

### 3. A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF OPERATION MURAMBATSVINA (OPERATION DRIVE OUT FILTH) ON PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV AND AIDS IN ZIMBABWE AS REFLECTED BY NEWSPAPER REPORTS

**\*Rewai Makamani (PhD)**

#### **Abstract**

Between May and June 2005, the Government of Zimbabwe embarked on a nation - wide blitz dubbed Operation *Murambatsvina* (Operation Drive out Filth). It was purportedly aimed at cleaning up the country by destroying all illegally built structures including flea market stalls, informal workshops and dwelling units of poor people thereby rendering thousands homeless and desperate. This national blitz received wide media coverage both at home and abroad. This study analyses persuasive strategies used by Zimbabwean newspaper reports on Operation *Murambatsvina* (OM) in a bid to reflect on how newspapers persuaded readers to accept their viewpoints on how OM affected people particularly HIV and AIDS victims. The study reveals that newspaper reports employed a wide range of linguistic strategies (e.g. thematisation, metaphors, deictic referencing, rhematisation, nominalization, direct speech) to expose OM as a gross violation of all the provisions made in the HIV and AIDS policy document for Zimbabwe of 1999. The operation brought to question government's commitment to the plight of HIV and AIDS victims. The study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), whose incorporation of a number of analytical tools, facilitated an in- depth analysis of the said newspaper reports. More than thirty newspaper reports and a number of online media articles were selected for analysis in this study.

#### **Introduction**

This paper interrogates newspaper discourse on the effect that OM has had on people living with HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe. This government operation occurred in May 2005. What makes it significant is that it was conducted during the winter season thereby exposing victims to vicissitudes of homelessness and the cold weather as they lacked alternative accommodation and means of continuing with their livelihoods. The paper observes that, regarding the operation, there exists polarization in the reportage by government newspapers (*The Chronicle, The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail*) and private newspapers (*The Daily Mirror, The Financial Gazette, The Standard* and *The Zimbabwe Independent*). Newspaper discourse reflects a wide use of linguistic and discursive strategies aimed at either concealing and, or, revealing how the said operation impacted on people living with HIV and AIDS. The study however, notes that such well calculated use of linguistic and discursive strategies were for ideological reasons. Therefore, the study unpacks the linguistic and discursive strategies used and uncovers how the operation affected people living with HIV and AIDS. Consequently, the study explicates how proper planning and empathy would alleviate the plight of people living with HIV and AIDS were such major operations embarked upon in future.

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**\*Senior Lecturer, Department of Communication, PoN (NUST), Windhoek, Namibia**

## **Theoretical framework: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

The study engages CDA to unpack the reportage of OM by selected newspapers in Zimbabwe. CDA is drawn from the meta – theory of critical realism (Berko, 2007). It stems from problems of society (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, (1999) in Cavalrho (2008). Its origin is associated with enlightenment philosophers. They viewed rhetoric as the art of ‘speaking well’ (bene dicendi) (van Dijk, 2011: 1). CDA incorporates “social – theoretical insights into discourse analysis and advocates social commitment and interventionism in research” (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 447). The main reason for my use of CDA in this study is that it focuses on “dimensions of power abuse and the injustice and inequality that results from it” (van Dijk, 1993: 252). It is therefore important to use CDA in this analysis as the study focuses on discourse structures that influence cognition. This means the study is seized with issues of text production and reception. As argued by Janks (2003) the concerns that will be investigated through the use of CDA are:

- ▶ How is the text positioned or positioning?
- ▶ Whose interests are served by this positioning?
- ▶ Whose interests are negated?
- ▶ What are the consequences of this positioning?
- ▶ Why did they use this language?; How else could this have been said?; What is missing?; and, What thinking patterns does it cause?

This means CDA enabled this study to investigate the following:

- ▶ How did Zimbabwe newspapers portray the impact of OM on HIV and AIDS victims?
- ▶ Did OM relate to the Zimbabwe National Policy on HIV and AIDS of 1999?

