

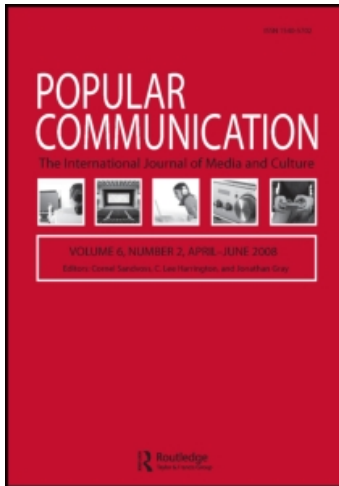
This article was downloaded by: [Willems, Wendy]

On: 2 May 2011

Access details: Access Details: [subscription number 937135903]

Publisher Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Popular Communication

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t775653693>

## Comic Strips and “the Crisis”: Postcolonial Laughter and Coping With Everyday Life in Zimbabwe

Wendy Willems<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> University of the Witwatersrand,

Online publication date: 02 May 2011

**To cite this Article** Willems, Wendy(2011) 'Comic Strips and “the Crisis”: Postcolonial Laughter and Coping With Everyday Life in Zimbabwe', *Popular Communication*, 9: 2, 126 – 145

**To link to this Article:** DOI: 10.1080/15405702.2011.562099

**URL:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15405702.2011.562099>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf>

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

## Comic Strips and “the Crisis”: Postcolonial Laughter and Coping With Everyday Life in Zimbabwe

Wendy Willems

*University of the Witwatersrand*

In African Studies, political cartoons and comic strips have frequently been analyzed in relation to concepts of power and resistance and considered as ways in which those subject to power challenge the rulers (Mason, 2002; Mbembe, 2001; Nyamnjoh, 2009). To a certain extent, these studies have reflected the wider debate on the role of humor in the relation between rulers and ruled in the post-colony. In media and cultural studies, scholars have analyzed comics primarily as ideological texts which offer a particular framing of reality. Drawing on the Zimbabwean comic strip Chikwama, which was published in the Zimbabwean privately owned newspaper *The Daily News* in the early 2000s, this article argues that postcolonial laughter does not always address those in power, but humor may also point fingers at those subject to power in an attempt to make readers cope with the tragic events unfolding around them. Laughter frequently adopts a self-reflexive mode through which those subject to power mock their own powerlessness and lack of agency in the face of a system that they perceive as immutable. Furthermore, the strip Chikwama also highlights how media discourse came to reflect the way in which politics slowly invaded the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans, hereby reinforcing the importance of treating media texts as embedded in broader social discourses. The comic strip Chikwama did not only replicate the particular institutional ideology of *The Daily News* but also mirrored the way in which ordinary Zimbabweans negotiated the social and economic impact of the crisis on an everyday basis.

In African Studies, political cartoons and comic strips have frequently been analyzed in relation to concepts of power and resistance (Arntsen, 2010; Mason, 2002; Mbembe, 2001; Nyamnjoh, 2009). To a certain extent, these studies have reflected the wider debate on the role of humor in the relation between rulers and ruled in the postcolony.<sup>1</sup> A number of scholars have placed the emergence of comics and cartoons in the broader context of shifts in political power in Africa as a result of processes of political liberalization and democratization. It is in this particular environment that cartoons and comics began to hold the newly installed governments to account and emerged as vigorous critiques of the actions of political elites. Focusing on political cartoons

---

<sup>1</sup>This debate was partly initiated by the publication of Mbembe’s 2001 book, *On the Postcolony*.

Correspondence should be addressed to Wendy Willems, Department of Media Studies, School of Literature and Language Studies (SLLS), University of the Witwatersrand, P. O. Box 279, South Africa. E-mail: wendy.willems@wits.ac.za

in Senegal, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, and Kenya, Eko (2007), for example, analyzes cartoons as resistant forms of satirical subversion that mock the excesses of Africa's political leaders:

Indeed, communication in Africa in the post-Cold War era has become a gigantic struggle of images. Political leaders, who had a monopoly over media content during the 1960s and 1970s, now face stiff competition from private, independent media outlets. Cartoons are at the forefront of this battle of images. They take the animal mascots and other images that African leaders had created for themselves, turn them up-side-down and transform them into a caustic critique of the abuse of power. (Eko, 2007, p. 225)

The debate has not only focused on the way in which cartoons ridiculed those in power but has also reflected on the implications of cartoons for those in power. Eko (2007, p. 235), for instance, has attributed agency to cartoons and points out that "cartoons and caricature are politically sensitive, even dangerous texts. This is because cartoons are addressed mostly to urban dwellers who were at the forefront of agitation for democratization and liberalization in the 1990s." Writing about the role of cartooning in South Africa, Mason (2002, p. 388) has argued that "it would be an exaggeration to claim that it was a major factor in the overthrow of apartheid" but still maintains that "cartooning in its various forms nevertheless played an important role in crystallising issues of allegiance and identity, introducing revolutionary concepts into public discourse, undermining the ideological hegemony of the state and valorising the political struggle."

However, in his analysis of political cartoons in Cameroon, Mbembe (2001) is less convinced about the effectiveness of political cartoons as forms of resistance. He argues that the very act of making the autocrat visible in cartoons in fact reproduces its power. The representation of the autocrat as an ordinary human being does not serve to strip him of his power, but

[. . .] far from signing the "thing" [the autocrat] in death, [the cartooning of the autocrat] rather intensifies its presence by enclosing the subject in a mixture of fascination and dread, a sort of consciousness whose peculiar feature is to be hallucinated – not in the Lacanian sense of hallucination as "objectless perception", but to the extent that it is the autocrat who offers speech, commands what is listened to and what is written and fills space to the point where he is still being talked of even as the act of creation is claiming to debase him. (Mbembe, 2001, p. 160)

Nyamnjoh (2009, p. 107) disagrees with Mbembe's analysis and argues that "Mbembe seems to imply that [the autocrat's] power diminishes if the public were less preoccupied with him in this way. However, I think it is also important to see in what light he is presented: he is generally talked of in very negative terms, which obviously has a greater effect than if the press were simply to ignore him as if he did not exist." Nyamnjoh (2009, p. 97) encourages us to be "critical of any suggestion that such cartooning has little impact simply because it has failed to bring about a revolution or revolt against the status quo" and he proposes instead to take into account "effects that may be gradual, cumulative, and in the long term, than on effectiveness that stresses immediate outcomes to the detriment of that which takes time to unfold." These scholars have thus focused on the role of cartoons as spaces for resistance—whether effective or not—and the way in which these have functioned as what Scott (1990) would call "hidden scripts." While for Scott the public transcript refers to the official public sphere in which ruling elites communicate with their subordinates, the hidden transcript includes the "discourse that takes place 'offstage,' beyond the direct observation of the power holders" (Scott, 1990, p. 4). It represents what the subordinates say about those in power among each other.

Engaging with this debate, this article discusses how and whether comics in Zimbabwe can be positioned in relation to the question of power and resistance. I will focus on the strip Chikwama, which appeared in the private Zimbabwean newspaper *The Daily News* in the early 2000s. Chikwama is a strip about an “ordinary” Zimbabwean struggling with all the economic and political changes around him. In the strip, we see Chikwama, or Chiki as he is known to his friends, socializing with a variety of people, frequenting beer halls, hanging out drinking, and joking with his friends. I argue that the comic strip Chikwama both reflects the particular institutional ideology of *The Daily News* and the way in which ordinary Zimbabweans negotiated the social and economic impact of the crisis. The particular kind of laughter represented in the strip Chikwama cannot simply be treated as resistance against those in power but instead fulfills a self-reflexive role in which those subject to power reflect on their own powerlessness and lack of agency.

