

**Democratising Communication: Media Activism and Media Reform in
Zimbabwe**



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Philosophy in Media Studies**

Declaration

I, Last Alfandika, hereby declare that this thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Media Studies at the University of Witwatersrand has not been submitted for a Degree at this or any other University, that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all reference material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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Signature

Abstract

Media policy reform in Zimbabwe should be able to liberate rather than limit the public sphere long “captured” by narrow interest of the ruling class before and after independence in 1980. While some authors have regarded media activism as critical in the creation of the public sphere, not much is known beyond this particular materialistic aspect. The wider importance of media activism to the fight for media reform and democracy in Zimbabwe is ignored in literature. In addition, media activism in Zimbabwe has not been adequately documented leading to little understanding of the practice. Against this background, the study seeks to ascertain the degree and extent to which media activism has led to media reform and democratisation in Zimbabwe through the lens of Gramsci’s theory of hegemony and the Social movement theory of Resource Mobilisation (RMT).

Using personal interviews, the examination of media activists and government documents, and journalists’ articles, this study examines the extent to which media activism influences media reform and democracy in Zimbabwe. The study argues that major debates over the democratisation of communication in Zimbabwe are pitted between the hegemonic government and the counter-hegemonic media reform activists sponsored by Western based donors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Article 19 among others. The highlights of the debate indicate differences in conceptualisation of “media democracy” between the the state and media reform activist organisations. While media reform activists define media democracy from a transplanted Westernised democracy concept, the government rejects such deterministic approaches to media democracy and argues that media democracy in Africa must not be tied to Western manufactured models but must be informed by the socio-cultural, economic and political needs of the society. The government perceives Western funded media reform activists as conduits for regime change. In the end, the study noted a number of media reforms influenced by media reform activists. However, these reforms did not democratise communication in Zimbabwe as they were either not implemented or appropriated by the government which uses them to further consolidate its hegemonic power. The research recommends that media reform activists and the government should seek a common understanding on issues which involve democratised communication.

Dedication

For *Ruvimbo, Takunda, Munashe, Mufaro and Mukudzei, and those not yet born ivai Mukundi*

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There is no one who walks alone in the journey of life. It is because of this that at this moment, I need to acknowledge those that walked with me, and besides me, those that I have met to share a thought with and those that care so much to listen or read my work and gave it a meaningful direction. This thesis would not have been completed without the support of several people whose interventions have to be acknowledged. I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr Ufuoma Akpojivi. His insightful comments, guidance and support helped me through the most challenging moments of this thesis. I wish to express my gratitude for the support I received from Dr Pedzisai Ruhanya during the initial stages of the research. I'm grateful to my greatest friend, Gift Gwindingwe, for encouraging me to trudge on even when everything seemed bleak and impossible. I would like to pass my greatest appreciation to Dr Lyton Ncube. I can't thank him enough for his tremendous support, motivation and guidance.

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List of Acronyms

ACPDT-	African Community Publishing Development Trust
AIPPA-	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
AMB-	African Media Barometer
ANZ-	Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe
BSA-	Broadcasting Service Act
CAFSNRN-	Central African Federation of Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland
CCJP-	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CEO-	Chief Executive Officer
CNG -	Community Newspaper Group
CPA-	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CRI-	Community Radio Initiatives
DA-	District Administrator
ESAP-	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FAMWZ-	Federation of African Media Women Zimbabwe
GNU-	Government of National Unity
IMF-	International Monetary Fund
IMPI-	Information and Media Panel of Inquiry
ITU-	International Trade Union
LOMA-	Law and Order Maintenance Act
MABC-	Munhumutapa African Broadcasting Corporation
MCZ-	Media Council of Zimbabwe
MIMBS-	Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services
MISA-	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MM-	Media Monitors
MMPZ-	Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe
NAM-	Non-Aligned Movement
NIZA-	Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa
NSM-	New Social Movement
NWICO-	New World Information and Communication Order
OSA-	Official Secrets Act
RBC -	Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation
RDC-	Rural Development Council

RFBC-	Rhodesian Federal Broadcasting Corporation
SW-	Short Wave
UN -	United Nations
UNDP -	United Nations Development Partners
UNESCO-	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA -	United States of America
VMCZ -	Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe
VOA -	Voice of America
VOP-	Voice of the People
WB-	World Bank
ZACRAS-	Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations
ZANU PF-	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZAPU-	Zimbabwe African People's Party
ZBC -	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZIANA-	Zimbabwe Inter Africa News Agency
ZICORA-	Zimbabwe Community Radio
ZINEF-	Zimbabwe News Editors Forum
ZMC-	Zimbabwe Media Commission
ZMMT -	Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust
ZUJ-	Zimbabwe Union of Journalists
ZESN-	Zimbabwe Election Support Network

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Chapter One

Introduction and background of the study

Media policy reform in Zimbabwe should liberate rather than limit the public sphere long “captured” by narrow interest of the ruling class before and after independence in 1980 (Chuma, 2010: 90). While some authors have regarded media activism as critical in the creation of a democratic media sphere (Chuma, 2007; Freedman & Jonathan, 2015; Hackett & Carrol, 2006; Viktorija & Marijana, 2013; Wongrujira, 2008), not much is known beyond this particular materialistic aspect from a Zimbabwean perspective. The wider importance of media activism to the fight for media reform and democracy in Zimbabwe is ignored in literature. In addition, media activism in Zimbabwe has not been adequately documented leading to little understanding of the practice (Mutsvairo, 2014; Mare, 2014). Against this backdrop, this study seeks to ascertain the degree to which media activism has influenced media reform and media democracy in Zimbabwe.

The research examines key contestations in media policy and regulation reform in Zimbabwe in a time considered or known as the “Zimbabwe crisis” devoting most attention to the period 2000-2013. The period is significant in that it marked the beginning of a new milieu in the Zimbabwean media sphere. There is evidence that this period witnessed an introduction of a raft of media laws such as the Broadcasting Service Act (BSA) of 2001 and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2002 as a result of the build up which had started way back in the 1990s (Chuma, 2007; Chuma, 2010). Besides, this period saw an intensification of media reform activism fronted by a number of newly formed media activists organisations such as the: Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) of 1999; Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS) of 2003; Voluntray Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) of 2007; and the Media Centre (MC) of 2010 among other media reform activists organisations in Zimbabwe. Media reform activist organisations play a critical role in the struggle for media democracy (Carrol & Hackett, 2006). One of the most important events of the period 2000-2013 was the establishment of two private national broadcasting radios and several commercial regional stations (Ndawana, 2015). In addition,

the year 2013 marked the end of the Government of National Unity (GNU¹) which had started in 2009. Interestingly, media reform was one of the agenda items of the global political agreement that was signed by three political parties which formed the GNU. In spite of this, 2013 saw the coming in of the new constitution and since its promulgation, Section 61 and 62 which guarantee freedom of expression, freedom of the media and access to information have been attracting considerable interests from media researchers (Chirume, 2015; Moyo, Oluyinka & Chabwinja, 2014; Muchena, 2013; Ruhanya, 2014). Moreover, what is striking about this period is that, of all media reform activism that happened, there is little to no research which captures media activism and media reform of this period as well as the prospects of media democratisation in Zimbabwe. It is therefore imperative for this study to be situated in this epoch so as to interrogate issues that impinge on the process of democratisation of communication in Zimbabwe focusing specifically on media activism and media reform.

The concepts of media democratisation, media activism and media reform grapples with the issues of struggling for free access and exchange of information as well as free and open communication through various means. Ideally media policy and regulatory reform in Zimbabwe should contribute to the liberation of a democratic public sphere by providing citizens with information about their world; fostering debate about various issues and enhancing citizen participation in issues that involve how they are governed so as to encourage informed decision making on available courses of action.

Part of what the study aims to do is to establish and interrogate instances of media reform in Zimbabwe. The study focuses on media activism by civil societies such as the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Media Monitors (MM), Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) and the Zimbabwe Union of Journalist (ZUJ) among others, these being the prototypical media advocacy groups of local imagination selected based on their activities, interests and influence. The study further seeks to determine how media democracy can be achieved in a country which has engaged media as a tool for ideological manipulation and maintenance of hegemony. In addition, the study searches for an understanding on how

¹ The GNU was the government formed after the signing of the Global Political Agreement between the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations. It was born on 11 February 2009 as a result of mediations by Thabo Mbeki, the then South African President.

media democracy is conceived on the underside of global neo-liberalism, in an environment where several regulations impinge media freedom and access to information and where the state has intensified efforts to deal with errant members of the press who dare challenge the incumbent ruling authority. In doing so, and drawing specifically on the literature on media democracy and activism, the study hopes to highlight the challenges that media activism faces in its quest for media policy reform in Zimbabwe.

Media in Rhodesia and post-colonial Zimbabwe, a brief background

Rhodesia, under Ian Smith's administration, used the media as a vehicle for exerting control over the nation (Windrich, 1981). During this period, media freedom was curtailed (Moyo, 2004: 16). The year 1980 marked the end of a thirteen year armed struggle (1966-1979) against settler rule and the dawn of a new era. However, the coming in of a people's government whose principals were informed by participatory democracy and an ideal public sphere did not help things either. The media of the new independent Zimbabwe remained aligned to the state in a bid to help it consolidate its political gains as a result of achieving national independence (Prime Minister Robert Mugabe quoted in Saunders, 1991: 1). This development laid to rest all the hope of democratised communication which was envisaged before ceasefire (Ronning & Kupe, 2000).

Mainstream media continued to serve the interests of the minority while enjoying monopoly with its publications designed to promote the needs of the ruling party and its leaders (Windrich, 1981). The same applies to the inherited broadcasting media which continues to serve the propaganda needs of the state (Moyo, 2004). Former ZANU PF guerrilla fighters who had been at the helm of the Nationalist radio, "The Voice of Zimbabwe", took over employment at the newly crowned Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). This move further entrenched the ruling party's hegemony over broadcasting from the outset (Chuma, 2010). It can therefore be argued that media in the colonial and post-colonial epochs was not clearly distinct compartments but rather there was a nexus between the past and present. Therefore, there is no need to wonder why the media in the post-colonial era has some level of continuity, fluidity and interconnectedness of the periods (Moyo, 2004; Magure, 2009). It was upon the recognition of the "embeddedness" of the past in the present that Moyo (2004) concludes that it was a "Change without Change".

Media reform and media democracy are part of and parcel of a larger discourse circumscribed by neoliberalism. The end of the cold war² politics and the intensification of globalisation marked a paradigm shift in media regulatory models which began to favour market-oriented competition creating a profound impact in developing countries. The end of Cold War convinced policy-makers that state-operated monopolies are running a loss prompting the need for democratisation and liberalisation of the economy towards the end of the first decade after independence in Zimbabwe. As the need for democratisation increased, a number of civil societies emerged. The United States of America and its Western allies backed by the International Monetary fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) pushed for liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation of communication and media industries in the developing countries (Chakravartty & Sarikasis, 2006; Chiumbu, 2015; Zeleza, 1994). They funded pressure groups which formed the local front for the call for change to media democracy (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997).

However, the problem with this emerging scenario was that the type of media democracy proposed and foisted on Africans was a rigid and Western hegemonic version. It was fraught with exogenously generated ideas, models and research paradigms, all with the purported goal of achieving neo-liberal media democracy (Nwauwa, 2005). Drawing specifically on the literature on media democracy, activism and media reform, the study hopes to explore and highlight the activities and challenges surrounding the process for democratising communication in Zimbabwe.

Research aim and objectives

Media activism is a highly complex, multi-faceted phenomenon (Carroll & Hackett, 2006). Media activism Zimbabwe has a history which dates back to the Rhodesia Guild of Journalists, of 1950 by active journalists who wanted to advance the welfare of media practitioners. The Guild of Journalist was later changed to the current ZUJ which is part of the Zimbabwe Congress of trade Union (ZCTU) a union which seek to address workers grievances and advance professionalism in the media among other professions (www.zuj.org.zw). Media reform movements and individuals in Zimbabwe have adopted media activism as a way of articulating their grievances and struggle for media reform so as to democratise communication. It has been observed that the state lacks a sense of urgency

²

when it comes to issues of media reform and media democratisation (Zimbabwe Election Support Network, 2011: 5). Thus, media reform movements like, MISA-Zimbabwe, have conclusively shown that,

...the only way to get things done and attract attention to their plight is to form coalitions of like-minded individuals, media and civic organisations that promote and campaign for freedom of expression and the right to information, monitor media freedom violations and take action and campaign for broadcasting diversity among other activities (MISA-Zimbabwe annual report, 2013:7).

As a result, several media reform activist movements have been established in Zimbabwe starting with MISA-Zimbabwe in 1991. These organisations have discovered an important opportunity to lobby and bring together relevant stakeholders to recognise and uphold constitutionally guaranteed rights to freedom of expression and freedom of the media as well as access to information. One of the strongest strategies was to form coalitions with other like-minded organisations within and outside Zimbabwe (Chimhutu, 2009). However, the extent to which media reform activism has informed media reform and media democracy in Zimbabwe has not been established. Based on the above developments, the central thesis for this study is to determine if such media reform activism has led to media reform and the extent to which such media reform has democratised communication in Zimbabwe.

Chiumbu and Moyo (2009) argue that from the year 2000 the government of Zimbabwe embarked on a deliberate policy of using the media as its tool to advance both its domestic and foreign policy projects in the face of decreasing popularity at home and increasing criticism abroad. New laws that undermined the performance of news media include the: Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) of 2001 and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2002. These laws entrenched a monopoly of the state media infringing on the people's rights to freedom of expression, freedom of the media and access to information.

For these reasons, specific objectives guiding this research are:

- i. To establish the rationale behind the new media laws passed in the post 2000 era.
- ii. To ascertain key contestations in the Zimbabwean media policy reform process.
- iii. To determine the extent to which media activism influenced media reform processes in Zimbabwe.
- iv. To examine if media reform contributed to media democratisation in Zimbabwe.

Key research questions

The research seeks to address the following questions:

- i. Why did the government of Zimbabwe pass new media laws in the post 2000 era?
- ii. What are the key contestations in the Zimbabwe media policy and regulatory reform process?
- iii. To what extent has media activism influenced media reform processes in Zimbabwe?
- iv. How has media reform contributed to media democratisation in Zimbabwe?

Justification of the study

Media is important for the public, the government, capital and even the opposition politics. Its role is to disseminate information so that people are always informed on what is happening around them, participate on the debates that shape their lives and make informed decisions based on the information they get through the media. However, those with means have a tendency of controlling the media in such a manner that it serves their interests at the detriment of those who do not have the means. For instance, the state and the capital have a tendency of using the media to manipulate the audience to understand or perceive the world in a way they want (Chomsky, 1997). Thus, media is always playing a crucial role in the lives of the ordinary people. As a result of this importance, media has always been described as an instrument of democracy as it enables the general public to exercise their freedom of expression and access to information. In order to exercise this role, there is need for the media itself to be democratic, that is free from the influence of both the state and the capital. The state and capital have always been meddling in media hence affecting its democratic orientation. In other words media has remained undemocratic therefore, it has not been free to serve the people in a way which enhances democracy, and instead it has served in away which is skewed to the needs of the ruling party in Zimbabwe. This has prompted the civil society, particularly those sponsored by the West to struggle for media democracy in Zimbabwe. The rationale behind Western sponsored media reform activists always being at the forefront remained elusive in the case of Zimbabwe and has to be investigated.

Whereas, a number of researches on media and the press in Zimbabwe have been conducted by several scholars (Chiumbu, 2015; Chuma, 2007; Dombo, 2014; Mpofu, 2014; Ruhanya, 2014 and Saunders, 1991), very few academics have bothered to interrogate the extent to which the works of such activism has influenced media reform and media democracy in

Zimbabwe. Thus, the growing profile of activism and advocacy work in the media and communications policy area underscores the need for scholarship that examines these activities, that places them into broader historical and theoretical contexts as well as assess the structure and behaviour of the organisations engaged in these activities (Napoli, 2007). Therefore, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence necessary to bridge the knowledge gap on the subject. The available few studies on media democratisation were done in the developed world and Asian countries (Carrol & Hackett, 2006; Picard, 2015; Skinner, 2006; Wongrujira, 2008). However the information generated may not be appropriate for intervention programmes in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. As a result, the absence of adequate research-based information makes it difficult to develop intercessions aimed at reversing capital and the government's direct and indirect interference with media democracy.

This research assumes that media oriented non-state actors, government and other policy makers in Zimbabwe have qualitative data on media oppression and repression which needs to be collected and analysed so as to find solutions to media democratisation challenges which is at the heart of media contestations in Zimbabwe (Ronning & Kupe, 2000; Kupe, 2000; Moyo, 2004). While this data will be analysed to show the magnitude of the problems, the focus of this research is to examine media activism and to analyse the extent to which it has led to media reform and democracy in Zimbabwe.

Research methodology and design

This section discusses the research strategy of the thesis. The section aims to explain “why some research methodology decisions were taken, how they were implemented and with what result” in order to achieve the objectives of this research (Yin, 2003: 12). It gives a clear and concise description of how the study was carried out. The research is predominantly a qualitative study designed to reveal a target audience's range of behaviour and the perceptions that drive it in media activism, reform and democracy in Zimbabwe. In particular, the study focuses on a case study of media activism in Zimbabwe in order to understand and unravel the debate on issues of media policy reform as a process of communication democratisation. This section begins with an explanation of the research paradigm adopted as it specifies the ontological and epistemological premises upon which the selection of the research design is based. Sources of data and methods used in data procurement are reported

and explained. In addition, the section elaborates sampling strategies, methods of data collection and instruments of data collection as well as methods of data analysis. The question of validity and ethical considerations of the inquiry is described at the end.

The method of sampling would logically demand that the researcher selects subject communities directly related to these activities. From the broader groups of media activists in Zimbabwe, the study drew out particular groups of people as research informants and as a case study. However, in order to get a deep insight into the complexities of contemporary issues surrounding media activism, reform and democracy, it would be pertinent to seek out some informants who are direct participants in the democratisation process. In as much as the research had particular interest in media activists and the civil societies involved in media activism and media freedom support, it sounds reasonable to contrast them with media policy makers in Zimbabwe who in this instance are government officials and members of parliament whose role is to either maintain the ruling elite hegemony or to change it. The research adopted a qualitative methodology informed by the interpretivist paradigm and designed as a case study.

Qualitative methodology to the study of Zimbabwean media activism, reform and the prospects of democracy

Studying Zimbabwean media, activism, reform and democracy is to a great extent qualitative in nature. As a qualitative research, this study emphasises words than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman cited in Ncube, 2014). This methodology is intended to produce findings not arrived at by means of quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 17). Such a methodology supports systematic investigation into the meanings which respondents employ to make sense of their experience about media policy and guide their actions. The approach described above uses familiar techniques for handling verbal materials that make situations “come alive”, it keeps the investigator close to the data and markedly facilitates understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Kratthwohls, 1993:159). In this kind of research, it is acknowledged that the findings depend on how the work of media activists are interpreted and may not be particularly valid to researchers immersed in the objectivity of positivistic research. This study recognises the limitations of inquiry and does not aspire to know all.

