Chapter Five

Mediating the ‘Second’ Transition

5.0 Introduction

This chapter explores how the press sought to shape political debate during national elections, while simultaneously being itself shaped by the shifting contestation(s) within and between political and economic centres of power during Zimbabwe’s second decade of independence. The rapidly changing period covered by the chapter—stretching from 1990 until the end of 1997—is, for analytical purposes, referred to as Zimbabwe’s ‘second’ transitional phase (Sylvester, 2003).

Although changes in terms of its policy on the press in general were far from profound, the state during this period began to sound its impatience with a critical press and actually started cracking the whip. On the other hand, this same period experienced an expansion of the press occasioned in large measure by the deregulation of the economy. Importantly, local black capital became actively involved in the ownership of the private press, either taking over from or complementing the predominantly white-owned private press system that had existed during the first decade of independence. Within the realm of the public press, the state entrenched its control by amending the ZMMT trust deed to give the Ministry of Information more power over the ostensibly autonomous body’s operations.

The chapter argues that factors of ownership and financing of the press, as well as the broader legal and policy realities, influenced media framing of political debates in the transition, in particular the elections of 1990 and 1995 as well as the one-party state debate, whose coverage is the subject of close examination in the second part of the chapter. In addition to the Sunday Mail, The Herald and the Financial Gazette—which were the predominant focus of the previous chapter—this chapter also pays attention to the editorial perspectives adopted by entrants of the ‘second’ transition, namely Zimbabwe Independent (established in May 1996) and The Zimbabwe Mirror (established in December 1997).
5.1 The Political Economy of Zimbabwe’s ‘Second’ Transition

Zimbabwe’s ‘second’ transition presented the nation state with immense political and economic challenges. Firstly, as early as the late 1980s, it had become clear that the government’s impressive policies on the expansion of social services, especially in health and education, were being implemented on the basis of a shrinking economic base (Hammar & Raftopoulos, 2003). The lack of economic growth, coupled with rising unemployment, shortage of foreign currency and a ballooning budget deficit persuaded the government to consider an alternative economic model. In 1991, the government, which during the first transition operated an economy characterised by limited state interventions and a protectionist local capitalism inherited from the colonial era, adopted market reforms inspired by both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) was originally designed to revitalise the economy by 1995 (Knight, 1991).

The economic restructuring project, however, flopped rather dismally. The expected GDP growth averaged just 1.2 percent from 1991-1995. Inflation averaged 30 percent during the period, failing to hit the 10 percent anticipated goal (Bond & Manyanya, 2003). The budget deficit remained extremely high, partly because of state expenditure during the droughts of 1992 and 1995. In 1995, the government launched the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Structural Transformation (ZIMPREST) as a successor to ESAP, but again failed to achieve the desired economic turnaround. The ‘second’ transition ended on a rather gloomy economic note in Zimbabwe with the dramatic fall of the local currency by 74 percent on the morning of November 14th, 1997. Economists have explained this as a direct result of President Mugabe’s decision to award huge one-off gratuities of Z$ 50 000 and a monthly pension of Z$2 000 to more than 50 000 war veterans after their protracted demonstrations against the state (see Bond & Manyanya, 2003).

The failure of economic policy during the ‘second’ transition had profound implications for the relationship between the state and ordinary citizens and workers who bore the brunt of unemployment, low wages and the erosion of social safety nets that had cushioned them during the first decade of independence. At the same time, as Knight (1991) observes, ESAP led to a realignment of state-capital relations. Industrialists and local capitalists, some of whom who had been vocal critics of
government economic policy in the 1980s, began to support the state in the post-1991 era. This was so because business benefited from commercial deregulation, luxury goods imports, declining real wages and, according to Bond and Manyanya, “their new-found ability to move money out of the country” (2003:32).

It has been argued that the adoption of ESAP led to the escalation of “politics of the belly that threatened the tremendous achievements of the first decade” (Sylvester, 2003:30). While big business counted its benefits from the environment of market deregulation, marginalised groups and sections of civil society such as trade unions and students organisations became vocal in their opposition to the new system. The general mood of disenchantment—initiated by the biting effects of ESAP but later merged with a host of other grievances centred on political governance—persisted throughout the ‘second’ transition, climaxing in the formation of a strong opposition political party on the eve of the 21st century (Hammar & Raftopoulos, 2003).

One of the most noteworthy developments during this era of liberalisation was the fallout between the state and the ZCTU. As noted in Chapter 2, the state took active interest in the formation and operations of the ZCTU both as part of its hegemonic project and as a way of reining in potential rival centres of power. However, from the late 1980s, a growing critique of the state emerged in the context of the erosion of the ruling party’s legitimacy amid revelations of corruption, the escalating poverty in the wake of market reforms, as well as the crisis of delivery. Raftopoulos (1997) notes that much of the criticism emerged from the labour movement which, “after a period of corporatist and paternalist domination by the state during the first decade of independence, took an increasingly autonomous stance in relation to the state” (Raftopoulos, 1997:23)

The political divorce between the state and the ZCTU was already on the horizon by the late 1980s in a context which Saunders and Saul (2005) describe as an “uneasy truce between unkept promises and economic stagnation on the one hand and elite privilege and presumption on the other” (Saunders & Saul, 2005: 8). The Willowgate car scandal in 1988 epitomised the extent of Zanu PF’s moral degeneration and set off a wave of protests by, among others, University of Zimbabwe (UZ) students in 1989. When ZCTU Secretary-General Morgan Tsvangirai issued a statement condemning
police heavy-handedness in breaking off the students’ strike, he was detained for six weeks and only released after espionage charges against him were thrown out by the High Court on three separate occasions (Saunders, 1991: 35). Saunders (1991) argues that after its special national congress in 1988, a re-organised ZCTU resolved to wean itself from the ruling party by setting a new agenda for public debate and taking the state on for a range of grievances including hostile labour legislation and the ruling party’s shift towards the right. The labour movement felt betrayed by Zanu PF in a context where “the rapid convergence of interests of old white and new black elites...[had] reduced the will to redistribute and increased the politicians’ desire to accumulate” (Jenkins & Knight, 2002: 4). By linking up with other sections of civil society including the students’ movement, churches, as well as opposition political parties whose beef with the state stemmed from the uneven electoral playing field, the ZCTU had become a leading threat to the Zanu PF hegemonic project by the start of the ‘second’ transition. The state, with its legitimacy on the wane, resorted to brute force as an instrument to contain an increasingly restive society.

It is important to note that, even as it adopted ESAP, Zimbabwe’s ruling elite perhaps had no illusions about the challenge of sustaining the unpopular programme without creating too large a wake of discontent that could threaten Zanu PF’s political security. In a global context of post-Cold War economic reform and a so-called era of ‘second winds of change’ in Africa, the government had to carefully negotiate the slippery terrain of implementing drastic economic reforms while simultaneously attempting to retain political control and legitimacy. The dilemma confronting the government, and its preferred solution, were captured early in 1990 by the Financial Gazette in an editorial comment:

We detect an unusual divergence occurring in Zimbabwe. On the one hand, there’s definite though tardy evidence of a recognition by government that there are economic facts of life that are not subject to political ideology. On the other hand, there’s a trend in political affairs towards centralisation and greater control in the classic socialist manner (Financial Gazette, 16/2/1990).

In practical terms, the ‘second’ transition was therefore paradoxical in the sense in which the state on the one hand implemented economic liberalisation, while on the other adopted authoritarian tendencies. Stewart (1997) correctly argues that rather
than strengthen the state, the imposition of structural adjustment programmes—while easing the path for external and internal business interests—inevitably contributed to the arbitrary use of state power by weakening its ability to provide basic protections for citizens and in the process eroding its legitimacy (p.19). This was to get worse during the crisis-ridden ‘third’ transition.

5.2 Media-State Relations in the ‘Second’ Transition

5.2.1 The Public Press
As stated earlier in the chapter, there was no profound policy shift in media-state relations in post-1990 Zimbabwe. However, there were fundamental, though sometimes contradictory policy initiatives which reflected the Janus-faced nature of the state’s approach to the media in an era characterised by the predominance of the global discourses of democratisation. Firstly, within the arena of the public media, the state maintained its firm editorial grip over publications under the ZMMT stable. The Ministry of Information under Victoria Chitepo, David Karimanzira and Joyce Mujuru continued to exert tremendous influence over Zimpapers publications. So pronounced was state control of public journalism that some government officials even complained the media had lost any semblance of credibility. In July 1992, Public Service minister Eddison Zvobgo remarked that his fellow ministers were now tuning to BBC and CNN for credible information about local events “as a respite to (our) daily bread” (The Insider, March, 1992: 1). He criticised the public media’s “shrill personality cult syndrome characterised by the incipient extolling of often meagre virtues of the political leaders of the day” (Ibid: 1).