### CARTOONS AND COMICS AS “HIDDEN SCRIPTS”?

In the case of Zimbabwe, one can question the extent to which cartoons and comics have come to fulfil the role of “hidden scripts,” that is subtle, implicit forms of critique against those in power. It is certainly tempting to view them in this light, given the widely reported range of legal and extra-legal restrictions which the government imposed on press freedom. Arrests of journalists and acts of intimidation were common in Zimbabwe in the 2000s. Pieces of legislation such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), which were both introduced in early 2002, did have a serious impact on journalistic practices. Journalists and editors were cautious in what could be published and what might attract persecution from government. Reports in global media and alerts from press freedom institutions often painted the picture of a strong, “Big Brother” police state.

It is important to consider the medium in which cartoons and comics in Zimbabwe were published, which were mostly newspapers, and then to assess how these forms of popular culture compared with other genres of writing (e.g., news article, editorial, letter to the editor) in these papers. For example, looking in more detail at the reporting in private newspapers such as *The Zimbabwe Independent*, *The Zimbabwe Standard*, *The Financial Gazette*, and *The Daily News*, one could find numerous examples of frank reporting on the crisis and articles which pointed to the complicity of government forces in this regard. Therefore, while political cartoons in Zimbabwe certainly could be seen as forms of political resistance and opened up alternative communicative spaces, as Arntsen (2010) has argued, it remains questionable to what extent cartoons were unique in offering opportunities for political dissent, and whether there was a need for these to be less explicit in order to avoid a confrontation with government.

In my reading, political cartoons did not necessarily constitute a space which regular news articles in private newspapers could not occupy. Like news articles, columns, and editorials, cartoonists openly criticized politicians, ministers, and even the President. Minister of Information, Professor Jonathan Moyo, was a favorite target of ridicule as well as Dr Tafataona Mahoso, an important ZANU-PF “regime intellectual.” The long, exaggerated forehead in caricatures of Moyo poked fun at his most obvious asset: his brain power evidenced by his use of “big English” and wordy sentences. However, cartoonists probably did take extra care in the way they represented Robert Mugabe so as to avoid being charged by newly implemented legislation such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA). This Act was “gazetted” into law on January

22, 2002, and imposed severe restrictions on the publication or communication of false statements prejudicial to the state and of undermining the authority of, or insulting, the President.<sup>2</sup> Rarely did the Zimbabwe government express its concern over cartoons with the exception of one cartoon published in *The Daily News* on May 16, 2003, in an advert of the opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which caricatured President Robert Mugabe as a thief (see Figure 1).

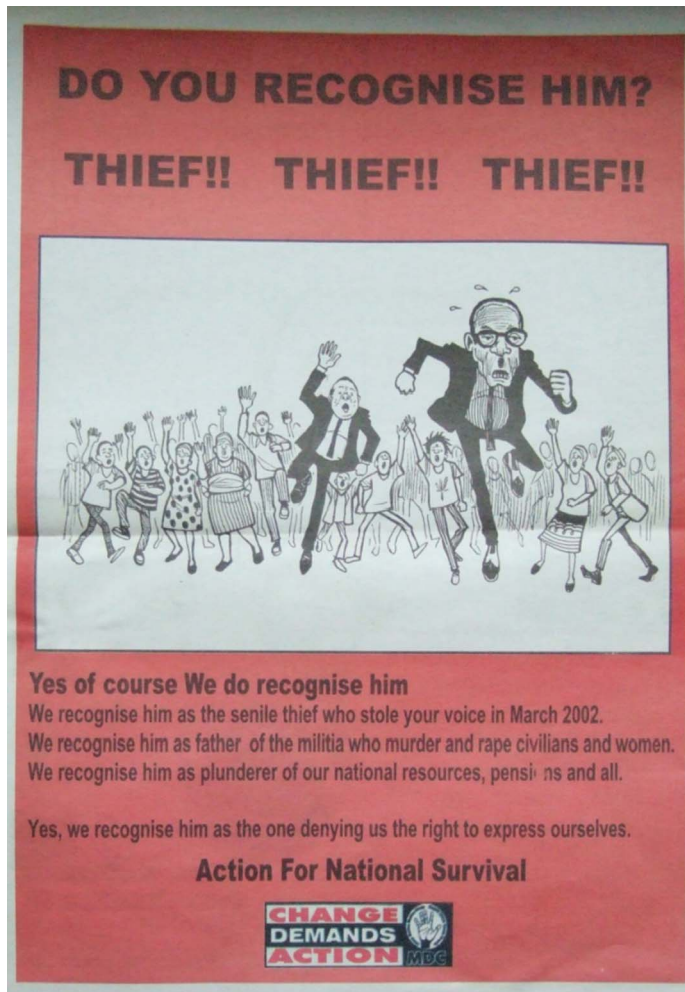


FIGURE 1 MDC cartoon advert in *The Daily News*. May 16, 2003 (color figure available online).

<sup>2</sup>While POSA was supposed to repeal the repressive Law and Order (Maintenance) Act (LOMA) which dated back from the colonial regime, POSA did not significantly differ in content from LOMA. The text of POSA can be downloaded from Kubatana, a NGO network alliance project. Check: [http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/legisl/020122posa.asp?orgcode=par001&year=2002&range\\_start=1](http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/legisl/020122posa.asp?orgcode=par001&year=2002&range_start=1)

Subsequent to the publication of this advert, *The Daily News* Editor Nqobile Nyathi was arrested and charged under POSA for allegedly insulting the President.<sup>3</sup> In the case of Zimbabwe, treating cartoons and comics primarily as forms of resistance would perhaps attribute too much weight to them, given the role of other forms of dissent in private newspapers.

In this article, I am less interested in the way in which cartoons may provoke social and political change—which they rarely do—but more concerned with the way in which they reflect and work out social change. Partly responding to Mbembe’s argument, Schneider (2004, p. 79) has argued that “the value of comics may not so much lie in its potential to provoke (instant) political change but in the way comics keep track and record actual and historical reality. As such they form an important part of the public memory.” Focusing on what a controversial cartoon of President Jacob Zuma by well-known South African cartoonist Zapiro might tell us about constitutional debates in South Africa, Hammett (2010, p. 89) has also argued that cartoons “capture elements of a nation’s zeitgeist that can be utilised to explore a wide range of inter-connected issues within complex contexts.”

A treatment of media discourse as reflective of social change could also contribute to wider debates in the field of media studies. Allan (1999, pp. 64–65) has argued that “in discussing the day-to-day activities of reporting, journalists and their critics alike often draw upon the metaphor of a ‘mirror’ to describe how the social world is ‘reflected’ in news accounts.” These journalistic accounts of media discourse stand in stark contrast with dominant academic analyses of media texts which conventionally highlight the way in which news is socially constructed and shapes “reality” (Fowler, 1991; Hall, 1997). In these interpretations, which predominantly focus on the genre of “hard news,” news is not simply that what happens in society but rather that which is regarded as important by media institutions. The events that a certain newspaper reports on do not simply reflect the significance of those events but rather reveal the selection criteria of a newspaper. Events are not newsworthy in themselves but only become “news” when they are selected for inclusion in news reports. Academic analyses that emphasize the role of media in constituting versions of reality also tend to attribute certain powers to media institutions in terms of influencing audiences or shaping worldviews.