This study uses an interpretive inquiry process that is based on a naturalistic approach. The researcher develops a complex, holistic picture; analyses words; reports detailed views of informants and conducts the study in a natural setting (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The main objective of this qualitative study is to interrogate and understand media activism and media reform as a media democratisation process. To enable this, the study utilises broad and general questions and seeks to understand participants' experiences with the issues of media democratisation under study (Creswell, 2007). Although in some instances data may be quantified, the mode of data analysis remains the determinant of qualitiveness (Strauss & Carbin, 1990).

The need to use qualitative methodology stems from its ability to overcome certain kinds of resistance due to its capability to probe deeper. Such characteristic is suited to politically delicate issues such as media policy and media reform in Zimbabwe. What is most interesting with qualitative research is its concern with the question "why" and the "how" as it seeks to grasp the reasons behind some behaviour undertaken by either counter hegemonic forces or the ruling elite. For instance, responses to the reasons why the government introduced media regulations around 2000 can only be understood through a qualitative inquiry to seek for explanations. Qualitative research further seeks to comprehend the approach being employed by the state to suppress media freedom by asking the "how" question. Here, the research would establish the manner in which things are happening on the ground as the struggle for democratisation of communication in Zimbabwe unfolds.

Contrary to the above description of the methodology, the researcher is aware of its failure to overcome the subjective position of the investigator and its tendency to focus on a very small population sample which may lead to the possibility of falsification of results (Johnson & Joslyn, 1995: 27). However, to minimise this, the study employed a technique of reflecting the researcher's role in the study as suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (cited in Wungrujira, 2008). The study further argues that the results that shall be presented reflect an interpretation of the phenomenon under study and its objectivity is by no means a "fixed position reflecting the truth, but remains a relative position on a continuum...where...objectivity is a position that is closest to the phenomenon being examined" (Potter cited in Wungrujira, 2008: 50). However, qualitative methods are best suited to the study of meaning and purpose of human action because knowledge claims are derived from varied construction and interpretation perspectives of research participants (Creswell, 2003: 19).

In addition to the above, the need to facilitate “delicate and responsive questioning process to unpack a “complex” and “deeply rooted” phenomenon” (Ritchie, 2003: 32) makes this methodology suitable for studying media policy in Zimbabwe. It enables exploratory and responsive questioning in order to obtain views from a vantage of particular positions (ibid). Since data in this research is collected from specialists in media policy such as government officials, media scholars, media reform activists, the flow of delicate information from these respondents to the researcher needs not endanger both parties, it is therefore crucial to use a qualitative methodology (Ritchie, 2003; Devine, 1995). Furthermore, in this study, the qualitative methodology is highly suitable because it fits the principles of the Gramscian hegemony which forms a key defining moment of this research even if it cannot be subjected to quantification. In the end, a qualitative methodology is adopted for this study, in terms of both data collection and analysis processes. The next section discusses the research paradigm for the thesis.

Research Paradigm

The beginning of any research is premised on the researcher’s ability to reflect on the known world. Having reflected, the researcher must be able to interrogate the rationale of seeing things in the manner he/she does (Gibbons & Sanderson, 2002:5). Furthermore, the researcher must question the philosophical framework or paradigms that guide researchers to view things in the manner they do. There Research paradigms are sets of assumptions, values or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which give rise to a particular world view and serve as the lenses or organising principles through which researchers perceive and interpret reality. To a larger extent, the paradigm represents what we think about the world (Creswell, 2007; Maree, 2007). It is fundamental at this juncture to note that our actions in the world, including the actions we take as researchers, cannot succeed if not underpinned by paradigms.

Paradigms are all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define, for investigators, the nature of their inquiry along the three dimensions of ontology, epistemology and methodology (Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Ontology specifies the nature or essence of the social phenomena or reality being investigated, therefore pure reality cannot be known as it can only be interpreted through our senses and experiences resulting in differing perspectives of reality (Blanche & Durrheim, 1999; Cohen, Manion & Morrison,

2006). Epistemologically the interpretivist assumes that knowledge is gained through personal experience. This study appreciates that people are different and it requires a social scientist to carry out a scientific inquiry so as to grasp the subjective meaning of social actions (Grix, 2004). In addition, from the accumulated knowledge, a theory can be inductively created. However, it must be taken into consideration that knowledge comes from particular situations hence it must not be reducible to generalisation or simplistic interpretation (Grix, 2004: 64). The epistemological orientation enables this researcher to either see knowledge as absolute and separate from the researcher and linked to a knowable external reality or to see it as part of the researcher and relative to the individual's experiences that are associated with their environment. This study opts for the interpretivist paradigm which is also known as the "anti-positivist" paradigm because it was developed in response to positivism paradigm (Ernest, 1994). This research's ontological locus acknowledges the existence of a social reality understood by actors under study in a subjective manner. This world requires an open mind engagement with divergent viewpoints about media activism, media reform and media democracy in Zimbabwe. This research triangulates the respondents' views on the subject matter and analyses them in the research's "terminology, and conceptualisation" in the realm of the intended objectives.

The study employs the Gramscian philosophy of hegemony and the Social Movement's Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT) as theoretical and analytic frameworks. These theoretical lenses play a pivotal role in the choice of methods because the underlying belief system of the researcher (ontological assumptions) largely defines the choice of methods. To a great extent, this research believes that epistemology is intimately related to ontology and methodology. As ontology involves the philosophy of reality, epistemology addresses how we come to know that reality while methodology identifies the particular practices used to attain knowledge of it. Our knowledge about the phenomena is organised and increased through methodology which is a set of rules, principles and formal conditions that ground and guide this scientific inquiry. The next section explains the research design.

Research design

A research design is a "framework for the collection and analysis of data" (Bryman, 2001: 29). Research designs exhibit coherence between purpose, research questions, approaches, methods and the sampling plan employed (Lewis, 2003; Robson, 2002). As this study places

emphasis on interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative approach the research is designed as a case study.

The case study design

A case study is the “intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of cases which forms a population of the study” (Gerring, 2007:20). A case study “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 2003: 13). It depends on several sources of evidence and a “prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis” (ibid). To buttress these propositions, Porta and Keating (2008) advance that, a case study is a “research strategy based on an in-depth empirical investigation of one, or a small number, of phenomena in order to explore the configuration of each case and to elucidate features of a larger class of (similar) phenomena, by developing and evaluating theoretical explanations” (Porta and Keating, 2008: 226).

To some, a case study is just a single instance out of several similar collections of phenomena with several characteristics and belonging to a generic category, a case study such as the one under study may be defined either in terms of the similar nature of activism taking place in all the chosen movements. The cases selected are all in the struggle for media freedom from a media repressive system. In addition, they share same objectives and to a larger extent, they fall under one umbrella board, the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ). The data collection methods in a case study are usually of a qualitative nature (Neuman, 2011: 130). In a case study research design, the researcher has no control over events. Although, “what” questions can be asked particularly in an exploratory way, “how” and “why” questions are usually at the centre stage of a case study (Robson, 2002: 91).

This study has the hallmark of a case study research design. The study can be viewed as a case (of media activism, reform and the media democratisation process in Zimbabwe) that seeks to offer an insight into the phenomenon under study (democratisation of communication in Zimbabwe). In relation to Yin’s (2003) definition, the role of a media activist as a vehicle of media reform and democratisation of communication is topical in contemporary political science and public policy debates. Furthermore, this study seeks to examine how and why media reform activists appropriate or resist state hegemony in the media in Zimbabwe. The aim of applying the case study approach is to understand the degree

to which media reform activism has accomplished the process of media democratisation in Zimbabwe.

The case study provides an intervention and the real-life context in which media reform activism is occurring, such as advocacy programmes. Through this engagement, the researcher had an opportunity to ask questions that went beyond media laws and policies and strove to understand the root of the media democracy challenges in Zimbabwe. Through case analysis, the study has been able to explain the extent to which media activism has influenced media law reform in Zimbabwe.

Such a conclusion has been solicited by seeking explanations from media reform activists, media professionals, media policy makers and media academia. Thus, the use of a case study approach to investigate the questions permits the study to present descriptions, understandings and analytic explanations that are central in interpretive research (Tellis, 1997). The case study also allows the study to probe deeper and analyse how the contestation for state hegemony in Zimbabwean media facilitates media reform and democratisation of communication. This has been done by analysing activities of media activist such as, programmes, campaigns, petitions and speeches among others. Furthermore, the research asks direct questions pertaining to the impact of media activism actions on media policies. In addition, an examination of media reform and their implementation gives an insight into levels of media democratisation in Zimbabwe. The case study contributes to knowledge by either challenging (or extending or confirming) the utility of the application of the Gramscian approach and the social movement theories further than their original context. Through the use of Zimbabwean media reform activism cases, the case study approach provides impetus “in refocusing the direction of future investigations in the [same] area” (Burns, 2000: 461) and it lays ground for possible future research. Now that the design has been laid, the next section describes the population and how the sample was selected.

Population and sample selection

In research a population indicates the total number “of elements or cases that one can investigate” (Moyo et al, 2002: 26). To buttress this definition, Murimba and Moyo (1995) opine that in research a population determines any group of individuals with common characteristics that are of interest to the researcher. The target population in this study can be described according to the concentric model of media activism outlined by Carroll and Hackett (2006) in which the core of the circle consists of media professional associations,

communication scholars and social movement actors drawn from media activists' organisations promoting social justice and democratic communication values (ibid).

Consistent with Carroll and Hackett (2006); human participants in this study are media activists in Zimbabwe aged between 18 years, which is the legal age of majority in Zimbabwe, and 60 years which is the legal age of formal retirement according to the laws of Zimbabwe (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013). The participants were selected purposively based on their knowledge and experience in media activism in Zimbabwe. The activists sample were grouped into three categories of media professionals, media and communication scholars and media activists based in media activists social movements non-governmental organisations (NGO). The category of media professionals and media activists from NGOs was drawn from Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ) which is a larger board composed of media reform movement groups such as Zimbabwe National Editors Forum (ZINEF), Zimbabwe Union of Journalist (ZUJ), Federation of African Media Women of Zimbabwe (FAMWZ), Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Media Monitors (MM), Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) and Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS). In addition to the above groups, the researcher interviewed some government officials such as: George Charamba, the then permanent secretary in the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services; Tafataona Mahoso, the Chief Executive Officer in the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC); Academy Chinamhora, Research Manager, ZMC; two government officials who preferred anonymity herein referred to as Government official 1 and Government official 2; Kindness Paradza, Member of Parliament (MP); Settlement Chikwinya (MP) and other two legislators who preferred anonymity herein referred to as Legislator 1 and Legislator 2.

These media reform activist movements based on their prominence and activities offer a robust framework for data collection (Remenyi et al, 1998) and are a source of explanatory data to answer the three fundamental questions which are; what media reform activists are doing? Why they are doing it? And how they are doing it? These multiple cases are included to increase the explanatory power of the data collection process (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and to cater for heterogeneity of media activists in Zimbabwe (Ritchie et al, 2003). Thus, the researcher enquired about their understanding of media democracy, nature of their programmes, campaign strategies, challenges and how they are circumventing them. Further

and more important for this study, enquiries were made about the nature of media reform influenced by the efforts of media reform activists and whether the reform has democratised communication.

Sample selection

A researcher cannot study all cases or units that make up the study population (Ritchie et al, 2003). As a result, this study designed and defined a representative sample of the study population. It is important to understand that whatever criteria is used in designing and defining a sample population should stand an independent scrutiny (ibid). Although, there are two broad models of sampling which are probability and non-probability sampling, this study, settled for a non-probability sampling which entails the choice of sample units based particularly on features or characteristics which enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles under study. As a characteristic of qualitative research, this study investigates a small, distinct group of participants to enable the researcher to “understand the problem in depth” (Horberg, 1999; Krathwohl, 1993). This study, reflects on and carefully uses a sampling procedure to minimise the vulnerability to error. It uses a purposive sampling strategy based on information-rich and illuminative principles so as to draw deep rooted insights on the subject under study and to avoid generalisation in the process (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling, locates information-rich key informants or critical cases to attract samples most suited for qualitative research designs such as the present study and for answering the specific research questions (Patton, 2002). “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases whose knowledge and experience illuminates the questions under study” (Patton, 1990: 169).

Since the research sought for in-depth details from the information-rich key informants, the study selected the samples mainly for informative purposes. Their involvement in Zimbabwean media policy reform activism and the role played in media policy making was the main criteria used in this study. Thus, the study interviewed senior government officials who occupies critical positions during the media reform period (2000-2013) from the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services (MIMBS), Members of the parliamentary portfolio committees on media, Media academia, media professionals and directors in media reform activist movements and other policy makers. In qualitative research, once the sample matrix has been drawn up, it is possible to draw up the quotas that

need to be met in the sample selection. Quotas specify the precise number of people that were needed with each of the characteristics set out in the sample matrix (Ritchie & Lewis, 2004). In this research quotas varied with the level of information saturation for each category chosen as explained below.

Firstly, a decision was made on media activism organisations in which to conduct in-depth interviews and collect documents for analysis. Media activism organisations that would best expose the researcher to various aspects of media activism in Zimbabwe were chosen. For instance, the following organisations were appropriate for this purpose MISA, MM, ZUJ, ZINEF, VMCZ and ZACRAS. The next stage of sampling involved the selection and recruitment of informants for in-depth interviews. In choosing participants for this study, the study identified media reform activists under media and communication scholars who had published in any peer reviewed journal material relevant to media reform, media activism or media democracy. Secondly, participants could be media professionals such as journalists, producers, editors and should belong to any media reform activist movement under MAZ, such as ZINEF or ZUJ or FAMWZ. Thirdly the study identified other participants by virtue of belonging to other media reform activism movements which fall under MAZ for instance MISA, MM, VMCZ and ZACRAS.

The researcher then carried out reconnaissance on websites, social media sites, journals, and other media to understand the structures under which these participants belong. Using this information, the researcher then selected those participants observed to have influence, experience and knowledge about activism due to their prominence and publications. After gathering specific information which included statistics, names, positions and recruitment, the study located contact details such as the potential participant's cell phone numbers in order to request for appointments. At other times as the researcher interviewed some participants, he would kindly request more potential participants whom he would approach for interviews using similar criteria. For instance, during the interview with Kindness Paradza, the researcher was introduced to another member of parliament as another source of data. In some instances, the researcher would go straight to the participant's office, introduce himself and request for an interview appointment.

In addition, document samples were carefully chosen based on their significance and importance on the subject under study. Documents that were used for systematic evaluation

as part of this study took a variety of forms. The documents are divided into primary and secondary data. Since the research entails media activism and activists, the primary data includes; media reform activists meetings agenda; attendance registers; minutes of meetings; media law proposals; position papers; corresponding letters, manuals, background papers, books and brochures, diaries and journals, events programs; letters and memoranda; newspaper articles; press releases; program proposals; application forms and summaries; radio and television program scripts; organisational or institutional reports; survey data; various public records; photo albums as well as statutory documents such as AIPPA; and BSA.

On the other hand, secondary data entails: parliamentary debates; parliamentary portfolio committee on media and broadcast reports and government gazettes. These documents were located in libraries, such as the Zimbabwe National Archives center; Parliament of Zimbabwe Library; media organisations; Media activist's institutional files; libraries and archives as well as online resources. These documents helped the study to reveal meaning, develop understanding and to discover insights relevant to the problem under study. The research attempted to provide a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility by triangulating interview data with documents. A total of 178 documents (primary and secondary) published between January 2000 and January 2014 were analysed. This is the period the research intends to look at and by extending to January 2014, there is a general assumption that issues raised in January documents would have happened the previous year. The documents were carefully perused and aligned together with informants respondents along thematic clusters for the purpose of discussions.

Data collection

Data was collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The study made use of semi-structured interviews (with media activists, media academia and media professionals and well as policy makers and respondents from the government). In addition, the researcher undertook documentary analysis to identify issues pertaining to media policy, media activism, reform and democratisation in Zimbabwe. Selected documents were examined and analysed on issues that bolster the argument of whether media activism led to media reform and ultimately media democratisation in Zimbabwe. While most documents for social movements were readily available online especially on websites, it was difficult to access some which were not available online as they were not readily available as hard copies. On

the government side, the researcher had to pass through rigorous vetting process to access some documents in the parliament library and in the state department of information.

Interviews

As explained in the section of data collection above the researcher conducted interviews with information rich informants who consisted of media activists, communication academia, government officials and media professionals because such interviews added some knowledge about media debates and deliberation that pave way for new decisions and actions. Semi-structured interviews have predetermined questions which can be modified, re-worked and re-worded, explained to the interviewee, or removed as and when the situation is deemed appropriate (Robson, 2002). More often than not, semi-structured interviews are often contrasted with structured interviews that have predetermined but fixed worded questions and unstructured interviews that have no pre-set questions. One of the disadvantages of structured interviews is that they constrain a conversation, often ignoring interesting data along the way. Although, unstructured interviews, risk straying away from the focus of the study and the interview also requires more time which often the researcher might not have (Denscombe, 2003), they remained preferred in this study because they encouraged free and unrestricted responses from the participants. The researcher keeps the mind open and accepts and understands any situation that may arise during the interview process (Kvale, 1996). Semi structured interviews have the flexibility to allow changing of the questions and omission and bringing forth other unprepared questions depending on the situation.

The semi-structured interviews were intended to answer all research questions of the study because of the emphasis put on subjective meanings and interpretation of social reality by research participants. A semi-structured interview permits interviewer-interviewee interaction that has great potential to generate new revealing data on a subject (Legard et al, 2003). This was important, especially given the extent of contestations and various interpretations of media policy reform issues in Zimbabwe by both media reform activists and the state. In this context, as Robson (2002) argues, semi-structured interviews offer "...the possibility of modifying one's line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives." (Mikkelsen, 2005: 105).

To obtain data required to meet specific objectives of the study and to standardise the situation to some degree, the research employs the interview guide (Borg & Gall, 1989). An interview guide is a framework that identifies broad topics or themes to be explored (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003). All the questions that were to be asked during the interview were listed in the desired sequence as guidelines to the researcher regarding issues under study. It “helps to ensure that relevant issues are covered systematically and with some uniformity, while still allowing flexibility to pursue the detail that is salient to each individual participant” (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003:115). For the study and in broad terms, the guiding questions focused on the role and extent to which media activists as social movement actors play in the process of democratising the media in Zimbabwe. The interview guide was used to merely guide the research in questioning issues that were within the scope of the study. Generally, the interviews were conducted in about 30 minutes to 2 hours. The least duration of an interview that took thirty minutes was done with Earnest Mudzengi of Media Centre while the longest interview of 2 hours was done with the then Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services, George Charamba. While the rest of the interviews were done away from the respondent’s workplace the following were done at their offices; interview with Tafataona Mahoso, Mathew Takaona, Prisiel Samu, Nhlanhla Ngwenya, Pedzisai Ruhanya and Loughy Dube.