The state-controlled social and political communication infrastructure established in the first decade of Zimbabwe’s transition was meant to be dissent-proof. It was basically linear and intended to discourage bottom-up debate. Because such infrastructure—principally the public press—was not geared to operate in a politically contested environment, it had to undergo some metamorphosis in the politically turbulent ‘90s and in the new century. Although the full-throttle change in communication policy was to come in 2000, the state began moving in that direction much earlier.
In April 1996, the Zimbabwe government, through the Ministry of Information, assumed direct control of the ZMMT by invoking an amendment to the ZMMT Notarial Deed of Trust and Donation. The amendment, which was criticised by the private press and sections of civil society, formally granted the state the authority to oversee ZMMT’s operations. This move removed any semblance of autonomy left at the Trust. Up until 2001 when it was finally disbanded, ZMMT had virtually been operating as a section of the Ministry of Information. The emasculation of the ZMMT resulted in a situation where, according to former Chronicle editor Geoffrey Nyarota, “the existing publications (were) reduced to mere mouthpieces of the administration, while the public, civil society and the opposition were denied a platform”.¹

5.2.2. The Private Press
Saunders (1991) has argued that during the first decade of independence, white domination of the private press and other important sectors of civil society served as a locale for counter-hegemonic mobilisation by sections within civil society who were marginalized by the ruling elite and state. However, as indicated in Chapter Four, the state in response maintained its contradictory ‘tactical indifference’ approach, punctuated by occasional threats to crack the whip. The entry of black capital into the media sector in the post-1990 era did not result in any significant changes in state-private press relations. As stated earlier, the ‘second’ transition was an era where the state’s authority was being challenged by a diversity of competing voices and social interests mainly from marginalised groups. For example, student movements, women’s groups and workers (including civil servants) mobilised around a range of causes, from anti-corruption to academic freedom, from anti-price hikes to struggles for higher wages and salaries. Against this background, the private press became a terrain for mobilisation around causes identified by groups challenging various aspects of state policy.

In a context where the formal political opposition was hardly organised and posed no real threat to the sitting government, evidenced by its dismal performance during successive elections (see Moyo, 1992; Makumbe & Compagnon, 2000), the private

¹ Geoff Nyarota, Interview, May 2004.
press assumed, by default, the role of political opposition. This was to lead to occasional harsh responses from the government especially as the political stakes were upped at the dawn of the 21st century. However, in the early to mid-1990s, against the background of the media liberalisation tide sweeping across the African continent then, as well as the increasing prominence of the global discourse of democracy and press freedom, the state actually sent initial positive signals towards media law reform.

In 1995, the state gave its blessing to the formation of the Zimbabwe Media Council (ZMC). Comprising of senior journalists, civil society organisations and chaired by a retired judge, the council’s role was to lobby for media law reform in the country. During the same year, three cabinet ministers who attended a conference convened by the Willie Musarurwa Memorial Trust—a media trust established in honour of the late Sunday Mail editor—assured the conference and the ZMC of government support for media law reform. The 1995 ZMC chairman’s report cited the contributions of the state officials thus:

All three ministers, in their presentations, agreed that the current Zimbabwe legislation and official practices unduly restrict access to official information, publication of such information and press freedom generally. The ministers called on media practitioners and interested parties in Zimbabwe to submit proposals to the government for the repeal/alteration of legislation and the abolition of official practices which restrict media freedom (ZMC Chairman’s Report, 11/12/1995).

Hardly a month after the ministers of Justice, Information and Home Affairs had pledged their support for media law and policy reform, the national Director of Information wrote the Willie Musarurwa Trust proposing the formation of a working group to compile a document with proposed amendments (to existing legislation) for submission to the Ministry of Justice. In his own admission, the director, Bornwell Chakaodza, stated in the letter:

We all know the problem as regards the laws that impinge upon press freedom and …what is needed now is to transform the process from complaints and promises into concrete action that will lead to the repeal/amendment of those laws (Chakaodza, 17/08/1995).
By early 1996, there was consensus between the state and sections of civil society, including principally the private press, that legislation impinging on media freedom in Zimbabwe had to be either amended or repealed altogether. In September 1996, the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Emmerson Mnangagwa, wrote to the newly appointed Minister of Information, Joyce Mujuru, requesting her to submit proposals for amendments of the identified statutes to the Law Development Commission for legal drafting. In the letter, Mnangagwa acknowledged the existing faulty legislation and the need for reform:

The principal piece of legislation dealing with press freedom and access to information is the Official Secrets Act [Chapter 11:09]. This Act was based originally on the British Act of 1911, and was subsequently amended in 1970 to deal with the situation in Rhodesia during UDI. The provisions of this Act as currently framed were intended to protect information regarding sanctions busting and to deter espionage and other such disclosures. This Act in our view is inappropriate to our present circumstances and constitutes a serious limitation on access to information. A further problem is that current legislation dealing with this subject is fragmented…it would be desirable to introduce legislation that is comprehensive in nature and also appropriate to the changing times in which we live (Mnangagwa, E.D., 27/09/1996).

However, by the end of that same year, things took a new twist. The state began to show disinterest in the whole process of media reform. In fact, even as he wrote to the Information minister requesting her input in the media law reform process, the Minister of Justice around the same time told a group of journalists attending a media law reform conference: “We dislike the Law and Order Maintenance Act, but sometimes it becomes handy” (quoted in Saunders, 1999). Sections of this law, inherited from Rhodesia, had been identified by journalists as impinging on media freedom.

What is clear from the foregoing is that in the ‘second’ transition, state-private press relations assumed a somewhat ambivalent nature. On the one hand, the state’s professed ‘commitment’ to media freedom ensured a kind of ‘tactical indifference’ discussed in Chapter Four. Even more, the state proceeded to commit itself to media
law reform. However, the fact that it eventually backtracked could mean that a liberal media law reform programme was not an integral part of the state’s agenda. The fact that at the time the private press had become “a decisive site for contesting the falling nationalist political order, and for constructing alternatives led by social interests” (Saunders, 1997: 13), may also have contributed to the state’s reluctance to facilitate reform.

The state occasionally applied legal attacks on the private press. In 1992, two Financial Gazette journalists were summoned before a parliamentary committee investigating a financial scandal involving a private company after publishing leaked information. The committee used its legal powers to compel the paper’s editor to reveal his source or face jail. Two years later, two journalists from the Daily Gazette were detained and questioned under the Official Secrets Act for a story on tax evasion by Zanu PF-owned companies. In 1995, Financial Gazette publisher, editor and his deputy were charged and convicted of criminal defamation and fined for a story about the alleged secret wedding of President Mugabe and his secretary, Ms Grace Marufu. However, as shall be discussed in Chapter Six, incidents of arrests, detentions or legal action against journalists by state officials during the ‘second’ transition compare favourably with the post-1998 era of the ‘third’ transition. What is important to note though is that there was a great deal of continuity in the relations between both the private and public press and the state (i.e., partly authoritarian, partly indifferent) notwithstanding the largely rhetorical statements emanating from the state which occasionally pointed to a new dispensation of improved relations in the context of a reformed media policy and legislation.

5.3. Capital and Media Ownership: 1990-1997
The environment of liberalisation and deregulation created by the adoption of ESAP contributed to the expansion of the private press in Zimbabwe (Saunders, 1999). This was also enhanced by increased market demand for more critical and analytical media, given the general disillusionment with the manner in which the government had transformed the public press into party propaganda machinery. While the public press did not witness any growth in terms of both circulation and new titles in the 1990s, an interesting feature of the same period was the increased participation of black capital in the private press which substantially increased media density in the
urban areas. The new trajectory in media ownership came against a background where for most of the first decade of independence the mainstream private press was white-owned.

In 1989, Elias Rusike, former chief executive of Zimpapers, teamed up with two black businessmen and bought Modus Publications, publishers of the *Financial Gazette* and a host of trade publications. In 1992, Modus launched the *Daily Gazette*, the first private daily newspaper in the country to challenge the Zimpapers monopoly on the daily newspaper market. The paper was followed by a sister weekly, the *Sunday Gazette*, which was launched in 1993. Both publications were meant to be an alternative source of news, and became the platform for especially oppositional voices which could not get the attention of the partisan public press (Saunders, 1991). The *Daily Gazette* also tried to build on the investigative tradition of its sister publication, *The Financial Gazette*, although it occasionally carried inaccurate and sensational stories that fed into growing anti-government sentiments (Andersen & Oslen, 1997). An interesting aspect of the paper was its explicit editorial support for the ESAP programme, a position that was consistent with that of local capital which, as discussed in this chapter, was a major beneficiary of the programme. As the first publication to challenge the Zimpapers monopoly on the daily press in post-independent Zimbabwe, the *Daily Gazette* also challenged what critics referred to as the “sunshine journalism” practised at state media institutions—a deferential journalism that would not dare take on the political centres of power. In its inaugural issue, the paper stated in an editorial:

> Our mission is to publish the truth and in the process we shall create friends as well as enemies. We shall lose old friends and gain new friends. But that is what publishing is all about (*Daily Gazette, 5/10/1992*).

Notwithstanding the promise of objective and critical journalism (and the paper did provide an alternative to Zimpapers), the *Daily Gazette* also occasionally resorted to sensational journalism with a heavy focus on scandal, sex and corruption.²

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² Bill Saidi, Interview, April 2004.
According to Oslen and Andersen (1997), the “tabloidisation” of the *Daily Gazette* was a reflection of the role and influence of the market on the vulnerable private press. They note that: “…although both the *Herald* and *Daily Gazette* depended on advertising revenue, the urge to get advertisers was more pronounced in the *Daily Gazette*. Hence they were more vulnerable when faced with pressure from advertisers” (Oslen & Andersen, 1997: 101). In just over two years of its existence, the *Daily Gazette* had three editors—Mike Hamilton, Brian Latham and Bill Saidi—and tried different editorial thrusts in what was arguably an attempt at market appeasement in the context of stiff competition from the state media (Oslen and Andersen, 1997). A year into circulation, the paper had still not managed to make any significant inroads into the Zimpapers market share, and its Chief Executive Officer, Elias Rusike, criticised the advertising industry of racism. He was quoted in the *Herald* expressing his frustration with advertising agencies “for shunning [his] publication” and describing them as “racists who [wanted to] stick to traditional publishers such as Zimpapers” (*Herald*, 4/12/1993). This was in spite of the fact that Zimpapers itself was an organisation owned by a black government. Even more, this was despite the fact that advertisers continued to support the *Financial Gazette* owned by Rusike himself.