While the role of “the media” in shaping accounts of reality cannot and should not be denied, there is, however, a danger that the analytical focus on media discourse prevents us from understanding the reflective role of media. The emphasis on the constitutive elements of media discourse may lead us to ignore how media texts are ultimately part and parcel of broader social and cultural discourses. As Couldry (2006, p. 182) has argued, by virtue of its object of study, media studies has adopted a form of “centrism” which he defines as “the automatic assumption that media are central to explaining the dynamics of contemporary societies.” By adopting media texts, media production, or media consumption as central object of study, media scholars have closed “down the field of media we analyse and (in so doing) [it] reinforces its own validity in an endless self-fulfilling prophecy” (Couldry, 2006, p. 182).

In practicing media-centrism, media scholars have presented media as analytically separable from society. Partly in response to these accounts, scholars more recently have proposed cultural interpretations of news media and journalism (Berkowitz, 2010; Bird, 2010; Rao, 2010; Zelizer,

---

<sup>3</sup>See “Third editor charged under Public Order and Security Act in two weeks,” alert of the International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX), June 27, 2003. Available from [http://www.ifex.org/zimbabwe/2003/06/27/third\\_editor\\_charged\\_under\\_public/](http://www.ifex.org/zimbabwe/2003/06/27/third_editor_charged_under_public/)

2004, pp. 175–203). These calls are intimately linked to perspectives from the field of media anthropology, which propagates a society-centered approach to media and emphasizes the way in which media are embedded in broader contexts (Askew & Wilk, 2002; Dickey, 1997; Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod, & Larkin, 2002; Peterson, 2003; Rothenbuhler & Coman, 2005; Spitulnik, 1993). The embeddedness of media in society is precisely the entry point from which this article departs. Comic strips circulated through newspapers are here understood not primarily as ideological vehicles but also more importantly as cultural narratives that reflect—as much as construct—social change. In her work on witchcraft in the Nigerian popular press, Bastian (1993, p. 155) looked at newspaper editorials because these “offer insight into how Igbo people consolidate their everyday life experiences and make sense of a world that contains both witchcraft and international capitalism.” In another article, she discussed “how Nigerian [popular press] representations of witchcraft, modernity and development necessarily speak to the recent history of the Nigerian state and to the separate cultures that inhibit it” (Bastian, 2001, p. 72). Media texts are then shaped by both the institutional context in which they are embedded as well as the broader social, political, and cultural context of which they are part.

### COMIC STRIPS AND INSTITUTIONAL IDEOLOGIES IN ZIMBABWE

The strip Chikwama partly reflects the broader institutional ideology that *The Daily News* came to mediate. The newspaper was established in 1999 and could be considered the first serious challenge to the monopoly long held by the main government-sponsored daily newspaper, *The Herald*. In order to compete with the broadsheet format of *The Herald*, *The Daily News* opted for a tabloid size newspaper which it felt would appeal to commuters (Nyarota, 2006, p. 238). In terms of content, the newspaper also sought to differentiate itself from state-sponsored media such as *The Herald* and the monopoly broadcaster the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), which relied to a large extent on the official voice of government elites and represented the spectacle of the state. Their reporting could be classified as development journalism which can be defined as “a notion of journalism according to which reporting events of national and international significance should be constructive in the sense that it contributes positively to the development of the country concerned” (Kunczik, 1988, p. 83, quoted in Musa & Domatob, 2007, p. 316). In the development journalism model, media are not expected to be antagonistic to the state but rather are considered partners in the development process and, as extensions of the state, as important allies in the process of nation building and development.

Both ZBC and *The Herald* offered upbeat stories about the accomplishments of the state, and readers were addressed as willing subjects of development and as beneficiaries of the state’s accomplishments. Political elites played a central role in ZBC’s televised music gala which emerged in the 2000s as a popular alternative to the official commemoration of national days such as Independence Day, Heroes’ Day, and Unity Day (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems, 2009). In these official broadcasts, ordinary Zimbabweans were shown as legitimizing, applauding, supporting, and condoning the rituals of the state. Similarly, *The Herald* reflected the voice of the state and often used literal press statements of government departments and uncritically published these or accompanied the president on his/her official state visits. Both ZBC and *The Herald*, therefore, primarily sought to attribute legitimacy to the state and the ruling party ZANU-PF.

In response to these, *The Daily News* sought to be a paper for the common man in the street. As a journalist for *The Daily News* described it, “We are writing for Zimbabweans who want the truth. Not for anyone. For Zimbabweans who want the truth.”<sup>4</sup> This is concomitant with the paper’s slogan which was “telling it like it is.” The paper’s political editor, Sandra Nyaira, further described the mission of the newspaper as “to give the ordinary Zimbabwean a chance to know the truth about the political violence going on in the country, the corruption, the nepotism and related issues and policies that were bringing Zimbabwe down slowly but surely.”<sup>5</sup> Instead of relying on the views of experts and politicians, *The Daily News* believed ordinary Zimbabweans had important opinions which were worth recording.

Especially in the run-up to the 2000 parliamentary elections, the paper rapidly increased its popularity. In this period, *The Daily News* tripled its average sales from 35,000 to 90,000. According to its editor, the circulation of *The Herald* in the same period dropped from around 90,000 to little more than 60,000 a day.<sup>6</sup> As Table 1 indicates, *The Daily News* and *The Herald* were predominantly available in urban areas in Zimbabwe, with well-off urban residents of low-density suburbs as the most likely readers of daily newspapers, followed by township dwellers (high-density urban residents). In rural areas, radio continues to be the most accessible medium. For example, in 2001, 52% of rural residents noted that they had listened to ZBC’s Radio 2 (in the past seven days), which primarily broadcasts in chiShona and siNdebele.<sup>7</sup> This figure is substantially higher than the proportion of rural residents reading a newspaper.

	2000		2001		2002		2003	
	<i>Daily News</i>	<i>Herald</i>	<i>Daily News</i>	<i>Herald</i>	<i>Daily News</i>	<i>Herald</i>	<i>Daily News</i>	<i>Herald</i>
Rural residents	15%	27%	26%	30%	11%	16%	20%	18%
High-density urban residents	47%	63%	58%	44%	62%	50%	61%	44%
Low-density urban residents	73%	79%	72%	53%	78%	60%	77%	49%

TABLE 1 Proportion of residents (in percentage) who read a daily publication in the last six months, 2000–2003.<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Sources: Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation (2000). *Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey (ZAMPS)*. Harare: Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation; Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation (2001). *Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey (ZAMPS)*. Harare: Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation; Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation (2002). *Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey (ZAMPS)*. Harare: Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation; Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation (2003). *Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey (ZAMPS)*. Harare: Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation.

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Precious Shumba, Senior Reporter of *The Daily News*, Harare, August 21, 2003.

<sup>5</sup>Special edition of *The Daily News* in exile, May 3, 2007, p. 3. Available from [http://www.zimbabwejournalists.com/uploaddocs/Daily\\_News\\_in\\_Exile\\_2007\\_for\\_websites.pdf](http://www.zimbabwejournalists.com/uploaddocs/Daily_News_in_Exile_2007_for_websites.pdf)

<sup>6</sup>Chakaodza tells Herald secrets, *The Daily News*, May 21, 2001.

<sup>7</sup>Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation (2001). *Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey (ZAMPS)*. Harare: Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation.

The establishment of *The Daily News* in March 1999 coincided with the foundation of a new opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in September 1999. The MDC was the first opposition party after independence in 1980 that managed to win a significant amount of seats (57 out of 120) during the June 2000 parliamentary elections. In an increasingly polarized political environment where ZANU-PF and MDC were battling for power, the government began to label independent newspapers as “enemies of the state” or “opposition” or “white” mouthpieces. *The Daily News*, which to a certain degree indeed reflected the concerns of the opposition and growing number of civil society organizations, in particular became a target of the government. The newspaper was eventually forced to close down on September 21, 2003, after it lost a court case in which *The Daily News* challenged the forced registration of newspaper houses with a government-appointed Media and Information Commission (MIC).