Three (3) media professionals, nine (9) government officials, four (4) media scholars and six (6) media reform activist organisation participated in this research. Research subjects for interviews were purposively selected on the basis of experience and length of service in the media profession; qualifications and publications for intellectuals and their position and influence on media issues in the government for government officials. The study selected a total of twenty-two (22) participants for interviews. The list of respondents has the following people: George Charamba; Tafataona Mahoso; Kindness Paradza; government official (1)³; government official (2)⁴; Legislator (1); Legislator (2)⁵; Earnest Mudzengi; Nhlanhla Ngwenya; Settlemnet Chikwinya; Andy Moyse; Pedzisai Ruhanya; Golden Maunganidze; Takaona Mathew; Nigel Nyamutumbi; Loughy Dube; Academy Chinamhora; Kudzai Kwangware; Samu Prisiel; Rashweat Mukudu; Nhamo Mhiripiri and Eckson Mugari.⁶

³ Government official one (1) used this name as he was not comfortable with his real name to be used, hence the code

⁴ Government official two (2) was not comfortable with his name to be used in this research hence the code

⁵ Legislator one (1) and two (2) where not comfortable with their names to be used, hence the use of the code.

⁶ See signed consent forms on appendix D and F.

Documents analysis

Documents were examined mainly because they contain information which guides media activism and media policy and debate in Zimbabwe. Examining both primary and secondary documents outlines actions, reform and contestations in the Zimbabwe media democracy agenda. The study also made use of published and unpublished documents. As sources of primary data, documents that relate to media activism and media laws in Zimbabwe were gleaned, worked out and analysed. Some of the examined documents were in the public domain, archives, libraries and on the organisations' websites. Some of the documents were accessed during field work while others were accessed during the initial preparatory phases of the study through digital media. Another set of primary data sources that was used consisted of legal documents and government official reports. In particular were documents authored or published during the period, 2000-2013, a period of media crisis in Zimbabwe when the government introduced an array of media restrictive policies such as the AIPPA and BSA. These documents were the ministerial rules and government mandates published in the Government Gazette (the government official publication), meeting minutes and official reports of the state agencies. The laws focusing on communication matters, such as the Zimbabwe constitution amendment number twenty (20) of 2013, the AIPPA Act of 2000, the BSA of 2001 were anticipated to provide the frameworks of media policy in Zimbabwe and were utilised in the study.

On the other hand, secondary data allowed the researcher to investigate the context, discourse, and stakeholders interactions during the process of media reform. These materials provide different views of the media reform. To better understand the statements and actions made by various stakeholders, news archives and academic journals are important sources for determining the stakeholders' intentions. Furthermore, the importance of data collected from these documents was that they assisted as critical exploration or analysis of the media debates(s) that shape the nature of the media space, state-activist relations and position of media activists in relation to the state hegemony in Zimbabwe. As Howarth (2010) argues, an analysis of "the role of meaningful social practices and ideas in political life" as expressed in the political discourses of various actors is crucial in unpacking the salient structures of the struggles for social change. Thus, by analysing media related political statements or speeches,

the research was able to decipher, through the “social movement way of thinking”, how actors or institutions represented by the actors aim to influence the direction of media policy in Zimbabwe.

The review of documents allowed the research to investigate the history and context surrounding a media policy debate in Zimbabwe. The strength of documents is that they represent a direct expression of the values of the organisations, and hence they “may provide confirmatory evidence and strengthen the credibility of the results of interviews” (Potter, 2012: 96). Marshall and Rossman (1999) suggested that researchers supplement interviews and observations by gathering and analysing documents, since they are unobtrusive method[s], rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting. Minutes of meetings, announcements and formal policy statements were all useful in developing an understanding of the setting or activist groups that were studied.

Data presentation, analysis and interpretation procedures

Qualitative research generates copious data, which needs to be physically organised and subdivided into meaningful segments, which forms part of data analysis. The analysis of qualitative data began when the researcher was still in the field, continued soon after the data collection stage and was completed and wound up at the presentation stage (Murimba & Moyo, 1995). In essence data collection and analysis occurs at the same time. This study presented, analysed and interpreted data at the same time guided by the thematic approach. Undeniably, qualitative research, data analysis is a vigorous process involving organising data into manageable units and categorising, comparing, synthesising, searching for patterns, discovering of important issues and new lessons and deciding what to be reported on (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Thus, the process of presentation, analysing and interpreting data is referred to as data analysis process (Horberg, 1999).

Data Analysis process

Data analysis is the systematic process of searching and arranging data from interviews, documents and other instruments of research to enable the increment of one’s understanding of the phenomena under study and present to others what one has discovered in a clear and concise way (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). It involves organising and transforming data into manageable units, synthesizing items, searching for patterns and deducing what is valuable and lessons to be learnt. Therefore, data analysis is a process of bringing order, structure and

interpretation to the mass of collected data which results in the generation of patterns, themes, constructs and inferences. Basically, there are five signs of sufficiency for an analysis;

- Simplicity – a “small polished gem of a theory”, rather than “a mere pebble of truism”
- Elegance and balance – it is coherent
- Completeness – it explains all
- Robustness – it does not fall over with new data and
- It makes sense to relevant audiences. (Lyn Richards cited in Bazeley, 2009: 56).

Data analysis is based on the research design. The analysis gave the researcher the opportunity to identify whether certain ideas or opinions were linked to media democratisation and media reform, as well as the role of media activism in the reform. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest a process of data analysis, data reduction, data display and verification. Data reduction is a process of rearranging and organising data. The data from document was organised by coding, teasing out themes and making clusters. The primary data, such as rules and regulations were coded under certain topics, such as press freedom, media structure, media ownership structure, state intervention or censorship. The data was then compared across the regulations in order to find changes occurring during the time period studied. Secondary data such as journalistic articles was coded by different stances of each stakeholder when debating media reform issues, such as their goals and objectives in supporting media reform.

Similar to document data, interview data was coded after being transcribed. The interview questions were arranged based upon the research questions and themes therefore, while the researcher did the transcription, the data was also coded, rearranged, and managed to fit in the analysis and writing of each chapter. All data was sorted based on the categories used for the stakeholders (state, media scholars, media professionals, and media activists) and for the themes stated above. Taking both the documents and the transcriptions together, the researcher then analysed the discourse using emerging themes. Combining news archives, organisational documents and interview materials, the researcher sought patterns in the involvement of media activists, their strategies, their actions and an evaluation of their strategy.

In a nut shell, this study analysed data by examining information from responses of interviewed participants and documentary evidence. Furthermore, all the data fragments that arose in single cases was inspected compared with data from other cases. To do this the researcher coded each item in the notes in terms of dimension or concept it indicated. Concepts were linked with other concepts in a theory on explanation of the phenomenon. Comparative explanations were done to outline similarities and differences between cases. Through this comparative methods, the research arrives at various interpretations which were gleaned from the use of a variety of methods. The use of comparative methods like interviews and document and data analysis helped the researcher to cross-validate findings. This study found it essential to discuss analysis in the same paragraph to avoid isolated analyses which tend to result in disjointed interpretations (Moyo et al, 2002).

Data analysis was based on the evidence gathered by the researcher. Patton (2002) explicated two kinds of evidence in qualitative research, *emitt* and *etic*. When a researcher records and presents what the respondents say and do using the respondents' perspectives and language, the evidence is *emitt*. But when a researcher uses his/her words and viewpoints to describe the phenomenon, the evidence is *etic*. This study includes both types of evidence. The researcher attempted to include the voice of the interviewees so as to allow the reader to make his/her own judgments. However, *etic* evidence was not ignored, since the interviewees did not disclose the details of some controversial issues. The researcher then applied *etic* evidence—interpretation and judgment. The researcher is aware of his role in analysing qualitative data as Potter (1996) warned that interpretation is not to find “ultimate, defensible truth there are only interpretations of it. Therefore, objectivity must not be viewed as a fixed position reflecting truth but instead as a relative position on a continuum” (Potter, 1996: 85).

Challenges of sample selection process

The researcher encountered challenges in choosing respondents regardless of determining the category using, Carrol and Hackett's (2006) concentric model; For instance, which media academia to use? Which media reform activists to include, as well as the choice of media professionals. The researcher used the MAZ's database to identify media interested civil society organisations in Zimbabwe, MAZ is an alliance of media support organisations. From this group two organisations, Gender and Media Connect (GMC) and African Community Publishing Development Trust (ACPTD) indicated that they were not willing to participate based on the fact that their operations do not add much value to the study being carried.

Regardless of a repeated plea by the researcher to have them included in the research, they could not be drawn into the research and their choice was respected. Although MAZ is the official umbrella board of media reform activists organisations in Zimbabwe, its membership is voluntary and therefore not all civil society groups are affiliated to it. In this case, the researcher had to use informants to find other potential participants as indicated by Carrol and Hackett's (2006) concentric model.

Secondly, during the time of field work the polarised factional politics environment in “ the Zimbabwe Africa National Unity” Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), was worsened by the November 2017, coup which started with the dismissal of the then Vice President of Zimbabwe, Emerson Mnangagwa, and then followed by the controversial removal of President Mugabe in a dramatic turn of events. Therefore, one of the challenges in designing and selecting the sample population for this thesis was the failure to access one of the cabinet Ministers, Professor Jonathan Moyo who is believed to be the brains behind the reorganisation of Zimbabwean media around the year 2000. However, the researcher, covered up for this failure by roping his permanent secretary who is currently the presidential spokesperson Mr George Charamba, and the chief executive officer of Zimbabwe Media Commission, Dr. Tafataona Mahoso who is referred to as the “media hangman” in Zimbabwe media cycles⁷ (MISA, 2006). The researcher hoped to have balanced policy makers from the two dominant political camps in Zimbabwe, ZANU (PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

While some participants would grant an interview easily, others would dismiss the researcher at the first instance, while the rest would agree after further explanation. It is interesting to note that most government officials were willing to divulge most information and provide documentary evidence to support their claim than their civil society counter parts. This can be explained by the government to set their record straight by making people understand their position. This was indicated even in the manner in which their responses corroborated each other. What surprised the researcher was that the civil society's works are shrouded in mistry and most of them are not at liberty to divulge their information. The researcher had to probe deeper to understand issues taking place in their struggle for media democratisation in Zimbabwe. At one point, the researcher was regarded as a state agent who was looking for

⁷ Dr Tafataona Mahoso was the Chairperson of the Media information committee set up under AIPPA and he presided over the closure of the Daily News and The Tribune, among other banned newspapers in Zimbabwe

information to destroy the freedom of information agenda regardless of producing some authentic documents from the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

Validity and reliability

The use of reliability and validity has often been associated with quantitative research mainly because variables of interest to researchers; such as democracy, power and political culture; are notoriously difficult to operationalise and measure (Golafshani, 2003). However, qualitative researchers are gradually increasing the use of these terms. Reliability and validity in qualitative research cannot be used in the same manner as in a positivistic research (Shenton, 2003). As this study uses a case study approach, only internal validity is applicable (Gunter, 2000). To ensure that the research findings are reliable, the proposed study fully implemented the correct instruments of data gathering. This is supported by correct data analysis and results reporting. Furthermore, validity and reliability was achieved via triangulation. Triangulation is the use of multiple sources of evidence. In some instances, it entails application of multiple sources of data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Yin, 2003) to increase credibility and trustworthiness of the data interpretation. There are four features of triangulation; firstly, data source triangulation; secondly, methodological triangulation; thirdly, investigator triangulation, and fourthly, theory triangulation (Stake, 1995). This study employed multiple data sources (document data and interview data). In addition, data collection was done through two methods as well, which were documents review and interviews to enhance reliability and validity.

Ethical considerations

For the purpose of collecting data, all the ethical procedures were followed in this research. The researcher was fully aware that government officials, media professionals, media activists and journalists would be used as informants for this research and was also cognisant of the ethical issues that arise in research where human beings are involved as subjects. Therefore, ethical clearance was applied for and obtained from the Human Research Ethics (Non-Medical) Committee of the University of Witwatersrand before embarking on the research (see appendix C for ethical clearance certificate). Due care was taken to ensure that informed consent of all those who would participated in this research was obtained prior to their being asked to participate (see appendix D and F for consent forms). The study adhered to all ethical considerations before, during and after data collection. For instance, maintenance of anonymity, if so required by the respondent and the use of codes such as

Government official (1) and Legislator (1), was important to maintain anonymity of a respondent. In addition, during the research process, introducing the purpose of the research to the research respondents, informing the respondents of their rights to answer or refuse to answer any question as well as an explanation of other ethical matters as pertaining to the use of the data. Besides, ethical management of data during and after the research was exercised. Such procedures were used to make sure that the data collection, analysis and reporting process of the study adhered to all ethical considerations of research. Therefore, it is envisioned that the data collection procedure that was followed was fair and transparent for all.

Thesis outline

The study is structured in the following manner, Chapter one (1) introduces the study, the background of the study, research objectives and questions, rationale and purpose of the research. The chapter further explains the research methodology, data collection procedures, strategies of sample selection, analysis plans and validity and reliability as well as the ethical considerations. Chapter two (2) reviews related literature that interrogates media activism and media reform as processes of media democratisation. Chapter three (3) deliberates on the theoretical framework adopted. Gramsci's theory of hegemony and the resource mobilisation theory (RMT) of social movement give lens to this study. A discussion of their suitability, weaknesses and solutions is offered. Chapter four (4) explores the political economy of the media in Zimbabwe and its historical overview. The historical contestations that bedeviled the media since the establishment of the media till 1999 is overviewed in an effort to create a historical understanding of issues key to this study. Chapter Five (5) presents and analyses findings under the theme of key contestations in the Zimbabwean media policy and regulation. It explores major issues that are at the heart of media policy debate in Zimbabwe and made effort to analyse how and why such issues remain a bone of contention. The chapter further explore how such issues impact the process of media democratisation. Chapter six (6) presents and analyses two issues, firstly, it presents and analyses data on media reform influenced by media reform activism in Zimbabwe. Secondly, it examines whether the reform has democratised the media in Zimbabwe. Chapter seven (7) concludes and recommends solutions to the problems as well as areas for further study.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to outline the background of study, research questions, significance of the study and the approach and methodology used in this study. The study is premised on the

qualitative research approach and data was collected using interviews and documents analysis. In this study, the sample was drawn from the core media activists who are media professional associations, communication academia and social movement actors drawn from media activists' organisations and media policy makers. The chapter, provides a rationale for the requirement of studying media democratisation process and media activism in Zimbabwe. The next chapter, reviews literature related to the study.

Chapter Two

Literature review

Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature in terms of the four general questions indicated in the previous chapter. The three major concepts which are; media activism, media reform and democratising communication are specified and given meaning relevant to this research. At various points, the study seeks to provide clarification of the linkages between the processes of media democratisation, media activism and media reform. The chapter seeks to show the perspective from which the research was approached and the underlying assumptions that influenced the research design. Firstly, the chapter proceeds by organising the review around three broad fundamental areas of concern that require both elaboration and synthesis in an effort to address the research questions.

The literature rationally attempts to give clarity on the interrelation of media activism, media reform and media democratisation as processes of attaining the state of media democracy in Zimbabwe. It seeks to establish the degree of media democratisation in spaces manifested by authoritarian rule to protect state hegemony (Saunders, 1999). The thesis presents critical and deep rooted primary data grounded on empiricism and emphasised by the author's acquaintance with Zimbabwean media games and wars. Some of the existing discourses analysed in a Zimbabwean context lack this close contact with reality as, to a greater extent, some researchers lack both the cultural context in which these discourses are located and the nerve to approach the authoritative and elusive state authorities in Zimbabwe asking questions that seek to explain contradictions in media democracy, the democratisation process and media activism in Zimbabwe.

Media policy and regulation discourse

Societies are punctuated with existing communication policies mainly because it is inevitable for a society to live without one. Failure to put communication policies may lead to chaos such as the historical "Chaos in the Nether" which preceded the formation of powerful state-authorised agencies like the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the United States of America (USA). Communication policies exist, "either explicitly as in legislations, constitutions, codes of conduct, rules and procedures or implicit in accepted practices existing at the national, institutional and professional levels" (UNESCO, 1976: 32). Freedman avers that media policy is public policy and it seeks to respond to "the distinctive characteristics of, and unique problems posed by, mass-mediated communication" (Freedman, 2015: 1). The

author further asserts that it is the systematic attempt to promote some types of media structure and behaviour while suppressing alternatives of structures and behavior (ibid). This indicates that media policy reform is deeply a political phenomenon which ensures that media regulations serve not the interests of the market and or the state by bringing order through setting standards, principles and procedures to be followed so that public interest will be served. Freedman's argument indicates that ideally policies are there to protect the media from political and economic interests.

While media policies are at times clearly articulated and harmonised, in other instances, they seem to be latent, sometimes fragmented and uncoordinated. McQuail (2010) argues that, media policies are usually projects of the state for application in the media system and they lie in between, general statements of principles and actual regulation. As the struggle to balance effective media regulation and democratic rights with freedom of expression becomes harder and unattainable, media regulation took a centre stage in the global world (Sarpong cited in Akpojivi & Fosu, 2016). To some, media regulation is regarded as the influence over media operations that governments, statutory agencies, industry associations or civil society groups and others have (ibid). To others, it refers to several processes of control and or guidance, through rules and procedures applied by the state and other political and administrative authorities to all communications related activities to avoid adverse effects against "public interest" (McQuail, 2010).

Media regulations range from constitutional clauses, statutory provisions, administrative procedures and technical specifications. It can be categorised into either "self-regulation" or "state regulation" or a hybrid of self and state regulation. Media regulations are applied as formal and compulsory instructions about the structure, conduct or content of the media. Legal requirements that help to regulate the media may include prohibitions against libel and defamation, laws protecting privacy, laws concerning prohibitions against incitement to violence or racial hatred, pornography or obscenity. McQuail (2010) describes mechanisms for media regulation in terms of a dimension of greater to lesser formality. To the author, formality refers to three main aspects of the relevant regulation, "whether or not it is established in law; whether provisions carry enforceable penalties (financial or otherwise) and whether it is permanent or temporary" (McQuail, 2010: 8). On the other hand, informal mechanisms of regulation are based on customary agreement and voluntary compliance pressured from colleagues, industry clients, audience, advertisers, sources and others. These

instruments have a bearing on the analysis of media in Zimbabwe which according to the available literature has not been subjected to scrutiny of this magnitude.

While it is common knowledge that the ability to express beliefs, ideas and views is central to media democracy, some democracies place limitations on freedom of communication through pieces of legislation that impinge on the free flow of information. This has given into the debate to determine whether media must be regulated by the state or must regulate themselves. However, it has become common information that, state regulation contravenes the doctrine of “freedom of expression” as it tightly regulates and subjects public communication to the ruling class supervision which is an affront to the media democratisation processes. This affords an impetus for media interest groups and social movements to contest for media freedom and removal of some regulations that interpose the media’s independence and advance the need for self-regulatory mechanisms. However, activists must be aware that despite the rhetoric of freedom of expression as enshrined in different constitutions, there is a wide limit to what individuals and the media can communicate due to provisions in enabling laws.