This analysis enables the study to expose linguistic and discursive strategies used in the discourse, lay bare the hidden motivations for such portrayal and, chart a way forward regarding both reporting patterns and the need for people - driven implementations of national programmes.

### **Data collection methods**

In this study library research and internet searches were used to gain insights into various theoretical positions as well as to source information from online media that covered OM. More than thirty newspaper articles were gathered using purposive sampling and analysed. Additionally, personal experience, the social network - approach (Tagilamonte, 2006), the ethnographic methods (Drew and Heritage, 1992, Talavera, 2002, Angalleli, 2004, Anafara and Mertz, 2006) were invoked to establish the relationship between newspaper reports and reality. The use of personal experience and social networks proved crucial in this study as it unveiled critical insights that aided CDA in unravelling newspaper discourse in relation to how the operation impacted on people living with HIV and AIDS.

### **HIV and AIDS Policy provisions**

The Zimbabwean HIV and AIDS policy of 1999 deals with management of the national response to HIV and AIDS. It makes it succinctly clear that General Human Rights and issues of Public Health were to be maintained and promoted in Zimbabwe. The policy also mentions the need to

provide care to people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA). Gender issues are highlighted as needing attention together with education about HIV/AIDS/STI and HIV/STI research. In its further renditions, the policy charges that there be a supportive environment for every citizen of Zimbabwe with no human rights violations. Discrimination is outlawed by the policy. Furthermore, the HIV and AIDS policy for Zimbabwe dwells on the need to promote marital integrity and sustainability. The need to facilitate marital unity is highlighted as well as that of protection of family against threats (e.g. lack of housing facilities, finances and health problems). These are critical issues that the policy was set to tackle in order to alleviate the plight of people living with HIV and AIDS. On the foreword of the policy, President Mugabe rightly inculcates a sense of urgency in fighting the disease which he metaphorically conceptualises as, “A tragic reality being experienced by families, communities and the nation at large”( Mugabe: Zimbabwe: iv). President Mugabe further calls for “...a broad based participatory and consultative concerted and unified national response” (Mugabe, *ibid*). Lastly, the policy outlines that Government’s role is “...to provide the required leadership to mobilize national efforts to combat the epidemic” (Zimbabwe: 3). This shows that the HIV and AIDS policy for Zimbabwe of 1999 was well conceived as it catered well for the welfare of people living with HIV and AIDS.

### **The media environment**

Zimbabwe is endowed with public and private media. Public newspapers investigated in the study are *The Herald*, *The Chronicle* and *The Sunday Mail*. They are owned by the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT). The investigated private newspapers are *The Zimbabwe Independent* Publishing group’s *Zimbabwe Standard* owned by Trevor Ncube and *The Daily Mirror* owned by Ibbo Mandaza. Zimbabwe media is regulated by harsh media laws which are the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) which was enacted in 2002, The Broadcasting Services Act (BSA), The Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Interception of Communications Act (ICA). The existing ownership patterns have influenced the way Zimbabwe media reports on national issues such as HIV and AIDS such that one needs analytical tools in the mould of CDA to uncover reality given the prevalence of inherent media biases.

### **Analysis of findings**

#### **Negative evaluation, claptraps, deictic referencing and positive politeness**

In their reportage of the implementation of the HIV and AIDS policy for Zimbabwe of 1999, newspapers used negative evaluation, claptraps, deictic referencing and positive politeness. For example, *The Standard* of 20 May 2005 negatively evaluates OM as “...callous and insensitive”. This evokes negative contingent emotions (See Cockcroft & Cockcroft, 2005). However, *The Daily Mirror* (*Mirror Reporter*, 2005: 1) had the following headline: “Destitute arrested in police clean – up”. This positively evaluates OM as a noble ‘clean up’ operation aimed at ridding the city/country of social malcontents. *The Mirror Reporter*, (*Ibid*) posits:

“A combination of the harsh economic conditions, HIV and AIDS scourge and rural to urban migration has forced hundreds of people onto the streets to beg and make ends meet. However, these destitute harass civilians grabbing women’s handbags, foods from people and at times snatch jewellery from women’s necks and wrists”.

