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Kate Law, ''We wanted to be free as a nation, and we wanted to be free as women': Decolonisation, Nationalism and Women's Liberation in Zimbabwe, 1979–85[1]''
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'We wanted to be free as a nation, and we wanted to be free as women': Decolonisation, Nationalism and Women's Liberation in Zimbabwe, 1979–85[1]

Kate Law

ABSTRACT

This article examines one of the most intractable problems that a newly independent nation encounters; the dissonance between the rhetoric of a revolutionary movement and its subsequent treatment of women in nationalist and supposedly decolonial projects. In drawing on interviews and archival research carried out in periodicals, newspapers and Hansard, the article examines the optimism, disillusionment and betrayal of Zimbabwe's women in the first decade of independence. Exploring women's variegated roles during the country's war of independence, this article argues that many women believed that their participation in national liberation would be a precursor to a broader programme of cultural and societal emancipation. Yet, as is shown, governmental thinking placed women as consumers and not producers of new nationalist culture. In particular, the grim reality of the situation was unambiguously shown just three years into independence through 'Operation Clean-Up', whereby thousands of women in Zimbabwe's main cities of Harare and Bulawayo were indiscriminately detained with state machinery arguing that the women were prostitutes, vagrants and beggars. A blatant effort to curtail women's autonomy in urban spaces, the machinations of 'Operation Clean-up' demonstrated an uneasy coherence between colonial and post-colonial thinking regarding the 'appropriate' place for women in the new nation.

> The national struggle, therefore expecially [*sic*] at its higher level, when it became armed national struggle, became as much a process towards the liberation of the nation as towards the emancipation of the women.
>
> (Robert Mugabe, May 1979)

> The demand by women for equality today is as much a threat to humanity as nuclear weapons are.
>
> (Musekiwa Zenda, writing in *Moto*, May 1984)

> The Liberation struggle raised women's level of consciousness. But we need to remember that the struggle is still very much alive. While we have the commitment of the government, we need to make the most of it. We should make full use of our opportunities, because sexism, the oppression of women, is still alive and kicking in Zimbabwe.
>
> (Olivia Muchena, 1987)

> Women were still considered second class [in the] social arena.
>
> (Interview with Patience, November 2014)

On 18 April 1980, official celebrations took place at Rufaro stadium, Salisbury, to mark the coming of Zimbabwe's independence. A host of international luminaries, including Bob Marley, Indira Gandhi, Seretse Khama and Prince Charles, came to enthusiastically commemorate, or at least cautiously observe, the final chapter of the country's colonial history.[2] For the previous ninety years, Zimbabwe had existed as Rhodesia, a self-governing British Crown colony that operated on the basis of white privilege and black subjugation. In November 1965, this dichotomy was thrown into particularly sharp relief when Prime Minister Ian Smith declared illegal independence UDI from the British Crown in an attempt to stop the coming of black majority rule.[3] Despite the fact that the country had been embroiled in a bitter and bloody civil war for nearly fifteen years, Zimbabwe's independence did not come through the barrel of the gun; rather, it was achieved through negotiated settlement at the Lancaster House conference.[4] Although the meeting nearly broke down over the subject of land restitution, it succeeded in as much as all sides agreed for the necessity of a general election on the basis of universal adult suffrage.[5] While Britain was somewhat blindsided by the eventual victory of Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), the birth of Zimbabwe, as personified by the events at Rufaro stadium in April 1980, had finally solved one of the most intractable episodes in the history of Britain's decolonisation. To many international onlookers, Zimbabwe's transfer of power was a dramatic success. Mugabe's performance as international statesman, his fraternal and reconciliatory rhetoric towards the beleaguered white minority, and his cautious commitment to non-alignment assuaged international fears that Zimbabwe's future was one of Soviet-influenced despotism.

A nation ripe with possibility, Zimbabwe's independence heralded a brave new dawn that was rich with potential.[6] Understandably, the country's six million black population had high hopes for what the future held, with a variety of interest groups jockeying for position in the post-colonial *dénouement*. Drawing on interviews and research carried out in periodicals, newspapers and Hansard, this article examines the unqualified optimism, subsequent disillusionment and ultimate betrayal of the country's women in the first decade of independence. Although feminist scholars have trenchantly challenged the idea that the liberation of women is satisfied through decolonisation, scholars of the end of the empire have been remarkably slow, if not downright cynical, in embracing gender as a serious category of analysis.[7] If we focus on Zimbabwe's process of decolonialisation as being bookended by the Lancaster House negotiations and the celebrations at Rufaro stadium, then we risk investing too much attention in the changing of one flag for another, in the ushering in of new political symbols, and the exchange of one male elite for another. If instead we look at the everyday experiences of women in post-colonial Zimbabwe, then we can begin to question the very notion of 'decolonisation'. A sympathetic reading of state actions in the early post-colonial period would suggest that decolonisation was a time-extensive process in which not all freedoms were immediately available. Yet, 'during wars of liberation women are not to protest about women's rights. Nor are they allowed to before and after. It is never the right moment. Defending women's rights 'now' – this now being any historical moment – is always a betrayal of the people, of the nation'.[8] The transfer of power, then, should be seen as the beginning and not the end of the process of decolonisation. In uniting 'gender' and 'decolonisation', this article maps new

coordinates on Zimbabwe's early post-colonial history. In doing so, it also encourages other scholars of decolonisation to take seriously the potential of gender as a category of historical analysis.

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The article begins by examining women's variegated roles during the country's war of independence, arguing that many women believed that their participation in national liberation would be a precursor to a broader programme of cultural emancipation.[9] Yet, as is shown, governmental thinking in this period placed women as consumers and not producers of new nationalist culture. By examining life in the first rush of post-colonial nation-building, a gendered narrative of nationalist control emerges in which patriarchal prerogatives 'continued unabated'.[10] In particular, the grim reality of this situation was unambiguously shown just three years into independence through 'Operation Clean-Up' – a concerted effort to subjugate women and consolidate state power – whereby thousands of women in Zimbabwe's main cities of Harare and Bulawayo were indiscriminately detained with the state arguing that the women were prostitutes, vagrants and beggars who did not belong in urban spaces. A blatant effort to curtail women's autonomy, the machinations of Operation Clean-Up demonstrated an uneasy coherence between colonial and post-colonial thinking regarding the 'appropriate' place for women in the country's urban landscape.[11] As Joy, a feminist activist remarked in an interview, the reasons for Operation Clean-Up were 'complicated', but were certainly 'embedded in patriarchy'.[12] For scholar Lynette Jackson, 'these women's only crime was that they had challenged traditional gender boundaries: they had been seen alone at night […] and could not produce proof of marriage'.[13] While this article does not exhaustively detail the machinations of Operation Clean-Up, as this has been done elsewhere, it rather locates reactions to the operation as a way to understand why increased female autonomy – whether that was the wearing of 'Western' dress, migration to urban areas or indeed the ability of women to occupy public space without being chaperoned – was believed to be such a major threat to the project of post-colonial nation-building.[14] In doing so, the article examines letters published in the national press, as well as exploring parliamentary debates regarding prostitution, sexuality and female respectability. The debates examined in the media and through Hansard therefore serve as a backdrop to Operation Clean-Up, highlighting how state-sponsored violence was used to control and circumscribe female autonomy in the post-colonial period. By focusing on debates about women's post-war demobilisation, the politics of dress and the crisis their increased visibility provoked (Operation Clean-Up), this article reflects on women's vernacular or 'everyday' experiences of a nationalist culture that has imagined clearly defined, but circumscribed, roles for them.