Regulations are at the centre of media reform and democratisation of communication debate. Accordingly, the democratisation of communication process depends on either the creation of a strict media regulation or a laissez-faire model where measures to establish media control are relaxed. Such liberal models account to no one but themselves. In such models, the excessive concentration of media ownership often leads to over representation of certain political viewpoints or values of certain forms of cultures “especially those favoured by dominant media owners, whether on commercial or ideological grounds at the expense of others” (Doyle, 2006:13). In response to media freedom deprivation, media activist organisations bankrolled by Western donors emerged and began the struggle for media liberalisation. The level to which these boards have accomplished the media democratisation process is not obvious in the available literature.

Actors in the media policy sector transcend the level of government and state agencies to other institutions and interest groups, (McQuail & Siune cited in Wongrujira, 2008). Thus, policy-making is a complex process which involves a lot of conflicts of interest between public and private interests; economic versus social or cultural interests and international versus national or local interests. While the form a media policy assumes most of the time,

indicates the expression of government's political priorities, other political actors and political values should not be ignored (Freedman, 2015). Regardless of the assertion above, Fentucky and Fentuky and Vaney (2006) weighed in to accentuate that the state at all times ensures a degree of control or influence over the media. Each of these positions about media policy makes an important contribution to the understanding of media policy and its effects on media democracy. They further elaborated that media is central to democracy as a primary source of information because democracy requires that citizens should be informed for them to effectively act as citizens and that justifies media regulation within a democratic context.

The world over, public policies are made at different levels such as the transnational, the national and the local or regional levels. At transnational level, policy actors are usually transnational boards such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), International Trade Union (ITU), UNESCO and many others. The national level calls for several policy stakeholders ranging from political parties, media organisations, the government and others who may affect or are affected by the communication policy in question. At the local level, policy actors may involve the local authority itself, traditional leaders, political and cultural boards and the masses though their representatives have much to say in policy formulation. To this end, "communication policy-making is not a free value affair, but follows a certain logic which reflects different roles and perspectives brought to bear on an issue, (McQuail & Siune cited in McQuail", 2010: 8).

Furthermore, the above can be justified by the fact that media are significant economic entities and are counted for an increase in the amount of trade at both domestic and world trade levels (Freedman, 2015). For instance, "media...are often counted as part of the 'copyright industries' in the USA and the 'creative industries' in the UK" (Freedman, 2015: 5). Accordingly, Wongrujira (2008) describes communication as central to economic activities. More importantly, it is transforming from the traditional and domain of the state agencies to engage with multiple actors from the public and private sectors (ibid). In explaining this further, Freedman argues that since media is an economic entity, media policy is developed to control some unruly behavior by some internal and external forces in order to achieve benefit from some desirable social or economic objectives (Freedman, 2015: 2). On the other hand, Waisbord and Morris cited in (Chakravartty & Sarikakis, 2006) acknowledge that while there is a solid connection between a communication policy and an economic policy of a nationstate, "beyond economic interests, governments retain the capacity to

control the media to reinforce legitimacy or fortify a regime's hold on power" (Chakravartty & Sarikakis, 2006: 7). Thus, using the media arsenal, the state communication infrastructure and the media industry may be subjected to abuse to advance the interests of the incumbent governments.

In some instances, media policy can be used as a repressive tool when executed in an uninformed and impartial manner, while in other instances, the significance of democratised media as a core element essential in democracy does not leave out the possibility of the same democratised media platforms being abused to the detriment of democracy. For instance, state-controlled media in Zimbabwe have reported genocide from conflicting and complex angles. This has made it hard to reach a consensus on the truth about genocide in Zimbabweans (Mpofu, 2016). The South African media is alleged to have been used to perpetuate racism during apartheid and later on xenophobia in the post-apartheid epoch (Coronel, 2003). In Rwanda, the media was used to spread hatred that led to the 1994 genocide (Harrison, 2009). These developments in the media explain that the enjoyment of freedom of expression should be tied to duties and responsibilities. Thus, the duties that are commonly placed on the recipients of democratised media are in the form of limitations to the right to freedom of expression through regulations so as to protect and respect others, national security and public health and morals.

In developing nations, it is a paradox to explain the logic of media regulation as a communication liberating agent when regulation by its nature limits freedom of media which forms the basic principle of a democratised media (Mugari, 2004). In Zambia, research carried out by the African Media Development Initiative (AMDI report, 2006) indicates that media policy, especially the media legislation, was problematic. For instance, while laws were passed to free broadcasting media from the state control, most of the clauses have not been effected, fundamentally, because of what has been referred to as "the state's recalcitrance" (AMDI report, 2006). As usual, the issue of the rule of law and the state commitment towards it was questionable. The state's impunity in deciding the terms of reference in media was cited as another folly to media democracy in Zambia (ibid). The political regimes from Kenneth Kaunda to the current Edgar Lungu, have been described as "media phobic", the state was described as insincere. These regimes have been employing various elements of legislative, judicial, executive and political tools to devise written and unwritten policies to contain and control media behavior (Phiri, 2010: 133). Until as recent as

2017, research indicates that regardless of different governments assuming power, “the conundrum of a free press continues to complicate governance and journalistic practices...although there is an awareness of the importance of press freedom ...there appears to be a reluctance – rather than resilience – to implement changes that would provide for a freer press system” (Kasoma, 2017:129).

Furthermore, it has been established that efforts to transform state broadcasters into public broadcasters in the larger part of the Southern Africa have been futile (Chuma & Moyo, 2010). This indicates the failure of the media democratisation project in the Southern region of Africa. For instance, in Botswana, the development of a media policy has been constrained mainly to the state with other actors playing a minor role. This has resulted in the government monopolising public media especially broadcasting (Zaffiro, 2010). Around 2014, the government relocated the public media to the office of the president resulting in radio Botswana and Botswana television being biased towards the ruling party as a result of such control (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2014). In South Africa, there has been a debate with some scholars arguing that, the media system in the Southern African country offers a democratised media (Chuma, 2010). However, in the same space, some argue that the South African media system is far away from a democratised media system as it is fixated in a dilemma of both government control and commercialisation, leaving little or no space for a true media democratisation transformation (Duncan & Glen, 2010).

Just like any other country in the Southern Africa, the literature available shows that media policy transformation from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe has been influenced by several factors ranging from internal and external factors. Internally, media research indicates that, as early as 1963, the government has been fighting for the control of the media through the use of security laws such as the Law and Order Maintenance Act or the use of extra judicial measures such as the deployment of censors in media houses. While some policies were written, a lot more were not as they were implemented on adhoc basis (Windrich, 1979). Through the use of the Rhodesian Front propagandists and censorship, the government sought to control the mind of the general public (Windrich, 1979; Moyo, 2004; Msindo, 2009). Although, this act could not be denied, the general explanation was that, it was:

aimed at securing complete control of radio and television while waging a campaign of intimidation to destroy the credibility of the press, in particular, the Daily newspapers, the Rhodesian Herald and the Bulawayo Chronicle (with their Sunday

equivalents) controlled by the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company, a subsidiary of the Argus Press of South Africa. (Windrich, 1979: 523).

To some extent, this was so because, while the Rhodesian Front government was controlling the radio, the press was controlled by the private organisations against the state interest.

To further advance its own interests, the state enacted the Emergency powers act accompanying the unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) on 11 November 1965 and at this moment full censorship backed by this proclamation was introduced (Windrich, 1979). In line with the Rhodesian front behavior, Zaffiro (1992) avers that all governments utilize broadcasting to build or reinforce value consensus among important support groups. In addition, broadcasting is used to promote cooperation from vital state institutions responsible for policy goals (ibid). The author called that type of broadcasting, “Regime broadcast” and adds that it propels and reflects wide processes of political transformation and legitimacy construction (Zaffiro, 1992). The author further avers that “media policy illuminates crucial intersections of conflict, opposition and power across the political system and wider society” (Zaffiro, 1992:62). According to Mpofu (2016) this trend continued into the post colonial era where the public media “use a single-story narrative that is politically expedient to ZANU-PF when covering the reverberations of the 1980s genocide” (154). Thus, the organisation of the media system in the colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe was made in such a manner that the government had ultimate authority in controlling both finance and content (Windrich, 1981; 2010; Mpofu, 2016; Mukasa, 2003; Moyo, 2004; Msindo, 2009; Ndlovu, 2016). None among these scholars have made an attempt to interrogate the media democratisation efforts which are being pursued by media reform activists in the Southern African region such as Media Institute of Southern Africa-Zimbabwe (MISA) so as to find out the extent to which they have influenced media reform and whether such reform democratised the media.

At independence in Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe’s ZANU PF government inherited a state with unlimited power to control the media and its citizens. The media which did not fall under direct control of the government engaged a self-censorship mode for survival as failure to self censor had negative implications on the publication business. The newly introduced governing board of Zimbabwean media, the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT), was progressively composed of members of the ruling party. Thus, ZANU-PF’s control over the

media increased over the course of the 1980s (Saunders, 1999; Ronning & Kupe 2000; Moyo, 2004; Chuma, 2007; Mutsvairo, 2013; Chari 2016).

Although, the above developments are essential, the events that ushered in the current crop of Western oriented media interest activism in Zimbabwe have its roots arguably in the debates of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) of the early 1970s (Mansell & Nordenstreng, 2006: 2011a). Adding to this debate, Chiumbu (2015) argues that the desire for media democracy as advocated by the West is a continuation of the post-World War II (WWII) development agenda which intends to modernise the non-Western population. The NWICO debate came as a prominent issue intended to contradict such continuation by delinking developing nations' modes of knowing and production of knowledge from the Euro-American epistemology that assumed universal proportions and truth, (Quijano cited in Chiumbu, 2015). It is a struggle against, global narratives that are projected as absolute while othering, ignoring, marginalising or repressing knowledge produced outside the bounds of Western modernity (ibid). This debate is credited for the decolonisation wave which pervaded several developing nations up to the 1980s.

As UNESCO continues pushing the agenda of an equitable world communication order, the discourse of the media's role in society and the world at large becomes a thorn in the flesh of America and its Western allies. Annoyed by recommendations of the McBride Commission, the liberal Reagan administration left UNESCO on December 31, 1984, and in 1985 the British government of Margaret Thatcher followed suit (Nordenstreng, 2011a). This move was seen as a deliberate and strategic shift from the debate of multilateralism in preparation for the new launch of liberalism. This development, together with the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, bolstered the rise of liberalism in the 1990s thereby dealing a fatal blow to the project of "egalitarian democracy" which had been started by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Liberalism would mean strengthening existing inequalities and eroding the people's liberty to achieve self-empowerment through liberalising the economy and guaranteeing freedom of the media. This arrangement provoked and showed disrespect for national sovereignty, ethics and religious fundamentals. It threatened the arrangement of world communication order and reinforced power concentration on America and its Western allies (Hamelink, 1995). Indeed, it was seen as a continuation of colonial forms of domination after the end of the colonial era.

At this phase, new corporate interests were taking over and globalisation was the emerging buzzword. A sweeping restructuring of markets worldwide resulted, and continuous commercialisation, deregulation and privatisation of many sectors followed. Globalisation of markets permeated the public sphere. National markets became integrated into a global market structure. National boundaries faded away in many other respects and individual nations' cultures and sovereignty were under threat (Chakravathy & Sarikakis, 2006). In the same manner, the media system was affected especially with the advancement of technological innovation and deregulation (Mansell & Nordenstreng, 2006). As foreign media ownership collapsed boundaries, it became a contentious issue mainly because of the perceived power of the mass media to influence the political, social and economic behaviour of individuals (Moyo, 2005).

A new political and economic world order has brought changes in the information and communication order too. During this period, access to different cultures and knowledge became easy as cultural borders collapsed and a great diversity of actors became active on the global stage. Indeed, this development "attests to the clash of values and an attempt to ignore African Cultural realities that might as well enrich domesticated liberal democracy towards greater relevancy" (Nyamnjoh, 2005:28). As a result, African governments increasingly became wary of the interests of the foreign investors in the media sector and a plethora of selective foreign funding of some sections of the media. There was no guarantee that these interests would have ended by providing information and funding. There was no way donors would have supported processes of democratisation and "independent" media without being accused of foreign interference in domestic politics (Moyo, 2005). With the Soviet Union and its communist doctrine largely discredited, the United States and its Western allies began to maneuver for capitalist markets liberalisation. These objectives were covert to such an extent that it could only be reviewed from activities and policies such as the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, (ESAP) (Chiweza, 2013). This web of government control of the flow of information extended to broadcasting, which was inherited as a monopoly from the colonial era.

Democratisation and trade liberalisation policies were pursued through a stick and carrot method. A country needs to liberalise its economy in order to receive foreign direct investments. Those who could heed the call of liberalism became champions of democracy; they could be rewarded and could receive media endorsement. In contrast, those who could

not take the “advice” faced shrinking foreign direct investments and failed to get donor aid. “The United States and its Western allies were actively engaged in funding and sponsoring “friendly” opposition political movements and hordes of non-governmental organisations” (Chiweza, 2013: 36). The liberalisation of markets in Eastern Europe and Africa went across all business sectors including the media. Thus, as part of the ongoing global change, new organisations campaigning and advocating for liberalisation of the media began to emerge in Zimbabwe and elsewhere on the African continent.

In Southern Africa, MISA was officially launched in September 1992 in Windhoek-Namibia to promote free, independent and pluralistic media. It seeks to promote the free flow of information and co-operation between media workers, as a principal means of nurturing democracy and human rights in Africa. MISA works with compatible organisations and individuals to achieve its objectives (www.zimbabwe.misa.org). The organisation became the leading media freedom and free expression policy advocacy organisation in Southern Africa (MISA Annual report, 2012). According to Chakravartty and Sarikakis (2006) the coming in of external influence witnessed a significant change in the role and power of the nation-state in governing matters of national interest such as the media in developing nations, nevertheless the range of choices for consumers was expanded. While Ronnings and Kupe (2003) and Moyo (2004) describe this development as efforts to liberate and democratise the media in Zimbabwe, they fall short in addressing issues behind the interests of external funders in a sovereign state. They further did not address the nature of media democracy envisaged by the Western handled established media reform activists like MISA. The researchers have not deeply considered the motivation for promoting liberal democracy by foreign handled organisations such as MISA (Mentan, 2015). It was however, Mutsvairo who noted that, “activism in Africa is hugely dependent on external donor funding, which provides another constraint as without foreign funds or links locally bred ideas may continue to be seen as lacking credibility and Legitimacy” (2016, 8) and such relationship should be subjected to inquiry so that their sincerity can be tested. Research on media democracy in Zimbabwe has been substantially shy of the naivety and hypocrisy associated with liberal democracy imported by Western funded and controlled media reform activists in Zimbabwe. This coloniality of power is embedded in global processes that direct and fund media and media democracy projects. The democratisation agenda, which encompasses media reform projects, is central in promoting the West’s foreign policy interests. Democracy promoting initiatives are not benign, but have strong ties with donor

countries' geo-strategic priorities (Saltman, Reifer and Mercer cited in Chiumbu, 2015). Just as coloniality of knowledge means the manner in which Eurocentric knowledge systems are privileged over other knowledges and epistemes (Mignolo, 2007), coloniality of the media refers to the manner in which Euro-American liberal media systems are privileged and given universal autonomy over other media.

What complicates issues in this debate is the issue of funding, ownership and control of MISA which is supported by the Western-based organisations such as Article 19, Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NIZA), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and World Bank Institute (WBI). These funders and associates are largely Western-based. These organisations provide advice, and funds to MISA and other related projects in Southern Africa. These organisations also provide training, workshops across the globe in order to influence the recipient ideological point of view (Mahoso, 2015). Thus, "...the tragic realities of...civil society is that it really has not been anchored in its domestic constituencies, though some are more advanced in this than others" (Lee, 2011:1).

The objectives of democratising communication in the developing world are to a larger extent a result of "the 21st-century global trend in communication policies to facilitate media freedom or the free flow doctrine as a means of addressing political, economic and cultural complexities in societies" (Akpjivi, 2014:88). Thus, media reform in emerging democracies has depended on Western countries for blueprints and frameworks. This has however had the impact of collapsing national sovereignty with respect to communication policies (ibid). The media reform processes attempted by most developing countries in the 1990s are a reflection of a unipolar world dominated by the United States (Chuma & Moyo in Akpojvi, 2014). In Zimbabwe, it is regrettable that literature has not been sufficiently critical of the modernist aspirations of the democratisation agenda, an omission which has obscured understanding of the love-hate relationship between the government of Zimbabwe on one hand and the media activists as well as the private press on the other. This study seeks to investigate such relationships and tweak out what could be the major issues compromising the independence of reform processes in Zimbabwe.

Problematising the role of actors, ideas and interests in shaping the media and democratic agenda, Chiumbu (2015) questions the concept of power in media and democracy processes. The role of bilateral and multilateral donors, Western think tanks and private business

interests in promoting media democracy in the developing world has been inconspicuous. The support of media reform by these actors is not neutral, but is tied to certain material interests (Fourie, 2008; Wasserman, 2007; Sesanti, 2010 and Kasoma, 1996). Western notions of journalism ethics are constitutive of the capitalist world-system and must be rejected and replaced by a media normative framework embedded in Ubuntu which puts emphasis on the community as well as the collective departure from the Western preoccupation with the self (Ake, 2001; Fourie, 2008). These issues play a fundamental role in the process of analysing the interests of media democracy agency and how they disagree with the state.

Media researchers in Zimbabwe agree that to muffle the powerful and critical private media, the government, began to use a combination of laws and extrajudicial measures including death threats, assaults on reporters, arrests and legal suits as the regime became increasingly repressive in constraining the press and journalists (Willems, 2004; Muchena, 2013; Moyo, Oluyinka & Chabwinja, 2014; Ruhanya, 2014). However, in making these claims, researchers did not mind the growth of counter hegemonic pressure mounted by sprouting Western backed media activists. In fact, there exists a gap in explaining the influence of the counter hegemony activist force. Besides, a justification of the existence of such a force being exerted on the Zimbabwean government to reform the media, as if the Western world countries had moral superiority to impose freedom of expression and media democracy to the developing world without their own input in the media policy making process, is still lacking in the literature. It is therefore imperative for this study to critically consider the extensive context of media activism and reform of media policy in an effort to influence democratised media in Zimbabwe. The following section discusses, “public interest” as the central issue in justifying media policy and regulation.

Public interest

More often than not, media regulations are used as an excuse to protect “public interest” (Napoli, 2001; Feintuck, 1999; McQuail, 1992). Public interest is a decision-making tool for policy makers as well as an evaluative tool for policy analysts (Napoli, 2001: 71). It plays an essential role in the media policy formulation process as it has been used to measure the viability of media policy by policy analysts when doing media policy evaluations. Public interest underlies the extent to which the public sphere values are clearly identified and articulated and is key to the establishment of meaningful objectives for the regulatory regime

(Feintuck & Varney, 2006). It is essential in the long-term well-being of society and its members (McQuail, 2010). Public interest originates from the will of the people. It is what the majority wants and is decided by absolute standard of value regardless of what an individual citizen may want (Iosifidis, 2013: 24). It embodies the power of the people and concurs that the common good overrides the interests of the individuals to create a common value. Thus, the media must be regarded as public goods held in common, accessible by all and for the benefit of everyone. The media must be treated like clean water, fresh air, the right to life and other things of similar nature such as parks, highways and public places that can be used by everyone (Iosifidis, 2013). In this case, public interest is considered a “common good” which presupposes that the society benefits in the long run by adapting to the principles that are accepted by the entire public.

