

## **Abstract**

This research studies the discursive ways in which male student graffiti at Midlands State University reveal ethnic tensions between the Shona and Ndebele of Zimbabwe. The study is carried out in a sociopolitical environment in which spaces for openly discussing issues of ethnicity have been greatly limited, especially in conventional media. Any discussion of ethnicity is quickly labelled as fanning tribalism and is therefore suppressed or criticised. This does not, however, mean ethnicity is not engaged with outside of conventional platforms. Graffiti is one such alternative platform appropriated by male university students to discuss ethnicity issues. It emerges that such discussions are predominantly violent in nature with each group trying to prove or assert its dominance over the other. The analysis of this data is couched in Wodak and Meyer's discourse-historical approach as it gives precedence to the historical context in which the discursive 'events' are embedded.