any chances of doubt among the people of Chipinge concerning the hero status of Sithole.

4.2   Ndabaningi Sithole as an Opposition Leader

Ndabaningi Sithole's determination and heroism was also seen in the fact that when he returned to Rhodesia in 1977, after having been ousted from power as ZANU president , his bitterness did not make him give up nationalist politics. Instead , he formed a new organization known as the African National Council (ANC-Sithole) and at times known as ZANU- Sithole which later on culminated into ZANU – Ndonga. Thus, Sithole began to build his fortunes in Zimbabwe's politics as an opposition leader. It is this opposition role which earned him a great name among the Ndau.

This determination made him to raise considerable financial resources as demonstrated by his ability to dispense cars and other rewards to his followers[148].

His new internal politics emphasized the imagination of Zimbabwe as a multiracial democracy with a mixed economy. However, Sithole failed to maintain his political fortunes throughout the 1970s as Muzorewa overshadowed him in terms of support. But Sithole's resilience has resulted in him being considered a national hero by the people of Chipinge who never wavered in their support for Sithole. Thus, Sithole's great works have earned him great support from the people of Chipinge.

As discussed in the previous chapters, the events of the period from 1979 to 2008 show that Ndabaningi Sithole was a determined nationalist , explaining why he was regarded as a hero and not a sell-out. As already demonsrated in the previous chapters, the period from 1980 in Zimbabwe was dominated by Ndabaningi Sithole as one of the personal critics and opposition leader to the ruling ZANU-PF party, a stance which he maintained until his death. It is this stiff opposition by Ndabaningi Sithole and ZANU-Ndonga which contributed to the failure by ZANU-PF to establish a one party state in Zimbabwe. [149] It is also this opposition which Ndabaningi Sithole gave to the ruling ZANU-PF party which earned him a name among the Ndau people as a National Hero. Sitholes vision of a democratic and multiparty society was considered as having materialised due to these political developments. The people of Chipinge , therefore, continued to rally behind Sithole after making a full consideration of the role he played, not only as one of Zimbabwe's liberators, but also as a fighter for democracy.[150]

However, it is because of such a strong opposition which Sithole posed on the ruling ZANU-PF party that at one point he was accused on treason charges.

He was accused of trying to stage a coup against the government and to assassinate President Robert Mugabe. [151] While these accusations presented a dark cloud in Sithole's political career,it is such accusations and Sithole's bravery and endurance that made the Ndau people to consider him as a hero. He is regarded as having contributed immensely in development of Zimbabwe's political history. Votes were thus poured in for him in elections during his life time. Even though he was not declared a national hero by the ZANU-PF led government when he died , the Ndau people continued to regard him as one. This partly explains why the people of Chipinge have continued to vote against ZANU-PF as they also wanted to maintain the way they have been voting during the life time of Ndabaningi Sithole [152]. The Ndau people still have a strong nostalgic feeling , which is shown by the fact that they believe ZANU- Ndonga shall be resuscitated so that they continue to vote for Ndabaningi Sithole in the name of ZANU- Ndonga . Due to the great works he did for the country and for the Ndau people in particular, Sithole is viewed not as a sell-out, but a national hero by the people of Chipinge , a fact and conviction I strongly subscribe to.

To sum up, the heroism of Ndabaningi Sithole has been based on the contribution which he made during the liberation struggle. Sithole is considered as having participated fully in the liberation struggle as is reflected , firstly in the formation of ZANU , which became one of the major political parties in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle .

His role as the founder and first president of the party has resulted in him being hailed for such a role by the people of Chipinge . His participation in the declaration of war against Iran Smith and the Rhodesian Front has also left a lot to be desired on the contribution he made in the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe. It was also with his encouragement that a lot of people are said to have crossed into Mozambique , which became one of the countries from which the liberation war was fought . His suffering in detention for a period of eleven (11) years has erased any room of doubt among his followers , who strongly regarded Sithole as a national hero to this day. The fact that Sithole was not declared a national hero when he died only served to galvanise the element of ethnicity among the Ndau people, a situation which made them to move even closer to Sithole and his party. The view among the Ndau that Sithole is a hero has come to overshadow the label which he had received earlier on when he was viewed as a sell-out. The Ndau people have come to interpret this castigation of Sithole as one effect of the ethnic tensions and enmity that characterized ZANU politics during the liberation struggle . Such political developments have come to influence political behaviour among the Ndau people as already discussed in the previous chapters. To the Ndau people Sithole remains a hero , even though this is not a popular view in the country as a whole and among ZANU nationalists.