Owing to its role of informing and its capability to influence, it is reasonable to argue that media should be accountable and their activities should be regulated (Feintuck & Varney, 2006). A closer analysis of media regulation discourse in Zimbabwe indicates an insufficient address of issues that prompted strict media regulatory measures if they are known at all. On the same note, regulations put in place by the government have not been adequately explained, causing them to lack clear targets, value and inefficiency on application. The success and failure of the regulation activities may be measured by reference to a degree to which regulatory regime achieves identified objectives or outcomes. Open discussion is important for establishing the truth which, when protected, will see no single set of ideas dominating society because any potentially domineering values are subjected to rationale justification. On the other end, if communication is limited, the truth is stifled and some ideas will dominate the society (Berendt cited in Feintucky & Verny, 2006). The struggle between liberty and authority is the most conspicuous feature in many aspects of society including in the communication sphere. The philosophical foundation to the arguments of media regulation and accountability is centred on John Stuart Mill’s work *On Liberty* which tries to address salient questions surrounding the debate on media freedom (Akpojivi & Fosu, 2016). To prevent the weaker members of the community from being manipulated by the power of the media, there is need for media policies and regulations that keep media operations in check. This is the obvious justification advanced by those who seek to regulate the media. However, it becomes a wonder when those who are appointed to protect the people’s democratic right to access information began to trample upon them.

Advancing the same ideas Akpojivi (2018) argues that the major issue in media reform should be on how the media should serve the interests of the public instead of the selected few. Reform must be able to deal with market competition and state influence so that the media must remain a neutral buffer created to meet “the diverse needs of the public such as information, education and entertainment “in pursuit of a dynamic, equitable and culturally endowed national development” (Akpojivi, 2018: 80). In contemporary communications spheres, regulatory boards and commissions have been established to balance power between freedom of communication and the state or powerful corporates. Citing Mills, Akpojivi and Fosu (2016) further advance that everyone has the right to an opinion and that such opinion should not be suppressed but should be freely expressed because it is valuable to society. Suppression of an opinion robs society of development. Open discussions lead to the discovery of truth, as truth is likely to come out of uninhibited discussion than from the exercise of freedom subject to occasional government control.

Despite the fact that it is important for the truth to be protected, it should also be revealed that, not all that should be defended as some of the truth could be at loggerheads with the stability of a community. In this case, such truth must be regulated even though it is a violation of the freedom of expression. State secrets may be true and good for general knowledge, yet such truths may be limited or restricted for public interest (Feintucky & Verny, 2006). Also, it must be noted that freedom of communication may be regulated to create an efficient communication system while preventing monopolistic and oligopolistic tendencies. Even if it violates freedom of communication, regulation can protect the poor from the powerful and the public interest is served in that way. These contestations have not been satisfactorily addressed in the Zimbabwean studies though the government has been seen promulgating laws and regulations that impinge on the democratic nature of communication. Though it is interesting to note that media activist groups have taken the lead in fighting against a regulatory regime which they believe suffocates democratisation of communication in Zimbabwe, the extent of their success in this struggle has not been documented. In this study, one cannot ignore the need to unravel and balance the complexity between the need for media regulation with the yearning for freedom of communication as part of the democratisation drive.

Although communication may need to be regulated in some circumstances, restrictions on the media to express freely inhibit economic, cultural and individual growth (Happer & Philo,

2013). The public's growth is also limited unless they are given access to information which they may engage with in critical discussions to come up with various important positions. In these critical engagements, the primary concern is to enable individuals to understand political issues, thereby empowering them to participate as informed citizens in processes of democracy and economic growth. Although freedom of expression is fundamental, it is not a free value affair. It is tied to certain responsibilities which must be exercised by those enjoying such freedom. Mills (1859) reasoned that the rights of free speech should be withdrawn when it poses a threat to the public because human activities can affect society. Therefore, freedom from restraint may only be enjoyed if it does not affect others because if freedom of expression as conferred by the democratic nature of society to individuals is not enjoyed with responsibility, it may expose the society to dangers (Kitchener, 2001). This justifies the need to regulate communication when it is necessary. Media regulation is a delicate and complex balancing act which requires careful consideration of the public interest and the need to safeguard society.

The media requires regulation to ensure that they act in accordance with democratic principles of supporting citizens rather than undermining them. It is inappropriate for the media to claim freedom of expression if their act is running counter to democratic enterprises. In the global North, the threat to media democracy comes from the corporates. In this context, media market, legal and regulatory context is to a significant extent a reflection of corporate interests of oligopolistic, subverting democratic values. In the global South, however, the threat to media democracy comes from the state which puts up a restrictive regulatory regime under the pretext of dispelling information inequality and protecting cultural sovereignty considered to be under threat from cultural imperialism which gains advantage from a laissez-faire regime (Chakravatty & Sarikakis, 2006). This confirms the assumption that media in the global South is just an arm of the ruling class rather than a counter balance of it. While the major purpose of the corporate media is to deliver audiences as a product to advertisers, in the global South, it is also not to deliver information for public good but to create a "public" ready for manipulation.

Whereas democratised media contributes towards a healthy democracy by serving the public interest, the media itself must be a democratised public sphere to serve the public interest good. Unfortunately, serving the public interest is a normative principle which is used as a justification to regulate communication (Iosifidis, 2013). The extent to which the

communication regulatory framework is structured must be subjected to a democratic media test so as to establish if indeed it has been put in place to protect the public interest. Failure by the authorities to allow the public to exercise their constitutional right over, freedom of expression access to information and the right to the media at times leads to a call for the government to reform media policies to democratise the media. There are also studies that have explored major debates in the media regulation processes, in African countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia and South Africa (Freedman & Obar, 2015; Akpojivi, 2018; McChesney, 2009). They have argued that media reform is a constituent part of contemporary struggles for democracy and social justice (Freedman & Obar, 2015). Preliminaries on media scholarship in Zimbabwe or about Zimbabwe indicate that little to nothing has been written about the nature of media reform except the mere mention of terminology without a critical consideration to its implication to media democratisation. These are not the only issues explored in this study but there are several others that have been problematised and presented in a sophisticated academic manner based on the empirical data. Acceptable press freedom should promote the free flow of diverse ideas and create space for a vibrant public debate by eradicating barriers that affect the flow of information, (Picard in McQuail, 2010). Thus, if there is any need for regulation, the rationale must always be to create necessary conditions that support freedom of expression.

From the above discussion one can note that, public interest embodies the national interest. This means that what is contained in the public interest is all in national interest although it is not always true, what is in the national interest is in public interest (Kupe, 2005). It has also been established in the above discussion that politicians usually claim that some information is not in the national interest in order to avoid transparency and accountability so as to advance their political goals. What this means is that public interest is broader and wide enough to accommodate the national interest. Kupe (2005) further explains that it reflects values that can not be claimed by a single social organisation or individual or entity. It contains “values of justice and equality which individuals and groups seek to attain and engage in struggles to achieve” (Kupe, 2005: 1). This differs with the national interest which advances the interests and values of specific groups in their efforts to achieve some hegemonic domination in a society. It therefore follows that national interests’ agenda is a narrow set of justifications, policy choices and actions that at times undermine public interests. This is done usually in situations where there are internal conflicts and divisions. In these situations as evidenced from the discussion above, national security and national

sovereignty are used to justify repressive legislations and curtail freedom of expression and the media.

Regardless of this great literature on the wide policy making process, little scholarly consideration has been given to democratic media policy reform process as a vital component of a democratised media sphere. As a result of such grave omission, there has been a gap around democratic media policy advanced by the western scholars and the media democracy that is envisaged by some developing countries governments and scholars such as (Ake, 2001; Nyamnjoh, 2005; Larock, 2011 and Akpojivi, 2018). These scholars have advanced a comprehensive media democratic process that should see Africans dictating the media democracy they want as opposed to the problematic Anglo-American liberal democratic model that is assumed to have a “one-size-fits-all” approach. (Nyamnjoh cited in Chari, 2016). The following section looks into the process of democratising communication and the contestations surrounding the concept, “democracy”. Efforts are made to address this from both the Anglo-American liberal scholars’ angle and from the African academics perspective.

Democratising communication in Zimbabwe: a delinking agenda of Western and African ideologies

Generally, there are two models of democracy; representative and participative (Ferree et al cited in Wongrujira, 2008: 19). The media in representative democracy provides information about political parties and candidates so that the public makes informed decisions. Contrary, participative democracy believes that each citizen should participate in policy decisions regardless of levels. The rationale behind public participation comes from mistrust in representative public institutions such as political parties and government agencies. While this can be viable in small organisations, it is very difficult in complex societies of the modern world where unavoidably, representatives are required to take part in issues of public interest in the policy process (Wongrujira 2008, 19). This section conceptualises the process of democratising communication before discussing the debates emanating from different conceptualisations. The purpose of this section is to acknowledge the analogy between Western liberal media democracy and the Africa media democracy and an attempt by the Western democracy to export its raw concept of democracy to Africa resulting in resistance by the receiving governments. Several scholars have contributed to the debate on democracy as a Western and African concept (Nyamnjoh, 2005; Lopes, 1996; Mkandawire, 1995; Ake, 1991;

Akpojivi, 2018). This debate takes heed from Akpojivi (2018) that conceptualisation of democracy needs to take cognisance of the fact that there are multifarious forms of democracy practiced hence the attempt at universalising democracy has always resulted in the failure of reform as processes of democratisation in Africa and the third world.

On the concept of democratised media, White (1995) posits that it refers to an institutional organisation of public communication—media—which attempts to guarantee the right of all individuals and subcultures to participate in the construction of the public cultural truth. Every segment of the society should have a chance to access and express its ideas, information and culture into social circulation to reach all other segments of society (Hackett, 2000). Through this, a democratised media should contribute to the public sphere by providing citizens with information about their world, by nurturing debate about various issues and by encouraging informed decisions about available courses of action. Furthermore, it should be a site of contestation in which diverse positions are advanced, significant opinions are heard, interests and inner-workings are exposed, and input is received. Consequently, democratised media are expected to act as “watchdogs” on government and industry while upholding stakeholders’ participation at all levels without fear or favour (McConnell & Becker, 2002).

As described above, the democratisation of the media is a process undertaken to liberate the media from the market and the state’s authoritative control. To some, media democratisation is conceived as a social movement which promotes political democracy and the public sphere in civil society. It comprises, “efforts to change media messages, practices, institutions or system and context (including state policy), towards a direction that enhances democratic values and equal participation in social decision making” (Hackett, 1999: 64). Yet to others, media democratisation is a course which seeks to create a way of life.

The term “democracy” has been described as a complex and ambiguous concept to define due to the many perspectives from which it can be conceptualised (Akpojivi, 2018:4). As a result of these complexities, any definition is subject to intensive debate and contention (Rozumilowicz cited in Akpojivi, 2018). While Diamond (2008a) among other scholars believes that democracy is a Western concept with a universal appeal, Mentan (2015) argues that it is dangerous to consider democracy as a “one size fits all” which must be imposed on other nations. The author further elaborated that while the term “democracy” might have

originated from the Greek world, the thoughts and values are not exclusively Greek, European or American. The desire for inclusion, participation and representation in public fora as essential elements of democracy are universal to all human beings, the difference is mostly on the strategies of attaining the goals (Mentan, 2015). In support, Nwauwa (2005) adds that the concept of democracy is not alien to Africa. What has consistently not been recognised is the fact that democratic values and process are indigenous to the African continent in the same manner they are to the ancient Greek, the difference lies in the methods of attaining these goals (ibid). The appropriation of this basic human right by the Western donor agents into a Western ideology has rubbished the concept from being African to become more Western. This appropriation forgets that prior to European invasion and colonialism, Africans practised some variants of democracy alongside authoritarian rule. Further arguing along this line, Mentan (2015) posits that this analysis indicates that the discourse of democracy and democratisation as presented by the Western world are not new notions and practices to the global south. Hence taking the idea of democracy as a Western concept which the global south and Africa are in desperate need is misplaced. The author rejected the use of European bench-marks to determine other non European states' democratic status.

Mentan (2015) further advanced that Africa must be allowed to practise its indigenous democratic values that are not civilised to the European or America mindset. In the same manner, Larok (2011) advances that since societies have different traditions and cultures that shape their ways of life, Africa's history, culture and beliefs should be allowed to negotiate a form of media democratisation that suits its context (Larok, 2011). This debate was taken further by Hyden, Leslie and Ogundimu (2002) who posit that freedom of expression, access to information and ownership of the media are not the only values of a democratised media but, they should be the practice of African beliefs which should form the base of a democratised media in Africa. It is based on such assumptions that this study argues that the globalising world needs a media democratic theory that is consistent with Africa's common human nature. The conceptual definition of democracy advanced by the Greeks, Ferree et al. (2002) is based on liberalism and individualism hence it must be adjusted, because Africa and African culture in their different species do not believe in individualistic philosophical systems but is communal and collective (Ake, 1991).

Nyamnjoh (2005) acknowledges the greatest limitation of liberal democracy as its exaggerated focus on the autonomous individual, a reality which is contrary to Africa's dominant communal spirit of *Ubuntu or ubuntuism*⁸. The author argues that Africans continue to emphasise relationships and solidarities over the illusion of autonomy and that for democracy to succeed in this context, it must recognise the fact that most Africans are primarily patriotic to their home village, to which the state and country in the modern sense are secondary. The author further challenged the appropriateness of the neoliberal democracy in Africa by narrating that,

... implementing liberal democracy in Africa has been like trying to force onto a body of a fully figured person, rich in cultural indicators of health with which Africans are familiar, a dress made to fit a slim, de-fleshed Hollywood consumer model of a Barbie-doll entertainment icon...then when the dress fails to fit the African body, instead of blaming the tiny dress or its designer, the tradition has been to fault the popular body for emphasizing too much bulk, for parading the wrong sizes, for just not being the right thing. Not often is the experience of the designer or dress maker questioned. Such high levels of insensitivity is akin to the behaviour of a Lilliputian undertaker who would rather trim a corpse than expand a coffin to accommodate a man-mountain or a carpenter whose only tool is a hammer and to whom every problem is a nail...(Nyamnjoh, 2005:25).

The model of media democratisation does not conform to the African rule of communalism and collectiveness argued above. Instead, it rules out the politics of moderation and advances the politics of extremism whereby winners in a competition for power take all, while losers lose everything. Nyamnjoh critiques the Western notion of media democracy which the author argues is constitutive of the individualistic and selfish capitalist system and propose *Ubuntu* whose preoccupation is communalism (Chiumbu, 2014).

Embracing Western liberalisation policies in the manner of "one size fits all" can be problematic, particularly for African countries that face the danger of having their media systems swamped by foreign companies if they do not put in place sufficient limits to foreign ownership (Moyo, 2003: 27). In fact, the idea of liberal democracy as tied to human rights conception does not include black people, Jews, Muslims and women (Chiumbu, 2014).

⁸Ubuntu is a traditional African philosophy, defined as communicating, caring and sharing with humans in harmony with all of creation.

More so, (Mutua cited in Chiumbu, 2014) strongly argues that Africa was not present at the drafting table of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This demonstrates that democratisation of communication in a liberal manner will leave Zimbabwean media framed as an ideologically neutral project that orbits in space, with no firm cultural ground to anchor. In other words, it can be argued that the concepts of media democracy which results from communication democratisation process is a product of Western liberalism centred on Western-centric epistemologies and world views which seem to suggest that countries in the global south are incapable of democratic thinking to justify bringing the seemingly civilised notion of Western democracy.

Notwithstanding the discussion above, what may be needed in Africa are ideas of media democracy anchored around an African cradle and around more cultural relevant realities like collective social aspirations, solidarity and humanism or “Ubuntocracy”. The current configuration of liberal democracy is a divergence to African realities and may be equated to slavery, exploitation, colonialism and dictatorships, most of which were incited by the same agents of western liberal democracy (Larok, 2011; Chiumbu, 2015; Nyamnjoh, 2005 and Nwauwa, 2005). In the same manner, Mentan (2015) advised that the efforts by the Western worlds to introduce and spread democracy to other parts of the non-Western world is akin to re colonisation.

As a matter of fact, the adage, “*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*”⁹ underscores the characteristic of the universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity and implies the notion of democratic values and tradition predicated on people’s participation. The aspect of “Ubuntu” or communalism applies to a great extent in media democracy which entails people to open public discussion on matters of general interest and reflecting critically upon the people and state’s practices without interference from any possible quotas. The *Ubuntu* philosophy can play a significant role in the new media democracy concept because it is rooted in the genuine belief that we are human only in community with other people (Lutz, 2009: 1).

Advancing the above argument, Lutz (2009) acknowledges the complexities associated with the African culture and belief system, by asserting that,

⁹a person is a person through other persons

One of the most striking features of the cultures of sub-Saharan Africa is their non-individualistic character...Although African cultures display awesome diversity, they also show remarkable similarities. Community is the cornerstone in African thought and life. An African is not a rugged individual, but a person within a community. ...I am, because we are and since we are, therefore I am. Or...People are not individuals, living in a state of independence, but part of a community, living in relationships and interdependence (Lutz, 2009:1).

Furthermore, the complexity of African democracy is based on the fact that there are no homogenous African values. Nevertheless the general consensus is that people live communally rather than individually. The traditional African principles refer to a composite set of values such as “knowledge and beliefs that are held in high esteem, entrenched in African societies and that are deemed worthy of being regarded as the guidelines for human behaviour in interpersonal, group and inter-group communications and relationships” (Blake, 1993:3). Moreover, beliefs about what is right or wrong are worth being held and treasured too. In Africa, values may be some convictions which people live with, live by and can even die for (Idang, 2015). Each African community is governed by its own belief and value system although at times some traits overlap from one society to another. In these societies, those who do not obey their society’s values are reprimanded by such societies.

Admittedly, Umozuruke (1997) opines that in the global South, the rights of full members of the society were fully integrated into the rights of the society. Thus, Africa and its people put less emphasis on the individual and more on the collective, hence the individual does not have any claim which overrides that of the society (Ake, 1991). Unlike Western democracies, Africa venerates the progress of the community or state than personal and private interest of individual members. In other words, traditional African systems are imbued with democratic values, they are invariably patrimonial and consciousness is communal. In Africa everything is everybody’s business engraving a culture of participation within communities (Ake, 1991: 30).

Indeed, African values stretch from social values, moral considerations, religious, political institutions, African aesthetics and economic values (Idang, 2015). Therefore, the democratisation of communication should not just make Africans receivers of packages for "modernisation" but should also make them sources of message preparation and packaging. In democratising communications, African states must pay attention to the development of

indigenous communication structures and forms rather than merely rely on borrowed Western concepts being forced on Africa where they cannot be naturally accommodated (Blake, 1993; Nyamnjoh, 2005).