Besides the *Daily Gazette* and its sister publication, another addition to the stable of the private press was the launch of *Horizon* magazine in 1991. The magazine was launched by Andrew Moyse, who had a year earlier been fired as editor of the monthly *Parade* magazine. From the outset, *Horizon*’s funding was shaky, with the start-up capital being a grant from a local non-governmental organisation. Despite low funding, the magazine adopted cutting edge investigative journalism, with most of its stories being exposes of official corruption in such areas like land allocation for resettlement, public housing scams and fraudulent looting of state funds including the War Victims Compensation Fund and the Social Dimensions Fund (Kupe, 1997). *Horizon* became an important terrain for the articulation of dissenting voices, especially from within the opposition and civil society.

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3 Although officially the reason for his sacking was an industrial dispute, there has been speculation that Moyse was fired because under his editorship the magazine became more vocal in its criticism of the government, therefore worrying the owners whose primary concern was profit and not possible reprisals from state officials.
In the same year of the launch of Horizon, a local black businessman and executive at the multinational corporation Lonrho, Herbert Munangatire, launched the weekly tabloid Sunday Times, using staff ‘poached’ from Zimpapers. The paper maintained a critical thrust in relation to government and at its peak had a weekly circulation of 40,000 (Kumbula, 1997: 177). The introduction of the Sunday Times added diversity to the Sunday newspaper market, becoming the third Sunday publication after the Zimpapers-owned Sunday Mail and the Sunday News. The Sunday Gazette was to join the pack two years later, albeit rather briefly.

The initial boom in the arena of the private press suffered drawbacks when the Daily Gazette closed down in December 1994 and two years later the Sunday Gazette followed suit. The Sunday Times also closed shop in 1995. The reason for the folding of all these papers was primarily financial. While they sometimes served as important alternative voices, the closure of these papers reflects the extent to which market factors impacted on media density and the related issue of access to information. The role of the government both as a major advertiser and an influential institution which can deter private sector advertisers and other institutions such as lending houses has also been cited to explain the collapse of the these publications (Saunders, 1999; Andersen & Oslen, 1997). According to a South African Press Association (Sapa) report, the Daily Gazette closed shop because, “its audacious reporting angered the government and state-owned enterprises were ordered to withdraw their advertising” (Sapa, 11/2/1996).

On a related issue, in February 1996, Elias Rusike fired his editor for the Financial Gazette, Trevor Ncube after publishing a Reuters wire story alleging that President Mugabe had directed his pilot to land ahead of Nelson Mandela in Lesotho because he was concerned the South African president was stealing the regional and global limelight from him (Sapa, 11/2/1996). Rusike accused Ncube of “operating like an unguided missile” by disregarding editorial policies of the Financial Gazette (Sunday Mail, 10/3/1996). However, it has been alleged that the real motive for the dismissal had less to do with subverting editorial policy than the threat Rusike received from his creditors Zimbank—which is owned by the state—to liquidate his company (Hill, 2003). The threat also came against the background of failed attempts by South African media group, Times Media Limited (TML) to buy a controlling stake in the
debt-ridden Modus Publications. The bid was stalemated when the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe said exchange control regulations prevented TML (SA) from acquiring more than 25 percent interest in the Zimbabwean media company (Sapa, 11/2/1996).

The closure of Modus Publications newspapers, save for the Financial Gazette, and the increasingly hostile macro-economic environment in the late 1990s did not deter new entrepreneurs in the newspaper industry. In May 1996, former Financial Gazette editor Trevor Ncube teamed up with Clive Murphy and Clive Wilson (former owners of Modus Publications) and launched the weekly Zimbabwe Independent, which was followed a year later by the Standard. While the former was ostensibly a financial weekly with the latter being a leisure Sunday read, both papers adopted a critical approach to their coverage of the government and concentrated on predominantly political news. This kind of journalism placed them into the category of the Financial Gazette, Horizon and Moto magazine (Mukasa, 2000).

Both the Zimbabwe Independent and the Standard are an important case in the sense that they were a product of a strategic coalescence of black and white capital supporting the state for liberalising the economy, but consistently attacking it for what could be broadly termed ‘a crisis of political governance.’ The Independent’s launch issue front page had the following headlines: “Mugabe Clings to old Guard in Reshuffle”; “Govt Watchdog Programme Collapses”; “Tawengwa (mayor of Harare) linked to Indian Company in Zesa Contract”. Further, the paper’s founding editorial comment was titled: “The arrival of the Zimbabwe Independent marks the end of a deferential press” (Zimbabwe Independent, 10/5/1996). Here the paper promised to offer “forthright views on issues of the day”. It further stated:

In a society where news has traditionally been massaged to accommodate the claims of a governing elite, and where views have been expressed in the straitjacket of indulgent perspectives, telling it like it is should in itself represent a refreshing change (Zimbabwe Independent, 10/5/1996).

Apart from the Zimbabwe Independent, the Zimbabwe Mirror was another addition to the Zimbabwe print media towards the end of the ‘second’ transition. Launched by the Southern Africa Printing and Publishing House (Sappho) in December 1997, the Zimbabwe Mirror added an interesting dimension to the private press in Zimbabwe.
The paper was owned by Ibbo Mandaza, a former senior civil servant and academic with strong links with the ruling party dating to the era of the 1970s liberation struggle. According to Ronning (2003), the *Zimbabwe Mirror’s* editorial line under Mandaza could be characterised as “a form of radical nationalism and quite different from the business-based attitude of its competitors” (2003: 207). Ronning also notes that although the paper was critical of the ruling party, it simultaneously maintained a close political affinity to Zanu PF, which allowed it access to information about the goings-on inside the party that none of its competitors had.

The *Zimbabwe Mirror* defied conventional journalism style and instead carried analyses from mostly academics and researchers in its pages. The paper assumed an assertive style, consistently arguing that the crisis of both governance and the economy should not be simplistically blamed on the incumbent government but rather on a spectrum of forces including the colonial inheritance and the continuing scourge of neo-colonialism. In pursuing this editorial line, the paper drew more enemies than friends. Other private newspapers saw it as aligned to the ruling party, while state-owned publications viewed it as partly private and therefore a kind of ‘opposition’ paper. Throughout its existence, the *Zimbabwe Mirror* had to contend with the controversial problem of identity in the bifurcated terrain of Zimbabwean politics. At the same time, for a brief period the paper’s model of ‘independent nationalist’ journalism arguably approximated the ideal of the public sphere (See Chapters Six & Seven).

5.3.1 Capital-Press Relations: A Discussion

Implicit in the foregoing discussion is the role of capital in the expansion (and, in some cases, subsequent shrinking) of the private press in the post-1990 era of liberalisation and market economics. The launch of over half a dozen privately-owned commercial newspapers in the ‘second’ transition brought fierce competition for the small advertising pie.⁴ Established organisations such as Zimpapers emerged victors because of their high circulation rates and sophisticated printing and distribution infrastructure, notwithstanding their affinity to a ruling party which hitherto faced popular disenchantment over the escalating cost of living.

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⁴ Liz Linsell, Interview, April 2005.
Because of the initial promises of economic revival brought by the adoption of ESAP, the early 1990s witnessed the expansion of advertising agencies in the country taking advantage of the growing media density and media spending in manufacturing, banking and retailing industries. While a handful of mostly white-owned advertising agencies controlled the market in much of the 1980s, the 1990s saw limited black and international capital make forays into this industry. To gain access to lucrative international brands, most accredited local agencies wooed global advertising players who acquired various stakes in them. As a result, as happened in the press, the stronger, internationally affiliated agencies survived because of their linkages to multinational corporations. In a near-monopolistic situation, advertising agencies, acting on behalf of big capital, arguably had significant influence on the practice of journalism, especially small and new entrants without alternative sources of funding and financing or the backing of big parent companies.

The case of the *Daily Gazette* cited above is testimony to this advertiser influence. On the other hand, the failure of economic growth envisaged by ESAP and the droughts of 1992 and 1995 also hit advertising capital, with serious implications for newspaper survival. The demise of the *Daily Gazette*, the *Sunday Gazette* and *Sunday Times* should be viewed in this context. At the same time, the collapse of these papers also shows that appeasing advertisers is not a necessary guarantee for long-term survival.

