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## Ethical Subjectivity and National Identity on Zimbabwean Loyalty



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### ABSTRACT

A Zimbabwean is identified as a Zimbabwean because of ubuntuism with hundred percent Zimbabwean flavors. Ubuntu is one's identity or sense of belonging to one state or to one nation thus national identity is the sense of a nation as a cohesive whole, as represented by distinctive traditions, culture, ethics, language and politics. Ethical subjectivity attends to how people manage to define their ethical position in relation to their everyday practice hence their constitution as subjects in relation to ethics and the practices they adopt in forming a sense of an ethical self. Being ethical self and national belongingness depict a clear jingoism. This conceptual paper examined the influence of ethical subjectivity and National identity on Zimbabwean loyalty. Broadly, a qualitative research method was employed with the support of quantitative analyses especially on the statistical components of the research data. Structured and amorphous type of questions was used to the purposively selected respondents. The open research will assist the inhabitants of Zimbabwe and other natives to understand the ethical subjectivity and national belongingness in a positive light as jingoism, which is characterized by national pride and positive emotion of love for one's country and chauvinism, which refers to the firm belief in the country's superiority and extreme loyalty toward one's country.



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## INTRODUCTION

Loyalty is characterized by faithfulness, devotion, allegiance and dependability of the populace of a nation thus categorically referred as nationalism. National loyalty is to love your country and the willingness to act in its interest, possibly at the cost of an individual's own interest. This is keeping own countries interest above everything and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture, norms and values. Loyalty, national identity, the subject of ethics and nationalism are hand in glove type of relationship. Miller, D (2005) contended that nationalism is a component of national identity and national identity a critical factor of nationalism.

### Background of the study

At a time when ethnic nationalism seems insurgent and capable of pushing the Zimbabwean government chaos and war, there is increased need both to understand and to learn how to cope with the conditions that promote extreme national loyalty. Focusing attention primarily on individuals and small interacting groups, there is need to sought basic knowledge about the ways in which people relate to groups and nations. Central to this focus is the role played by feelings of loyalty to the nation and the conditions that arouse or reduce affection.

The current Zimbabwean situation is haunted by the impact that loyalties have on what people are doing politically. Strong, even extreme, attachments to ethnic, religious, national, and clan identities have appeared to push individuals, groups to engage in what often seem to be inhumane, and improbable acts toward those perceived to be the enemy. According to Foucault (1997) considering ethics in relation to organizations, is a matter of exploring how people constitute themselves as the ethical subjects of their own actions within organizational/national contexts and in relation to national discourses.

### Globalization and Culture

The issue of globalization has a critical effect on the behavior of the nation inhabitants. According to Akindele (1990), globalization refers to the process of the intensification of economic, political, social and cultural relations across international boundaries. Simply it entails the changes in societies and the world economy that result from dramatically increased international trade and cultural exchange. On daily basis, different perspectives on globalization implication are tabled where some viewed it as the destruction of cultural

entities and national loyalty. It is, therefore, having an impact on Africa in general concerning politics consequently eroding national sovereignty especially on economic matters (Oyejide 1998).

Zimbabwe, in particular, is rapidly losing its cultural identity and therefore the ability to interact with other cultures on an equal and autonomous basis, borrowing from other cultures only those aspects that meet their requirements and needs. The loss of cultural identity contributes largely to the loss of national identity and the ethical subjectivity hence the pride of being a Zimbabwean. Broadly, globalization according to Mule (2000) encourages illicit trade in drugs, prostitution, human smuggling, dumping of dangerous waste and depletion of environment by unscrupulous entrepreneurs. On the positive note, globalization opens people's lives to other cultures thereby scrutinize comparatively such cultures resulting in taking up ethical positions that promote nationalism.

### **Ubuntuism**

The philosophy of Ubuntu derives from a Nguni word, ubuntu meaning "the quality of being human" manifests itself through various human acts, clearly visible in social, political, and economic situations, as well as among family. Ubuntu is described as the capacity in African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and mutuality in the interest of building and maintaining communities with justice and mutual caring ( Khoza 2006; Luhabe 2002; Mandela 2006). The ubuntu philosophy believes in group solidarity which is central to the survival of African communities (Mbigi and Maree 2005). The philosophy represents an African conception of human being and their relationship with the community that embodies the ethics defining Africans and their social behaviors (Dia 1992; Mbigi 2005). Thus, the survival of human beings is dependent on other people, the community and the entire society consequently depicting the National identity.

The ubuntu philosophy influences a positive behavior among individuals where individual's behavior is governed by the ability to reason and think within the community context. This positive behavior reflects respect, which refers to an objective and unbiased consideration of and regards for somebody's rights, values, beliefs and property (Eze 2006). Thus under African governance provisions, respect, dignity, caring, humanity and sharing are considered critical values that constitute communities, national identity and loyalty.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Conceptual framework**

#### **Ethics**

Ethics refers to principles by which to evaluate behavior as right or wrong, good or bad thus are continuous efforts of striving to ensure that people and the institutions they shape live up to the standards that are reasonable and solidly-based (Traer 2013; Gasper. D 2004). Tanguay, D (2014) added that ethics may be used to describe a particular person's own idiosyncratic principles or habits. There is, however, various typology of ethics but of interest in this study is role ethics which is an ethical theory based on family role and the individual's relationship with the community (Ames. T. 2011).