Researchers who understand democracy from the Western world view fail to acknowledge that “media democracy” just like the term “democracy” itself can not be homogenous across the global world, it must, draw attention to the cultural, social and political contexts of different societies in which it operates (Chakravartty & Sarikakis, 2006:3). That knowledge gap needs to be addressed so as to draw a clear understanding between African media democracy and Western media democracy. Media democratisation in Africa is never absolute since it is a cocktail of values, beliefs and cultures that define being African. According to Ake (1987) liberal democracy is highly individualistic yet there is little individualism in Africa. They celebrate abstract universalism which can only be embraced in African urban centres where few reside, with the majority living in rural homes. Democratising the media in the liberal sense deviates from the African traditions that are in themselves an endeavour to shun individualism and are a quest to integrate the rights of individuals into the rights of the society as a whole. In this instance, there is less emphasis on individuals and more emphasis on the collective (Ake, 1987). Thus in the liberal sense, democratisation strongly deviates from the African tradition and, to a larger extent, remains Western-oriented.

As discussed above, in Africa, media democracy is varied as there are different cultures and beliefs that cut across a vast continent of more than fifty sovereign states. Based on the assumption that the concept, “democratisation of communication” has its roots in the term democracy, it is prudent to have an overview of its nature and how issues of democracy influence the media. Democracy can be conceived in several forms such as liberal democracy, social democracy and participatory democracy (Sklar, 1983). In liberal democracy, the media is not limited by state laws rather they enjoy freedom to compete as enshrined in the “free flow doctrine in which there must be a market place of ideas that ensures that the truth prevails” (Nordenstreng, 2011:79). Liberal media democracy was bequeathed to the third world by the global media led by America and the supranational boards such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Several liberal models were swept away following the attainment of independence by several African states that adopted and maintained the Soviet authoritative media model to this date although some

few breeds of liberal media democracy have been planted and maintained by African statesmen themselves (Sklar, 1983).

While liberal democratic media plays a watchdog role, it comes at loggerheads with the African communal beliefs discussed above in that it allows a competitive marketplace of ideas to flourish without much restriction creating a survival of the fittest like environment where the poor and the weak are not catered for by the society where individualism reigns. In such societies, the media is taken as strong institutions with the power to legitimise or delegitimise the government as a result they become the fourth estate. Regular elections form part of the characteristics of liberal democracy with public participation being a critical feature too. Given this condition, democratised media must play a central role in enlightening the electorate so that they make informed decisions when choosing their representatives (Diamond and Morlino, 2005). There is a strong belief that when the public is well-informed by the media, they can make sound choices or they are able to make rational choices among candidates. The government must be transparent in its dealings and the public must know or should at least be able to inquire about the working of their government (Wongrujira, 2008).

When media democratisation is conceived as participatory, the assumption is that each citizen must participate in policy decisions. Active participation in the public sphere enhances trust and transparency which cannot be solely left to public institutions. Participatory democracy affirms the existence of a mutual relationship between democratic political institutions and participative social institutions. Unlike in Zambia, the concept of participatory democracy was introduced as a national goal by President Kenneth D. Kaunda in 1968. To him, participation of the masses in all spheres was to advance the notion of the public interest which had suffered as politicians, soldiers, intellectuals, technocrats, writers and workers monopolised their spherical power (Sklar, 1983:16). Nevertheless, the former Zambian president tried to induce popular participation into channels which would be controlled by a monopolistic political party. Induced participation was rejected by the Zambian people and the project collapsed (Sklar, 1983: 16). Contrary to the Zambian tragedy, media democratisation is based on a self-motivated and self-determined public participation concept. Here, coercion is ruled out and commitment to the self-motivated assertion of the people interests in political affairs is affirmed. In addition, media democratisation should be regarded in terms of participatory enabling media platforms attached to a civil society, it must

be concerned with minority cultures and marginalised people, it should empower the public to participate directly and let their voices be heard.

This study acknowledges that democratisation of the media is promoted by communications policies informed by broader democratic values such as; accountability of media institutions to the public; democratic policy goals; diversity of citizen-relevant information; community-building; minority cultural and linguistic rights; domestic control over Zimbabwe's media system as a prerequisite for cultural sovereignty; democratic control over communication policy and universal access to the key means of public communication as a basis for equality and participation in society (Hackett & Anderson, 2011). In Zimbabwe, these policies and values are under attack by the state which formulates and implements media laws without the input of other stakeholders such as civil society and the media industry itself. Communication policies have never fundamentally altered the state's domination of the Zimbabwean media. Ownership concentration continues rapidly, mergers and conglomerations are fast capturing the media. Regulatory and funding support for the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) has been whittled down, its management and programming seemingly abandoning the philosophy of public broadcasting while adopting a state broadcaster outlook (Masuku, 2011; Moyo, 2010; Chuma, 2010; Chiumbu, 2009; Willems, 2008; Mukasa, 2003).

The process of democratising communication emphasises democratic values such as freedom of expression, the right to communication, participation and competition (Wongrujira, 2008). This study, therefore, considers the main concern of communication democratisation to be the promotion of democratic values and practices of the media. In this framework, the media is expected to be liberalised and democratised and to operate with minimal intervention from dominant elites (state, government, politicians, parties, businesses and capital) (ibid). Communication democratisation is conceived as "efforts to change media messages, practices, institutions or system and context (including state policy), to the direction that enhances democratic values and equal participation in social decision making" (White, 1995, 64). Furthermore, the democratisation process is considered effective and goal oriented if it can influence mainstream media and their contents advocate for positive media policy reform, establish alternative media to serve as public communication channels for the marginalised people and to empower citizens to be an active audience by enhancing media literacy or media watchdogs (Carroll & Hackett, 2006: 88). In the end, to democratise communication should be comprehended as to remove media from direct/indirect

government, political parties and market control. This rationale has prompted society to fashion media activism groups to challenge the dominantly established, centralised and authoritative communication systems.

In line with these sentiments, this study acknowledges the need for a paradigm shift from the narrow definitions imposed by Western liberal thinking on media democratisation. As Africans, there is need to think from “different spaces” (Mignolo quoted in Chiumbu, 2015) which have the potential to break African knowledge away from Eurocentrism as a sole way of looking at media democratisation. In agreement with this ideology, Chinweizu et al quoted in Chiumbu (2015) supports the importance of working from an African standpoint adding that it is only Africans who understand their conditions to qualify and define them. Hence media democratisation must be defined and conceptualised from an African point of view.

However, defenders of African indigenous media democracy cannot have it both ways. Their assertion that democracy must be communal and inclusive is contradicted by their claim that in modern society, participatory democracy is inimical to development. To date, no such model as African media democracy has been conceived, meaning that the judgement of democratic practices still uses Western liberal democracy as a yardstick. Of course, this is not to suggest that the search for a suitable type of democracy for Africa should be abandoned. Rather, it is to acknowledge that the media situation in Africa is ambivalent. It is a mixture of both accustomed forms of Western liberal democracy and African concepts of democracy. Liberal democracy is used only as a means to power, but cannot respond to the demands of the subalterns’ need for freedom of expression and access to information in a meaningful way. Therefore, regardless of the fact that organisations and individual activism under study are perceived to be informed by Western ideologies, this study will engage and work with them because they are the relevant organisations promoting media reform in Zimbabwe. The study will ascertain the extent to which such activism has led to media reform and media democratisation. It will further identify the challenges encountered in the processes and document the extent to which media activism projects in Zimbabwe have democratised communication so as to inform the alternative processes. However, in line with the nature of media activism in Zimbabwe which is advanced by the Western donor sponsored media activists, this study approaches media democratisation as the ability of the media reform activists to remove the media from the influence of capital and the state. Thus, as discussed above a democratised media should contribute to the public, it should be a site of contestation

in which diverse opinions are heard and should act as “watchdogs” on the state and industry while upholding stakeholders’ participation (White, 1995).

This thesis differs from the reviewed works in the sense that it critically explores and problematises the extent to which media democratisation has taken place in Zimbabwe. What further makes this study interesting and unique is its employment of the Gramsci lenses on hegemony and counter-hegemony. While some researchers have provided their analysis based on the democracy theory, (Wongrujira, 2008), this research is grounded on Gramsci to understand the power matrix around the media in Zimbabwe and how such power is countered by media activists. Furthermore, the study engages the Resource Mobilisation Theory embedded in social movement theory. These theories are critical for a convincing analysis of the nature of media activism in Zimbabwe as well as in exploring the motive behind that lobbying. The theories discussed in chapter three (3) shall provide the basis for exploring the frames used by activists in their campaign for freedom of expression, access to information and press freedom.

Reimagining Media Activism

This section begins by giving an operational definition to “media activism” as an important concept in this research. Besides, the section seeks to provide a roadmap of the literature examining media reform activism or advocacy in media policy and how they have been able to bring change, if any, in the media. In addition, the section seeks to synthesize key findings of such scholarship so as to understand the strategies used in order to understand the differences between available literature and this study. Ashraf and Islam (2014) realised that media reform activism can liberalise the media through both plurality and diversity as the number of media outlets have increased in Pakistan as well as penetrating different societies. However, while activism has managed to mobilise people for media reform and increase government accountability and policy advocacy at the other end, it has caused journalism to cut across the professional boundaries into political engagement. Besides, the liberalisation of the media has caused the breach of personal privacy and increased sensationalism thereby affecting the general people psychologically but all in the name of commercialisation and profit maximisation.

In this study, activism is regarded as “taking action to effect social change” (Chibita, 2014: 71). Although the change may be in the social, political, economic or environmental domain, (ibid) in this study, it should be in line with media change. To a greater extent, activism is associated with social movements. According to Chibita, there are several types of activism which “include grassroots activism, letter writing and petitions, direct lobbying, litigation, demonstrations, civil disobedience, digital activism...” (2014: 70). In support of this, activism is defined along four dimensions, participants, causes, tactics and tools. While participants are individuals engaging in activism, cause, speak to the rationale of engaging in activism. Tactics represent the strategies employed by the participants in order to achieve their set goals. Lastly, tools refer to both human and material resources at the disposal of the participants used for fighting for their cause. It refers to the actions of a group of concurring individuals (participants) who congregate to advocate for a change in the status quo (Cammaerts, 2007; Kahn & Kellner, 2004; Lomicky & Hogg, 2010). To a greater extent, activism incorporates social movements and collective action. Briefly defined, reform activism involves a continuous contestation of authority although there are some interactions between the challengers and power holders (Tarrow, 1998; Tilly, 1978). The ultimate goal is to achieve some kind of reform as a process of democratisation of the media. In doing so, there is need for a collective action which refers to a combined effort in pursuit of a common goal (Tilly, 1978). Thus, common efforts such as protests, advocacy, writing position papers and petition campaign among others can be employed as part of activism. The success of reform activists’ movement depends on the degree of a group’s common interests and shared identity, available resources, political power, opportunities and threats and the level of governmental authoritarianism (Tilly, 1978).

It is not enough to define activism only through its tools because activism, like a moving target, is always shifting positions. Traditionally, this method of description has been popular but new media technology has brought several new terms of activism referencing the new tools of new media. For instance, terms like internet activism, hacktivism, cyber activism, clicktivism, digital activism and several others have been introduced (Joyce, 2014). Activism protests an undesirable status quo or protests an undesirable future alteration of the status quo (Bakke, 1966). To a greater extent, activism is an activity undertaken by a deprived group of people or individuals in order to protest the status quo or a proposed change to it. Also, activities that constitute activism differ according to context. Activism can be defined in the context of a group of participants, cause or tool type. It is therefore apparent that, “the

activities of activism are highly context-dependent. What constitutes activism differs from researcher to researcher. Based on these arguments it is judicious to conclude that “one person’s defiance in personal consumption patterns may be another person’s frivolous narcissism,” (Joyce, 2014: 20). The above efforts indicate that defining activism has never been an easy task as many scholars resort to defining activism within their own contexts of choice. Although, the dynamics of activism have always been in constant shift due to economic, cultural, and technological changes, there are some structural features that can be generalised across multiple contexts (Earl & Kimport, 2011; Lievrouw, 2011). While the researcher is aware of the presence and vibrancy of Digital activism described above, this study focuses on offline activism conceived in four types of actors: challenger, antagonist, constituency and beneficiary. The challenger initiates the activism effort on behalf of a disadvantaged or threatened beneficiary group. Action includes the mobilisation of a constituency of supporters that seek to influence a powerful antagonist. In the media activism model of activism, the rationale is to influence antagonists to take action and improve the welfare of beneficiaries.

In some circumstances, activism can be defined through the collective identity of the participants. Usually, in these circumstances, the term activism is modified by an adjective to create phrases like, student activism, women protests and others. In addition, activism can be defined by the particular causes they are fighting for such as, civil rights activism, human rights activism and environmental activism. To others, activism refers to everyday defiance by cultural innovators (Baumgardner & Richards, 2010; Alexander, 2006). Interestingly, to some, activism refers to actions like residing in slums instead of paid housing, refusing to pay for public transportation, and living on discarded food instead of purchasing to force the responsible authorities to act (Yates, 2014). This represents a shift from the concept of activism as prescribed in civic engagement (Verba, Nie, & Kim, 1978). In other terms, activism can mean the behaviour of the representative, for example environmental activists draft petitions, advocate for environmental policy change, vote for pro-environment candidates, participate in protests against environmental damage and write letters to the manufacturers of harmful products (Seguin, Pelletier, & Hunsley, 1998). Such type of activism encompasses both civic engagement, which adheres to the law and convention, and a more rebellious form of activism which disregards both (Joyce, 2014).

In comprehensive terms, “activism” refers to the actions of a group of concurring individuals who congregate to advocate for a change in the status quo (Cammaerts, 2007; Kahn & Kellner, 2004; Lomicky & Hogg, 2010). To a greater extent, activism incorporates social movements and collective action. Briefly defined, social movements involve a continuous contestation of authority although these are some interactions between the challengers and power holders (Tarrow, 1998; Tilly, 1978). While collective action refers to a combined effort in pursuit of a common goal (Tilly, 1978). Thus, common efforts such as protests, advocacy, writing position papers, and petition campaign among others can be employed as part of media activism. The success of a social movement depends on the degree of a group’s common interests and shared identity, available resources, political power, opportunities and threats, and the level of governmental authoritarianism (Tilly, 1978).

Activism combines strategic and partial incorporation with confirmed resistance and independent critique (Servaes & Carpentier, 2005). Mobilisation and protest actions by citizens and civil society in the form of civil disobedience and demonstrations are some of the strategies used by media activists. In addition, alternative media, media literacy, public journalism, media monitoring, policy advocacy and micro-radio remains variables used by media activists to influence change. Media activism may be groups within and around the media industries groups whose working life or professional specialisation may stimulate awareness of the alienation, exploitation and/or constraints on creativity and public information rights generated by a hegemonic state media system (Carrol & Hacket, 2006). Media activism can be organised “grassroots” efforts that are intended to create and influence media practices and strategies (ibid).

Media activists are mediators between the policy makers and those who are affected by media policies. In other words, media activists act as intermediaries between an ideal media environment and the existing state of affairs. Activism is therefore important in the process of media reform and as a feature of civic involvement in democratic public spheres (Taib, 2006:1). More importantly, media activists move and galvanise communication democratisation processes that must be a permanent landscape of the ideal media. Activism is an act of translating private problems into the public sphere, a move described as an enlargement of the realm of critique and affirmation of the existence of the common good (Giroux cited in Taib, 2006:1). In this study, activism is the struggle over democratising the media space. Therefore, activists must subject their intellectual energy and capabilities to

uprooting the undemocratic media systems that are denying the public their constitutional rights.

Carroll and Hackett (2006) categorised media activism in a three concentric circles model: the central circle, middle circle and outermost circle. The central circle harbours groups within and around the media industry; these groups include media professionals, workers, journalists, independent producers, researchers and academics, policy makers among others. The middle group have subordinate social groups with interest in other social economic or political problems. For instance social justice movements, civil rights groups, labour unions and other groups like feminists. The outermost circle includes more diffuse sectors for which media policy is not the central concern however, they could occasionally worry about threats that some commercial media pose to human, public interest and democratic values. For example, in the United States these types of activists include religious groups, parents and ordinary citizens (Carroll & Hackett; 2006).

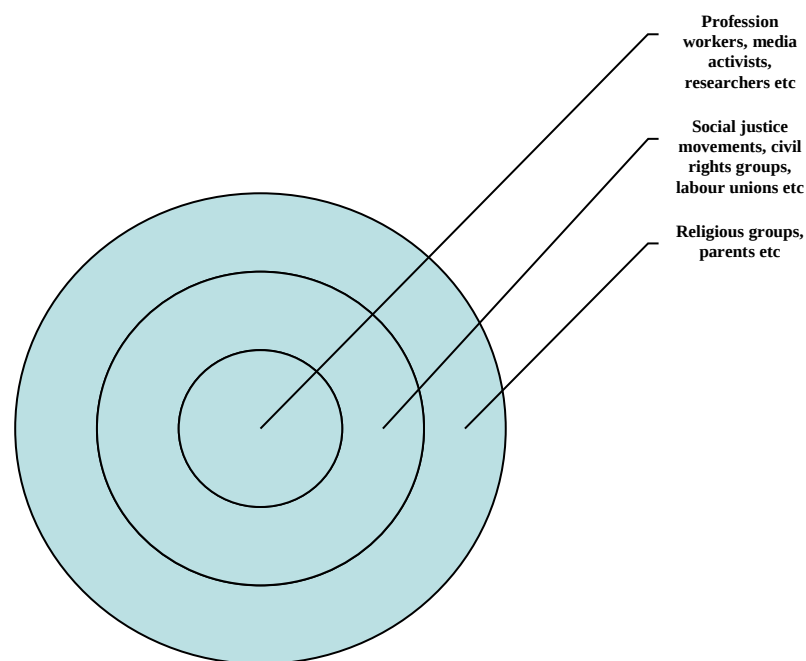


Fig.1 Carroll and Hackett concentric circle model (Carroll and Hackett, 2006)

This study focused on the outer circle as it seeks to analyse media reform activism by media professionals such as journalists and journalists unions, independent producers, and civil society and media scholars in Zimbabwe. Using this model, the study focused on the works of media academics, media professionals, media reform activists and media policy makers in Zimbabwe.

Some researchers on activism have advanced that causes of activism can be subdivided into two distinct categories which are assertive and defensive (Wilson, 1961; Bakke, 1961). Whereas, assertive is informed by the necessity to transform the status quo, the latter is characterised by the prerequisite to preserve, protect and prevent. Furthermore, other causes, such as anti-war activism, can be of either type. For instance, before the onset of Zimbabwe's controversial land reform programme, the anti-reform lobbyists were defensive. Once the process of taking the land began, anti-land reform activism became assertive as it sought to stop the programme that had already started. This study is concerned with the assertive cause pursued by activists who are seeking to transform the status quo into what they envisage as a media democratised state of affairs.