As Table 5.1 overleaf shows, the papers under review were the major dailies and weeklies at the time and gobbled up a significant portion of the national annual advertising budget for the print media. Both the *Herald* and *Sunday Mail* benefited from the strong infrastructure at Zimpapers, while the *Financial Gazette* survived the closures at Modus Publications because of its solid readership constituency and profitability as a credible business weekly. The launch of *Zimbabwe Independent* naturally brought competition in the business/financial media sector. It is important that former owners of the *Financial Gazette* regrouped with former editor Trevor Ncube to launch the *Zimbabwe Independent*. Further, many of the new newspaper company’s staffers were ‘poached’ from the *Financial Gazette*, including established advertising managers. As a result, the *Financial Gazette* experienced serious viability problems immediately after the launch of the *Zimbabwe Independent*. 
Table 5.1
Advertising Market Share for Selected Newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Herald $000</th>
<th>Sunday Mail $000</th>
<th>Financial Gazette $000</th>
<th>Zimbabwe Independent* $000</th>
<th>Total Adspend for Print Media $000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>16 830</td>
<td>5 436</td>
<td>5 685</td>
<td></td>
<td>43 881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>22 784</td>
<td>7 350</td>
<td>4 267</td>
<td></td>
<td>62 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>29 037</td>
<td>8 882</td>
<td>9 766</td>
<td></td>
<td>83 074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>34 829</td>
<td>9 566</td>
<td>10 164</td>
<td></td>
<td>101 571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>48 967</td>
<td>12 504</td>
<td>14 880</td>
<td></td>
<td>134 376</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>62 104</td>
<td>15 197</td>
<td>18 291</td>
<td></td>
<td>165 483</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>85 032</td>
<td>19 701</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>107 247</td>
<td>25 623</td>
<td>26 505</td>
<td>22 790</td>
<td>305 082</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Advertising Media Association (Adma).

*The Zimbabwe Independent was launched in May, 1996.

While press-state relations during the ‘second’ transition were rather strained because of the state’s reluctance to reform media policy and allow for enhanced media freedom, the domain of capital-press relations was defined by uncodified ‘rules of engagement’. In a context of limited advertising spend and an expanding press, representatives of capital arguably wielded significant influence on the content and form of journalism.

Saunders (1997) observes that, thanks to the influence of capital, the business-oriented press including the Financial Gazette became less vocal about deepening the meaning of democracy once neo-liberal economics had been installed as the government’s orthodoxy in the ‘second’ transition. Although this can be contested when one looks at the coverage of the 1995 elections by the Financial Gazette, it is true that the “social alliance for democratisation” that had existed between the private press and sections of civil society during the first transition—built on the common advocacy for political liberalisation and accountable governance—became frayed in
the ‘second’ transition after the adoption of ESAP (Sanders, 1997:13-14). Challenges to the institutional autonomy of journalism in the ‘second’ transition were therefore not confined to the state. Capital also presented profound, though largely subtle when compared with the state, structural constraints to journalism practice.

5.4. The Press and 1990 Elections

5.4.1 Background to the Elections

The 1990 elections in Zimbabwe were the country’s second general elections, but arguably the most important since independence (Moyo, 1992). Covering a period of three days (28-30 March), the elections were the first to offer voters the opportunity to directly elect the Executive President, following the passing of the Constitutional Amendment of Zimbabwe (No. 7) Act (No. 23 of 1987) which merged the offices of Prime Minister and President. The elections were also important in the sense that the contestation for political office was much higher than the previous one, largely because of the rise of popular, urban-based disenchantment with the government’s management of the national economy. Not least, the merger in 1987 of the two erstwhile political rivals, ruling Zanu PF and opposition PF Zapu, created an opportunity for the united Zanu PF to go into the elections partly with the aim of establishing its long-held ambition of establishing a one-party state in Zimbabwe.

The main protagonists in the elections were Zanu PF and newly formed opposition Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), led by Edgar Tekere, formerly Zanu PF’s secretary general. Tekere had been expelled from the ruling party in 1988. The opposition party mobilised and campaigned around issues of anti-corruption, free market economy and the preservation of multiparty democracy in the context of the ruling party’s professed one-party state ambition. In its election manifesto, the party also promised to address issues of unemployment, lack of housing and urban transport, high taxation, the supremacy of parliament and the independence of the judiciary (Moyo, 1992).

Coming at a time when the ruling party was going through difficulties both in terms of internal squabbles (despite the signing of the unity accord) as well as mounting dissent outside the party, ZUM “became a convenient regrouping of various elements
within the ruling party who, for one reason or another, felt marginalised from mainstream politics” (Moyo, 1992:37). With the unprecedented possibility of defeat in its face, Zanu PF mobilised strongly for the elections, and one of the ways employed to deal with the fierce opposition was to invoke the emergency regulations to stop ZUM from holding public rallies. Personal appeals were also made by both President Mugabe and other senior members of Zanu PF to Edgar Tekere to disband his party and come back to the Zanu PF fold. On its part, Zanu PF in 1990 campaigned around three issues of land redistribution, the establishment of a “socialist” economic system, as well as economic reform aimed at increasing the participation of citizens in the mainstream economy both as employees and owners (Moyo, Ibid).

The ruling Zanu PF won the 1990 elections by a huge margin, taking 116 out of 120 contested parliamentary seats, its presidential candidate beating his main rival Edgar Tekere by 2 026 976 to 413 840 votes (ESC Report, 1990).

5.5. The Public Press and the 1990 elections

5.5.1 Endorsement of the Ruling Party’s Candidature
The public press applied similar frames in covering both the 1985 and 1990 elections. As in the 1985 elections, the Herald and Sunday Mail made both explicit and implicit endorsements of the ruling party as the most credible player in the 1990 elections, and often appealed to the voting public to “vote wisely”, implying voting for the incumbent ruling party. Two weeks before the voting process, The Herald dismissed opposition ZUM and the Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe (CAZ) as being so hopeless that, in the unlikely event of them winning the election, “the vote will no doubt have come from Zanu PF, it (would) be a protest vote…” (The Herald, 14/3/1990). In the same editorial, entitled “Punishing Campaign for a man of action” the paper devoted the bulk of the text to a eulogy of President Mugabe. “At 66 and assured of victory in the…general and presidential election,” wrote the paper, “one would have expected President Mugabe to slow down a little and spare a thought for his personal health” (Ibid). So convinced was the paper of the President’s impeccable credentials as a “sober workaholic whose track record is as impressive as
that of the party itself” that it declared that “only the dim-witted would expect anyone to effectively challenge Cde Mugabe” (Ibid).

In both papers’ selected news columns on the elections, a noticeable trend was to foreground campaign promises by the ruling party politicians while relegating stories that could cast the opposition in favourable light to mostly single columns. Most of the stories allocated the front page and with a couple column inches of text and accompanying pictures were related especially to president Mugabe. Stories like “Resettlement Plan to be Revised” (The Herald, 27/3/1990), “President Promises urgent launch of relief programmes” (The Herald, 7/4/1990) and “The People Reject ZUM” (Sunday Mail, 1/4/1990) were overwhelmingly based on single ruling party sources. At the same time, an interesting trend in stories relating to the opposition was that where the nature of the news item cast the party in positive light (e.g., the unveiling of the ZUM election manifesto), the story was either relegated to the innermost pages of the newspapers or presented in the prime pages but as a tiny brief. In the case of ZUM, only stories portraying either the party or its leaders in negative light (e.g., Tekere’s withdrawal, with costs, of his High Court challenge on Mugabe’s presidential nomination citing irregularities), were given bigger space and prime positioning.

5.5.2. Opposition as Futile and Unpatriotic

Running alongside the papers’ endorsement of the ruling party was a consistent commentary on the futility of the opposition and its alleged lack of patriotism. The delegitimization of the opposition was such a consistent motif in the editorials on elections by the two papers that the majority of the comments were either a critique of the opposition or a eulogy of the ruling party or both. On February 16, 1990, about six weeks before the election, a Herald comment reminded the paper’s readers to “learn from the past” and be wary of opposition parties. With the approaching election, wrote the paper, “many a pseudo political party should be emerging from the woodwork to challenge Zanu PF”. The paper argued that the only chance of success these “pseudo” political parties might have would be only “if the ruling party itself blunders enough to antagonise the voters”. This is however unlikely, argued the paper, because “as it is, the new united Zanu PF is taking measures to effectively counter any opposition” (The Herald, 16/2/1990).
Reading through the editorials, one gets a sense of the writer’s personal empathy, grief, even angst, for or against one of the political protagonists in the elections. For example, in the same editorial cited above, the writer expressed a worried recollection of how the ruling party, because it was hardly organised and ill-prepared, “nearly had a collective heart attack” in the run up to a fiercely contested by-election in Dzivaresekwa constituency. “The sigh of relief that arose when Zanu PF won…was equally collective,” noted the paper. The language of the editorial creates the impression of a media organisation that’s closely involved in the election process as more or less active political participants.

Besides ZUM, the predominantly white CAZ was also a regular recipient of both The Herald and Sunday Mail’s acerbic editorial and news criticism. A month ahead of the election, the Sunday Mail took a swipe at the alleged merger of CAZ and ZUM to present a strong showing against the ruling party. Urging voters to “beware of new poll marriages,” the editorial sarcastically argued that in trying to merge with a stronger opposition, “the dinosaurs of the CAZ…certainly have tenacity” (Sunday Mail, 26/2/1990). The paper argued that the best the party could have done was either to join the ruling party or simply to disband. The regrettable bit, said the editorial, was that “there appears to be a significant group, although no longer a majority, who still believe in a white political life”. In its assessment of electoral politics ten years into independence, the paper implied that chances for political participation (outside Zanu PF) by minority groups in the country were so slim that “the CAZ’s re-emergence, coupled with the incredible apathy of so many in the minority communities, could taint the way most Zimbabweans see minorities” (Sunday Mail, Ibid).