#### **Ethical Subjectivity**

The nature in which people in a nation constitute themselves as subjects in relation to both their conduct and their sense of ethical responsibility to others depicts ethical subjectivity. Ethical subjectivity gives attentions to how people manage to describe or define their ethical position in relation to their everyday practices (Chan, Garrick 2002). The distinction between what is regarded as right or wrong and good or bad determine an individual's position in a group or a nation.

The ethical behavior is, in the first place, reality disclosing behavior. The ethical subject does not harbor moral principles nor strive for a new moral order. The ethical subject instead moved by a powerful longing, and there is no longing stronger than the longing for reality (Critchley 1999a). This reality, this secretive intertwining of individuality and otherness, of facticity and meaningfulness, of singularity and commonality, only reveals itself in ethical engagement (Critchley 1999b).

#### **National Identity**

National identity is defined as the maintenance and continuous reproduction of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myth and traditions that the distinctive heritage of nations and the identifications of individuals with that particular heritage and those value, symbols, memories myth and traditions (Smith 2001). In simple terms Smith (2001) describe the national identity

as the subjectivity feeling one share with a group of people about a nation regardless of one's legal citizenship status.

Bloom (2004) concurred that national identity describes the condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols have internalized the symbols of the nation so that they may act as one psychological group when there is a threat to or the possibility of enhancement of these symbols of nationalism.

The given definitions have influenced the formulation of a social identity theory from the different researchers. According to (Alexander et al. 2010) social identity theory suggests that conceptualization of national identity includes both self-categorization which refers to identifying with a nation and viewing oneself as a member of a nation whereas affect refers to the emotion a person has with this identification such as a sense of belonging or emotional attachment toward nation.

### **Self-categorization**

National identity requires the process of self-categorization and it involves both the identification of in-group (identifying with one's nation) and differentiation of out-groups (other nations). By recognizing commonalities such as having common descent and common destiny, people identify with a nation and form an in-group, and at the same time, they view people that identify with a different nation as out-groups (Smith, 1991).

Social identity theory suggests a positive relationship between identification of a nation and derogation of other nations. By identifying with one's nation, people involve in intergroup comparisons and tend to derogate out-groups (Turner, J. C. *et al.* 1999). However, several studies have investigated this relationship between national identity and derogating other countries and found that identifying with national identity does not necessarily result in out-group derogation (Hopkins, Nick 2001).

### **Affect**

National identity, like other social identities, engenders positive emotions such as pride and love to one's nation and feeling of obligations toward other citizens (Henri 1978). The socialization of national identities, such as socializing national pride and a sense of the country's exceptionalism contributes to harmony among ethnic groups (Horowitz, Donald 1985).

Under various social influences, people incorporate national identity into their personal identities by adopting beliefs, values, assumptions and expectations which align with one's national identity (Ervin *et al.* 1997). People with identification of their nation view national beliefs and values as personally meaningful and translate these beliefs and values into daily practices (Ashmore *et al.* (2001).

### **Loyalty/Nationalism**

Understanding nationalism is acknowledging a sense of national loyalty hence a love of national symbols, specific beliefs about that nation's superiority and a critical ingredient in the development of civic ties to a mature nation (Hurwitz & Peffley 1991; Theiss More 2001). Nationalism also involves the understanding of the nation, ethnicity and national identity. It is there according to Simpson *et al.* (1991) considered as a devotion to one's nation or policy of national independence. Thus, nationalism is not only preceded by the very existence of a nation but also by sentiment or belief that produces devotion to the nation. Therefore, the nation is the gravity center where a sort of national identity is founded (Grasper 2004).

However, on more specific approach, nationalism has been used in forms that suggest the creation and preservation of a nation Smith (2000). According to Smith (2000), in this respect five ways in which nationalism is used has been distinguished as follows;-

The whole process of forming and maintaining nations

- A consciousness of belonging to the nation
- A language or symbolism of the nation
- An ideology (including the cultural doctrine of nation)
- A social and political movement to achieve goals of the nation to realize the nation's will.

On the other front, Connor (2007) argues that nationalism is a question of loyalty thus the ideology or movement, in this case, has to do with the devotion to the nation and maintenance of its multidimensional attributes. Connor went on by defending that nationalism is manifestation of loyalty to the nation apart from the loyalty that is reserved to the state that represents them. Additionally, larger or minor groups can abide the state laws but remain loyal to what they consider their first source of identity that is national identity.

Hence, nationalism glorify a people's history, accomplishments and aspirations, to preach the obligation of loyalty to the community, its institution and symbols and to warn against external threats (Connor 2007)

### **Typology of Nationalism**

According to Kellas, G (1998) there are three general approaches that define nationalism, ethnic nationalism, social nationalism and official nationalism.