Activism in the modern age has greatly embraced technology, with debate being rife as to whether online activism is effective or not. The prevalence of information technology has brought in new forms of activism known as a "networked social movement" of the Information Age whose mandate is to challenge the status quo (Castells, 2001). These networked social movements are based on cultural values such as social justice and the coalitions rely mostly on internet technologies especially social media (ibid). In fact, the most effective "counter-power" movements are networked in form and have entered the arena of global communications to challenge prevailing norms and institutions, aided in particular by the internet. The internet provides the essential platform for debate, [a] means of acting on people's mind, and ultimately serves as their most potent political weapon (Castells, 2007:249).

It is important to understand that the relationship between media activists and the state is not always antagonistic. In some instances, it is a process of negotiation, with some media activists seeking to formalise negotiations. At times, the state invites them to participate in policy formation through multi-stakeholder processes (Livingstone et al, 2007; Mueller et al, 2007). To some extent, people actively influence the state through public debate. In this process, the internet has bolstered activism and built new opportunities to create and nurture a

democratically-networked public sphere by increasing access to public debate and the inter linkages between different actors (Harlow, 2011).

In an authoritarian state, the principle of providing opportunities to powerful elites, politicians and business entrepreneurs at the expense of the powerless, ordinary, marginal people and the civic groups has always been questionable. However, such conditions trigger the society to create social structures that seek to challenge established, dominant centralised political systems. These structures often carry the mandate to pressure the authorities to change laws and regulations, policies and to some extent resources allocation as a means of correcting the perceived injustices (Wongrujira, 2008). These social structures or activism groups seek to emancipate society from the bondage of injustices, hence, they mobilise resources to enable themselves to advance their cause.

In this study, media activism is not just a free-standing ideology, but is rooted in some historical mission as lack of it would result in the lack of consciousness on the critical need for media environment reform. It therefore goes without saying that the present actions will determine the course of tomorrow's history (Taib, 2006). Activism galvanises the democratic media sphere that the majority want to see tomorrow. To win this, activists may have genuine concern for the people especially the poor, marginal voices, underrepresented minorities, victims of violence against the media and the abused. Besides, the sense of empathy must be rooted down in the heart. Activists must partake of the joys and suffering with the ordinary lives, they must strive to understand the complexities of human interaction. Activism resists a broad universal definition which is clearly targeted and static in nature. It is marked by both continuity and rebellion as researchers adopt and adapt to past theories to describe new forms of protest. Nevertheless, the research agrees that there are common types of actors and structures that can be located across different contexts. The best definition which suits activism should be open-ended mainly because the causes, activities and tools of activism are constantly moving and difficult to pin down.

Conceptualising activism in an African context requires a cross-disciplinary examination of factors facilitating and inhibiting its growth across the continent (Mutsvairo, Columbus & Leijendekker, 2014). Citing Willems, Mutsvairo, Columbus and Leijendekker (2014) took popular culture such as comic strips and protest music as naïve forms of activism in Zimbabwe. Besides, they advanced that in Africa and other regions of the world traditional

demand-driven campaigns such as protests, strikes and demonstrations have played a crucial role in determining policy outcome. From student activism in Kenya to Aids activism in South Africa, colonial and post-colonial activism in sub-Saharan Africa shows that activism is not a new phenomena in Africa but an old tradition which have been used as a force for new changes (ibid). Advancing this debate, Mare avers that in Zimbabwe activism has been active “since the days of the colonial struggle through the post-colonial era” (2014: 49). It is interesting that soon after independence, activists abdicated on their role of speaking back to power as the voice of the voiceless (ibid). However, later in the second decade after independence, activism revived with trade unions protesting against Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAP), War veterans demanding compensation and student unions protesting against economic melt down and poor living conditions. This period saw the formation of a number of activism organisations such as the Media Institute of Southern Africa, National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) among others. In accordance with the context of this study, media activism is approached as the actions of a group of concurring individuals who congregate to advocate for a change in the media police using resources mobilised for the purpose (Cammaerts, 2007; Kahn & Kellner, 2004; Lomicky & Hogg, 2010).

Studies on media activism discourse largely focus on the American, Asian and European continents (Caroll & Hackett, 2004; Wongrujira, 2008). Little has been written on Africa and Zimbabwe despite that media activism supported by the western countries has been a critical strategy of fighting repression against the state’s media policies in the developing nations. Available literature on media in Zimbabwe largely ignores the issue of media activism and democratisation. This confirms that a huge gap, which needs to be plugged by providing systematically researched information on media freedom, freedom of expression and access to information; still exists. This also presents an opportunity for the exploration of the extent to which media activism in Zimbabwe has resolved such sticking issues thereby helping to fill that academic void. Some studies on the state of media democracy in Zimbabwe have been reviewed and it was established that the media in Zimbabwe has – to a larger extent – been manipulated by the state, (Wendrich 1980; Saunders, 1999; Mukasa, 2010; Chuma, 2004; 2005; 2009; Moyo, 2004; 2005; 2008; Willems, 2005; 2008; 2009; Chiumbu, 2008; Chirume, 2015; Muchena, 2013). These studies are however largely silent on issues of media activism, media reform and media democracy. This makes the current study necessary as it extends knowledge beyond the current state of media democratisation information in

Zimbabwe. There is a glaring need to investigate the scope to which the work of media activists in Zimbabwe has contributed to the media democratisation process. From 2000 the Zimbabwean media landscape has seen a tremendous sprouting of media reform revolution which has witnessed a surge in media reform activism. Though research has been done to some levels in Zimbabwe as indicated above, the research has remained limited to challenges of media democracy and the role of the authoritative state in media policy reform. There is little to no attempt at studying the influence of the media activism being advanced by the Western sponsored counter hegemonic forces fronted by MISA and “how” such media reform activism is manifesting itself in Zimbabwe and its media. There is hardly any media research on Zimbabwean media activism and its influence and this study hopes to bridge the gap.

Media reform

Media reform emphasises changing any aspect of the media such as the structure and processes, media employment, financing, content, media laws, ownership and control, access to media and other variables (Media Development, 2004; Carrol & Hacket, 2006). It provides information about the levels of media freedoms, tolerance, social justice and pluralism within a political system. Media reform has been at the forefront of social movement focusing upon state policies towards communication industries. This study, however, concerns media reform that is at the heart of the process of democratisation of communication in Zimbabwe in the quest to eliminate direct or indirect government and political party control of the public media. It advocates for the removal of statutory media regulations believed to be the key in the stifling of the media. It seeks to replace of government control of the media with an assortment of reform which include but not limited to self regulatory, freedom of speech, media sustainability among several others.

In Zimbabwe, media reform activists are a key (though not the only one) driving force of media reform for media democratisation (Iofidis, 2013; McQuail, 2010; Fentucky & Varny, 2006). The limits on freedom and on forms of expression differ from country to country. In some customs and concerns, press regulation is informed by three basic areas of public concern. These includes, the security and integrity of the state and maintenance of the law and order, then matters of morals, decency or public offence (e.g. racism, sexism, undue violence) and finally, matters around privacy, which range from the issue of confidentiality of information to intrusion by reporters in private spaces. The hacking scandals in the United

Kingdom have provided an impetus for further introspection into the efficiency and effectiveness of the Press Complaints Commission (PCC), journalism ethics as well as relations of the press and politics. These issues have not been subjected to serious scrutiny in Zimbabwe meaning that both statutory and self-regulation need a closer examination to understand the nature of a regulatory regime in Zimbabwe and how that has affected the democratisation of communication processes.

A gap between the potential of media reform strategy and the realisation of its effective implementation needs to be closed (Freedman & Obar, 2015). Media reforms are not done for their own sake but are done to fix a challenge which would have arisen. One of the major motivations of seeking media reform is to democratise communication. Media reform entails a vast field in which several actors are accommodated. They deploy several strategies and efforts to prise open the communication system in the interest of the ordinary, marginalised viewers and listeners. Readers have a meaningful participation to make informed decisions in the world they live in (ibid).

Media reform is understood through the contribution of Freedman and Obar (2015). Firstly, criticising the content and structures of the mainstream media to delegitimise them as ideologically dedicated to support the power relations to which they are tied. For instance, in Zimbabwe, there is print and broadcast media systems monopolised by the state interests to an extent that they are now acting as mouthpieces of the ruling party (ZANU PF). In this scenario, the newsroom cultures of mainstream media stick closely to the consensual agenda and the well-established political discourse. The media reflects the ideological interests of the state and the ruling class, resonating with Herman and Chomsky's argument that media produces propaganda, to secure manufacturing consent (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Propaganda is handed down as ideologies meant to naturalise the ideas of the powerful groups in society so that they become natural and common-sense to marginalise dissent. McChesney (2008) says that the system is not "natural" but is created to reflect the "ruling party" interest. Secondly, the establishment of the alternative media that produce content which is designed to better engage and reflect the diversity of the population. Alternative media will counter the falsehood of the mainstream news through democratic methods that seek empowerment rather than profit-making.

In Zimbabwe through the “private” media such as the Daily News, the Voice of America and other decentralised “dissident” stations and press, repression and politicisation of mainstream media is countered through the use of channels of communication that are emancipatory and offer every receiver the potential to transmit thereby creating a more democratic space. Thirdly, there is need for changing the media through diversifying ownership, campaigning for new forms of funding in marginalised content, pressing for more ethical forms of journalism, and more recently, opposing forms of surveillance. This requires an engagement with official structures such as legislative processes, parliaments and policy makers. As policy making process underlies the complexity of media reform and the process of democratising communication, the study now looks at media policy and policy-making processes as well as the politics of media regulation at length. In line with the above contentions, this research will approach media reform in Zimbabwe as changing media policies in a way that creates freedom of expression, freedom of the media and enhance access to information.

Since the 1990s, a large archive of literature on Zimbabwean media has been established. This academic work mainly argue that there is no free and democratic media in Zimbabwe, (Moyo, 2004; Chuma & Moyo, 2010). Although these studies note the undemocratic nature of the media sphere in Zimbabwe and discuss government strategies to strangle the communications, they are not sufficiently critical of the media reform. They lack indepth analysis on issues of the Western-funded media reform activist organisations operating in Zimbabwe and how they have managed to convince the government to change media reform policies. This thesis contends that while there is evidence of growth in researches on media in Zimbabwe, studies on media reform activism have not been adequately embraced as yet. Such an omission of contemporary scholarly conversation is a huge blow to knowledge. This thesis, therefore, builds on already established board of knowledge on media reform and activism elsewhere in an effort to contribute and take the media democracy debate in Zimbabwe to new levels.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature in terms of four major research questions and these are; Why did the government of Zimbabwe pass new media laws in the post 2000 era?; What are the key contestations in the Zimbabwe media policy and regulatory reform process?; To what extent has media activism influenced media reform processes in Zimbabwe? And how has media reform contributed to media democratisation in Zimbabwe? Besides, three major

concepts that underpin this study which are; democratising communication, media activism and media reform are specified and given meaning relevant to this study. The discussion started with a general overview of media policy discourse focusing on the state of media democracy in some parts of Southern Africa and the coming in of the counter hegemonic force under the pretext of liberal democracy sponsored by Western based organisations at the end of the cold war around 1990. Debate over media regulation was discussed further bringing issues like national interest, national sovereignty and public interest as justification for regulating the media. To properly situate the concept of “democratising communication” within the study context, the chapter made efforts to give operational meaning to the concept before problematising “democracy” as a difficult concept to pin as the differences in societies’ social cultural beliefs and values affects how they define it. However, since the study is on Western democracy as envisioned by the Western funded media reform activists available in Zimbabwe, the research remained largely guided by the liberal definition of democracy. Media activism was also operationised and given relevant meaning in this study. Carroll and Hackett’s (2006) concentric circle model was used to guide the selection of activism in Zimbabwe. In the end activism is regarded as counter hegemonic forces which seek to fight the state hegemony although it is clear that in the end it seeks to establish its own liberal hegemony described as democratic in nature. Furthermore, the concept of media reform is discussed and conceptualised as changing any aspect of the media such as the structure and processes, media employment, financing, content, media laws, ownership and control as well as access to media. The literature reviewed established that, while the issues of media and democracy have been researched to a large extent in Zimbabwe, literature on media activism, media reforms and democratisation of the media in Zimbabwe is scarce. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

Chapter Three

Theoretical foundations

Introduction

This Chapter presents the study's theoretical framework. It discusses theories that frame and give focus in tracking down specific issues of communication democracy in Zimbabwe. The Italian Post-Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci's concepts of ideology, hegemony and organic intellectuals are re-casted in a discussion with a view of highlighting how hegemony occupies a central position in the Zimbabwean media democratisation process. Using Gramsci's lenses, this study illuminates the rationale behind the government struggle to dominate the media sphere and how media activism movements have resisted state and political media hegemony in favour of a democratised liberal media. In addition, the theory teases the paradoxical relationship between the state and nonstate agents of media democracy. Furthermore, Gramsci illuminates the debates between liberal democracy and the authoritarian state policies adopted by most African states soon after their political independence. , In further examining issues that are at play in media democratisation within Zimbabwe, Gramsci's genealogical account of cultural hegemony is strengthened by "resource mobilisation theory" (McCarthy & Zald, 1973; 1977) and to establish a robust theoretical framework that can stand the rigour of theoretical descriptions in this context.

Exploring media democratisation discourse through Gramscian lens

The theoretical point of departure for this study is Gramscian's theory of hegemony which is played in and within media reform activism. Here the narrative takes the study down the line of Gramsci's thinking and attempts to influence understanding on how hegemony embedded in the media is enforced and challenged by civil society sphere especially by media reform activists as media activists through counter-hegemony. The study grapples with the challenges of using Gramsci's thoughts beyond original context of Italy 1919 to 1936 and attempt to forge a linkage with media activism events of the post 2000 Zimbabwe.

Gramsci's political thoughts were shaped by his activism in the Communist Party, a political movement in which he was actively participating between 1916 and 1919. He also played a major role as a journalist and his active role with the Italian communist party had a major influence in the formulation of his ideology (hegemony). His thoughts were written down in 'The selection from prison notebooks' (Gramsci, 1971). As he tried to explain the rationale behind the failure of the workers-led revolution, Gramsci argued that the failure of the worker

led revolution was influenced by both external and internal factors. For him external factors were capitalist influences in Italy while internal factors were accounted for in the internal actors or activists such as trade unions and the state to oppress the workers' revolution. The study contends that the state usurped the powerful civil society actors and came up with a political society and civil society (Gramsci, 1971: 263). This theoretical basis informs the study on how to understand levels of media democratisation through media activists.

Gramsci perceives the ruling-class as maintaining its dominance over society in two different ways which are coercion and consent and he calls it "hegemony". Coercion uses the "political society" (army, the police, legal systems etc.) of the ruling class to force other classes to accept its role. It is imperative at this juncture to understand that the communication system or the media can be coercively captured by promulgation of media restrictive laws and regulations that impinge on the democratisation of communication. For instance, in Zimbabwe the controversial statutes such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) (2002) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) (2001) restrict the media in several ways such as licencing, content and structure (Muchena, 2013; Mazango, 2005; Melbar, 2004). Gramsci's approach emphasises the positions of the state in consolidating its power through crafting laws that are stringent in an effort to silence the media in playing its watchdog roles. On the other hand, consent imprisons the "civil society" (family, education systems, trade unions, and the mass media or communication systems among others) ideas and values to persuade the subordinate class that its rule is legitimate. Indeed, when the communication system is captured on one or both levels, it becomes an undemocratic communication system and there is need for this to be addressed through advocating for a democratised media system through a counter hegemony revolution. In Gramsci's thinking, hegemony entails the control through moral and intellectual leadership. It is not only a leadership of dominance but also an intellectual influence and internal motivation.

The difference noted between Marx's cohesive force and Gramsci's hegemony is that the latter expresses the consent of the subordinate classes to the bourgeois or ruling class dominance, which comes as power, consciousness and ideology. Hegemony doesn't impose its own ideology, but combines common elements extracted from visions of the world and interests of the allied group (Gramsci cited in Brooker, 2003: 120). Gramsci's theory posits that no oppressive regimes can sustain its power through a coercive force alone but needs

consent (hegemony) of the subjugated. The discourses of media liberalisation and state media control in Zimbabwe are however treated as akin to the development of hegemonic tendencies that are elaborated by Gramsci.

Central to the idea of hegemony is what has been referred to as ideology. Ideology has been described as a system of values, beliefs and attitudes that help people to make sense of the world and the conditions in which they live. Ideologies are a set of conscious and unconscious ideas which enable the society to believe in certain things. They boost their expectations and motivate them to act in the manner they do. In other words, ideologies are visions that are unquestionably followed by the people, governments or social groups. To some extent, ideologies may be sets of ideas proposed by a dominant class of society such as elites to all members. It describes how and why dominant ideas reflect the interests of a ruling class in a society (Marx & Engels, 1989). Usually, ideology supports hegemony through abstracted meanings that are applied to public matters making ideology central to politics. When these loosely interrelated set of ruling ideas permeate society in such a way as to make the established order of power and values appear natural, taken-for-granted and “common-sensical”, they become hegemonic, (McQuail, 1994: 99).

Following the above assertion, Fiske (1990) and Curran (2002) posit that hegemony is not rigid and static, instead it is in a state of continual flux and transformation. It is therefore based on this conditions that consent must be constantly won and re-won as the subordinate groups are constantly reminded of the disadvantages of their subjugations by other discourses in society posing a threat to the dominant class. Media offers a fertile arena for these cultural wars to be played at both the global and national level because of their pervasiveness and ubiquity. They become vehicles, not only to carry out the role of newspapers— entertain, inform and educate— but also to mobilise the people behind the cause of independence and beyond. In Africa, media control has remained a preserve of the state mainly because it is utilised as an instrument of state authority whose role is to provide a platform for celebrating hegemony through ideologies (Little John & Foss, 2009). This spells out that consent must be constantly won and re-won, for people's material social experience constantly reminds them of the disadvantages of subordination and thus poses a threat to the dominant class (Fiske, 1990). In other words, hegemonic values and the social experience of the subordinate class means there is an inevitable site of ideological struggle where people may reject hegemonic values based on their own experiences of poverty and oppression. In this scenario the role of

the media to galvanise consent becomes paramount but only in the absence of a counter hegemony force.

The introduction of Gramsci's concept of hegemony into the field of media in the early 1970s brought about a rethinking of the politics of culture. It can be argued that media is a site for the production and reproduction of hegemony. They act as an ideological "site of struggle" as the ruling class relies heavily on consent to maintain their rule. Gramsci recognises that power needs constant negotiation, and believes that if the dominant classes are able to control influential institutions such as the media, e.g. magazines, films, newspapers etc, then the friction is eased. Media is therefore understood as a field of struggle and negotiation between the interests of dominant groups and interests of subordinate groups, between imposition of dominant interests and the resistance of subordinate interests (Storey, 1999: 149).