5.5.3. The Electoral Process as Fair and Transparent

Related to the two papers’ endorsement of the ruling party was also their endorsement of the electoral process, as being transparent and fair, right from the beginning of the campaign period. Although different political parties, especially ZUM, CAZ, the United African National Congress (UANC) and Zanu (Ndonga) complained about various aspects of the elections including alleged violence perpetrated by the ruling party and public media blackout of the opposition, the papers under review generally dismissed the opposition arguments. On March 19th, just over a week before the
election, *The Herald* ran an editorial comment assuring the readers that “anyone who knows the electoral process of Zimbabwe knows that it is impossible to rig the vote”. The paper justified this view further by stating that the country was “about the only country in Africa and certainly one of the very few in the world” where the cast ballot papers must first be matched with the counterfoils before the counting is done.

As for the pre-election violence that characterised some parts of the country, in particular in Gweru where a ZUM candidate was shot and critically injured by members of the state security agency for contesting the seat eyed by Vice President Simon Muzenda, *The Herald* placed the blame solely on the opposition for provoking the ruling party. Writing on the last day of the elections, the paper, in an editorial entitled “Peaceful atmosphere at election time”, explained the pre-election violence, including the Gweru incident, thus: “The voting has been fraught with tension …and Zanu PF members who endured abuse allowed themselves to lose control, to near disastrous results” (*Herald*, 30/3/1990). While appealing to all contesting political parties to rein-in their “hard-to-control youths”, the same editorial gave the impression that the ruling party only became violent when reacting to provocation by the opposition. On the other hand, the paper singled out ZUM for upbraiding for its leader’s alleged threat that the government could “fall within 12 months” should Zanu PF win the election.

### 5.6 The Financial Gazette and the 1990 Elections

Until the mid-1990s, publications from the black-owned Modus Publications, in particular the company’s flagship *Financial Gazette*, remained the predominant nodes of social critique in Zimbabwe. This was partly because of the underdevelopment of the (general news) private sector press in the country, and partly because of the success of the state in diminishing editorial autonomy at Zimpapers as part of a larger political project of “Zimbabweanising” the public press.⁵

By 1990, under new management, the *Financial Gazette* battled to shrug off its “Rhodesian political ancestry” while at the same time remaining “independent of the

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⁵ See ZMMT Executive Director Dr. T.I. Mathews’s Foreword to E.O Mamutse’s report entitled “Rural Newspaper Development in Zimbabwe, Harare, 1986
government, the ruling party, the opposition and big business.”6 This was no easy task, especially for the politically contested ‘second’ and ‘third’ transitions. As a result, for much of the 90s and beyond, the paper continued to attract a regular variety of charges ranging from lack of patriotism to being Rhodesian-oriented, and to being imperialism’s “running dogs” by the state. Compared to both The Herald and the Sunday Mail, the Financial Gazette’s coverage of the 1990 elections was rather sketchy in detail.

Most editorial comments in the paper skirted mainstream debate on the particular details of the fierce political contestation ahead of the elections, preferring to remain within the relatively safe confines of business news. Between February 1st and April 30th, 1990, the paper published only 3 editorial comments either remotely or directly related to the subject of the general elections. At the same time it carried less than 10 front page news stories on the subject. It should be mentioned, however, that the paper hosted several guest columnists during this period especially on the one-party state debate. Most of these columnists—the most notable of whom was University of Zimbabwe’s then Dr. Jonathan Moyo—were opposed to the ruling party’s grand political project, which was later abandoned in 1990 (see discussion of one-party state below). The following themes emerged from the paper’s framing of the elections:

5.6.1 Need for Increased Political and Economic Pluralism

An interesting aspect of the Financial Gazette’s editorial coverage of the elections was its location of the events within the broader context of political and economic pluralism in the country. The editorials were generally critical of the state for both political and economic challenges facing the country. On March 16, 1990, the paper welcomed the state’s mooted trade liberalisation programme, but warned that “a dangerous rupture might be imminent if the pace of economic reform outstrips political reform”. A month earlier, on February 16, in an editorial also cited at the beginning of this chapter, the paper blasted the state for implementing “perestroika in economics, but not politics”. The editorial decried the ascendancy of the party over the government and state as diminishing the prospects for vibrant national debate. It

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6 Elias Rusike, Interview, April 2004.
also criticised the amendment of the Lancaster Constitution to introduce a single chamber parliament.

On April 6th, 1990, the paper cautiously welcomed the ruling party’s victory in the elections. In an editorial entitled “Election Results are both Interesting and Revealing” the paper congratulated Zanu PF for victory, but advised against “complacency”. It also urged the newly elected leadership to reduce government spending, especially slashing the size of cabinet. A month later, on May 4th, the paper implored the ruling party to drop the idea of a one-party state despite its poll victory. The paper wrote: “The one-party state is archaic, and out of touch with the political climate both domestically and internationally. Zimbabwe stands to gain nothing by pushing ahead with the proposed system” (Financial Gazette, 4/5/1990).

Overall, the Financial Gazette reflected limited enthusiasm and detail in its coverage of the elections, and instead devoted more space to business news in 1990. Its critique of the electoral process was linked to the broader question of economic and political pluralism. Unlike the public press and its own reportage of the 1985 elections, the Financial Gazette in 1990 did not endorse a particular party. It could be argued that this was consistent with the thinking within the business community at the time. According to Raftopoulos (2005), at that time capital in general “was little interested in the question of democratic politics except in so far as it affected their ability to lobby the state in their own interests.”

5.7. Framing the One-Party State Debate

The one-party state debate in Zimbabwe in 1990 constituted a significant site of interaction between the state and civil society in the country. As cited in the previous chapter, the one-party state debate actually began during the first decade of postcolonial transition, especially in the run-up to and after the 1985 general elections. However, it was in 1990 and partly 1991 that the debate intensified. According to Sachikonye (1991), after 1990, the one party-state debate was part of the broader debate about the forms and content of the country’s democracy. The debate also comprised related themes such as the land redistribution question, as well as the

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7 Brian Raftopoulos, Interview, May 2005.
newly implemented Investment Code and the economic liberalisation programme. Underlying the debate was the issue of whether Zanu PF should continue with its flirtatious romance with bureaucratic nationalism (which the party presented as Marxist-Leninism) and move further to legislate itself as the sole party, or abandon both the ideology and the one party-state ambition altogether. The impetus for debate seems to have been the collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Some of these regimes—including Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, among others—were close allies of the ruling party and maintained close bilateral ties with the state, and these dramatic political changes forced Zimbabwe’s policy and ideology rethink.

The one-party state debate was primarily played out in the press, with the *Sunday Mail* and the *Financial Gazette* being the foremost hosts of the ideological contest between pro and anti-one party state elements within the state and civil society. Outside the media, but occasionally captured in media reports, there was also intense debate within the ruling Zanu PF party, between the ideological and technocratic camps identified in Chapter Four. The debate also occurred in the academy, resulting in the publication of the book: *The one-party state and democracy: The Zimbabwe debate* in 1991, edited by Ibbo Mandaza and Loyd Sachikonye. The book captured various strands of the debate in the academic community, with most writers questioning the political integrity of legislating one-party rule (see Mandaza & Sachikonye, Eds, 1991). The eventual decision by the state to abandon the idea of a *de jure* one party state—first announced by President Mugabe in Toronto, Canada on 27 September 1990, and later in New York on 2 October 1990—was viewed as a product of intense debate within the party itself but more importantly a reflection of “the strength, cogency and popular dimensions of the critique of the one-party state concept by civil society institutions.” (Sachikonye, 1991:59).

5.7. The Public Press and the One-Party State Debate

The *Sunday Mail* carried most of the stories on the one-party state debate. The paper’s opinion and editorial pages played host mostly to a coterie of academics and other influential figures in one way or another related to the state. Most of the academics who wrote for the *Sunday Mail* were affiliated to the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies (IDS), a think tank set up by the state in 1984, and operating as a unit of the University of Zimbabwe. According to Raftopoulos, “most of the
researchers at IDS were close to the ruling party and the idea of the one party state, though there was no official IDS position on this”\(^8\). Generally IDS academics who wrote for the *Sunday Mail* either argued in favour of both the adoption of a legalised one-party rule under a Marxist-Leninist Zanu PF leadership, or just dismissed arguments against the one party state without explicitly endorsing the ruling party’s political ambitions. Besides IDS staff, government officials, including then Minister of Education, Fay Chung, also wrote in support of the one-party state.

In an article entitled: “How Zanu PF is the only guarantee of democracy,” published by the *Sunday Mail* on 17 July, 1990, Andries Matenda Rukobo, then director of IDS, wrote that “the alternative to Zanu PF [is] bleak; a leap into the dark and unknown.” He argued that the united Zanu PF (after the merger with PF Zapu in 1987) was “the only guarantee for democracy” for Zimbabwe, offering his implicit support for one-party rule (*Sunday Mail*, 17/7/1990). The article criticised opposition parties in Africa for either being fronts for imperialism or lacking in proper developmental ideology. Rukobo singled out opposition ZUM for chastising for failing to present “a coherent alternative programme to that of Zanu PF” (Ibid). The academic viewed the ruling party’s victory in the 1990 general elections a public endorsement of the party’s political programme. As stated earlier, Zanu PF campaigned around the introduction of what it called “socialist” economic policies, land redistribution and the legislated one-party state ahead of the 1990 elections.