CONCLUSION

The role played by ethnicity in the African and Zimbabwean politics in general and on smaller ethnic groupings such as the Ndau in Zimbabwe is of immense magnitude. This influence of ethnicity in politics has attracted a wide spread attention among scholars as shown in this study. While the current discussion may not be exhaustive, it has tried to show that ethnicity has affected African and Zimbabwean politics since the colonial days. As a result of colonialism, many ethnic groups emerged among African communities many of which did not disappear after the attainment of independence . The emphasis by colonial policies in the creation of colonial boundaries and the grouping of people according to their place of origin also served to create divisions among African societies along ethnic lines. It is this situation which was inherited by independent Africa, which in some cases , resulted in ethnic tensions , violence and bloodshed. It has already been shown that some extreme cases of ethnic violence and conflicts were found in countries such as South Africa, Burundi and Rwanda. Such conflicts , as already shown , have resulted in the death of many people , an indication of how ethnic conflicts could be destructive.

Ethnicity has also been central in Zimbabwean politics. This has mainly taken the form of a split between the major political parties , ZAPU and ZANU in 1963 . Such a split resulted in the nationalist leaders accusing each other of tribalism. Thus, ethnic related conflicts came to dominate the history of the liberation struggle. This later developed into inter- ethnic conflicts in ZANU among the Karanga, Zezuru and Manyika ethnic groups.

Accusations and counter accusations continued to dominate the history of the political party during the liberation struggle . Such conflicts along ethnic lines and among ethnic groups resulted in politics of exclusion and inclusion, politics of violence and politics of deception. As already discussed such conflicts also resulted in the loss of power by Ndabaningi Sithole, following the disagreements that emerged over Chipeto's death. Thus, enmity between Sithole and other ZANU nationalists took an ethnic dimension , especially when Sithole retreated to his home area in Chipinge for support in his political aspirations. Ethnic related conflicts could also be seen in Zimbabwe in the early 1980s between PF ZAPU and ZANU-PF. Such conflicts resulted in the Gukurahundi genocide (1982-1986).

The period from 1980 has shown that ethnicity also dominated electoral politics in Zimbabwe , especially among the people of Chipinge . From this period onwards, the Ndau people began to vote along ethnic lines. They showed a strong allegiance to Sithole and his party which they supported in elections until Sithole's death in December 2000. Such an allegiance to Sithole occurred regardless of the various challenges which the Ndau people faced in the political game . It is also the influence of ethnicity which prevented the establishment of a one party state in Zimbabwe , following the 1990 elections . In the period after Sithole's death, ethnicity continued to influence electoral behaviour among the people of Chipinge. The people of Chipinge continued to vote against ZANU-PF, when they supported such opposition parties as the Movement for Democratic Change. It is this stance which the Ndau people maintained despite the effort by ZANU-PF to win votes in Chipinge.

Their voting for the MDC, as already shown, was not because the Ndau people had a passion for it, but it was because ethnicity had never taught them to vote for ZANU-PF.

The period from the 1970s has shown that the Ndau people began to hero worship Sithole. This followed the ousting of Sithole from power and the political developments that followed. After considering the role which Sithole played in the liberation struggle, the Ndau people began to treat him as a hero. Even though Sithole was not accorded a hero status by the ZANU-PF led government when he died, the Ndau people strongly regard him as one. This view was influenced by the fact that Ndabaningi Sithole was the founder and first president of ZANU , a party which later took a dominant role in the liberation of Zimbabwe . His eleven years in detention has also erased any doubt among the Ndau people in as far as the hero status of Sithole is concerned . This is contrary to the label which Sithole had received when he was regarded as a sell-out by other nationalists, following his internal agreement with Abel Muzorewa and Ian Smith in 1978. Thus, political behaviour, and in particular, voting patterns among the people of Chipinge, took an ethnic dimension.

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