Apart from its frank reporting on government, *The Daily News* also stood out for enabling local cartoonists to publish their work. While other newspapers in Zimbabwe often use cheaper, syndicated international comic strips from outside the country such as Hagar the Horrible, Andy Capp, and Fred Bassett, *The Daily News* published a full page of local comic strips including Nyati by Watson Mukutirwa, Samson by Noah Pomo, City Life by Boyd Maliki, and Chikwama by Tony Namate (see Figure 2).

The focus in this article is on the comic strip Chikwama, which appeared at the top of the comic strip page in *The Daily News*. Chikwama is drawn by Tony Namate, who is the most well-known cartoonist in Zimbabwe and who has received several awards for his work.

### CHIKWAMA AND EVERYDAY TALK ON THE CRISIS

In an interview, Tony Namate explained that the strip is about the lives of ordinary people, hereby clearly appealing to the paper’s intended readership.<sup>8</sup> Namate frequently draws inspiration from everyday life situations. For example, he recalls how he went shopping one day, witnessing the constant price increases of commodities, and began to think that the supermarket must have employed someone to change the prices on a daily basis. The thought subsequently inspired a comic strip. Namate considers it as his task to create awareness about social and political issues, hereby reflecting the conscientizing role that comic strips often have played in the wider Southern African region.<sup>9</sup> Namate seeks to draw “simple cartoons” which are relatively easily understandable to readers. He recalls with horror an incident in which a reader phoned to find out what one of his cartoons meant. Living a relatively modest life in the high-density satellite town Chitungwiza, situated approximately 30 kilometers from the capital Harare, Namate’s life in many ways resembles the lives of the intended readership of *The Daily News*. Namate does not like to be overexposed and prefers to be in the background; this perhaps in contrast to the celebrity status that South African cartoonist Zapiro has achieved.<sup>10</sup> This was motivated

<sup>8</sup>Interview with Tony Namate, Harare, Zimbabwe, December 2001.

<sup>9</sup>See for more on this topic, Kruger and Shariff (2001), Toroyan and Reddy (2005), Beck (2006), and Petersen et al. (2006).

<sup>10</sup>Zapiro’s global success could further be explained by the fact that he is a member of South Africa’s privileged minority and could hereby count on interest from the British and American market which has tended to identify with the experiences of white South Africans. Furthermore, in the late 1980s, Zapiro had the opportunity to study at the School

Downloaded By: [Willems, Wendy] At: 16:20 2 May 2011



FIGURE 2 The local comics page in *The Daily News*. July 22, 2002.

by fear of political intimidation as well as the possibility that it might reflect Namate's modest personality.

While Chikwama might target "ordinary" Zimbabweans, the very format of both the newspaper in which it is published as well as the type of comic strips that Chikwama represents, means that is primarily accessible to a certain segment of the population. While Chikwama is a combination of image and text, the text is often crucial to fully grasp the meaning of the strip. The image often merely represents a dialogue between two or more characters and the gist of the strip frequently lies in the text. As Olaniyan (2000, pp. 4–5) has argued with regard to Nigerian cartoons, this has broader ideological implications:

Picture-driven cartoons are fully keeping in line with the popular conception of the cartoon as primarily a visual art; and to give primacy to the visual over the verbal is to privilege the more mass-oriented and easily accessible of the two languages. There is a clear ideological implication here, though it need not be consciously chosen; but it is always there, embedded in the aesthetic choices [. . .]. Word-driven cartoonists violate the common idea of visuality as the essence of cartoons; their privileging of words over pictures often makes their works overly cerebral, highbrow or elitist.

Chikwama, therefore, is primarily accessible to urban, literate, and relatively educated Zimbabweans, for example, office workers, teachers, secretaries, and civil servants, which also meant its readership in many ways coincided with the supporter base of the opposition MDC. While the MDC drew its support mainly from urban residents in the country's major cities Harare and Bulawayo, the ruling party ZANU-PF continued to have a stronghold in Zimbabwe's rural provinces, with the exception of Matabeleland which has been supportive of the opposition (see Table 2).<sup>11</sup>

Because the dialogues in Chikwama are most crucial, the analysis in this article focuses primarily on the verbal aspects of the comic at the expense of the images.

While the strip certainly reflects the ideologies of the newspaper in which it was circulated, the fact that Chikwama mainly represents talk or dialogues between people strongly connects it to forms of public speech; recognizable from predominantly urban, everyday life conversations in Zimbabwe and based on Namate's observations from his base in Chitungwiza. In many ways, Chikwama reflected what has become known as "radio trottoir" in Francophone Africa or "pavement radio" in Anglophone Africa, defined as "the popular and unofficial discussion of current affairs in Africa, particularly in town" (Ellis, 1989, p. 321). As Nyamnjoh (2009, p. 99) has argued, the genre of political cartoons and "radio trottoir" are intimately connected:

---

of Visual Art in New York under the famous American comics artist, Art Spiegelman. This broadened his international network extensively and could explain some of his subsequent achievements (see also Zapiro, 2009). I am grateful to Sean Jacobs for pointing this out.

<sup>11</sup>During the 1970s liberation war, ZANU's guerrilla tactics were based on mobilizing peasant support for the struggle against the Rhodesian regime. The movement's strategy was premised on creating a rural revolutionary vanguard. In the post-independence period, the rural areas continue to be an important constituency for ZANU-PF. ZANU's major recruitment base during the liberation struggle was in the Eastern part of the country, primarily in Mashonaland provinces and Manicaland. The other liberation movement, Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), was active in the Western part of the country, known as Matabeleland. In the early 1980s, ZANU accused ZAPU of "dissidence" and sent the Fifth Brigade army to part of Matabeleland and Midlands. This resulted in an estimated 20,000 victims, many of whom were civilians, hereby questioning ZANU's accusation of "dissidence." These events explain the low support among rural Matabeleland citizens for ZANU-PF.

	2000		2002		2005		2008		2008	
	Parliamentary elections		Presidential elections		Parliamentary elections		Parliamentary elections		Presidential elections	
	ZPF	MDC	ZPF	MDC	ZPF	MDC	ZPF	MDC	ZPF	MDC
Bulawayo	13%	84%	18%	81%	21%	78%	0%	100%	12%	51%
Harare	22%	76%	24%	75%	32%	66%	3%	97%	20%	72%
Manicaland	42%	45%	48%	48%	55%	42%	23%	77%	38%	57%
Mashonaland Central	79%	20%	82%	15%	82%	15%	89%	11%	65%	31%
Mashonaland East	72%	24%	75%	22%	75%	22%	83%	17%	55%	41%
Mashonaland West	64%	33%	70%	27%	70%	27%	73%	27%	53%	42%
Masvingo	59%	33%	67%	28%	66%	31%	46%	54%	50%	46%
Matabeleland North	21%	74%	34%	61%	37%	54%	31%	62 % <sup>2</sup>	28%	47%
Matabeleland South	37%	60%	44%	50%	49%	48%	25%	75 % <sup>3</sup>	39%	29%
Midlands	57%	37%	61%	36%	62%	34%	74%	26%	49%	45%

TABLE 2 Provincial results of elections in Zimbabwe, 2000–2008.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Source 2000 Parliamentary results: <http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zimelectarchive.htm>; source 2002 Presidential results: [http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/elec/020313presres.asp?sector=ELEC&year=2002&range\\_start=31](http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/elec/020313presres.asp?sector=ELEC&year=2002&range_start=31); source 2005 Parliamentary results: <http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/elec/050331parres.asp?sector=ELEC>; source 2008 Presidential results: [http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/elec/080329kubres.asp?sector=ELEC&year=2008&range\\_start=871](http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/elec/080329kubres.asp?sector=ELEC&year=2008&range_start=871); source 2008 Parliamentary results: <http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zim2008results2.htm> (all websites were last accessed on November 8, 2010).<sup>2</sup> This result is the total of votes for the two MDC factions led by Morgan Tsvangirai (known as MDC-T) and Arthur Mutambara (MDC-M). The two factions came into being after a split in 2005.<sup>3</sup> This result is the total of votes for the two MDC factions led by Morgan Tsvangirai (known as MDC-T) and Arthur Mutambara (MDC-M). The two factions came into being after a split in 2005.