Another IDS academic, Louis Masuku, dismissed proponents of multi-partyism in the Zimbabwe debate as being ignorant of the views of the “masses” whom he alleged were all out in favour of the adoption of both “socialism” and a one-party state under Zanu PF. In an article entitled: “Beyond Jonathan Moyo’s understanding,” Masuku wrote:

> Zimbabwe is a capitalist society. For decades the masses have witnessed, experienced and suffered the cruelty of this same social system. What Zanu PF is simply saying is that its objective is to develop socialism in Zimbabwe under a one-party state. The two will not be forced upon the people. The

\(^8\) Brian Raftopoulos, Interview, May, 2005
people themselves have shown their support for socialism (*Sunday Mail*, 14/1/1990).

Although he offered no evidence to support the assertion that “the people themselves” were in favour of the adoption of a socialist political and economic system, Masuku argued that multiparty democracy was not useful in an economic environment like Zimbabwe “where economic sovereignty [is] surrendered to corporate interests in every aspect of social life” (Ibid).

Two other IDS academics, Bornwell Chakadza and Brian Raftopoulos maintained critical positions in relation to proponents of multiparty democracy in Zimbabwe, but at the same time questioned the rationale for establishing a one-party state in Zimbabwe. Raftopoulos took issue with proponents of political pluralism—the most visible and outspoken of whom was Dr. Jonathan Moyo who wrote for the *Financial Gazette*—arguing that although it was necessary, it was not “a sufficient condition for the fuller extension of democracy” (*Sunday Mail*, 2/12/1990). He argued that the debate about democracy should extend to the question of the creation of material conditions necessary for the development of a strong civil society independent of capital and the state, conditions which neither the existing capital relations in Zimbabwe nor the one-party state-oriented political leadership had created.

Chakadza contended that the framing of the one-party state debate was problematic because it was premised on “the top-down elitist perspective” (*Sunday Mail*, 29/7/1990). Like Raftopoulos, he argued that neither a Stalinist-style legislated one-party state nor a Western type liberal multi-party democracy was sufficient without a redistribution of material resources in Zimbabwe and a broadened participation of the majority in the economy. He summarised his argument as an attempt to “put accent on the essence of democracy rather than manifestations of it” (Ibid).

Zimbabwe government officials also participated in the media debate about the one-party state. In an article entitled “Socialism is the only answer to the country’s problems,” then Minister of Education, Fay Chung, praised the ruling party’s “renewed” commitment to “socialism” in its 1990 election manifesto, arguing that “socialism is the only ideology which promises to look after the majority, rather than
leaving their fate to the vagaries of profit and free enterprise” (Sunday Mail, 25/3/1990). She attributed Zanu PF’s failure to create jobs during the first decade of independence to the fact that the state did not control the economy and that multinational capital failed to invest in industrial expansion and therefore failed to create jobs. Chung also took a swipe at the opposition ZUM which embraced the free market economic policy as a campaign pitch ahead of the elections. She wrote: “Zum’s ideology is bankrupt comprador capitalism. Little wonder that it should be so wholeheartedly supported by the CAZ whose performance over the decades showed blacks only the ugly face of capitalism” (Ibid).

Another ruling party official, Cain Mathema, who later became the governor of Bulawayo, also wrote in The Herald that: “only socialism can meet the wishes of the people” (The Herald, 12/1/1990). He argued that the “liberation agenda” of Zanu PF was not yet over, and urged Zimbabweans to be “united in one organisation, with Marxists-Leninists taking their rightful places among the patriots as they did during the independence struggle” (Ibid). Mathema dismissed critics of a one-party state under Zanu PF as lackeys of imperialism who were against the wishes of the masses. In another submission, Mathema argued that proponents of multiparty democracy were ignoring the skewed property and production relations in Zimbabwe, where multinational corporations dominated the economy (Sunday Mail, 1/7/1990). A Zanu PF-led one-party state, he argued, would “enable [the people] to own the economy, to industrialise the country…thus doing away with the neo-colonial economy” (Ibid).

The Sunday Mail itself supported the idea of a legislated one-party state under the leadership of Zanu PF. In an editorial entitled: “Avoid Traps,” the paper argued:

A democratic state is not solely the existence of a large number of political parties. In fact, because they would tend to group themselves along tribal and regional lines, such a plethora of parties would be highly divisive in multi-ethnic African countries. Because of this, those arguing for multi-partyism in Africa could really be trying to implement the old colonial tactic of ‘divide and rule’ as national or continental issues take second place to individual or group power struggles (Sunday Mail, 8/7/1990).
The same editorial questioned the rationale for adopting free-market economics as the panacea for the country’s stunted economic growth. However, notwithstanding its editorial policy thrust, the paper also hosted views from factions within the ruling party who supported the adoption of market reforms and the abandonment of the one-party state project. On 28 April, 1991, the paper ran a story under the headline: “Socialism not for now—Chidzero.” It quoted Bernard Chidzero, then senior Minister of Finance, Economic planning and Development, saying “the new capitalist order” that followed the adoption of ESAP was a reality Zimbabweans had to accept. He defended ESAP as a “pragmatic” decision that the state had taken after realising that socialism would not work “at this stage in this country” (Sunday Mail, 28/4/1991). As argued in the previous chapter, Chidzero belonged to the technocratic wing of the ruling party, which was more inclined towards market economics as opposed to the leftist or ideological camp.

Apart from the story on Chidzero, there were other media reports from both the Sunday Mail and The Herald which revealed the incoherence within the ruling party over both the one-party issue and the related questions of party ideology and economic policy. Both papers reported on the Zanu PF National Consultative Assembly meeting aimed at reviewing the party’s ideology in the aftermath of the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe. In a story under the headline: “Zanu PF leaders debate need to update socialism,” The Herald quoted President Mugabe saying the agenda for the meeting was “yet another controversial ideological matter” (Herald, 23/3/1991). Mugabe conceded there was no uniformity of views regarding the way forward for the party, although he said he was personally in favour of what he called “Marxist-Leninist socialism” (Ibid). However, the same paper had quoted him in the Times of Nigeria two months earlier saying Zimbabwe was “prepared to have capitalism which is indigenous rather than capitalism that is totally foreign” (The Herald, 6/1/1991). The incoherence was also reflected by Senior Minister for Political Affairs, Didymus Mutasa, who was quoted differently by the Financial Gazette and the Sunday Mail on the party’s ideological and political agenda in the heat of the debate. Mutasa was quoted in the Financial Gazette (28/3/1991) addressing the business community and assuring them that the party and state had decided to adopt free market capitalism in light of existing realities. Three days later, he told the Sunday Mail he had been quoted out of context, and insisted the party would not make
a “u-turn on its commitment to socialism” (Sunday Mail, 31/3/1991). These contradictions within the party attracted general news reportage within the public press, but not much editorial commentary.

5.7.2 The Financial Gazette and the One-Party State Debate

Across the media, the debate was framed in at least two ways. On the one hand some academics saw the one-party state as a logical extension of the developmental state, while on the other, it was viewed as a precursor to an authoritarian state. The Financial Gazette opposed the one-party state idea. Most of the opinion and editorial pieces in the paper were penned by Dr. Jonathan Moyo, then a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe. Moyo consistently argued against the one-party state to the extent that he incurred “the intellectual wrath of Zanu PF’s ideologues who [fell] upon each other in attacking him” (Makamure, 1991: 103). In an article entitled: “Delegates opposing one-party state need ideological training, says Party Presidency,” Moyo blamed “self styled Marxists-Leninists in the officialdom” who since 1980 had succeeded “in smearing those who disagree with them” (Financial Gazette, 5/1/1990). He cited the collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe to sustain his argument against the adoption of a legalised one-party state under a Marxist-Leninist ruling party in Zimbabwe. He wrote that: “…the major cause for the violent overthrow of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe is simply that they have had a legislated monopoly of power in the form of the now discredited one-party state” (Ibid). Without that monopoly, Moyo argued, it would have been relatively easier and bloodless to remove a corrupt and inefficient leadership through democratic elections in a multiparty context.

In a separate article, Moyo cited Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda’s abandonment of the one-party state as a warning for the Zimbabwean leadership against taking the Zambian route. The article entitled: “Kaunda’s belated surrender over one-party state” stated that: “for politicians, the one party state is not a matter of national policy but their own capricious interests” (Financial Gazette, 28/9/1990). He argued against the limitations and denial of political freedoms inherent in one-party establishments, and questioned the ruling party’s commitment to democracy. On the announcement by Zanu PF that it would—rather than legalise one-party rule—achieve the same through mass mobilisation, Moyo made the charge of ruling party duplicity. He urged the
party to dismantle the Ministry of Political Affairs, ensure the Registrar General’s office was autonomous from the ruling party, and amend the Electoral Act to allow for proportional representation rather than the winner-take-all system in place (Ibid).

