

Brand and Reputation Management During Political Crises: The Zimbabwe Challenge

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Abstract

The chapter considers the essence of brand and reputation management during political crises and the discussion radiates within the Zimbabwean political party politics. Political parties in Zimbabwe (mainly ZANU-PF and MDC-A/ CCC) seem not to care as regards the importance of brand and reputation management in direct speak to their survival. Instead of building their brands as a marker of peculiar strategic trajectory, the said political outfits deploy foxy Machiavellian tactics steeped on bald rhetoric. It is on this score that this chapter explores the premise that brands and reputation are not built on empty political chants like “ÈD Pfee” and “Ngaapinde Hake Mukomana”. The chapter offers a refreshing trajectory that puts at the centre linguistic demographics as an appeal formula. The “ED Pfee” and “*Ngaapinde Hake Mukomana*” which are constricted political campaign lines that are off-tangent linguistically, since they relate to the Shona linguistic cohort only. This, by extension, becomes a political crisis or disaster that needs the agency of brand and reputation management. This chapter argues that the putative brand and reputation management of ZANU-PF and MDC-A is structurally, linguistically and economically infirm. The discussion advances the idea that brand and reputation management are predicated on the premise that political parties do not occur in a social and/or economic vacuum as brands and reputation are built on the backdrop of a symbiotic relationship between duty-bearers and claim holders. The chapter further argues that it is the claim holders who hold the centre as regards reputation and the same can only morph to good reputation if and when interests are averaged—ZANU-PF and MDC-A/ CCC should be alive to the stakeholder theory (generation of beneficiation) than predicating their “strategic” brand and reputation building on mere artistic rhetoric.