As the most distinctive feature of Radio Trottoir, rumour defines itself in opposition to official discourse, which it challenges and seeks to replace. The same is true for political cartooning in general, which could be described as the sketched or caricatured version of rumour about the high and mighty in society. Both political rumour and cartooning, it could be argued, are ways of cushioning the hardness of the crushing and stifling official discourse that monopolised the public sphere, often claiming to be the sole bearer of truth.

However, in this case, Chikwama did not necessarily reflect conversations about political elites, but its primary concern was the everyday impact of the crisis. Chikwama and his friends were portrayed as sarcastically joking about the pain and misery inflicted by the crisis, hereby mirroring the broader culture of joking that emerged in the face of the crisis (Willems, 2010). Recurring themes in Chikwama's dialogues included the eroding value of salaries as a result of the hyperinflation; the rising commodity prices; the shortage of commodities and resultant long queues; the nostalgia and longing for a pre-crisis Zimbabwe; and the diaspora and growing number of emigrants.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup>This article focuses on Chikwama strips that were published in *The Daily News* between May 1, 2001, and April 4, 2003, when Chikwama was replaced with the strip "Comrade Never" drawn by Knowleh Mushohwe.

Money is a returning motif in the strip and this also links to the meaning of the word *chikwama*. In Zimbabwe's major local language, chiShona, *chikwama* literally means wallet or purse, an object that was no longer very useful in Zimbabwe in the 2000s because of the hyperinflation. However, in the urban slang spoken in the capital Harare, *chikwama* also refers more generally to money. At the time during which the Chikwama strip appeared in *The Daily News*, the annual rate of consumer price inflation increased from 56% in 2000 to 77% in 2001, 140% in 2002, 432% in 2003, and an astonishing 24,411% by 2007.<sup>13</sup> In this climate of hyperinflation, the purse or wallet had lost its purpose as the stacks and stacks of notes that Zimbabweans carried around needed to be kept in something bigger than a wallet, a small bag perhaps. Indeed, reflecting these changes, a range of figurative metaphors emerged in chiShona that began to describe a large sum of money such as *chidhina* (literally brick), *chibhegi* (literally huge bag) and *chihomwe* (literally huge pocket) (Kadenge & Mavunga, 2009, p. 177). Apart from these meanings of *chikwama*, the word can also in an informal sense refer to someone who is difficult to shrug off, someone who always sticks with you wherever you go, someone who puts pressure on friends to borrow money.

Chikwama is presented as an average, urban Zimbabwean; that is, someone who is not particularly wealthy but who is able to afford going to the beerhall and has a decent life which quite radically changed as a result of the crisis. In the strip, Chikwama is pictured as discussing the growing magnitude of the crisis with his friends. For example, he notes to his friend, "Prices now increase every day" to which his friend responds, "No, they don't. They now increase every hour!"<sup>14</sup> Other dialogues demonstrate the various ways in which the crisis has impacted on social issues or events such as marriage, love, relationships, family life, and funerals:

I had hoped everything would go well with the lobola. Until your parents demanded five bags of scarce mealie-meal (see Figure 3).<sup>15</sup>

Love has become a very expensive commodity these days. My girlfriend says I don't love her the way I used to. What she means is that I no longer can afford to buy her things I used to.<sup>16</sup>

Things are really tough these days Chiki. I know. I can hardly afford to visit relatives in Mutare. I can hardly afford to visit relatives in Chitungwiza.<sup>17</sup>

Funerals are no longer exciting these days. It's either the people give you warm beer . . . Or the beer itself runs out before you arrive!<sup>18</sup>

Instead of commiserating about the situation, Chikwama and his friends are shown as laughing at the crisis and as making attempts to subvert its negative impact into a humorous situation, hereby pretending to ignore the pain and hardship that has come with the crisis. For example, a strip pictures the following dialogue: "There's one good reason why you should stop smoking, Chiki. What's that good reason? Cigarettes have become unaffordable!"<sup>19</sup> Another strip highlights a rare

<sup>13</sup>World Bank country indicators. Retrieved from <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG>

<sup>14</sup>The word "lobola" refers to bride price. Mealie-meal, also known as sadza, refers to the staple food in Zimbabwe. Chikwama strip, *The Daily News*, September 17, 2001.

<sup>15</sup>Chikwama strip, *The Daily News*, April 12, 2002.

<sup>16</sup>Chikwama strip, *The Daily News*, July 24, 2001.

<sup>17</sup>Mutare refers to the capital of Manicaland Province in Eastern Zimbabwe. Chitungwiza refers to a satellite town 30 kilometers out of the capital Harare. Chikwama strip, *The Daily News*, September 4, 2002.

<sup>18</sup>Chikwama strip, *The Daily News*, April 1, 2002.

<sup>19</sup>Chikwama strip, *The Daily News*, September 4, 2001.

**CHIKWAMA**

Tony Namate

FIGURE 3 *The Daily News*, April 12, 2002.

positive outcome of the crisis on employment, “Chiki, I’ve found a new job as pricing manager. Pricing manager? Yes, my job is to calculate new prices for products at the end of each day . . .”<sup>20</sup>

Rather than mocking the state as political cartoons do conventionally, Chikwama displays a certain degree of self-criticism. For example, a recurrent theme in the strip is a sentimental longing for a pre-crisis Zimbabwe, hereby implicitly mocking the level of crisis which the country as a whole has reached. “A few years ago a family could buy enough meat for only five dollars. Now a family of five needs one hundred dollars worth of meat for just one meal. There was a time when we could hunt meat without paying a cent!”<sup>21</sup> Other strips similarly ridicule the nation:

Zimbabwe has become a major exporter . . . You’re wrong our exports have actually dwindled. Yes, but we’re a major exporter of labour . . . remember?<sup>22</sup>

There’s no beef in the butcheries, but only pork products! What does that mean, Chiki? It means we’ve become a nation of pigs (see Figure 4).<sup>23</sup>

What is remarkable about Chikwama is that the sarcasm and criticism offered in the strip is not directed at politicians or the state as such. Without clearly naming the agent that caused Zimbabweans’ deprivation, Namate leaves it to *The Daily News* readers to interpret the reasons for their misery. Now and then, Chikwama is shown as discussing politicians in broader terms with friends:

I’m thinking of becoming a politician, Chiki. If you become a politician, you will lie, cheat and use political muscle to gain wealth. That’s why I want to become a politician! (see Figure 5)<sup>24</sup>

I’m thinking of becoming a politician . . . But I have one problem . . . I find it difficult to tell lies or steal!<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Chikwama strip, *The Daily News*, September 28, 2001.

<sup>21</sup>Chikwama strip, *The Daily News*, August 12, 2001.

<sup>22</sup>Chikwama strip, *The Daily News*, July 8, 2002.

<sup>23</sup>Chikwama strip, *The Daily News*, January 3, 2003.

<sup>24</sup>Chikwama strip, *The Daily News*, September 19, 2001.