In addition, in a broader theoretical sense this article further develops Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni's contention that Mugabe's years in power were characterised by anticolonial nationalism, rather than a programme of decoloniality which would have sought to 'radically transform' the newly independent state.[15] More than this, the article examines the ways in which in the 1980s violence, as the 'chief instrument of statecraft', was explicitly gendered.[16] Unlike much of this scholarship that locates the events of *Gukurahundi* as the first indicator of the future brutality of the Mugabe regime, by contrast this article argues that the machinations of Operation Clean-Up

should actually be seen as the first steps towards a future marred by authoritarianism, violence and repression.[17]

A false dawn? Women's participation in the struggle for national liberation

Although there had been sporadic guerrilla attacks since the UDI was declared in 1965, internal divisions between the two main African nationalist parties – the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and ZANU – coupled with the largely effective counter-insurgency tactics of the Rhodesian Security Forces limited the implementation of widespread guerrilla warfare.[18] This position changed, however, with the attack on Altena farm in December 1972, an event widely seen as the beginning of the Second *Chimurenga*, signalling an upsurge in insurgent activity and a new phase in the war.[19] The Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), based in Mozambique, and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) based in Angola and Zambia, as the respective armed wings of ZANU and ZAPU, adopted different strategies of warfare, with ZANLA practising Maoist guerrilla tactics that concentrated on politicising and winning the 'hearts and minds' of the rural peasantry.[20] Furthermore, 'the war was essentially fought in Rhodesia's rural areas, where the guerrillas felt safe and sheltered'.[21] While both ZANLA and ZIPRA infiltrated the country with combatants who moved back and forth across the border, participating in hit and run raids, by 1977 ZANLA had begun to place fighters in the country who participated in covert operations to undermine the Smith regime. The success of a great many of these raids, and indeed guerrilla warfare in general, was contingent on the support of the country's peasantry, particularly that of rural women.[22] Much of the literature on what has been termed 'peasant mobilization' in colonial Zimbabwe has focused on women as either active combatants or as passive actors back in rural areas.[23] Yet, the fighting of a civil war fractures any neat distinction between the 'front' and the 'rear', with the Zimbabwean case being no different. What is clear, is that the war was fought and conceptualised in many terrains with women contributing as cadres, as well as occupying crucial auxiliary roles with regards to the dissemination of information and food. In particular, the provision of food 'emerged as a major theme of self-identification' for many women who participated in the liberation struggle.[24] In addition to transporting food to camps, women would often be woken at night by guerrillas who had come to rural villages. As one woman, Jeni, recalled:

> the comrades talked to us a bit. They said that they were our children and that they were fighting for our country. They said they were not fighting for freedom, but for the freedom of everyone in the country. Then they said, 'please make us some food; we, your children, are very hungry.[25]

Guerrilla fighters thus claimed legitimacy and were able to extract resources from villagers by invoking traditional gender norms that emphasised women's roles as nurturing mothers. It is particularly revealing that one of the most popular ZANLA slogans during the liberation struggle was: 'Forward with the Mothers! Forward with the Cooking Stick!' This is not to say, however, that providing food and supplies for guerrilla forces was not important work in undermining the regime, as this was a crucial role played by women. As Margaret put it:

> I think if the women had not been there the freedom fighters would not have won the war. Women did a great job. Cooking and providing food for the freedom fighters was a way of fighting […] sometimes while we were busy cooking, the soldiers could come and we had to run away and hide […] the fact is we fought a war. Carrying hot pots of food up the mountains is no joke.[26]

The successful supply of food was thus central to guerrilla survival, thereby placing women 'at the heart of guerrilla strategy'.[27] While recent scholarship has emphasised the value of a traditionally gendered activity, such as food provision, to the wider struggle, much of the existing historiography has focused on women who became active combatants.

According to Leda Stott, at one stage there were ten thousand female combatants in ZANLA. As the vast majority were unmarried women and teenage girls, they perhaps saw an opportunity to serve the (hopefully new) nation, whilst also experiencing a semblance of personal autonomy away from familial oversight.[28] Reasons for joining the struggle were often varied; sometimes it followed a specific incident such as the burning of a village, the murder of a relative or a particularly brutal visit from the Rhodesian Security Forces.[29] Other important factors included 'a woman's desire to escape from traditional restrictions; low status, parental control and the influence of elders […] following a lover, being inspired by a teacher or as a matter of conscience'.[30] Daily activities often included collecting firewood, the cooking and carrying of food, the singing of revolutionary songs, and fitness training. As Stott explains, although 'camp life was theoretically equal for both sexes […] in reality women were still discriminated against on grounds of gender […] women and girls were still heavily conditioned by traditional and male decisions about what their roles should be'.[31] By contrast, Gisela Geisler argues that 'gender differences were suspended in the camps' with women achieving a level of parity with their fellow male cadres.[32] Similarly, Tanya Lyons sees the liberation struggle as a transformative period, in which gender roles became increasingly 'blurred'.[33] Yet, although it is clear that some women who became involved in the liberation struggle did momentarily elide patriarchal norms, their positions were still circumscribed by men; indeed, they were mobilised through, rather than against, patriarchy. Furthermore, the primary position of black women was conceptualised as being the 'mothers of the revolution' with this symbolic exaltation continuing through into the post-colonial period. As Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi has put it, the subsequent side-lining of women in post-independent Zimbabwe was merely a continuation of their treatment during the liberation struggle.[34] When the contribution of women was 'selectively recognised',[35] it was done in the service of militant and exclusionary nationalism.[36]

In 1979, as the Lancaster House negotiations were under way, Josiah Tongogara, a prominent ZANLA commander, reflected on the position of women in the post-colonial dispensation. 'There must be a change to some extent: under the old Zimbabwean system the man, as the hunter, held the gun. In the struggle, men and women participated equally; both held guns and some women were promoted to high rank. We can't push them out.'[37] At best, Tongogara's comments reveal the grudging acceptance that women had won by directly participating in the liberation struggle as combatants; at worst they demonstrate that there was no guarantee that the emancipation of women would be prioritised in the post-colonial dispensation.

This position was unambiguously demonstrated through the experiences of many demobilised female fighters who found that, once again, *their* struggle for freedom had been deferred. Whether as auxiliaries or combatants, the participation of women in the liberation struggle was implicitly (or perhaps cynically) understood to be part of a broader programme of transformation that would address their historical subjugation as both colonial subjects and African women.

Positivity then pessimism: Women's experiences of demobilisation

Once in power, ZANU's commitment to Marxist–Leninism continued with the party adopting the two-stage theory of democratic revolution as the blueprint for national development. This theory, also known as stagism, argues that in sites of underdevelopment (such as Zimbabwe), the continuation of capitalism is a necessary precursor to a socialist future. In short, there will be no immediate programme of radical redistribution. While the historiography is divided about whether or not ZANU's commitment to a socialist future was ever anything more 'than a cynical slogan employed to mobilise the masses', the government did embark on a wide scale programme of welfare delivery centred on health, education and labour reform'.[38] Despite the hostile reception that female combatants experienced after the conclusion of the liberation struggle, the government did enact some legislation to the betterment of its female citizens, including Equal Pay Regulations in 1980, the Legal Age of Majority Act (LAMA) in 1982, the Labour Relations Act in 1984 and the Matrimonial Causes Act in 1985. Yet, for Shereen Essof, the passing of this legislation constituted little more than 'affording women superficial access to state structures'.[39] These developments, coupled with a general sense of decolonial jubilation, bought the government time in this crucial transition period.[40]