Of interest of this paper is ethnic nationalism which according to (Kellas, G 1998) refers to the movement and ideology of ethnic groups whose one of its main goals is to form a "nation-state" (group) based on the group's common history, languages, territory, race or other cultural makers that create a sense of belonging to what they might perceive as a nation. The European center for minorities (2008) concurred that ethnic nationalism can be focused in keeping the "ethnic solidarity" of the group and seek the continuity its traditions through cultural political and territorial autonomy with the given nation.

### **Research methodology**

The study focuses mainly on the influence two important variables, ethical subjectivity and national identity on nationalism/national loyalty. Data from secondary sources immensely contributed in the study with the help of interviews carried out by purposively selected members of the local community. The collection of data broadly employed a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is the approach usually associated with the social constructivist paradigm which emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality. It is about recording, analyzing and attempting to uncover the deeper meaning and significance of human behavior and experience, including contradictory beliefs, behaviors and emotions. The author was interested in gaining a rich and complex understanding of Zimbabwean people's experience in issues of national identity, nationalism as form of Zimbabwean loyalty.

### **Findings**

The following views and facts were solicited from fifteen purposively selected respondents

➤ Individualism, greediness and corruption among other unethical practices within the Zimbabwean community have fused the then humanistic behavior of the Nation.

- The respect, dignity, caring and patriotism, which used to be shared among individuals is now the chapter of the past.
- The ethical subjectivity, an up-hold of national ethics is on the replacement process by position power on the expense of the majority.
- The pride of being a Zimbabwean identified by the upholding of Zimbabwean ethical principles and ubuntuism/hunhuism is currently proved difficult to justify.
- A section of the community who are economically benefiting from the current situation seems to be loyal but on the other side of the coin this loyalty now questionable.
- Globalization influences nationalism both positively and negatively. Donations and other foreign assistance are promoting national economic growth. Foreign culture brought about by globalization encourages disrespect national traditional beliefs.
- Political and social activities experienced in Zimbabwe for the past five years have a serious effect on nationalism especially on the majority populace of the youth.
- Nationalism is the important component of national identity and national identity a critical factor of nationalism.
- Loyalty is associated with peace and tranquility but Zimbabwe is experiencing both economic and political instability.
- Teamwork and team building are other among other characteristics of nationalism/loyalty, which the nation should enjoy.
- A selected section of the community who claims to have brought the independence is enjoying nationalism phenomenon.

## DISCUSSIONS

Nationalism involves love of, identification with and special concern for a certain entity. Nationalism is judged as ethics of belief, a set of norms for evaluating beliefs and other doxastic states. It is the principle that some people have that their country is highly important and that it is superior to other states thus being loyal. Nationalism can also describe a movement that wants to protect or establish homeland for a certain ethnic society.

While nationalism is associated with positive effects, some drawbacks can be experienced from this political ideology. Due to ethical subjectivity and national identity, nationalism becomes a unifying force which overshadowed tribal identities and forged a new much more inclusive and rational identity practices.



Zimbabwe was once a nationalism country but has since infested by unfaithfulness, greediness and corruptive among other unethical practices. The issue of alleged inequitable land distribution, land under-utilization and economic imbalance has diverted the sense of ethical subject, national identity and in particular nationalism.

Political instability being perpetrated by opposition parties jeopardize the sense of nationalism ideology. Globalization has fused Zimbabwean ethnicity positively by introducing universally accepted cultural beliefs and promoting ethical practices and negatively brought about foreign beliefs that engulf ubuntuism/hunhuism of Zimbabwean nature.

The notion of identity seems to be relevant to ethics. National identity is able to give sharp and meaning to a person's life thus human actions are radically different from natural events, they are meaning in the sense that they are performed for purpose. Thus to find a meaning in an individual's life, one need to have a sense of identity and understanding identity is the ethical context of self-conception. In this context, identity is described by ethical attitudes and ethical attitudes resemble identity, thus having a national identity depict nationalism.



## CONCLUSION

Nationalism has, therefore, two critical sides of the coin, the benefits and the drawbacks. Beneficially it inspired individuals to make greatest sacrifices and become better people in the course of it just like a soldier who is ready to die for the motherland. It is the voice of the people against the autocratic monarchs giving the movement of people legitimacy which the sovereign derived from divine right.

On the drawbacks side, nationalism often leads to excessive jingoism and or chauvinism where consideration of oneself superior to others is experienced. Distrust of different generations due to liberation struggle decisive situation promotes isolation of some sections of the society on economic resource distribution.

National identity is characterized by two senses of behavior or obligations. The first asserts that a weaker sense of national identity creates only a kind of love or affection towards things related to the nation. The second emphasized that a stronger sense of national identity creates some specific and concrete obligation such as to make sacrifices for the country. Additionally, a stronger sense of national identity invites serious ethical accusations.

A national identity builds up solidarity and maintains harmony and such identity is instrumental in preserving one's ethnicity.

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