The perspective of the *Daily Mirror* resonates with President Mugabe’s speech on the Opening of the 22<sup>nd</sup> ordinary session of the ZANU PF National Consultative Assembly in Harare on 25 June 2005. This issue is recorded thus,

“President Mugabe told delegates that the clean – up operation was, in fact, a reconstruction programme designed to weed out hideouts of crime and grime, filthy stalls and encourage the construction of orderly planned and tidy residential and business structures in their place.” In the report, Mugabe proceeded to say, “Their (BBC and CNN) crocodile tears will not deter us from carrying out the necessary action to rid ourselves of malpractices that have caused hardships to our people through the illegal trade in essential commodities like sugar, soap, mealie – meal, fuel, foreign currency and clothing items (Sunday Mail Reporter, 2005: 2).

The President’s speech betrays use of claptraps – cum - ideological squares. This is a technique used to manage face. The speech connotes ideological squares associated with two groups of people: ‘us’ versus ‘them’; ‘our’ versus ‘their’. Reah, (2001) argues that this strategy is used to forge a common identity between the speaker / writer and the audience as well as to label the referent as culpable thereby creating a ‘them and us effect.’ Therefore through the speech the President forges a common identity with the majority thereby excluding the minority – the victims of the operation. Regarding the use of this technique Artkinson (1984) in Beard (2000) argues that politicians use claptrap – a trick, device of language designed to catch applause - to appeal to their audiences. This perspective holds that politicians use sound - bites as strategy to identify with their target audiences. As shown in the given example, such statements reflect an exploitation of positive politeness strategy (Cutting, 2002: 47, Yule, 1996). Regarding this strategy, Cutting (2002) quotes Brown and Levinson (1987) as arguing that politeness is a cross cultural phenomenon by which interlocutors seek to, “... establish social relationship through acknowledging and showing an awareness of the face, the public self - image, the sense of self, of the people that we address. ... speakers should respect each other’s expectations regarding self - image, take account of their feelings and avoid threatening acts” (Brown and Levinson (1987) in Cutting (2002)).

The analysis symbolizes the existence of ideological squares in the reportage of OM between private and Government newspapers. It emerges that whereas private newspapers generally reported on how the operation negatively affected victims, government newspapers adopted the government position that the operation was noble and pro-people.

### **Thematised headlines**

Newspaper reports used thematised headlines as communication strategy to reveal their disapproval of OM. For example a headline of the Standard of 26 June (Standard Staff, 2005: 7) reads: ‘Clean –up forces 300 000 out of school’. The report claims:

“Both the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe and ZIMTA estimated that as many as 300 000 children have dropped out of school after their homes were destroyed. Most acutely affected school children were in the Harare suburbs of *Mbare*, Hatfield, Highfield, Glen Norah, Glen View, *Budiriro*, *Mufakose*, Warren Park, *Kuwadzana*, *Dzivaresekwa*, Epworth, *Tafara* and *Mabvuku*.”

The above report further mentions the rise in “separations” of couples and expresses fear of a possible rise in “child prostitution”. This agrees with a *Sokwanele* (online newspaper) report in which a victim of the operation was interviewed in Beitbridge Border Post saying, “We are too many ladies looking for too few men. I need to come earlier and stay longer to get business” ([www.sokwanele.com/articles/sok](http://www.sokwanele.com/articles/sok). Mail and Guardian Reporter).

The above report reveals that OM exposed people to the pandemic. From this perspective it violated the provisions of Zimbabwe's policy on HIV and AIDS of 1999. This view is shared by The Standard (Standard Staff, 2005: 6) article titled: "White cliff Farm 'homes' levelled". Part of the article informs that,

"Many families are still sleeping in the open air amongst the ruins of their homes, more than a week after the destruction of their homes. HIV positive people sleeping in the open with no medical attention after the Hatcliffe clinic had been closed, ...375 infants sleeping in the open."