Understandably, women shared in this sense of post-colonial optimism. As one ex-combatant, Viola Madhuka, wrote in an untitled poem: 'Who am I?/ A strong young woman/ aiming to play an important part/ in the new Zimbabwe.' Similarly, for Shumirai Nerupiri: 'New Zimbabwean women, we were brave in the struggle./ Now we are creators, rebuilding our society. […] We mustn't sit on our hands or lose our courage. We must continue and be leaders of tomorrow.'[41] During the course of the liberation struggle, but particularly after assuming power, Mugabe uttered a variety of positive proto-feminist statements which would have no doubt given women such as Viola and Shumirai cause for hope. In 1982, he suggested that 'the principle of equality between men and women' was a basic 'political philosophy of our government'. Going further, he added: 'we learned throughout the liberation struggle that success and power are possible when men and women are united as equals'.[42] Yet, the experience of a great many Zimbabwean women in the first decade of independence contrasts remarkably with such sentiments. Quite obviously, there is a clear disjuncture between laws passed in parliament and a shift in cultural attitudes. As one woman put it, 'what is the use of a new law if a woman has a stupid husband?'[43] In particular, old masculinist and patriarchal tendencies were quick to reassert themselves with regards to defining appropriate female behaviour in the new nation. During this period, three interrelated debates concerning 'appropriate' female behaviour and (un)respectable womanhood featured heavily in national public discourse. By analysing articles and letters in *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail* and

Moto, the latter a periodical aimed at a black readership, Zimbabwe's bright future appears considerably bleaker when viewed through the words and experiences of its women.

Originally founded in 1959 by the Catholic Church, *Moto* was associated with a long anti-colonial tradition that became particularly pronounced during the liberation struggle. In post-1980 Zimbabwe, the mandate of the magazine was to be 'the voice of the voiceless and defender of the downtrodden', and along with the magazine *Parade*, *Moto* was the only periodical that specifically targeted a black readership. While of course all of these sources are mediated through editorial control, in this article they are read as valuable indicators of public opinion. Newspapers and magazines, as media scholar have long argued, do more than just report 'news'; in particular, 'letters to the editor' often form a 'resistant genre of unrepresented voices'.[44] This in turn, then, speaks to the perennial feminist concern of the ability of women – whether physically or rhetorically – to enter the public sphere, and, in the Zimbabwean case, the backlash that this (perceived) increased access creates.

As in many other countries that have experienced revolutionary warfare, the demobilisation and subsequent reintegration of soldiers is a complex process.[45] As early as 1982, one letter writer to *Moto* argued that she had become 'increasingly aware of a sort of "conspiracy of silence" surrounding the return of ex-combatants, particularly female ex-combatants'.[46] As Paul Themba Nyathi has argued, governmental planning was short-sighted as 'no attempts were made to prepare communities for the reappearance of ex-combatants, nor was there any programme aimed at resolving problems that developed in communities accepting back ex-combatants'.[47] Receiving Z$400 upon demobilisation, former soldiers were thus expected to make their own way in the newly independent nation.[48] Once back in their communities, ex-guerrillas had to relearn how to live amongst civilians. As Shylet Mhaka put it, 'my mother cooked some rice and chicken for me to eat. Instead of sitting down, I took a plate, dished out my food, then I started walking around the yard eating. It was not my fault because in the bush […] we were always watching out for enemies'.[49] Pressure was also exerted on women such as Mhaka to distance themselves from their recent revolutionary pasts, as she explained:

> I went to town with my uncle Peter. He showed me nice dresses and shoes. I bought a dress. But I couldn't wear it because since 1976 I had been wearing trousers. […] I saw so many people including women and girls who twisted their hair or brushed it well. At that time my hair was like a guerrilla's showing that I was from the bush. From that time I changed. I decided to do what other young women were doing.[50]

The question of what 'young women were doing', or more importantly what they *should not* be doing, was one that occupied many newspaper columns and inches. Despite the sacrifices made in the service of liberating the nation, ex-female fighters were routinely condemned for their refusal to adhere to 'traditional' values in the post-colonial period. As Chipo Hungwe has persuasively argued: 'women who had been mobile or active as fighters during the war were now expected to return home and take up traditional and domestic chores such as childcare and housework'.[51] Patriarchal prerogatives were thus quickly reasserted once the war was over. An article in *The Sunday Mail* from November 1981 entitled 'Are men fighting shy of marrying guerrilla girls?' deftly encapsulates the prevalence of the notions of appropriate

gender roles shortly after the end of the war. The article, based on interviews with men about female ex-combatants, detailed how men believed that they were 'too independent, rough, ill-educated and unfeminine to make good wives'.[52] Furthermore, Mr Max Mataview, a twenty-two-year-old charge clerk, said men were not interested in marrying the women 'because they came back from the bush with many children'. He also believed they considered themselves equal to men. 'They think just because they have taken part in the war that they are on the same level as the man.' As Rudo B. Gaidzanwa has so witheringly put it, female combatants were not considered 'suitable marriage material'.[53]

The issue of sexual equality became a regular feature in the pages of *Moto* during this period, with a variety of opinion pieces highlighting the difficulties that demobilisation and life in post-colonial Zimbabwe entailed.[54] *Moto* acknowledged that returning female fighters were subjected to greater societal opprobrium than their male counterparts. Depressingly, some women had even gone as far as hiding and denying their role in the struggle. As one put it, 'people become very guarded as soon as they learn that one is a combatant as if it is a crime'.[55] A close reading of *Moto* therefore reveals that the country was beset by a variety of moral 'panics' with many contributions demonstrating the depth and ferocity of debates concerning 'respectable' womanhood.[56] Largely centring on female sexuality, commentators tied an apparent rise in the number of abandoned children to the supposedly perfidious nature of feminism. While concerns for women's chastity are not the only way in which sexuality arises as a point of contention in nationalist discourses, in the Zimbabwean case they emerged as the prima facie focus for the (re)assertion of masculinist principles in the immediate post-colonial period.

The price of liberation: Space, tradition and women's lives in the 1980s

By 1988, Zimbabwe was widely feted as having one of the most successful family planning programmes in the continent.[57] However, greater access to birth control did not necessarily correspond with an increased cultural acceptance of female sexuality, as patriarchal fears that the use of contraceptives would see Zimbabwe become a morally bankrupt nation continued to endure.[58] Even though the country had a (theoretically) proactive and largely well-developed family planning policy, three years into independence the country's print media were awash with stories of 'baby dumping'.[59] Conceptualised as a direct outcome of women's liberation and Zimbabwe's apparent concomitant sexual revolution of the 1980s, reported cases of child abandonment signalled a rise in 'unrespectable' behaviour amongst Zimbabwe's youth and were a 'serious blemish on our claim to be a moral nation'.[60]

As Barker Chirisa and Tsitsi Nyanhete wrote in an opinion piece for *Moto*, the majority of 'dumped' babies must be 'illegitimate because if their mothers had husbands who have jobs and gave them stable homes, they wouldn't abandon their babies'.[61] Child abandonment was thus seen as being part of a broader moral discourse.[62] Speaking in parliament shortly after the baby 'dumping' scandal broke, MP Dennis Divaris lamented the abandonment of 'baby foetuses which are being thrown into rivers, streams and so on', before imploring his fellow parliamentarians to 'look at the surrounding reasons' for the rise in child abandonment.[63] Summarily, the abandonment of children (and, relatedly, infanticide) was deemed to be both

unfeminine and 'un-African'.[64] As one opinion piece in *Moto* ruminated: 'nature has endowed the mother with strong maternal feelings and a deep sense of protection towards her offspring'. Women who abandoned children, or committed neonaticide, were therefore 'deviant' because their actions were 'contrary to nature'.[65]

When discussing 'Baby Dumping', Chirisa and Nyanhete's article shifted attention, albeit momentarily, to 'unrespectable' men. Although men were found to be 'acting in a very irresponsible manner' by 'using our ladies without serious intentions', it was ultimately believed that:

> the blame cannot be entirely placed on our men, because some of our women go against their cultures by wearing clothes that are unsuited to their position in society. Clothes like tight jeans and see through dresses, which serve only to entice men. We cannot expect our men not to be attracted to these women, because they are giving them an open invitation to make advances towards them […] what has happened to our principles and the lessons we learnt from our grandmothers and mothers? Have we suddenly forgotten them in our race to become westernised and urbanised?[66]

Matters relating to the nexus between African women, clothing and respectability have been well documented by several scholars.[67] In particular, as Margaret Hay has noted in relation to the Kenyan example, changing patterns of dress, particularly the adoption of 'Western' clothing, has been seen as a threat to patriarchal authority.[68] In Tanzania, as Andrew M. Ivaska has argued, the rising number of African women who chose to wear items such as miniskirts were seen to be '"indecent", "decadent", and antithetical to Tanzania's national culture'.[69] In Zimbabwe, 'clothing and morality are intertwined. The miniskirt is the lightning rod of the storm over culture values: those against it see it as indecent and un-African, while proponents argue that it provides more coverage than the pubic apron and bare breasts of traditional garb'.[70]

This apparent culture clash between African tradition and Western modernity continued to play out in the pages of *Moto*. In particular, the magazine ran pieces that critiqued the way Zimbabwean women were represented in advertising campaigns, expressing consternation for 'adverts which portray women half-naked'.[71] Based on several vox-pops conducted in the second largest city in the country, Bulawayo, the article reported that the portrayal of women as 'commodities' and 'sex symbols' was a threat to the integrity of the entire nation as they failed to 'conform to Zimbabwe's cultural and traditional customs'. Debates quickly shifted to the role of nakedness in traditional culture. One unnamed woman did not:

> see any reason why people are complaining about nude women on adverts; people seem to run away from our culture and claim cultures which are not theirs. Our grandmothers used to put on *umusis nhembe* [skirt aprons]; they did not wear blouses, they did not cover their breasts, and, worse still, they showed their thighs.[72]

As scholars such as Allison K. Shutt have demonstrated, although historically Africans were encouraged to adopt a 'Western' style of dress, they were also open to criticism should they display signs of conspicuous consumption.[73] Debates concerning clothing therefore have a highly politicised history in Zimbabwe.

While the politics of dress might seem peripheral and quixotic when viewed against the broader backdrop of national development, these issues speak to a broader

ideological contestation concerning appropriate female behaviour and respectable womanhood. In particular, the position of the Zimbabwean government was unambiguously demonstrated in October and November 1983 during the course of Operation Clean-Up, with the authorities 'arbitrarily rounding up thousands of women, subjecting them to humiliation and abuse, and detaining them in sub-human conditions'.[74] While the state attempted to legitimise the events of Operation Clean-Up by arguing that those detained were prostitutes and beggars, the episode caused many women to question the freedoms that living in an independent nation should bring.

Once again, issues relating to women's emancipation were at the heart of national public discourse, with *Moto* taking the lead in condemning governmental actions. In the December/January 1983–84 edition, the lead article, '"Operation Clean-Up" Takes Women's Lib One Step Back', argued that the state's detainment of women was not only an unfortunate invocation of the colonial state (as women were detained under the emergency clause of the Vagrancy Act of 1960), but also that the detainment of women was completely indiscriminate as 'a very wide cross-section of women was picked up [… including] Students, nurses, married couples, industrial workers [and] domestic workers'.[75] *Moto* also noted how Operation Clean-Up was an attack on a more significant female presence in urban spaces, as:

> social changes, especially since independence, have meant that some women, particularly in cities, have been able to acquire a measure of freedom denied to them traditionally such as the right to live where they like, rights to work, walk unaccompanied, to choose their own associations and to go about their daily lives without interference. These freedoms and rights have all been challenged by the 'clean-up' campaign.[76]

As well as being an unequivocal display of post-colonial authoritarianism, the events of Operation Clean-Up also fed into longer historical processes that have their roots in the colonial period, further illuminating the complex and contested history of the place of women in the country's urban spaces. Any discussion regarding the division between rural and urban space in colonial Zimbabwe must be cognisant of two issues. First, the imposition of European colonialism wrought huge physical changes to the country's landscape, with successive pieces of iniquitous land legislation further marginalising the indigenous peasantry.[77] Furthermore, although Zimbabwe's urbanisation 'was classically treated as a phenomenon that mainly concerned only the white population', tales of the growth of Rhodesia's "garden cities" routinely failed to mention either the servants' hovels at the back of suburban gardens or the squalid African townships of the far side of the railway tracks.[78] Second, the broader regional history of labour migration meant that spatial land use was gendered as well as raced; historically, labour migrants were male. While men left rural areas to seek work – be it in other parts of the country, or indeed migrating to neighbouring South Africa to work on the Rand – it was believed that 'respectable' women stayed behind, as 'family migration was discouraged, so sex ratios remained skewed towards men'.[79] Yet, as many scholars have shown, such neat distinctions between colonial Zimbabwe's rural and urban spaces, and indeed the perceived role of men and women within them, risks blinding analysis to the significant presence of an African urban population made up of women, as well as men.[80]

Table 1: Official estimates of the adult African residents of the Salisbury municipal location

	Men	**Women**	**Total**
1925	1,065	352	1,417
1934	2,578	806	3,384
1947	8,392	2,535	10,927
1956	31,636	5,169	36,805

Source: Adapted from Teresa Barnes, *We Women Worked So Hard: Gender, Urbanisation, and Social Reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930–1956* (Portsmouth: Heinemann Educational Books, 1999), as cited in Yoshikuni, 'Black Migrants', p. 113.[81]

While for Elizabeth Schmidt the 'subordination of African women' was constituted through an alliance between European colonialism and African patriarchy,[82] by contrast, Teresa Barnes rather reads the mobility of African women as dissension against the colonial state.[83] However, whether or not the colonial state and African patriarchs liked it, women were always present in colonial Zimbabwe's urban spaces. Most, if not all, women were engaged in some kind of wage labour, either as maids, nannies, food vendors, office workers, *mapoto* wives, shebeen owners or prostitutes.[84] Although no official figures exist that disaggregate the numbers involved in these occupations, a great swathe of the literature suggests that historically the majority of women in urban spaces were lawfully, and respectfully, employed.[85] Yet, the idea persisted that 'good' women stayed in rural areas.

After 1980, 'a new class of women had come to town, hoping for jobs in post-war society', yet for many the independent, urban-dwelling Zimbabwean woman was something to fear.[86] She undermined patriarchal prerogatives by leaving rural areas and not partaking in the rural economy, and she threatened traditional customs such as *Lobola* because she enjoyed independence outside of the family home.[87] As an article in *Moto*, 'The Dilemma of the liberated Zimbabwean girl', put it, the 'new' Zimbabwean woman 'is cool, She is wanted. She is desired. And she is willing. No; not an advert for the small car on American television. Take another guess. […] At 23, she is an efficient typist and receptionist with an impressive array of certificates in secretarial courses to her credit'.[88] Fewer than ten months since independence had dawned, letters appeared in the national press that equated 'the break-down of old traditions and discipline' with the free movement of women between rural and urban spaces.[89] Women who moved into urban spaces were therefore challenging confining gender categorisations, pushing against the very boundaries that equated mobility with morality. As Hungwe has observed, the signifiers of being either a 'respectable' or 'unrespectable' woman still carried much traction in post-colonial Zimbabwe, with the term 'prostitute' being deployed at specific times, such as in Operation Clean-Up. Attributes of a respectable woman included being fertile, participating in laborious agricultural activities and staying in rural areas.[90] This reasoning, as personified through the debates concerning Operation Clean-Up, continued to carry much weight in the 1980s with the government arguing that those detained (approximately six thousand people) were vagrants and prostitutes, and as such had no place in the newly imagined nation.[91]