<sup>25</sup>Chikwama strip, *The Daily News*, April 24, 2002.

**CHIKWAMA**

Tony Namate

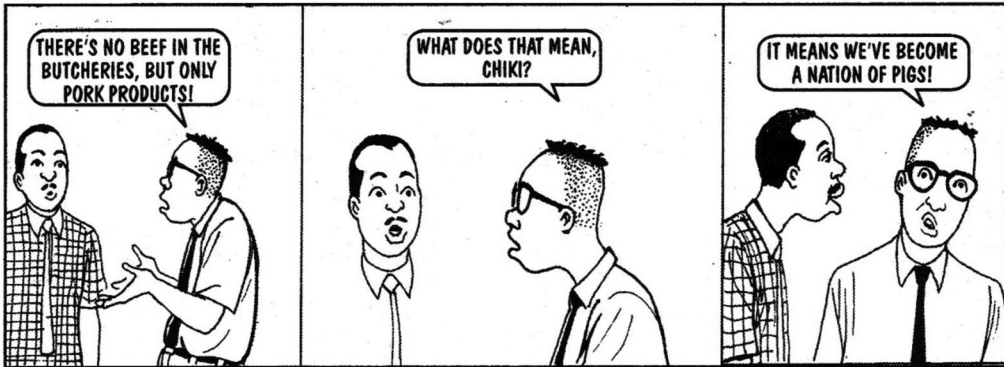


FIGURE 4 *The Daily News*, January 3, 2003.

**CHIKWAMA**

Tony Namate

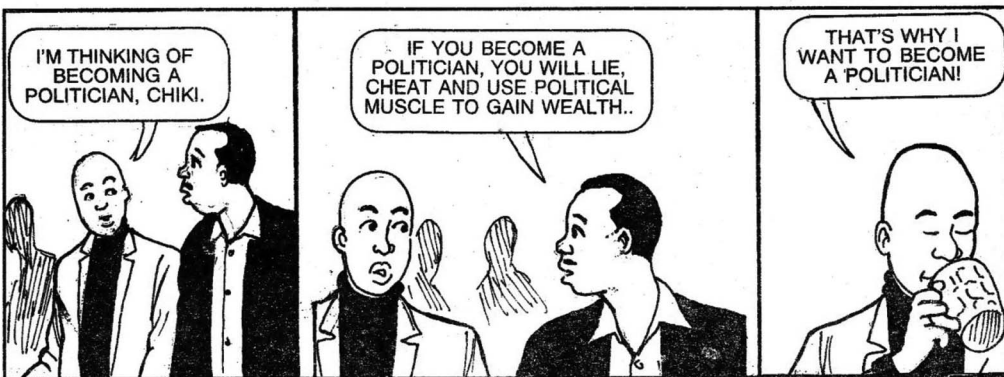


FIGURE 5 *The Daily News*, September 19, 2001.

I've often wondered why so many politicians like to form opposition parties. The answer is there for all to see. It is a quick way of making money!<sup>26</sup>

While politicians are not portrayed in a very favorable light (but instead as hypocrites and corrupt officials), no direct causal links are made between the state of politics and the state of the nation. Rather than mocking the state as political cartoons do conventionally, Chikwama reflects on the powerlessness of ordinary Zimbabweans in the face of the crisis and the immutability of the system in which they are caught up.

<sup>26</sup>Chikwama strip, *The Daily News*, February 12, 2002.

One could argue that the absence of the “perpetrators” of the crisis was an attempt on the part of Namate to avoid any potential charges against him. As in the conventional explanation offered in African Studies, Chikwama could function as a “hidden script” that served to pragmatically critique politics without explicitly mentioning political elites. This is unlikely, however, as the broader context in which the strip appeared, that is, a privately owned newspaper, was often characterized by frank news reporting with articles, editorials, and letters to the editor that explicitly critiqued government policies. In my view, the absence of “hard politics” in Chikwama reflects broader patterns of public speech in Zimbabwe and not necessarily fear of persecution on the part of the cartoonist or newspaper. The enormous impact of the crisis on people’s everyday lives made “hard politics” almost banal and overbearing. The complicity of the government in the crisis was obvious to all, particularly to urban dwellers who mostly supported the opposition MDC. The state’s “exhausted nationalism” mediated by ZBC and *The Herald* became surreal and absurd in the eyes of many readers of *The Daily News*.

The emphasis in Chikwama on symptoms at the expense of roots and causes could further be linked to the emergence in chiShona of a range of metaphors that began to refer to challenges people faced as a result of the crisis and the coping mechanisms people adopted to survive the crisis. Discussing linguistic innovation during the crisis, Kadenge and Mavunga (2009, p. 169) argue that metaphors could be seen as “one of the basic human strategies for dealing with our environment” and in this process, people tend to “utilize existing physical and natural concepts in our environment to conceptualize more abstract concepts such as the pain and confusion that characterize difficult situations.” They make reference to a range of terms that began to describe the pain and hardship faced during the crisis such as *zvakadzvanya* (literal meaning: being hard-pressed), *pakona* (literal meaning: being in a corner), and *zvakupuresa* (literal meaning: things are pressing) (Kadenge & Mavunga, 2009, p. 175).

With reference to the final days of socialism in the former Soviet Union, Yurchak (1997, p. 162) has argued that “the late socialist subject experienced official ideological representation of social reality as largely false and at the same time as immutable and omnipresent.” Instead of actively countering the state, citizens then began to ignore it. There was no need to point to an agent as the main causes of the crisis were too obvious. As Yurchak (1997, p. 165) points out, “a subjective recognition of ideology does not have to lead to its contestation, to an empowerment of the oppressed or to their resistance against the official representation of the social world.” The futile defense of the state against any allegations of complicity in the crisis resulted in a realization that the system continued to be omnipresent and immutable:

The perception of the social world’s immutability was based on the personal experiences of the Soviet citizen that nearly all mechanisms of representation in the official sphere were centrally controlled. Under these conditions, the official reality was uncontested not because its representation was taken for granted as truthful, or because people were afraid to contest it, but, first and foremost, because it was apparent that no other public representation of reality within the official sphere could occur. (Yurchak, 1997, p. 166)

Hence, the realization on the part of Zimbabweans that the ruling party’s ideological defense was false did not necessarily lead to resistance. Instead, it resulted into a lack of interest in the state which might explain the silence on the causes of the crisis in both Chikwama and the metaphors mentioned above.

## CONCLUSION

This article sought to discuss how and whether comics in Zimbabwe can be positioned in relation to the question of power and resistance. Focusing on the particular case of Chikwama, it was demonstrated that the lack of attribution to any agent in discourses on the crisis should be seen as a mocking of the powerlessness of the self. While previous literature on humor in the postcolony has predominantly discussed the ridiculing of political elites, the strip Chikwama demonstrated that humor does not always address those in power and therefore cannot always be treated as a form of resistance. Instead, humor as mediated by comics may also point fingers at those subject to power in an attempt to make readers cope with the tragic events unfolding around them. Laughter frequently adopts a self-reflexive mode through which those subject to power mock their own powerlessness and lack of agency in the face of a system that they perceive as immutable.