It is evident that 'levelled' is an emotive word used by the writer to evoke sympathy of the reader as it connotes extreme violence perpetrated against poor people. By attributing the statement to a reputable association of medical practitioners, the writer seeks to achieve persuasion through attribution and intertextuality (Reah, 2001). Additionally, the use of a direct quotation full of lexical words (Hatcliffe, HIV positive people) and statistical evidence (375 infants) is aimed at making the readers accept the information as authentic. What emerges however is the fact that as the operation unfolded HIV and AIDS patients and care-givers suffered quietly.

### **Metaphors and discourse topics**

Newspaper reports also use metaphors to sensitise the public about the effects of the operation. For example, the headline, "US \$60m went up in smoke during *Murambatsvina*" metaphorically symbolises the destructive impact of OM, which, according to a report by UN special envoy, Anna Kajimulo Tibaijuka, left about 700, 000 families homeless and affected about 2,4 million people. This headline can be understood as an extended metaphor that is used to create powerful persuasive images and ideas in the mind of the reader on negative effects of OM. It symbolises how the said operation negatively affected the source of livelihoods of those affected and the Zimbabwean economy in general. 'Smoke' can be regarded as a double - barrelled metaphor that communicates both the destructive effect of fire that was used to burn some of the structures and the very act of destroying houses, shacks, flea market stalls and workshops.

Some of the metaphors that reflect despair and destruction are highlighted in the following:

1. White Cliffe Farm 'homes' **levelled** (Sunday Mail, 29 May 2005)
2. Scores **Ditch** City Life (The Daily Mirror, 30 May 2005)
3. Operation **Pushes** Pupils out of School (-----, 3 June 2005).
4. Clean -Up **Forces** 300 000 pupils out of school (The Standard, 26 June 2005)

The verbs "levelled", "ditch", "pushes" and "forces" are used metaphorically to effectively and emphatically send the message that OM had brought untold suffering to people as it destroyed (levelled) people's homes and caused pupils to abandon schooling as they migrated to "unknown destinations" with their parents and guardians (Reporter, 2005: 2).

One also notes that the themes "White Cliffe Farm 'homes'", "Scores", "Operation" and "Clean - up" were carefully selected and positioned as "discourse topics" (Guijarro and Hernandez (2001) as they are the entities that writers "want readers to remember (Feries, 1994: 234). They can equally be viewed as themes or rather the noteworthy content of the N- Rheme (Halliday, 1985, Thompson, 1996). This initial positioning of the identified themes / discourse topics is deliberately intended to make readers accept their lexical imports as facts. Thus on number 1, for example, the reader is meant to accept for fact that White Cliffe Farm 'homes' had been razed to the ground. On numbers 3 and 4 readers are expected to be shocked to read about the "Operation"

/ “Clean – Up” which, as if to contradict its ‘good intentions’ as implied in its name, had now ‘pushed’ pupils out of school’ / ‘forced’ 300, 000 pupils out of school. Reporters clearly seek to cause readers to be suspicious about this operation. This is also evident in a Sunday Mail report (Reporter, 2005: 5) entitled, “Police raid leave informal traders stranded.” In the report a victim of OM is quoted lamenting his loss thus:

“We have been paying \$32 000 per month as rent to use these premises and we were not given any notice to remove our goods. We were only surprised to see police disembark from their trucks and setting our shacks and furniture on fire. It would make sense to give us alternative places to operate from but they haven’t...”

To conclude this section, one notes that reporters exploited thematisation / discourse topics and direct speeches of *Murambatsvina* victims as rhetorical strategies to convince readers that the operation had serious negative social, economic and health outcomes to the victims in particular and the people of Zimbabwe in general. One also notices that *Murambatsvina* has had a negative impact on the social and political spectrum of the entire SADC region. The operation also negatively affected people living with HIV and AIDS. So, the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe, Tibaijuka (2005: 39) was right to observe thus,

Assuming that the displaced population had an HIV/AIDS prevalence rate similar to the rest of population, the mission estimates that over 79,500 persons over 15 years of age living with HIV/AIDS have been displaced. The Operation has led to an increase of vulnerability and, probably, risky sexual practices and gender-based violence. It has also led to a disruption in HIV/AIDS services, particularly ARV treatment, home-based care and prevention.