Some women, however, did not shy away from challenging the state-propagated chimera that those detained were 'undesirables'. As one writer put it, 'the operation was ill-thought out and poorly organised, casting the net too wide to the point of becoming a police rampage'.[92] Using the letter pages of *Moto* to access the public sphere, 'Ex-combatant, Female' wrote that she was 'enraged' by the 'degrading and totally unjustified humiliation [of women] at the hands of the police and soldiers who forced, beat and generally mishandled women on the dubious allegations of being prostitutes'. Legitimising and defending a female presence in public space, Ex-combatant, Female reminded readers of *Moto* that the women who were detained were 'our mothers, sisters, wives, cousins, friends'. She concluded by questioning whether or not women had also fought in the war to 'liberate this country from tyranny and arbitrary laws or am I dreaming?' Disagreeing with 'the practice of arresting single women as prostitutes', members of the Kubatana branch of ZANU's Women League wanted further clarity on how the police decided who was a prostitute.[93] Other letter writers suggested that women working as prostitutes were only doing so because of economic hardship and the slow pace of national development,[94] while other writers equated the machinations of Operation Clean-Up as attacking women's rights in general. In particular, one group of writers demanded to know if women had been denied the right to occupy space in Zimbabwe's cities without a chaperone; if married women had to carry a copy of their marriage certificates; whether or not all single women would automatically be labelled prostitutes; and what the Ministry of Women's Affairs was doing to inform those deprived of their rights.[95]

In parliament and broader public discourse, the reputation of the detained women, and indeed the legitimacy of government actions, were also debated at some length. In the first instance, few parliamentarians actually expressed concern with the stated aims of Operation Clean-Up. Mr Ntuta, professing that he wanted 'a clear definition of a prostitute', went on to invoke biblical imagery when describing the situation.[96] Some, like Mr Ndangana, felt that criticism of governmental actions was propagated by 'opposition group[s] […] here to formulate stories', and that the government was right to 'encourage women to live decently'. For Ndangana, prostitution was a global 'problem', yet because the Zimbabwean government had decided to act, 'the opposition have decided to talk about it and it has become the topic here'.[97] While some of the most trenchant criticism did come from (white) opposition members, including erstwhile Prime Minister Smith, government officials were quick to question their sincerity, thereby deflecting attention away from the issues that Operation Clean-Up raised about post-colonial authoritarianism.

Disingenuous or not, opposition MPs continued to express their dismay at 'this deplorable exercise on what turned out to be the majority of completely decent women'.[98] One MP, Mr Elsworth, went on to explain that members of his constituency who were detained were 'decent women going about ordinary activities'. For Elsworth, the events of Operation Clean-Up were an augury of a country 'run by mob rule', which left unchecked would not encourage foreign investment because: 'No one is going to bring his money into a country which he sees going into the Dark Ages.'[99] While Mr York felt it was 'a laudable aim' that was 'well-intentioned',[100] he went on to argue that it was ultimately 'a vicious attack against the women of this country in general regardless of whether or not they have any connection or not, with

prostitution'. As one interviewee, Patience, remarked, 'women were always accused of prostitution without considering that it takes two to tango. The cultural position then was that women are the one[s] who entice men'.[101] As Dorothy L. Hodgson and Sheryl A. McCurdy have observed, the deployment of terms such as '"vagabond", "prostitute", "wayward", "unruly", "indecent" and "immoral" are […] used to label and stigmatize women whose behaviour in some way threatens other people's expectations of "the way things ought to be"'.[102]

The shame associated with such descriptions was noted by Brigadier Probert. Arguing that the government had acted with 'all the delicacy of a bull in a China Shop', he commented that 'the great pity about this whole business, is that decent, clean-living women are being arrested […] the tragedy is that when they come out of these prison cells, to come home the mud will stick. A lot of women will lose their reputation by what the government has done'.[103] For Mrs Chinamano, the state had targeted the wrong women as 'prostitutes are educated girls who earn a lot of money but […] they go about prostituting'.[104] While it is difficult to substantiate Chinamano's claims, it is clear that the increased presence of women in Zimbabwe's urban centres had a bearing on such comments. As Barnes has suggested, 'in urban culture prostitution was firmly linked with a woman's physical mobility, implying that once she was moving around there was absolutely no doubt what she was looking for'.[105] Responding on behalf of the government, the minister of legal and parliamentary affairs, Mr Zvogbo, challenged the representation of Operation Clean-Up in the press, before going on to state that 'the Government finds no necessity, no expediency to waffle about the question of human rights and matters of human dignity […] we believe that all upright, law abiding Zimbabweans despise the practice of prostitution'. Ominously, Zvogbo closed by explaining that those detained would be 'taken, resettled and made to work, and work hard'. What is entirely absent from these parliamentary debates is any challenge to governmental thinking that 'prostitutes' or 'vagrants' deserved to be targeted.[106] Although historically the colonial state had 'preferred to supervise rather than eliminate sexual deviance',[107] Operation Clean-Up unequivocally highlighted the parameters of nationalist nation-building, setting an alarming precedent for subsequent acts of state-sponsored violence.

Despite this, Operation Clean-Up was not without its supporters. One woman wrote to *The Herald* expressing her support for the government, hoping she could meet the prime minister and those involved to 'give them 20c each for cokes in praise of what they did about prostitutes'. Mrs Maps went on to explain how governmental actions were benefitting ordinary wives, as their husbands would be able to give them 'full pay for a change'. She went on to outline a further three advantages. 'Men are coming home earlier than usual because there is no one to entertain them in beer halls and nightclubs', numbers of 'dumped' babies would be minimised, as would the spread of sexual transmitted infections.'[108] Similarly, for Zhayerera Zhambira of Gweru, Operation Clean-Up 'instilled general confidence' in the government. Expounding similar reasons to Mrs Maps, Zhambira added that the divorce rate would likely drop, that 'those women who have been sitting on the fence are more likely to get married', which would, in turn, improve 'national discipline' as children would grow up with both parents.[109] As Fungai George of Harare felt that 'prostitutes are unspeakably undesirable', he congratulated the government, 'pray[ing] this campaign will go on until the final eradication of prostitution'.[110]

Conclusions

Whether hamstrung by the reality of living in a post-colonial nation whose independence had been negotiated through a settlement with its former colonial power, or through the strictures of the adoption of structural adjustment -through the International Monetary Fund - in the late 1980s, in Zimbabwe there was a lack of political will to meaningfully address women's historical subordination; just one example of the ways in which Robert Mugabe's regime 'never bothered to radically transform' the inherited colonial state.[111] This article therefore supports Carol J. Riphenburg's contention that in Zimbabwe the 'benefits of revolution were tempered by the retention of masculinist principles'.[112] As the Zimbabwean experience therefore suggests, women are supposed to wait for their emancipation, as 'pursuing that goal "too soon" may rock the boat' and derail national development entirely.[113]

While there is debate over whether or not women gained some level of equality during the course of the liberation struggle,[114] traditional gender roles and patriarchal prerogatives were quickly reasserted once the war was over. For all of the state rhetoric that Operation Clean-Up was ridding towns of vagrants, prostitutes and beggars, it baldly exposed the gendered nature of women's post-colonial political exclusion. For Stott, the Operation Clean-Up campaign was an attempt to silence women who were beginning to demand a better life in Zimbabwe.[115] Adding to this, this article has argued that Operation Clean-Up is also a way through which we can further understand the historic tensions surrounding the presence of women in the country's urban centres. Rapid urbanisation in post-colonial Zimbabwe, previously controlled by legislation in Smith's Rhodesia, saw unprecedented numbers of women moving to urban areas. This mobility, however, contravened widespread expectations that women who had participated in the liberation struggle should return to rural areas and 'take up traditional domestic chores such as childcare and housework'.[116] The attack on female autonomy, as personified through Operation Clean-Up, was therefore as much about exclusionary nation-building as it was about forcing women back into rural areas, to ensure their participation in the rural economy and to re-establish patriarchal prerogatives. For many women in Zimbabwe, it is clear that when 'the lustre of independence wore off [in Zimbabwe], feminism seemed like cruel optimism'.[117] Adding further weight to this, this article has shown that, at best, women were conceptualised as the nation's mothers and not as its ideologues. At worst, they were 'prostitutes' and 'vagrants' whose respectability and reputation were at stake in urban spaces.