Besides opinion pieces by Moyo, the *Financial Gazette* ran news stories that generally criticised the idea of a legalised one-party rule. In a story under the headline: “Shamuyarira accused of misrepresenting meeting outcome” (*Financial Gazette, 28/9/1990*), the paper quoted an unnamed source who had attended a Zanu PF Central Committee meeting, dismissing party Information Secretary Nathan Shamuyarira’s claims in the public press that delegates had unanimously upheld the party’s goal to make Zimbabwe a one-party state. The source argued that despite official public posturing, there was a strong opposition to the idea within the party. The same story also gave prominence to a statement by former President Canaan Banana, in which he opposed the one-party state and argued that “no generation has the right to make political decisions for future generations” (Ibid). In a separate issue, the paper cited an anonymous source on a story alleging that US ambassador to Zimbabwe, Steven Rhodes, had been pushed out of his post under pressure from the State Department for not seriously opposing Zanu PF’s one-party rule programme (*Financial Gazette, 12/10/1990*). Washington, like most other Western powers, was opposed to the ruling party’s political ambitions. The story was framed in a way that portrayed Rhodes, the first ever US African-American ambassador to Harare, as an irresponsible and complicit official who, by not publicly criticising the ruling party and government on the matter, was negating the cause of democracy.

After Zanu PF’s announcement that it would pursue its political goal through means other than legislation, the *Financial Gazette* published a story quoting a ZUM official dismissing the announcement as a political gimmick. The story under the headline: “Change on pluralism a ploy, says ZUM” (12/10/1990) quoted ZUM deputy chairman Davison Gomo accusing the ruling party of “attempting to hoodwink the public” by creating the impression that the one-party state eventually would have been established by general consensus rather than a coterie of powerful individuals within the party (Ibid). Gomo told the paper that his party would continue to fight against any formal introduction of one party rule by Zanu PF, notwithstanding the opposition party’s poor showing in the 1990 elections.
Overall, the debate about the one-party state and its various strands was one of the most widely ‘mediated’ issues in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Both the private and public press constituted a terrain through which the debate was played out. The public press hosted both those views that were consistent with the dominant thinking within the ruling bloc as well as, to an extent, those that questioned it. The Financial Gazette endorsed proponents of multiparty democracy although, compared to the Sunday Mail, it carried far fewer articles on the debate.

What was noticeable though was that in all the papers the participants in the debate were elites associated with different institutions in and outside the state. It was also interesting to note that both The Herald and the Sunday Mail were editorially quiet about the contradictory policy statements coming from the executive for domestic and international audiences. President Mugabe’s statement to the Times of Nigeria (quoted in The Herald) came just four months after another policy decision—the abandonment of the plans for a legislated one-party state—was made abroad for foreign audiences before being announced locally. That the apparent divisions and contradictions over policy within the ruling party did not attract any editorial comment from the public press arguably reflects the degree of self-censorship inculcated at Zimpapers through years of state interference.

5.8 The 1995 General Elections

5.8.1 Background to the Elections

The April 1995 parliamentary elections were the third elections in independent Zimbabwe and the second to be held under the amended Lancaster House constitution. It is important to mention that these elections were the first to be held in the country since the international demise of both the one-party state and socialism as approaches to governance and development (Makumbe & Compagnon, 2000). An important aspect of the 1995 elections was voter apathy. It was a period of political exhaustion, and only 57 percent of the electorate voted for the contested 65 seats. At the time of the 1995 elections, ESAP had failed to revitalise the economy, with poverty and unemployment beginning to soar to unprecedented levels (Ibid). ZUM
did not participate in the elections, leaving the ruling party to fight a smaller and pared down opposition comprising Zanu (Ndonga), the Forum Party and the UANC.

5.8.2 The Public Press and the 1995 Elections
The coverage of the 1995 elections by both The Herald and Sunday Mail was consistent with the papers’ editorial framing of the previous elections. There was a striking similarity in terms of aspects of the contest that were foregrounded by the papers, namely the futility and hopelessness of the political opposition, the invincibility and credibility of the ruling party, and the absence of impediments to a free and fair poll in the country’s electoral framework. Below is a thematic discussion of the details of the coverage.

5.8.3 The Futility of Opposition
Both publications regularly urged the electorate to ignore opposition parties, which were generally framed as ill-advised, illegitimate and anti-Zimbabwe. In some editorials, the opposition was lumped together as one, hopeless lot that, having failed to successfully hijack the liberation struggle in the pre-independence era, was now attempting the same in the guise of political opposition. It should be noted that the ‘blanketing’ of opposition parties put together old nationalist parties that were established before 1980 (e.g., Zanu Ndonga and UANC), and post-independence parties such as ZUM and the Forum Party, among others. Perhaps one most vivid illustration of the perceived hopelessness of the opposition was the Herald’s cartoon of 25th March, 1995. The graphic depicts President Mugabe (representing Zanu PF) facing a thin opposition man in a boxing ring. Mugabe, with one hand folded back, is quoted saying: “No, ref(eree), I only need one fist”.

The generic problem of the opposition in Zimbabwe, argued The Herald, was that they sold themselves “by listing Zanu PF policies and then condemning them as having failed” (13/3/1995). As such, according to the paper, they collectively deserved to be ignored by the electorate. Sometimes the attacks were directed at particular individuals as leaders of the opposition. Opposition UANC leader Bishop Abel Muzorewa, for example, was a regular recipient of the personalised attacks. In an editorial entitled: “Muzorewa desperate to polish up his image,” the paper referred to the leader’s “desperate attempts” to “explain away the crimes of his murderous
regime” when he was then Prime Minister of the short-lived Zimbabwe-Rhodesia in 1979. Muzorewa was dismissed as a national traitor who worked with the colonial administration in efforts to defeat the nationalist liberation project. The editorials made no reference to particular policies of any of the opposition parties. Constant reference was made to attempts to “recolonise” Zimbabwe in the name of democracy.

5.8.4 Zanu PF as the Only Legitimate Party
There was a sense in which both papers viewed the election in Manichean terms, as a contest between good and evil, between reactionary and progressive forces. The editors made casual appeals to the electorate to apply common sense, to vote for progress. In an editorial entitled “Common Sense” (16/4/1995), the *Sunday Mail* argued that the 1995 election should be viewed as a “battle for the hearts and minds of the people of this country and how they should be governed and by whom and for whom”. This battle, stated the paper, “has been going on for over a century since Cecil John Rhodes colonised this country …it will go on forever because since 1893 the colonialist forces are refusing to give up” (Ibid). It is arguable that the invocation of the discourse of anti-colonialism conveniently located the ruling party—which consistently sought to claim ownership of the ‘appropriate’ trajectory of popular memory of the liberation struggle—in an unrivalled position as the legitimate political grouping worth anyone’s electoral support.

The editorial cited above also, quite interestingly, made cursory reference to the difficult economic conditions that prevailed in the country at the time. By 1995, the effects of ESAP had begun to seriously bite the majority of the population, with widespread unemployment, reduced wages, unaffordable healthcare and retrenchments (Mlambo, 1997; Chipika et al, 2000). However, the ongoing economic crisis was explained by the *Sunday Mail* thus: “The majority of the people in this country know the issues at stake...difficulties arising from the grotesque political and economic imbalances and injustices imposed by colonialism and racism” (*Sunday Mail*, 16/4/1995).

In the rare incidents of editorial criticisms of the ruling party, the papers, especially *The Herald*, generally presented their case as a call on the ruling party’s top leadership to bring some order to the house lest the opposition took advantage and
scored big at the polls. In January 1995, some three months ahead of the elections, the ruling party was rocked by unprecedented infighting and factionalism (Makumbe & Compagnon, 2000). Senior party officials clashed over such issues as candidacy for parliamentary constituencies, conflicts in business organisations affiliated to the ruling party, and how to deal with civil servants suspected to be pro-opposition. So intensive was the infighting that on 31 January, 1995, *The Herald* appealed to the President to act on his subordinates. In an editorial entitled “Crack of whip needed to restore party order”, the paper issued a rather rare attack: “An impression has been created that there is confusion in the (ruling) party itself, hardly the kind of picture Zanu PF would like to create in the minds of the electorate” (31/1/1995). However, while acknowledging that the chaos in the ruling party could present the opposition with an opportunity “to rub their hands with glee”, the same were supposed to note that “it takes more than ministerial goofs, bleeps and blunders to topple Zanu PF at the polls” (Ibid).

**5.8.5 Electoral Process as Incorruptible**

As in previous elections, both *The Herald* and *Sunday Mail* devoted some significant editorial space to defending the country’s electoral system against charges of rigging and official malpractice. Two weeks prior to the poll, *The Herald* took a swipe at opposition political party candidates for allegedly boycotting meetings organised by the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC), itself a body the opposition accused of being filled with ruling party members or sympathisers. While attempts at reaching out to all candidates by the ESC were a reflection of the fairness of the electoral system, the paper argued, the opposition boycott showed that “the talk of potential rigging was just hot air from those trying to score a few cheap points” (*The Herald*, 25/3/1995). The editorial further dismissed the opposition complaints as “simply sly attempts to try and explain to outsiders why unelectable candidates are losing” (Ibid).

Human rights groups raising concerns about the electoral system in the country also came under *The Herald’s* attack. Describing as “growth industries” human rights watching and election observing, the paper said the Zimbabwean election was attracting “a motley collection of groups, both local and foreign, who have other motives than making a name for themselves and enjoying a good holiday” (23/2/1995). The ulterior motives were identified as finding faults in the country’s
electoral system. Local group ZimRights was singled out as a pro-opposition organisation whose agenda should be dismissed.