The above runs in the face of positive statements by some officials from SADC such as the following: “In many of our cities we have these problems but we lack the guts and courage to address them” (Herald Reporter, 2006: 1). Sadly, this seemed to be the general position that countries from the region took with regard to OM. If only they had realistically anticipated the impact of the operation on HIV and AIDS victims in particular and Zimbabweans in general, a solution to the plight of victims of HIV and AIDS affected by OM could have been chartered.

#### **Use of the theme – rheme syntax**

There are other reports that use the theme – rheme syntax to show the desperate conditions experienced by *Murambatsvina* victims. An example is the report with the title, “Clean –up victims appeal for food” (Standard Staff, 2005: 7). From this article we note that the theme “clean –up victims” has been deliberately ‘thingfied’ through “nominalization” (Halliday, 1985) in order to make the reader visualise the helplessness of victims of Operation *Murambatsvina*. The syntactical packaging of the theme and the rheme is meant to make the reader realize the sharp contradiction of the purported intention of the operation (clean – up) and its outcome – victims now appealing for food. This is meant to ultimately influence the reader to hate not just the operation but its agent (the government). In this article, we note that this linguistic packaging of theme and rheme enables the reader to understand both the suffering of HIV and AIDS victims affected by *Murambatsvina* and the sharp contradiction between this operation and the National Policy on HIV and AIDS for Zimbabwe of 1999. The policy makes caring of HIV and AIDS patients a priority both for government and relevant stakeholders. It equally makes the need to create a conducive environment coupled with the fostering of Human Rights as priority areas in mitigating against the further spread of the pandemic. And yet in the same report part of

the appeal reads thus, “Kindly find herein the six months’ food aid proposal and a one off assistance to two HIV/AIDS support groups located in the community” (Standard Staff, 2005:7). This symbolizes how *Murambatsvina* violated the much vaunted Community Home – Based Care (CHBC) with a patient, family and community focus advocated in the HIV and AIDS policy document. The National Policy on HIV and AIDS for Zimbabwe recognizes the need to uphold the rights and dignity of every citizen as crucial in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Other newspaper headings in which reporters sought to highlight the suffering of *Murambatsvina* victims by exploiting the theme – rheme syntactical arrangement as a rhetorical strategy are the following:

1. **Five months on**, blitz victims still homeless (*The Zimbabwe Independent*, 28 October 2005)
2. **Government** fails *Murambatsvina* victims: Parly Committee (*The Daily Mirror*, 16 November 2006)
3. **Prayers** held for ‘*tsunami*’ victims (*The Standard*, 27 May 2007)
4. **Tibaijuka report** in dustbin (*The Sunday Mail*, 11 March 2007)
5. **UN raps regional leaders over Zimbabwe** (*The Standard*, 24 April 2007)

From the highlighted newspaper headings, the themes / discourse topics are presented as non - negotiable components of the clause. They are meant to be accepted by the reader as given whilst the rheme is the component to be negotiated. In the context of OM, this syntactical arrangement is meant to convince the reader that the government of Zimbabwe was insensitive to the plight of *Murambatsvina* victims. The theme “Five months on” (number 1) is intended to make the reader understand that government had not fulfilled its promises to quickly build houses for *Murambatsvina* victims. Number two highlights government as culpable whilst the spiritual appeal in number 3 is meant to emphasise the hopeless situation faced by the victims of this operation which is metaphorically equated to the ‘tsunami’ disaster. So, according to this rhetorical strategy, people had been stretched to the limit and the only thing to do was to await God’s intervention. This also symbolized how regional and international bodies had failed to meaningfully intervene. Furthermore, thematisation of “Tibaijuka report’ (number 4) shows that the reporter respects the contents of the report. In the same vein, the reader is being influenced to question why government had not acted on this report choosing to side-line it. However, the Sunday Mail reporter was quick to give a reason saying, “...Government had instead launched a noble exercise, operation *Garikai / Hlanani Kuhle*” (“Operation Restore Order” - a government programme purportedly aimed at building houses for *Murambatsvina* victims). Just like its sister paper, The Herald, The Sunday Mail does not give the reader meaningful insights about how Operation *Murambatsvina* could have affected HIV and AIDS victims. To both papers, government solved whatever ‘temporal’ problems anyone affected by *Murambatsvina* could have faced. On the contrary, however, the headline, “Govt rejects tents, settles for plastics (Mukaro, A. & Sibanda, B. 2006: 1), connotes the untold tribulations of *Murambatsvina* victims. This is what is increasingly becoming evident in this analysis.