As the debates outlined in the national press and Hansard testify to, the concept of being a 'respectable' woman was still highly regarded in the newly independent country. This pursuit of 'respectability' often meant that the contribution of women who had participated in the liberation struggle was disregarded because 'respectable' women were not conceptualised as combatants; rather, they were symbolically exalted as the 'mothers of the revolution' who crucially could produce but not consume new forms of nationalist culture. Yet, as the letters profiled in this article also show, many women were quick to challenge these shibboleths, voicing their dissatisfaction with life in the post-colonial period.

Seeing decolonisation as a process and not a moment, this article has shed further a light on one of the most intractable problems that a newly independent nation encounters: the dissonance between the rhetoric of a revolutionary movement and its

subsequent treatment of women in nationalist projects. In doing so, it has sought to encourage scholars to think beyond the immediate decolonial moment. Fixating on the transfer of power, it has been argued, blinds analysis to longer historical processes that can help to explain the incomplete, fitful and contested legacies of decolonisation, such as those personified through the exigencies of women's liberation. Almost certainly, decolonisation could be conceived of as an interminable process through which successive freedoms are (hopefully) revealed, yet the end of empire can be more than a mere discursive threshold. As this article has argued, the only way to understand the porous boundaries between colonial governance and independent nation-building – and the attendant political and economic changes that the transfer of power brings – is to fully integrate gender as a serious category of historical analysis in the toolkit of the historian of decolonisation. Only then will we begin to understand the 'limits of liberation'.

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Notes

1. Zodwa Sibanda, cited in Kathy Bond-Stewart, *Independence Is Not Only For One Sex* (Harare: African Publishing Group, 1987), p. 20.
2. For more on the transfer of power, see Sue Onslow, 'Freedom at Midnight: A Microcosm of Zimbabwe's Hopes and Dreams at Independence, April 1980', in Robert Holland, Susan Williams and Terry Barringer (eds), *The Iconography of Independence: Freedoms at Midnight* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 89–98.
3. For an overview of the history of the country, see *inter alia* Robert Blake, *A History of Rhodesia* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977); and Alois Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). For the UDI specifically, see Carl Peter Watts, *Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence: An International History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
4. Held over a three-month period between September and December 1979 in London, the Lancaster House conference was populated by three distinct factions: Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo as leaders of the Patriotic Front, Abel Muzorewa and Ian Smith as leaders of the interim government, and the British delegation headed by British Foreign Secretary Lord Peter Carrington.
5. There is much debate about whether Zimbabwe has ever experienced a 'free and fair election'. For a damning assessment, see Norma Kriger, 'ZANU (PF) Strategies in General Elections, 1980–2000: Discourses and Coercion', *African Affairs* 104 (2009), pp. 1–6.
6. Between 1980 and 1983 the Zimbabwean economy grew by 21 per cent; Roger C. Riddell, 'Zimbabwe: The Economy Four Years after Independence', *African Affairs* 83 (1984), pp. 463–76.
7. The exceptions being Karen Bouwer, *Gender and Decolonization in the Congo: The Legacy of Patrice Lumumba* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) and Philippa Levine, 'Gendering Decolonisation', *Histoire @ Politique* 11 (2010). <https://www.cairn.info/revue-histoire-politique-2010-2-page-9.htm>. For recent works that continue to pay scant attention to the role of women, see, for instance, Jan C. Jansen and Jürgen Osterhammel, *Decolonization: A Short History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017).
8. Marie Aimée Hélie-Lucas, 'The Role of Women During the Algerian Liberation Struggle and After: Nationalism as a Concept and as a Practice towards both the Power of the Army and the Militarization of the People', in Eva Isaksson (ed.), *Women and the Military System* (New York: St Martins Press, 1988), pp. 171–89.
9. For instance, see the testimonies in Bond-Stewart, *Independence Is Not Only For One Sex*.
10. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Mugabeism and the Entanglements of History, Politics and Power in the Making of Zimbabwe', in Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (ed.), *Mugabeism? History, Politics, and Power in Zimbabwe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 1–25.

11. For a study that addresses the history of sex in Zimbabwe, see John Pape, 'Black and White: The "Perils of Sex" in Colonial Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16 (1990), pp. 699–720.
12. Interview/email correspondence with Tari (pseudonym), a feminist activist living in Harare, November 2014.
13. Lynette Jackson, 'Violence: Sub-Saharan and Southern Africa', in Cherise Kramarae and Dale Spender (eds), *The Routledge International Encyclopaedia of Women: Global Women's Issues and Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 2018–20.
14. For instance, see Carolyn Martin-Shaw, *Women and Power in Zimbabwe: Promises of Feminism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015).
15. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Mugabeism and the Entanglements of History', p. 1.
16. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2013), p. 186.
17. *Gukurahundi* (1983–87), which saw the killings of approximately twenty thousand people in Matabeleland (an Ndebele stronghold), is widely acknowledged as the first episode of state-sponsored violence, where Mugabe instructed his personal self-styled militia, the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade, to eliminate his political opponents. For more on the causes and consequences, see Shari Eppel, '"Gukurahundi": The Need for Truth and Reparation', in Brian Raftopoulos and Tyrone Savage (eds), *Zimbabwe Injustice and Political Reconciliation* (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), pp. 43–62.
18. Michael Evans, 'The Wretched of the Empire. Politics, Ideology and Counterinsurgency in Rhodesia, 1965–1980', *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 8 (2007), pp. 175–95.
19. *Chimurenga* is the Shona term for revolutionary struggle. For histories of the *Chimurenga*, see Mike Kesby, 'Arenas for Control, Terrains of Gender Contestation: Guerrilla Struggle and Counter Insurgency Warfare in Zimbabwe 1972–1980', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 2 (1996), pp. 561–84; Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Ian Phimister, 'The Combined and Contradictory Inheritance of the Struggle against Colonialism', *Transformation* 5 (1987), pp. 51–9; and Michael Raeburn, *Black Fire! Narratives of Rhodesian Guerrillas* (New York: Random House, 1978).
20. For more on the history of both armies, see Gerald Chikozo Mazarire, 'Discipline and Punishment in ZANLA, 1964–1979', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37 (2011), pp. 571–91; Eliakim M. Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union: 1961–1987* (Trenton: African World Press, 2005); and Edmund Yorke, 'African Exile Armies: ZANLA, ZIPRA and the Politics of Disunity', in Matthew Bennett and Paul Latawski (eds), *Exile Armies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 101–14.
21. Munyaradzi B. Munochiveyi, *Prisoners of Rhodesia: Inmates and Detainees in the Struggle for Zimbabwean Liberation, 1960–1980* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 58.
22. There is great debate in Zimbabwean historiography about the natural willingness, or lack thereof, of the peasantry to support guerrilla warfare. For some idea of the complexity of this debate, see Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe* (London: James Currey, 1985) and Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War.* Contrary to Ranger, Kriger argues that peasant mobilisation was based on coercion rather than commitment.
23. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War*.
24. Eleanor O'Gorman, *The Front Line Runs Through Every Woman: Women & Local Resistance in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle* (Harare: Weaver, 2011), p. 77.
25. Irene Staunton (ed.), *Mothers of the Revolution* (Harare: Boabab, 1990), p. 5.
26. Staunton, *Mothers of the Revolution*, p. 156.
27. O'Gorman, *Front Line Runs Through Every Woman*, p. 125. As O'Gorman subsequently argues, food networks simultaneously demonstrated the 'compliance, resistance, powerlessness and sacrifice' of many Zimbabwean women, p. 130.
28. Leda Stott, 'Women and the Armed Struggle for Independence in Zimbabwe (1964–1979)'. Occasional Papers No. 25 (Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh University 1990), p. 21.
29. For a detailed discussion, see Ireen Mudeka, 'Female Combatants and Shifting Gender Perceptions during Zimbabwe's Liberation War, 1966–79', *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies* 2 (2014), pp. 83–104.
30. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War*, pp. 22–3.
31. Stott, 'Women and the Armed Struggle', p. 27. The experiences of female fighters, and the harsh realities of camp life, were vividly depicted in Ingrid Sinclair's film *Flame* (1996); Teresa Barnes, '*Flame* and the Historiography of Armed Struggle in Zimbabwe', in Vivian Bickford-Smith and Richard Mendelsohn (eds), *Black and White in Colour: African History on Screen* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), pp. 240–55.