This article hereby contributes to recent work by other scholars who have pointed toward the self-reflexive nature of laughter in the post-colony (Musila, 2010; Obadare, 2009; Ogola, 2005). Discussing satirical columns in a popular Kenyan newspaper, Ogola (2005, p. 147) has argued that “not only do the columns satirize the empty pomp of dictatorial politics, they also enact the ambiguities of popular participation in these processes.” Analyzing the Kenyan comedian group Redykyulass, Musila (2010, p. 286) notes that the group’s satire could be seen as a form of “self-reflexive laughter” which “is the kind of humor that entails laughing at ourselves, at our various weaknesses, vices and flaws,” hereby “forcing Kenyans to pause and ask themselves some thought provoking questions about their role in the continued entrenchment of the repressive regime” (Musila, 2010, p. 286). Focusing on jokes in Nigeria, Obadare (2009, p. 250) argues that the focus of these jokes is not just the state but “the sheer absurdity of life as currently lived in the country,” which means that “jokes are often targeted at official vulgarity, and are also a means through which the ‘powerless’ hold a mirror to themselves.”

Furthermore, the strip Chikwama has demonstrated how media discourse came to reflect the way in which politics slowly invaded the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans, hereby reinforcing the importance of treating media as embedded in broader social discourses. Because of the growing impact of “hard politics” on people’s everyday lives, cartoonists were compelled to address the growing interference of the crisis with social life in general. Popular culture could then be seen as the space where “issues central to the everyday life of the majority of population are being articulated and debated, and new modes of life are made visible, audible, thinkable” (Folke Frederiksen, 1997, p. 94). The analysis of Chikwama shows that “cultural expressions [ . . . ] demonstrate how perceptions, experiences and problems are being ‘worked out’ in an open, never-ending process” (Fabian, 1997, p. 25).

An analysis of the Chikwama comic strip can therefore potentially tell us more about how “ordinary” Zimbabweans experienced the state and the “crisis” of the 2000s on an everyday basis. An examination of popular culture could contribute to Chabal’s (2009, p. xi) recent call for an examination of African politics from below:

My intention has been to bring back people into politics. There is nothing wrong with big questions and the study of causalities, but we tend easily to forget human beings in our sociological enquiries and regression analyses. I want here to fix my camera at eye level and engage with politics as it is played out in everyday life. I have eschewed the macro for the micro, the high for the low, and the

elite for the ordinary. Ideally, I would like to answer the question of what politics means for people who are not political actors.

Despite the abundance of academic analyses on the roots and symptoms of the “Zimbabwe crisis,” few studies have focused on the way in which ordinary Zimbabweans experienced and negotiated the events unfolding from 2000 onwards.<sup>27</sup> This could be because intensive fieldwork became difficult during the crisis as a result of the cash and fuel shortages as well as the political sensitivities around doing research. It could also be because politics continues to be conceptualized as the actions of “big men,” with Robert Mugabe most frequently being attributed a leading role in the events unfolding from 2000 onwards in both media accounts and some academic analyses.<sup>28</sup> Through an analysis of a genre of popular culture, this article has demonstrated how ordinary Zimbabweans worked out the arrival of the economic and political crisis in their everyday lives.

## REFERENCES

- Allan, S. (1999). *News culture*. Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press.
- Arntsen, H. (2010). Committing journalism? A view of the Zimbabwean 2008 general elections as interpreted by Internet news cartoons. *Communicare: Journal of Communication Sciences in Southern Africa*, 29, 18–41.
- Askew, K., & Wilk, R. (2002). *The anthropology of media: A reader*. Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishers.
- Auret, M. (2009). *From liberator to dictator: An insider's account of Robert Mugabe's descent into tyranny*. Cape Town, South Africa: David Philip.
- Bastian, M. (1993). “Bloodhounds who have no friends”: Witchcraft and locality in the Nigerian popular press. In J. Comaroff & J. Comaroff (Eds.), *Modernity and its malcontents: Ritual and power in postcolonial Africa* (pp. 129–166). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Bastian, M. (2001). Vulture men, campus cultists and teenaged witches: Modern magics in the Nigerian popular press. In H. L. Moore & T. Sanders (Eds.), *Magical interpretations, material realities: Modernity, witchcraft and the occult in postcolonial Africa* (pp. 71–96). London, England: Routledge.
- Beck, R. M. (2006). Popular media for HIV/AIDS prevention?: Comparing two comics: ‘Kingo’ and the ‘Sara’ Communication Initiative. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 44(4), 513–541.
- Berkowitz, D. A. (2010). *Cultural meanings of news: A text-reader*. London, England: Sage.
- Bird, S. E. (2010). *Anthropology of news and journalism: Global perspectives*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Blair, D. (2003). *Degrees in violence: Robert Mugabe and the struggle for power in Zimbabwe*. London, England: Continuum.
- Bolt, M. (2010). Camaraderie and its discontents: Class consciousness, ethnicity and divergent masculinities among Zimbabwean migrant farm workers in South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36(2), 377–393.
- Chabal, P. (2009). *Africa: The politics of suffering and smiling*. London, England: Zed Books.

<sup>27</sup>An exception might be the papers presented at a multi-disciplinary conference entitled “Exploring hidden dimensions of the Zimbabwe crises” which was held on July 1–2, 2009, at the University of the Witwatersrand. A selected number of papers were published in a special September 2010 edition of *Communicare: Journal for Communication Sciences in Southern Africa* (Vol. 29). Other recent exceptions to this rule include Bolt (2010), Duri (2010), Jones (2010), Hammar (2010), Magaramombe (2010), Mawowa and Matongo (2010), McGregor (2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2009), Morreira (2010a, 2010b), Musoni (2010), Parsons (2005, 2010), Rutherford and Addison (2007), Rutherford (2008), Worby (2010), and McGregor and Primorac (2010).

<sup>28</sup>This is also evidenced by the avalanche of (popular) analyses of the “Zimbabwe crisis” which featured Robert Mugabe as the main “architect” of the crisis. See, for example, Meredith (2002a, 2002b), Blair (2003), Chan (2003), Hope (2003), Norman (2003, 2008), Hill (2005), Gavin (2007), Moyo and Ashhurst (2007), Holland (2008), Auret (2009), and Godwin (2010). On the predominant focus on Mugabe in global media discourse, please see Willems (2005).