### **Evaluative and imagistic language**

In this segment it emerges that evaluative and imagistic language was used by some newspaper reporters to explain the failure by government to provide accommodation to *Murambatsvina* victims, thereby further exposing them to disease, hunger, self -humiliation and general

degradation. This use of linguistic expressions is in line with Kress and Hodge (1979: 6) who maintain that, “Linguistic forms allow significance to be conveyed and to be distorted. In this way hearers can be both manipulated and informed, preferably manipulated while they suppose they are being informed.” Thus the manipulative potential of linguistic forms such as action and relational verbs was exploited by reporters to vehemently express their disappointment towards the failure by government to provide victims of *Murambatsvina* with descent accommodation contrary to promises made when *Garikai / Hlalani Kuhle* was launched.

Government responded to the after effects of *Murambatsvina* with an ambitious housing programme called Operation *Garikai*. The latter was conceived after the publication of a highly critical report by Tibaijuka. It is in the light of this and wide criticism of *Murambatsvina* that an article with the title: “Demilitations: Govt admits it bungled”, quotes Jan Eangland, the United Nations under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs lamenting: “Many people are now living with extended families and crowding other houses. There is not enough shelter to house those evicted” (Mafunda, 2007: 1). This observation concurs with the following headline: “Squatter camps blossom” (Reporter, 2007: 9). In addition to overcrowding conditions, the latter reports about a “settlement in Glen Lorne suburb that had “degenerated into a haven for criminals and immoral behaviour in a tranquil environment” (Ibid: 2007: 9). Furthermore, the adjective ‘bungling’ used in the Financial Gazette’s report is meant to negatively evaluate government as having blundered by demolishing peoples’ houses before coming up with alternative accommodation. Negative evaluation is also noted in the noun ‘blossom’ used in the article by the Zimbabwe Independent. This metaphorical use of language for negative evaluation betrays the reporter’s attitude towards failure by government to alleviate the suffering of victims of *Murambatsvina*. Thus, articles portray how government had failed to provide descent houses to victims of *Murambatsvina*. Victims of the operation ended living in squalid conditions. It follows logic that crowded conditions are notorious for the spread of HIV and AIDS and other communicable diseases due to the fact that their inhabitants are vulnerable to all forms of abuse. More headings of reports that symbolise hardships faced by victims of OM are as follows:

1. Heavy storms destroy Hopley shacks (The Standard, 11 February 2007)
2. *Garikai* Homes turn into self – help projects (The Standard, 11 February 2007)
3. Hopley settlers exposed to the rains (The Financial Gazette, 18 February 2007)
4. No water, sewer for Cowdray’s *Garikai* project as yet (The Financial Gazette, 16 November 2006)
5. *Garikai* Houses no better than those condemned (The Zimbabwe Independent, 21 December 2006)
6. *Garikai* beneficiaries face evictions in Bulawayo (The Daily Mirror, 16 Nov. 2006)
7. Gwanda to evict *Hlalani Kuhle* beneficiaries (The Chronicle, 8 February 2007)
8. Bulawayo Council condemns *Garikai / Hlalani Kuhle* houses (The Sunday Mail, 17 Sep. 2006)
9. Only 36 benefit from ‘Operation *Garikai*’ in Bulawayo (The Zimbabwe Independent, 7 Jan. 2007)
10. Govt slips on *Garikai* targets (The Financial Gazette, 9 Dec. 2005)
11. Operation *Garikai* a failure: Amnesty International (The Zimbabwe Independent, 8 Sep 2006)
12. Response to massive graft in *Garikai* housing (The Standard, 24 Sep. 2006)