32. Gisela Geisler, 'Troubled Sisterhood: Women and Politics in Southern Africa: Case Studies from Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana', *African Affairs* 9477 (1995), pp. 545–78.
33. Tanya Lyons, *Guns and Guerilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean National Liberation Struggle* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2004).
34. Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse: Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle* (Harare: Weaver, 2000).
35. Rudo B. Gaidzanwa, 'Grappling with Mugabe's Masculinist Politics in Zimbabwe: A Gender Perspective', in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Mugabeism?* pp. 157–79.
36. For more on nationalism and selective remembrance in Zimbabwe, see Ruramisai Charumbira, *Imagining a Nation: History and Memory in Making Zimbabwe* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015).
37. Josiah Tongogara, cited in Ruth Weiss, *The Women of Zimbabwe* (Trenton: Red Sea, 1986), p. 105.
38. Kate Law, 'Episodes of Ambiguity: Steps Toward Socialism in Zimbabwe, *c.*1980–1985', *Australasian Review of African Studies* 30 (2009), p. 49; Christine Sylvester, *Zimbabwe: The Terrain of Contradictory Development* (London: Westview, 1991).
39. Shereen Essof, *Shemurenga: The Zimbabwean Women's Movement, 1995–2000* (Harare: Weaver, 2013), p. 34.
40. To understand governmental planning and national priorities in this period, see Ibbo Mandaza (ed.), *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition, 1980–1986* (Dakar: Codesria, 1986).
41. Untitled poems by Viola Madhuka and Shumirai Nerupiri, in Kathy Bond and Leocardia Chimbandi Mudina (eds), *Young Women in the Liberation Struggle: Stories and Poems from Zimbabwe* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1984), p. 62 and p. 64.
42. Robert Mugabe, cited in Richard Lapchick and Stephanie Urdang, *Oppression and Resistance: The Struggle of Women in Southern Africa* (Westport: Greenwood. 1982), p. 108.
43. Julia Zvobgo, as cited in Bond-Stewart, *Independence Is Not Only For One Sex*, p. 35.
44. Hina Ashraf, 'Letters to the Editor: A Resistant Genre of Unrepresented Voices', *Discourse & Communication* 8 (2014), pp. 3–21.
45. Nicole Ball, 'Demobilizing and Reintegrating Soldiers: Lessons from Africa', in Krishna Kumar (ed.), *Rebuilding Societies After Civil War: Critical Roles for International Assistance* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997), pp. 85–105.
46. Madeleine Mattarozzi, 'Letter: What about the women?', *Moto* 1:4 (1982).
47. Paul Themba Nyathi, 'Reintegration of Ex-Combatants into Zimbabwean Society: A Lost Opportunity', in Brian Raftopoulos and Tyrone Savage (eds), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation* (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), pp. 63–78.
48. Themba Nyathi, 'Reintegration of Ex-Combatants', p. 67. Z$400 was roughly equal to US$400.
49. Shylet Mhaka, cited in Bond-Stewart and Mudimu, *Young Women in the Liberation Struggle*, p. 16.
50. Bond-Stewart and Mudimu, *Young Women in the Liberation Struggle*, p. 16.
51. Chipo Hungwe, 'Putting Them In Their Place – "Respectable" and "Unrespectable" Women in Zimbabwean Gender Struggles', *Feminist Africa* 6 (September 2006), pp. 33–47.
52. 'Are men fighting shy of marrying guerrilla girls?', *The Sunday Mail*, 22 November 1981.
53. Gaidzanwa, 'Grappling with Mugabe's Masculinist Politics', p. 160.
54. For instance, see 'Comrades return to a cold front', *Moto* 2 (June 1982), p. 16.
55. 'A Luta Continua!', *Moto* 94 (November 1990).
56. For David Grey and Trevor Brown, the prime function of the letters to the editor section is that of catharsis, as 'it gives the irate, the antagonist, the displeased, a chance to speak out and be heard'; David Grey and Trevor Brown, 'Letters to the Editor: Hazy Reflections of Public Opinion', *Journalism Quarterly* 47 (1970), pp. 450–71.
57. Michael O. West, 'Nationalism, Race and Gender: The Politics of Family Planning in Zimbabwe, 1957–1990', *Social History of Medicine* 7 (1994), pp. 469–70. For more on white population fears of 'swamping', see Josiah Brownell, *The Collapse of Rhodesia: Population Demographics and the Politics of Race* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010).
58. Despite African (male) nationalists' historic suspicion and hostility towards birth control, under the guidance of Health Minister Herbert Ushewokunze, Zimbabwe adopted a family planning policy of 'tempered pro-natalism'. For more on this, see West, 'Nationalism, Race and Gender', p. 463. See also Amy Kaler, 'A Threat to the Nation and a Threat to the Men: The Banning of Depo-Provera in Zimbabwe, 1981', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24 (1998), pp. 347–76.
59. Although precise figures are difficult to obtain, one editorial in *The Sunday Mail* suggested that, in August 1983, there were over fifty reported cases of 'baby dumping'; 'Baby Scandal', *The Sunday Mail*, 28 August 1983. Despite governmental rhetoric to the contrary, *Moto* ran many opinion pieces that argued

that access to birth control was still limited; see *inter alia* 'Contraceptives – The Moral Issue', *Moto* 66 (June 1988) and 'Market Women – A Question of Survival', *Moto* 68–69 (August–September 1988).