5.9 The *Financial Gazette* and the Coverage of the 1995 Elections

Compared to the 1990 elections, the 1995 poll attracted more editorial comments from the *Financial Gazette*, with more pointed references to the particular aspects of the contest. What did not change though was the general thrust of the comments and stories. There was a consistency in the manner in which the ruling party was portrayed as unfairly, if selfishly dominating the polity and threatening to derail the pace of democratisation. Also consistent was the commentary on economic policy. The framing of the 1995 elections by the paper’s editorial comments can explained in the following themes.

5.9.1 Zanu PF as a Threat to Democracy

Between February 9th and March 30th, the *Financial Gazette* editorials and stories related to elections generally presented the ruling party as a threat to democracy and political pluralism in Zimbabwe. Commenting on the impending elections, the paper, in an editorial entitled: “It’s a Zanu PF Show”, decried the lack of political competition in the country, arguing that the only semblance of contest occurs within the ruling party itself during primary elections (*Financial Gazette*, 16/2/1995). The paper identified some impediments to open competition and free elections in Zimbabwe, namely the dependence of the Electoral Supervisory Commission on the executive, as well as unequal access to public media by political contestants outside of Zanu PF.

At the height of the ruling party’s primary elections, the paper shifted away from its earlier inference that fair competition might have existed in the ruling party. In an editorial entitled “Shambolic Zanu PF”, the paper dismissed the ruling party’s primaries as a kind of farce. “What has emerged from the current primaries”, the paper argued, “is that Zanu PF is a disorganised party prone to intra-party violence. Levels of intolerance within the party are rock bottom, while democracy is, at best, in its infancy” (*Financial Gazette*, 9/3/1995).
5.9.2 Flawed Political and Economic Policy

Besides singling out the ruling party as negating the democratic process, the Financial Gazette, in a related theme, decried the institutional political and economic policy systems in the country as a further threat to political pluralism and freedom. In an editorial comment entitled: “To vote or not to vote” (23/3/1995), the paper posed some rhetorical questions about country’s political system. “Do elections really matter in Zimbabwe?” it posed: “Do they (elections) have any policy relevance at all?” In both cases, the paper then proffered the answer: “an emphatic NO” (Ibid). It further argued, rather cynically, that “elections in this country are an expensive exercise in setting out to prove the obvious” (Ibid). The explanation for the alleged inconsequential nature of the election was identified as the “acutely flawed” nature of the institutional framework under which the elections are held, as well as the non-existence of political competition.

On March 30th, the Financial Gazette came out openly supporting the call by opposition parties to boycott the election. In an editorial entitled: “Clinging to power”, the paper cited a flawed constitution that gave “too much power to the President” as a critical impediment to political pluralism in the country.

Besides what it viewed as a political crisis engineered by the ruling party and government, the paper also identified—albeit rather irregularly in the run up to the 1995 election—an economic crisis for which the Zanu PF government was to blame. In “Fiscal Delinquency” (9/2/1995), the paper blamed the government for poor parastatal and civil service reform. It argued that the failure of the government to trim itself and implement drastic reform had to do with the absence of political will and would negate the ongoing structural economic reforms. As in other editorials, the pieces on economic policy centred on either the state or government as culprits responsible for the unhealthy state of affairs in the country.

5.9.3 Critique of the Coverage Elections and Debates of the ‘90s

The editorial framing of the 1990 and 1995 elections as well as the one-party state debate by the newspapers under study was not accidental. Processes of inclusion and exclusion, emphasis and the attribution of agency constituted an articulation of elite
(both political and economic) positions on the issue of political contestation and the process of democratisation.

As argued in the individual newspaper analyses, Zimpapers publications adopted an uncritically pro-Zanu PF editorial stance in their coverage of the two elections. By systematically sidelining and condemning the opposition, these publications assisted the ruling party in its attempts at hegemony-construction. They reflected basically the official view of the ruling political bloc. On the other hand, the Financial Gazette was consistent in its delegitimisation of the ruling party and government. The paper viewed the elections as a flawed process designed to keep Zanu PF in power. While offering mild support for the state for adopting market reforms, the paper consistently criticised the same for poor governance, corruption and an alleged unwillingness to democratise political space. Arguably, this editorial position was consistent with sections of capital in Zimbabwe at the time which, despite being beneficiaries of ESAP, were occasionally being critical of the government especially in cases where their interests were at stake. The changing racial profile of capital in the ‘second’ transition, as stated earlier, did not lead to an automatic improvement of state-capital relations as such. The initial realignment that followed ESAP was rather short-lived. It was only to be resuscitated in the post-2000 era in the aftermath of the controversial land reform programme. During the ‘second’ transition the Financial Gazette often found itself trying an intricate balancing act between the interests of emerging black bourgeoisie supporting the state and those of a range of civil society groups protesting against the state’s declining legitimacy and incipient predatory tendencies. However, most of the paper’s editorial attention remained focused on capital.

The fact that the Financial Gazette remained as an effective articulation of especially the economic elites, while The Herald and Sunday Mail remained mouthpieces of the state raises the problematic question of whether the press, in covering critical national events and processes like elections, provided neutral and discursive platforms for rational-critical debate in the sense of the public sphere. Related to this is the question of whether, in view of the increasing influence of owners, it is possible for journalism to contribute to democratisation processes, of which elections are an integral part. Commenting on the Zimbabwean press, Mukasa argues that, notwithstanding efforts by some journalists to assert their independence and professionalism, the press in
Zimbabwe “has historically developed as institutional partners to a coalition of big business and government whose economic and political interests are generally articulated in the editorial columns of the press” (2000:296). Makumbe & Compagnon (2000), while dismissing the public press for biased coverage of the 1995 elections, note that the private press was no better. Accusing it of “immaturity”, they argue that this press “excels in making nasty comments on the government and the ruling party, but it cannot contribute in any positive way to national debate” (2000:205).

The Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC), an institution that runs and supervises national elections, in its 1995 report said it was “most disappointed with the coverage of electoral issues by the newspapers”, which “lacked professional objectivity resulting in a total denial of balanced electoral information to the electorate” (ESC Report, 1995: 5). In its report on the same elections, human rights group ZimRights, noted that Zimpapers newspapers “were demonstrably propagandistic, partisanly belligerent, and lacked objectivity in their reporting and subject matter” (ZimRights Election Monitoring Report, 1995:6) However, the same report praised the private press for a “generally fair, unbiased and informative coverage” (Ibid: 6)

What emerges from both the comments cited above and an analysis of patterns of coverage of the selected issues is that, like the first decade of independence, the ‘second’ transition in Zimbabwe presented a media-state-capital relationship that largely reduced the press to institutional subordinates. This was much clearer within the public press than the private press. The state maintained, even entrenched its grip on the public press, while the transforming capital did not lead to much diversity in terms of interpretative frameworks of national debates and issues. The rather sketchy coverage of the elections by the Financial Gazette in 1990 for example arguably reflected capital’s limited interest in the democratisation debate obtaining within civil society at the time (see Raftopoulos, 2005; and Saunders, 1997). The legal and political context in which Zimbabwean journalism was practised in the ‘90s did not help matters. Notwithstanding limited initiatives at media reform, the ‘second’ transition ended on an unpromising note, with an increasingly polarised elite society recreating itself in the nation’s press pages.
Although the coverage of the one-party state debate in its various shades by the public press could resemble some form of ‘mediated’ public sphere, this was so arguably because of the dissent that existed within the ruling party on the debate as discussed above. Herman & Chomsky (2002) make the following observation in relation to media framing of contentious issues (such as the one-party state debate in Zimbabwe):

> The mass media are not a solid monolith on all issues. Where the powerful are in disagreement, there will be a certain diversity of tactical judgements on how to attain generally shared aims, reflected in media debate. But views that challenge fundamental premises…will be excluded from the mass media even when elite controversy over tactics rages fiercely (Herman & Chomsky, 2002:lx).

Going by this observation, one could argue that the semblance of diversity of opinion within the pages of both the private and public press was limited to elite disagreements. For example, although claims were made that the ‘masses’ supported the one-party state, there was no substantial evidence of their participation in the press, as the profiles of the writers showed a preponderance of educated elites, some of whom were aligned with the state.

### 5.9.4. Conclusion

The role of the press in relation to the public sphere during the ‘second’ transition was ambiguous. For optimistic critics, the beginning of the neo-liberal 1990s and the expansion of the private press heralded a vibrant era of press freedom. Kumbula (1997) wrote at the time that: “…press freedom is making a comeback in Zimbabwe…for most of the 80’s the press in Zimbabwe was largely cowed except, sometimes, for the Financial Gazette” (Kumbula, 1997: 178). Yet for others, the late ‘90s symbolised a negation of the press’s democratic-agency role as a result of the adoption of ESAP. Saunders (1997) argues that despite the promises of enhanced freedom of expression in the liberalised market, ESAP “provoked a shake-out within the commercial media that brought advantages to a few publishers and financially damaged many” (Saunders, 1997: 14).

The press under review faced the twin constraints of state and capital power and influence. While bigger and established organisations like Zimpapers could possibly withstand market pressures on their editorial autonomy, they remained editorially
mortgaged to the ruling party. On the other hand, whereas the private press enjoyed relative autonomy from direct and routine political pressure, it remained institutionally vulnerable to the vagaries of capital in an era of poor market growth and cut-throat competition for advertising spend. These broader structural constraints arguably limited—directly and indirectly—the ability of the press to provide institutional sites for critical-rational debate not sanctioned by and acceptable to political and corporate hierarchies. The press’s framing of the elections of 1990 and 1995, as well as the one-party state debate should be viewed in this context.