From the above examples reporting verbs namely, destroy, exposed, and evict betray the reporters’ negative attitude against the suffering of *Murambatsvina* victims. Such verbs also



depict government as insensitive. In addition, the adjective ‘only’ (number 9) further shows how little and ineffective government’s effort was to alleviate the suffering of *Murambatsvina* victims from vicissitudes of homelessness. However, the verb condemns in the Sunday Mail’s report is meant to label Bulawayo Council and not government as culpable. This is a pro-government position.

It emerges that, government newspapers propagated the view that government was right in coming up with both operations. According to this view Operation *Murambatsvina* was a positive move by government to get rid of malpractices and immoral behaviour from the city. From this perspective, Operation *Hlalani Kuhle* was a success as reflected in the following headline from the Herald: ‘Reports on Garikai houses false.’ This is a headline of an article in which the minister of local government, Ignatius Chombo, was quoted dismissing as false the revelation by Amnesty International that Operation Garikai had failed. Chombo remarked thus, “It is basically a mischievous report. They are sitting in their lofty offices in London and Brussels phoning some non-governmental organizations here for information. It (the report) is only intended to discredit Zimbabwe whose national housing programme is one of the best in Africa” (Herald Reporter, 2006: 3). This government’s position is reflected in a number of newspaper headlines from pro- government media as follows:

1. \$1,563 trillion spent on Garikai houses (The Herald, 10 June 2006)
2. Operation Garikai houses thousands (The Chronicle, 16 September, 2007)
3. New homes: new hopes (The Southern Times, 16 September, 2006).
4. 800 displaced families to get houses under council scheme (The Herald, 28 August 2007)
5. Harare takes over clinic (The Sunday Mail, 5 March 2006)
6. Zim’s clean – up programme hailed (The Herald, 22 Nov. 2006)

It is important to note that report number 5, mentions the taking over of a clinic at Hopley farm by the city of Harare. According to the report, the take - over was meant “...to provide free treatment to residents, most of whom suffer from HIV and AIDS related illnesses. Assuming that this was done, the question to be asked is what about the rest of the HIV and AIDS victims of *Murambatsvina* who had scattered in various camps, and informal settlements throughout Zimbabwe?

Information from newspaper reports on the failure of *Halani Kuhle*, is corroborated by independent bodies and UN agents. It is alleged that this failure was partly caused by lack of funding and corruption by civil servants. The issue of under -funding is variously highlighted mainly by private newspapers. Such newspaper reports blame government for being culpable in denying the funding that could have alleviated the suffering of HIV and AIDS victims in particular and, *Murambatsvina* victims in general. Some of such newspaper reports place government and, or, government officials on the thematic position of clauses thereby making them themes and hence culpable. The following are examples:

1. Mugabe rejects US\$30 mln assistance (The Zimbabwe Independent, 29 Sep. 2005)
2. Government rejects UN aid for blitz victims (The Herald 2 Sep. 2005)

Additionally, some of the reasons why this operation failed are enshrined in the following headlines:

1. Chefs grab ‘*Garikai*’ houses (The Standard, 5 Feb. 2006)
2. *Garikai* beneficiaries cough up forex for stand subscriptions (The Standard, 23 Nov. 2006)
3. *Garikai* houses: ZANU – PF chairperson in court (The Herald, 28 Jul. 2006)

4. Operation Garikai housing scam (The Herald, 25 Jul. 2006)
5. *Garikai* houses: Anti – graft nets top Government officials (The Herald, 22 Jul. 2006)
6. Whitecliffe houses allocation saga (The Daily Mirror, 22 Jul. 2006)
7. Beneficiaries lease *Garikai* houses (The Herald, 5 Jul. 2006)