- Chan, S. (2003). *Robert Mugabe: A life of power and violence*. London, England: I. B. Tauris.
- Couldry, N. (2006). Transvaluing media studies: Or, beyond the myth of the mediated centre. In J. Curran & D. Morley (Eds.), *Media and cultural theory* (pp. 177–194). London, England: Routledge.
- Dickey, S. (1997). Anthropology and its contributions to studies of mass media. *International Social Science Journal*, 49(153), 413–427.
- Duri, F. P. T. (2010). Informal negotiation of the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border for survival by Mutare’s marginalized people. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 26(2), 125–163.
- Eko, L. (2007). It’s a political jungle out there: How four African newspaper cartoons dehumanized and “deterioralized” African political leaders in the post-Cold War era. *International Communication Gazette*, 69(3), 219–238.
- Ellis, S. (1989). Tuning into pavement radio. *African Affairs*, 88(352), 321–330.
- Fabian, J. (1997). Popular culture in Africa: Finding and conjectures. In K. Barber (Ed.), *Readings in African popular culture* (pp. 18–28). Oxford, England: James Currey.
- Folke Frederiksen, B. (1997). Joe, the sweetest reading in Africa: Documentation and discussion of a popular magazine in Kenya. In K. Barber (Ed.), *Readings in African popular culture* (pp. 94–102). Oxford, England: James Currey.
- Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the news: Discourse and ideology in the press*. London, England: Routledge.
- Gavin, M. D. (2007). *Planning for post-Mugabe Zimbabwe*. New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations.
- Ginsburg, F. D., Abu-Lughod, L., & Larkin, B. (Eds.). (2002). *Media worlds: Anthropology on new terrain*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Godwin, P. (2010). *The fear: The last days of Robert Mugabe*. New York, NY: Picador.
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press.
- Hammar, A. (2010). Ambivalent mobilities: Zimbabwean commercial farmers in Mozambique. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36(2), 395–416.
- Hammett, D. (2010). Zapiro and Zuma: A symptom of an emerging constitutional crisis in South Africa? *Political Geography*, 29(2), 88–96.
- Hill, G. (2005). *What happens after Mugabe?* Cape Town, South Africa: Zebra Press.
- Holland, H. (2008). *Dinner with Mugabe: The untold story of a freedom fighter who became a tyrant*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Penguin.
- Hope, C. (2003). *Brothers under the skin: Travels in tyranny*. London, England: Picador.
- Jones, J. L. (2010). “Nothing is straight in Zimbabwe”: The rise of the Kukiya-kiya economy 2000–2008. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36(2), 285–299.
- Kadenge, M., & Mavunga, G. (2009). Linguistic innovation during a national crisis: An analysis of selected Shona metaphors created during the Zimbabwe crisis. *South African Journal of African Languages*, 29(2), 169–184.
- Kruger, L., & Shariff, P. W. (2001). “Shoo – this book makes me to think!” Education, entertainment, and “life-skills” comics in South Africa. *Poetics Today*, 22(2), 475–513.
- Magaramombe, G. (2010). “Displaced in place”: Agrarian displacements, replacements and resettlement among farm workers in Mazowe District. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36(2), 361–375.
- Mason, A. (2002). Black and white in ink: Discourses of resistance in South African cartooning. *African & Asian Studies*, 1(4), 385–406.
- Mawowa, S., & Matongo, A. (2010). Inside Zimbabwe’s roadside currency trade: The “World Bank” of Bulawayo. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36(2), 319–337.
- Mbembe, A. (2001). *On the postcolony*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- McGregor, J., & Primorac, R. (2010). *Zimbabwe’s new diaspora: Displacement and the cultural politics of survival*. Oxford, England: Berghahn Books.
- McGregor, J. (2007). “Joining the BBC (British Bottom Cleaners)”: Zimbabwean migrants and the UK care industry. *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies*, 33(5), 801–824.
- McGregor, J. (2008a). Abject spaces, transnational calculations: Zimbabweans in Britain navigating work, class and the law. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 33(4), 466–482.
- McGregor, J. (2008b). Children and “African values”: Zimbabwean professionals in Britain reconfiguring family life. *Environment & Planning*, 40(3), 596–614.
- McGregor, J. (2009). Associational links with home among Zimbabweans in the UK: Reflections on long-distance nationalisms. *Global Networks*, 9(2), 185–208.

- McLoughlin, T. O. (1989). Reading Zimbabwean comic strips. *Research in African Literatures*, 20(2), 217–241.
- Meredith, M. (2002a). *Mugabe: Power and plunder in Zimbabwe*. New York, NY: Public Affairs.
- Meredith, M. (2002b). *Our votes, our guns: Robert Mugabe and the tragedy of Zimbabwe*. New York, NY: Public Affairs.
- Morreira, S. (2010a). Living with uncertainty: Disappearing modernities and polluted urbanity in post-2000 Harare, Zimbabwe. *Social Dynamics*, 36(2), 352–365.
- Morreira, S. (2010b). Seeking solidarity: Zimbabwean undocumented migrants in Cape Town, 2007. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36(2): 433–448.
- Moyo, G., & Ashhurst, M. (2007). *The day after Mugabe: Prospects for change in Zimbabwe*. London, England: Africa Research Institute.
- Musa, B. A., & Domatob, J. K. (2007). Who is a development journalist? Perspectives on media ethics and professionalism in post-colonial societies. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 22(4), 315–331.
- Musila, G. A. (2010). The “Redykyulass generation’s” intellectual interventions in Kenyan public life. *Young: Nordic Journal of Youth Research*, 18 (3), 279–299.
- Musoni, F. (2010). Operation Murambatsvina and the politics of street vendors in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36(2), 301–317.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S., & Willems, W. (2009). Making sense of cultural nationalism and the politics of commemoration under the Third Chimurenga in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35(4), 945–965.
- Norman, A. (2003). *Robert Mugabe and the betrayal of Zimbabwe*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
- Norman, A. (2008). *Mugabe: Teacher, revolutionary, tyrant*. Gloucestershire, England: History Press.
- Nyamnjoh, F. (2009). Press cartoons and politics: The case of Cameroon. In J. A. Lent (Ed.), *Cartooning in Africa* (pp. 97–111). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Nyarota, G. (2006). *Against the grain: Memoirs of a Zimbabwean newsman*. Cape Town, South Africa: Zebra Press.
- Obadare, E. (2009). The uses of ridicule: Humour, “infrapolitics” and civil society in Nigeria. *African Affairs*, 108(431), 241–261.
- Ogola, G. (2005). Popular culture and politics: Whispers and the dramaturgy of power in Kenya. *Social Identities*, 11(2), 147–160.
- Olaniyan, T. (2000). Cartooning in Nigeria: Paradigmatic traditions. *Ijele: Art eJournal of the African World*, 1(1). Retrieved from <http://www.africaresource.com/ijele/vol1.1/olaniyan.html>
- Parsons, R. (2005). Grief-stricken: Zimbabwean children in everyday extremity and the ethics of research. *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 28(3–4), 73–77.
- Parsons, R. (2010). Eating in mouthfuls while facing the door: Some notes on childhoods and their displacements in Eastern Zimbabwe. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36(2), 449–463.
- Petersen, I., Mason, A., Bhana, A., Bell, C. C., & McKay, M. (2006). Mediating social representations using a cartoon narrative in the context of HIV/AIDS: The AmaQhawe Family Project in South Africa. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 11(2), 197–208.
- Peterson, M. A. (2003). *Anthropology & mass communication: Media and myth in the new millennium*. Oxford, England: Berghahn Books.
- Rao, U. (2010). *News as culture: Journalistic practices and the remaking of Indian leadership tradition*. Oxford, England: Berghahn Publishers.
- Rothenbuhler, E. W., & Coman, M. (2005). *Media anthropology*. London, England: Sage.
- Rutherford, B., & Addison, L. (2007). Zimbabwean farm workers in northern South Africa. *Review of African Political Economy*, 34(114), 619–635.
- Rutherford, B. (2008). Conditional belonging: Farm workers and the cultural politics of recognition in Zimbabwe. *Development & Change*, 39(1), 73–99.
- Schneider, J. (2004). Speaking in bubbles: Press cartoons and comics in Cameroon. In F. Wittmann & R.-M. Beck (Eds.), *African media cultures: Transdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 59–81). Cologne, Germany: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Scott, J. C. (1990). *Domination and the art of resistance: Hidden transcripts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Spitulnik, D. (1993). Anthropology and mass media. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 22(1), 293–315.
- Toroyan, T., & Reddy, P. S. (2005). Participation of South African youth in the design and development of AIDS photocomics, 1997–98. *International Quarterly of Community Health Education*, 25(1–2), 149–163.
- Willems, W. (2005, October). Remnants of empire? British media reporting on Zimbabwe. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, Special Issue on Zimbabwe, 91–108.

- Willems, W. (2010). Political jokes in Zimbabwe. In J. Downing (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of social movement media* (pp. 410–412). London, England: Sage.
- Worby, E. (2010). Address unknown: the temporality of displacement and the ethics of disconnection among Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36(2), 417–431.
- Yurchak, A. (1997). The cynical reason of late socialism: Power, pretence, and the anecdote. *Public Culture*, 9(2), 161–188.
- Zelizer, B. (2004). *Taking journalism seriously: News and the academy*. London, England: Sage.
- Zapiro. (2009). *The Mandela files*. Cape Town, South Africa: Juta Press.