60. 'Baby Scandal', *The Sunday Mail*, 28 August 1983.
61. 'Baby Dumping, Who is to blame?', *Moto* 17 (October 1983).
62. For more on this, see Catherine Panter-Brick, 'Nobody's Children: A Reconsideration of Child Abandonment', in Catherine Panter-Brick and Malcolm T. Smith (eds), *Abandoned Children* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 1–26.
63. Hansard, Mr Divaris, 11th Motion, 29 November 1981.
64. As Sarah Le Vine and Robert Le Vine have argued, 'Children remain the most highly valued possessions of their parents: they represent the continuation of religious and moral life as well as economic hope for the future'; Sarah Le Vine and Robert Le Vine, 'Child Abuse and Neglect in Sub-Saharan Africa', in Jill E. Korbin (ed.), *Child Abuse and Neglect: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 35–55.
65. 'Lack of Family Planning Education is Responsible for Some Women's Ills', *Moto* 54 (May 1987).
66. 'Baby Dumping, Who is to blame?', *Moto* 17 (October 1983).
67. For instance, see Jean Allman (ed.), *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 2004.
68. Margaret Jean Hay, 'Changes in Clothing and Struggles Over Identity in Colonial Western Kenya', in Allman, *Fashioning Africa*, pp. 67–83.
69. Andrew M. Ivaska, '"Anti-Mini Militants Meet Modern Misses": Urban Style, Gender and the Politics of "National Culture"', in Jean M. Allman, (ed.), *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 104–21.
70. Carolyn Martin Shaw, *Women and Power in Zimbabwe: Promises of Feminism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), p. 80. For more on the power of the mini skirt in Southern Africa, see Karen Tranberg-Hansen, 'Dressing Dangerously: Mini Skirts, Gender Relations and Sexuality in Zambia' in Allman, *Fashioning Africa*, pp. 166–85.
71. 'Zimbabwean Women Feel Slighted', *Moto* 70 (October 1988). For more on the history of advertising in Zimbabwe, see Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe* (Durham: Duke University Press 1996), pp. 125–65.
72. 'Zimbabwean Women Feel Slighted', *Moto* 70 (October 1988).
73. Allison K. Shutt, *Manners Make A Nation: Racial Etiquette in Southern Rhodesia, 1910–1963* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2015), details the case of Lennox Njokweni, a middle-class clerk at Inyati Boys' Industrial and Agricultural Institution. An 'urbane man' who was on speaking terms with the local Native Commissioner (NC), and who wore a hat as a sign of 'his distinction', Njokweni had his hat knocked off by the assistant NC, Tapson, for a perceived display of impudence.
74. Essof, *Shemurenga*, p. 36.
75. '"Operation Clean-Up" Takes Women's Lib One Step Back', *Moto* 19 (1983–84).
76. '"Operation Clean-Up"'.
77. Access to land has come to be seen as a defining feature of many liberation struggles. Who can farm what, and where, is a highly politicised issue that continues to play out in many post-colonial states. For some idea of the complexity in the Zimbabwean case, see Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia* (London: Heinemann, 1977) and Ian Phimister, 'Rethinking the Reserves: Southern Rhodesia's Land Husbandry Act Reviewed', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19 (1993), pp. 225–39.
78. Teresa Barnes, *We Women Worked So Hard: Gender, Urbanisation, and Social Reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930–1956* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1999), p. xxix.
79. Deborah Potts, 'Debates about African Urbanisation, Migration and Economic Growth: What Can We Learn from Zimbabwe and Zambia?', *Geographical Journal* 182 (2016), pp. 251–64.
80. Tim Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield* (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, University of Rochester Press, 2008).
81. Tsueno Yoshikuni, 'Black Migrants in a White City: A History of African Harare, 1890-1925', Ph.D. thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1990.
82. Elizabeth Schmidt, 'Patriarchy, Capitalism and the Colonial State in Zimbabwe', *Signs* 16 (1991), pp. 732–56.
83. Teresa Barnes, 'The Fight for Control of African Women's Mobility in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1900–1939', *Signs* 17 (1992), pp. 556–608. For more on the women and urbanisation in the country, see D. W. Drakakis-Smith, 'The Changing Economic Role of Women in the Urbanization Process: A Preliminary Report from Zimbabwe', *International Migration Review* 18 (1984), pp. 1278–98. For a longer term

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84. Hungwe, 'Putting Them In Their Place', p. 34.
85. For instance, see Barnes, *We Women Worked So Hard*.
86. Stott, 'Women and the Armed Struggle', p. 61.
87. As one writer put it, 'the demand by women for equality today is as much a threat to humanity as nuclear weapons are'; *Moto* 23 (May 1984). For more on *Lobola* (bridewealth), see Nicola Ansell, '"Because it's our culture!" (Re)negotiating the Meaning of *Lobola* in Southern African Secondary Schools', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27 (2001), pp. 697–716.
88. *Moto* 23 (May 1984).
89. Michael Musekiwa, Mabvuku, 'Letter: Too Much Freedom', *The Sunday Mail*, 8 February 1981.
90. Hungwe, 'Putting Them In Their Place', p. 33.
91. Stott, 'Women and the Armed Struggle', p. 61.
92. 'Letter', signed P. Muringani, Harare, *The Sunday Mail*, 20 November 1983.
93. Letter, signed ZANU Women's League, Kubatana branch, *The Herald*, 28 November 1983.
94. Letter, signed by seventeen people, *The Herald*, 1 December 1983.
95. Letter, signed by H. Hall, N. Jacques, A. Kotler, C. Lovatt and V. Morrisey, Gweru, *The Herald*, 29 November 1983.
96. Hansard, Mr Ntuta, 11th Motion, 29 November 1983.
97. Hansard, Mr Ndangana, 11th Motion, 29 November 1983.
98. Hansard, Mr Elsworth, 11th Motion, 29 November 1983.
99. Hansard, Mr Elsworth, 11th Motion, 29 November 1983.
100. Hansard, Mr York, 11th Motion, 29 November 1983.
101. Interview with Patience (pseudonym), a nurse in Harare in the 1980s and who now works from a women's non-governmental organization (NGO). Email correspondence/interview between Patience and the author, November 2014.
102. Dorothy L. Hodgson and Sheryl A. McCurdy, 'Introduction', in Dorothy L. Hodgson and Sheryl A. McCurdy (eds), *'Wicked' Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001), pp. 1–26.
103. Hansard, Brigadier Probert, 11th Motion, 29 November 1983.
104. Hansard, Mrs Chimano, 11th Motion, 29 November 1983.
105. Barnes, *We Women Worked So Hard*, p. 48.
106. One letter writer, 'only trying to help' of Harare, argued that prostitution acted as an outlet for 'undesirable' men, with the availability of sex workers limiting attacks on 'normal' women; 'Letter: Prostitution Does Serve a Purpose', *The Sunday Mail*, 20 November 1983.
107. Ushehwedu Kufakurinani, 'Empire and Sexual Deviance: Debating White Women's Prostitution in Early 20th Century Salisbury, Rhodesia', in Will Jackson and Emily J. Manktelow (eds), *Subverting Empire: Deviance and Disorder in the British Colonial World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 205–25.
108. 'Operation Clean Up Pays Off', *The Herald*, 16 November 1983.
109. 'Benefits of the Clean-Up', *The Herald*, 30 November 1983.
110. Fungai George, Harare, 'Letter: Campaign Welcome', *The Sunday Mail*, 27 November 1983.
111. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Mugabeism and the Entanglements of History', p. 1.
112. Carol J. Riphenburg, 'Changing Gender Relations and Structural Adjustment in Zimbabwe', *Istituto Italiano per L'Africa e L'Oriente* 52 (1997), pp. 237–60.
113. Cheryl Bernard, Seth G. Jones, Olga Oliker, Cathryn Quantic Thurston, Brooke K. Stearns and Kristen Cordell, *Women and Nation-Building* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2008), p. 3.
114. As Joyce Chadya has rather bluntly put it: 'African nationalists' support of women's causes was part of a tactic of social and political inclusion that was meant to yoke as many people as possible to the nationalist struggle'; Joyce M. Chadya, 'Mother Politics: Anti-Colonial Nationalism and the Woman Question in Africa', *Journal of Women's History* 15 (2003), pp. 153–7.
115. Stott, 'Women and the Armed Struggle'.
116. Hungwe, 'Putting Them In Their Place', p. 41.
117. Shaw, *Women and Power in Zimbabwe*, p. 2.

Kate Law works in the history department at the University of Nottingham (UK). She is also a Research Fellow of the International Studies Group at The University of the Free State (South Africa).