The story being related by these headlines, which are full of imagistic and metaphorical language, appears to be that the real beneficiaries of *Garikai* houses were not the victims of OM who included some HIV and AIDS patients (Tibaijuka, 2005). Such beneficiaries were the powerful elite – top government officials (chefs) (Herald Reporter, 2006: 4). These engaged in all sorts of deals at the expense of real victims of OM. It is crystal clear that OM exposed victims to the dangers of HIV and AIDS. This is further revealed in the following title: “Sexual Abuse Scandal Hits Bulawayo Primary School” (<http://www.thestandard.co.zw/>). Part of the article reads:

At least 106 orphans at a local primary school with 366 pupils have been sexually abused. And 15 of these children have tested positive for HIV after they were raped by close relatives, a yet to be released documentary has revealed.

The pupils at Lockview Primary School come from a neighbourhood, which consists of peri-urban plots where victims of the government's 2005 clean - up campaign found refuge.

In such settlements people living with HIV and AIDS were rendered more vulnerable due to poor and crowded accommodation facilities, lack of sources livelihoods and treatment centres.

## **Conclusion**

The analysed newspaper reports reveal that Operation Murambatsvina violated not only the rights and dignity of victims including those infected with HIV and AIDS, but also the National Policy on HIV and AIDS for Zimbabwe of 1999. It is also noted that there is a three - tier reporting pattern that Zimbabwe newspapers adopted in keeping with editorial policies and ownership patterns. Government controlled newspapers (The Herald, The Sunday Mail, The Chronicle) reflected government position with regard to the operation, while private newspapers like the Daily Mirror, the Sunday Mirror and the Financial Gazette took a middle (lukewarm) position while other private newspapers namely, the Standard and the Zimbabwe Independent adopted a negative stance. The latter was also the position reflected in reports by Tibaijuka (2005) and other independent bodies.

Reporters used a wide range of linguistic strategies such as metaphors, thematisation and rhematisation, claptraps, deictic referencing, pronouns and adjectives to persuade readers to accept their views. Direct speech and positive politeness were also used both by politicians and newspapers for manipulative purposes. In most cases such reportage was unethical as it was characterised by exaggerations and concealment of reality.

However, it emerges from the analysis that Operation Murambatsvina resulted in victims losing their dwellings, community support, sources of medication and treatment, counselling services,

networks for psycho-social support and community home – based - care projects. As explicated earlier, these are pinnacles of the National Policy on HIV and AIDS for Zimbabwe of 1999. The planning and implementation of the operation was therefore flawed as it was not pro - people. It rendered victims homeless and vulnerable. The fact that the operation negatively affected people living with HIV and AIDS betrays inadequacies in the Zimbabwean HIV and AIDS intervention model. However, in this article, it is adequate to conclude that in future if such operations are to be carried out, they should be foregrounded by proper planning so that the rights of people, particularly vulnerable groups like those living with HIV and AIDS, are not violated. Lastly, there is need to establish a mechanism to ensure that reporters are ethical in their reportage of events

### **Author's Bio data**

**Rewai Makamani** is a senior lecturer in the Department of Communication at the Polytechnic of Namibia. He has lectured at the Zimbabwe Open University, University of Zimbabwe, Great Zimbabwe University and the Catholic University in Zimbabwe. He obtained a Master of Arts in African Languages and Literature (1993) , Master of Arts in Language for Specific Purposes(2003), Bachelor of Arts Honours (HSH and HRS)(1990) and Graduate Certificate in Education (1994)from the University of Zimbabwe. He also holds a number of professional qualifications including the Executive Certificate in Humanitarian Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation which he obtained from the University of Zimbabwe in 2008; English for Specific Purposes Best Practices Certificate obtained from the University of Oregon. He has published a number of articles in learned journals in the broad area of Applied Linguistics. His research interests are in the areas of Text Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Doctor Patient – Communication and language for the media.

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