Liberal media ideologies touted by the global North as the ideal forms of media democracy distort and retard the pace and tempo of cultural growth and the trend of civilisation in Africa mainly because they tend to uproot reigning ideologies and replace them with Western values, beliefs and cultures. Given that the media is a cultural industry manufacturing cultural goods, the consequences of allowing liberal media is the creation of a new unbridgeable cultural gap between the African ideologies of unity and communality and Western individualism (Ake, 1997). The global mantra of "free flow" of information and "free market ideologies" is not a balanced sum given the power and pervasiveness of global media technology and its potential for cultural imperialism. The counter hegemony global North that want to implant Western ideologies continue to influence the world to accept free market ideologies against arrangements that promote state hegemonic media control such as the licencing of journalists (Mansell and Nordenstreng, 2006). This view acknowledges the Gramscian perspective that media occupies a central stage in the global world of influence since it cannot be separated from the desire to control the minds and hearts of the people.

The Gramscian approach assumes that hegemony is a consequence of class conflict. However, it continually favours one side of the struggle at the expense of the other, the dominant group at the expense of the subordinate groups (Strinati, 1995: 154). Gramsci (1970) argues that the concept of hegemony seems to describe the concept of cultural imperialism in which the global North and global South are pitted against each other.

However, counter-hegemonic states like the United Kingdom and the United States of America use the ideas of free trade and global media policies to maintain their influence in developing countries. The claim that this system benefits everyone has been so widely accepted that it has attained “common sense” status. However, free trade and global media policies benefit those counter hegemonic powers as it is the most efficient producer in the global economy, and it can produce cultural goods which are competitive in all markets. The peripheral countries do not benefit from free trade and global media policies as much as the counter hegemonic states do. In as far as free trade and global media policies are concerned, this research contends that they prevent the development of the periphery economically and culturally while serving to maintain the counter hegemony of the Western world. Thus, the power of the United States is based on the counter-hegemony advanced by the introduction of neo-liberalism concepts in the hegemonic developing countries. For instance the concept of democracy advanced by the Western countries may be hidden behind the neoliberal agenda (Nyamnjoh, 2005).

As is the case with capitalism, the ruling class relies not just on brutal enforcement in order to gain and maintain control, but it makes extensive use of ideology and propaganda through culture (Bondes & Heep, 2012). Since media is culture, this study benefits from this model as it gives it a direction to interrogate how media as culture is and how it has been used to manipulate and gain control of the people in Zimbabwe. Furthering this idea, Gramsci maintains that cultural domination paves way for political domination (Strinati, 1995). It is from such arguments that the research derives impetus to interrogate the relationship between the state’s media policies and the Western funded counter hegemonic media reform activists in Zimbabwe. It further analyses the extent to which the ruling class or ZANU (PF) uses its political clout to silence counter hegemonic forces (nonconformists). Through these lenses, one should now be able to understand that the dominant ruling class and Western liberal hegemony relies not just on brutal enforcement to gain and maintain control, but it makes extensive use of ideology and propaganda channeled through culture (Bondes & Heep 2012). Thus, the role of the media as a cultural carrier becomes important. In this scenario, it only makes sense for people with an ideology they want promoted to fight for the control of the media. Closer home, the theory explains the reality of the developing countries’ tight control over the media as well as their reluctance to democratise that space. Similarly, Gramsci argues that cultural domination paves the way for political and economic domination (Strinati, 1995).

Neo-Gramscian theorists such as Hall (1988), view the relationship between politics and media mainly in ideological terms (Grossberg, 1992). It is not always the case that the connection between hegemonic politics and the media-influenced culture is constructed through consensual or ideological means. It also includes efforts to “organise” people’s everyday life through popular programmes. Culture is a critical component of people’s lives and identities in societies throughout the world (Dolby, 2006). It is in the realm of culture where negotiation of race, gender, nation and other identities and the play of power takes place (Dolby, 2006). Media is one of the sites where the struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged. It is also a stake to be won or lost in that struggle and it is an arena for consent and resistance. The media is where hegemony partly arises and where it is secured (Hall, 1981: 329).

Gramsci (1971) argues that since a ruling regime legitimises its domination through cultural hegemony, its overthrow must begin by countering its hegemony. For instance, the assumption that the Zimbabwean ruling regime has legitimised itself through the use of media hegemony among other strategies, its demise should start by countering this hegemony. This effort of countering the state hegemony is being pursued by the western funded media reform activists led by MISA- Zimbabwe. Only in this way can “huge masses” be antagonised and mobilised, and “put forward demands which taken together...add up to a revolution” (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci reasons that counter-hegemony must strategically shift from “wars of manoeuvre” (use of forceful assaults against developing nations like what happened in Iraq, Afghanistan and Lybia) to “wars of position” (cultural struggles within civil society).

In resisting hegemony, Gramsci explains the fundamental role played by intellectuals and civil society. He elaborates that each social group coming into being organically creates its intellectuals who give it homogeneity and awareness of its own function. They become the moral campus of the social system. He however goes further to say though all men are intellectuals, not all men have the function of intellectuals in a society. When one distinguishes between intellectuals and non-intellectuals, one is referring to the immediate social function of the intellectuals. Reasonably, it should follow that all human beings within a social system are intellectual but not all are intellectual by social function. The author distinguishes between a “traditional” intellectual and “organic” intellectual, arguing that organic intellectuals do not simply describe social life in accordance with scientific rules, but

they instead explain it through the language of cultural beliefs, values, the feelings and experiences which the public could not express for themselves. In other words, organic intellectuals are imbued with extra qualities to interrogate the conditions of the society in which they live and offer guidance to the obscured precepts of folk wisdom or common sense. Carroll and Hackett (2006) divide organic intellectuals into three categories, the academia, the media professionals and those leading counter hegemonic media interest social movements. This view is critical for this study in explaining the complex background of resisting state dominance in the Zimbabwean media. It enables the study to unravel issues beyond organisation of resistance within the state.

Neo-Gramscian thought understands media as a site of struggle between the “resistance” of subordinate groups in society and the forces of “incorporation” operating in the interests of dominant groups (Storey, 2001). Considering the media in Zimbabwe from a neo-Gramscian perspective clearly paints it as a terrain of ideological struggle between dominant and subordinate classes (Storey, 2001). These contestations are vital in this study as they provide a standard measure to see which side of the fighting parties has manoeuvred into the territory of the other and to what extent. Closer to the language of this study, this neo- Gramscian approach provides a basis for one to explain whether forces of counter-hegemony are gaining ground towards media democracy or not. In this context, the Gramscian hegemony theory understands media as a site of struggle between “resistance” of subordinate groups and the forces of “incorporation” operating in the interests of dominant groups. In Zimbabwe, the struggle is between the media-interested social movements and the state. Social movements engage in counter-hegemony to respond to the state media ideology of using stringent laws to keep the media tightlipped.

Hegemony results from class conflict and the need to maintain power and control over others. It is used by the dominant party to control the subordinate other, it is used by the dominant group at the expense of the subordinate groups (Strinati, 1995: 154). In this study the concept of hegemony is closer to issues of communication democracy where the dominant group is keen to use the media for ideological manipulation of the subordinate groups so as to exercise its power of both media and political control in Zimbabwe. At independence in Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Information re-politicised the inherited Rhodesian Front (RF) bureaucracy so as to use it as an ideological state apparatus. Nathan Shamuyarira, a central committee member and the party’s Secretary for Information in the political bureau, became the Minister

of Information. Besides him, other members of the ruling party who had been media stewards during the war time, broadcasting from the Voice of Zimbabwe Radio programme, were slotted into senior positions at the new Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) in an effort to avoid selling out the struggle but keeping on the hegemonic foundations (Mano, 2009; Saunders, 1991). Observing the same issues explains that the staffing policy “ensured strict ZANU PF hegemonic control over broadcasting from the outset” (Chuma, 2010: 92). For the new government of Zimbabwe, broadcasting, especially radio was an important medium of communication based on its pervasiveness in rural areas as compared to the press (ibid). This trend continued into the new millennium where the government intensified its hegemony through the use of laws and regulations to whip the counter-hegemonic media back into line.

Using Gramsci, this thesis finds it easy to interpret that the hegemonic control of the media by the state through legislative regulations and extra judicial measures was the genesis of clashes between the government and media activists. The authorities were battling to keep control while the media activists fought for media democracy through a media democratisation process which includes but is not limited to media reform. Though Gramsci (1971) mentions culture as critical in hegemonic projects and that more attention should be given to revolutionary organisations in the realm of culture and education, he becomes less helpful when it comes to developing a deeper understanding of the practical conceptions of such activism which should be advanced by the civil society in their bid to democratise the communication system. This is where theories of social movements become relevant in assisting in the explanation of the struggle to democratise communication through advancing the plight for media reform. The application of Gramsci theory of hegemony in describing how the state uses cultural institutions such as the media to maintain power has helped to answer the above research questions.

Democratising communication through Social Movement Theory

In this part of the research, social movement theorists are used to provide light in a discussion which seeks to unravel the interplay between media democratisation, media activism and media reform in Zimbabwe. The conceptions of social movements embedded in the resource mobilisation theory (RMT) (McCarthy & Zald, 1973; 1977) and framing (Benford & Snow, 2000) are explored in a manner that will inform the subject under study. From the onset, it has to be understood that social movement does not refer to a single theoretical school, but

rather points to a family of diverse positions that share a view of activism and campaign as the fundamental basis to induce social transformation. Social movements are defined as “collective challenges to existing arrangements of power and distribution by people with common purposes and solidarity, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities” (Meyer & Tarrow, 1998: 4). Social movement entails the need to challenge the status quo through activism efforts. Tarrow (1994) sees social movements as a collective challenge to power by people who share common purposes and solidarity. It may be through individual actions, collective tactics or campaigns. While there is less complexity at the individual level, the organisational level of social movement is very complex. These units of effort feed into one another. A collective tactic is made up of several individual actions, a campaign is composed of multiple tactics and a social movement is composed of multiple campaigns (Joyce, 2014). This study is premised in the social movement context as it examines efforts of the media reform activism in Zimbabwe. Recently, the form of the social movement has changed and scholarship has noted the changing role of collective identity in social movements as digital media afford greater personal expression and personalisation of movement frames (Bennett Segerberg & Walker, 2014). Networked technologies also facilitate flatter, peer-to peer structures in place of the hierarchical and centralised social movement structures of the past (Castells, 2010).

Originally, social movements are known to have their roots in the 1960s United States, emanating from collective action studies of the civil rights, student and labour movements (Bakke, 1966; Lipsky, 1968; Olson, 1965). Social movement developed into a substantive discipline around 1970s fortified by elaborate resources mobilisation theories (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Later on, new social movement (NSM) theories emerged to describe the fact that whereas the traditional social movements had viewed individuals as rational actors who mobilised resources to obtain collective good from states, new social movement theories challenge the assumption that the government was a social movement’s default antagonist (Tilly & Tarrow 2006). Since social movements are large and visible and are linked to a rich and diverse range of theories of collective action, collective identity, resource mobilisation, opportunity structures, and framing processes, they remain a suitable framework for the analysis of media activism in Zimbabwe.

Using various forms of protests, informal networks based on shared beliefs and solidarity can mobilise themselves around conflictual issues, (Della Porta & Diani, 1996). Indeed, it is a

social process through which collective actors articulate their interests, voice grievances and critiques and propose solutions to identified problems by engaging in a variety of collective actions. Relevant to the study, social movement is a process through which media interest activists collectively articulate media democratisation deficit inherent in Zimbabwe (Willems, 2005) and fight inequality of access to media, lack of freedom of expression and one dimensional political ideology in the media. It entails advocacy for media justice, media law reform and media democratisation using various activities and actions such as media education, lobbying and petitioning the government to reform media policies, and lobbying against media injustices in the courts of laws.

To analyse the communication democratisation process in Zimbabwe, the study will be informed by social movement theorists embedded in the Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT) and Framing theory. These approaches will complement each other in explaining whether these initiatives can cohere into a critical mass and produce the momentum needed to change the media into a democratic media system as envisaged. The intention is to use these approaches as a focal entry point to understand the struggle for communication democratisation in Zimbabwe and ascertain the extent to which such activism has been successful. Based on the theory of social movement, the study seeks to provide clarity and evaluation on how media activists, as a social movement, continue to struggle to democratise communication in Zimbabwe. The theory will further provide lenses to ascertain the extent to which such activism has been successful. For this research, focus will be on media activism as a social movement for media reform and media democratisation.

Resource Mobilisation Theory

The resource-Mobilisation theory (RMT) underlines the importance of resources in social movement development and success (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Resources in this instance include knowledge, money, media, labour, unity, legitimacy as well as support from internal and external power elite. The approach focuses on the availability of resources and selective incentives. It seeks to understand ways of aggregating resources and the ability to take advantage of political opportunities (Melucci, 1988). The RMT advances that social movements are established when individuals with complaints or grievances are able to mobilise adequate resources to act. The emphasis on resources explains why some discontented or deprived individuals organise social movements while others do not. Major propounders of this theory are McCarthy and Zald (1977). They state that the theory,

“...examines the variety of resources that must be mobilised, the linkages of social movements to other groups, the dependence of movements upon external support for success and the tactics used by authorities to control or incorporate movements...”(1977: 121). Interestingly, resources as described above, should be understood as knowledge, media, solidarity, funding, media legitimacy and support groups from both the internal and external sphere. The argument proffered by the Resource Mobilisation theory is that, although grievances are ubiquitous, movements are not. Therefore, following this disconnect, there must exist variables that translate personal or individualised grievances into organised descendency (Wiktorowicz, 2003: 196).

Professional formal social movement organisations (SMOs) are necessary to obtain external (and often, elite) resources (see McAdam et al, 1996; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). In addition, SMOs are founded by highly skilled professional entrepreneurs and these organisations are particularly capable of accessing external resources since they resemble the formal institutions with which they are interacting. Edwards and Kane (2014) support the view that resources in a social movement may be accessed from outside of the aggrieved constituency. However, resources may be pre-existing in organisations, for instance, communications networks and other resources already operating within excluding external support. The Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT) emphasises the role of entrepreneurs and formal SMOs in mobilising external resources required for successfully challenging authority. Nonetheless, these organisations are still treated as “outsider” groups no matter how much legitimacy is granted to them (Gamson, 1990). Thus, although RMT was the first theory to treat social movements as an entrepreneurial endeavour which emphasises professional activists, this perspective still reinforces the insider outsider dichotomy in asserting that challengers who are outside of the polity would eventually require formal structures to access inside resources and to gain the attention of sympathetic elites. Santoro and McGuire state that, “implicit in resource mobilization theory is the view that movement actors and political opportunities are conceptually distinct and mutually exclusive” (Santoro & McGuire, 1997: 504).

RMT assumes that in the modern politically pluralistic society, protest is inevitable because there is constant discontent because of perceptions of deprivation. However, protestors or actors are rational enough to do a costs and benefits analysis from movement participation. If the benefits outweigh the costs, members are recruited and networks commitment is

maintained by building a collective identity and continuing to nurture interpersonal relationships. It is important to note that movement organisation is contingent upon the aggregation of resources without which they will fold. In this instance, social movement organisations require resources and continuity of leadership to transform collective discontent into social movements as social movement organisations form the mainstay of social movements. The form of the resources shapes the activities of the movement.

Media activists' social movement organisations use numerous methods to gain resources. Methods such as credibility and achievements play a major role in the success or failure of social movement. In this instance, credibility implies the attempt to undermine another movement by publicly doubting and undermining its credibility to procure new activists. This can be done by indicating faults in a social movement strategy, message and ideology and evidencing the credibility of one's own social movement. The research will analyse how state organs have been used to challenge social movements using credibility means. Achievements are the progress a social movement has made by reaching its goals. The extent of media activism achievement forms the central part of these investigations as the research seeks to understand the levels in which media activism has been able to cause media reform and ultimately the degree to which media rights have been extended from the elite class to the rest of the population. This relationship forms the crucial part of this study. The research acknowledges that media activism is not done for the sake of itself but to institute change.

Partly, the research seeks to analyse the extent to which some forms of media democratisation action have been successful. Firstly, the study examines the manner and extent to which media activists have managed to influence content and practices of mainstream media; for instance, finding openings for oppositional voices, media monitoring, and campaigns to change specific aspects of representation. Secondly, the study examines the level at which media activist groups in Zimbabwe have managed to advocate for reform of government policies/regulation of media to change the structure and policies of media themselves for instance, media reform coalitions. Thirdly, the study looks at the degree to which media activism has influenced the building of independent, democratic and participatory media. Lastly, it investigates how media reform advocacy groups have managed to change the relationship between audiences and media. Using the RMT, the research seeks to appreciate the extent to which media activists can be better equipped to reduce deprivation in the freedom of speech and media freedom. Media freedom ensues that the right kinds of

resources reach those that need them most. The argument here is that in order for media reform activism to develop from mobilisation potential to actual mobilisation, it requires good and effective framing that is understood and shared with potential participants. Chosen frames must resonate with the participants' grievances. The creation of correct and effective frames that are cognisant of culture, economic and political environment is likely to influence the much needed reform in the media.

As noted above Gramsci's thoughts were influenced by the activism role he played in the Communist Party. In his understanding, Gramsci avers that hegemony is a result of class conflict where the dominant team will always emerge victorious at the expense of the subordinating class. Regardless of this glaring dominance, the subordinate groups remain inactive until they are well resourced to counter the hegemony. Thus, counter hegemonic forces referred to as media activists in this research are resourced by the Western based organisations elaborated somewhere in this research. Resources come in different forms ranging from; human resources, intellectual resources, material resources and several others. According to McCarthy and Zald (1977) resource-mobilisation theory (RMT) underlines the importance of resources in media policy counter hegemonic movements. It is based on this explanation that one should now be able to understand that the success of the Western liberal media reform activists relies not just on strategic planning and implementation but also on resources mobilisation skills and proper resource distribution.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter explores theoretical framework used in this study. It establishes two theories namely Gramsci's theory of hegemony and the Resource Mobilisation theory as suitable lens used to analyse works of media reform activism and media democratisation in Zimbabwe. Using Gramsci's perspective, the study sought to establish how the state hegemony embedded in the media is enforced and challenged by the counter hegemonic media reform activists. Hegemony by the authoritative state permeates society through a loosely but interrelated set of ruling ideas which make the established order of power and values appear natural, taken-for-granted and "common-sensical". On the other hand, by countering the state hegemony, these lenses help to understand that the Western sponsored media reform activists seeks to establish their own hegemony. Besides Gramsci, the chapter introduced another theory embedded under the broad spectrum of social movement theory,

the Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT). The RMT examines a variety of resources that must be mobilised for a media reform activism effort to achieve its objective. It further explains the linkages of social movements groups to other groups and their dependence upon external support for success and the tactics used by the authoritative regime to control or incorporate the movement. Resources should be understood as knowledge, media, solidarity, funding, media legitimacy and support groups from both internal and external sphere. The next chapter presents the history of media debates in Zimbabwe and outlines the events which led to the promulgation of media laws in 2000.

Chapter Four

History and development of media policy in Zimbabwe

Introduction

Investigating media policy reform and media democracy is a continuing concern within the discipline of media. The contextual background in this chapter gives an overview of the historical emergence and development of the issues that later characterise the media sphere in the post-colonial Zimbabwe. The chapter articulates the build up towards the government of Zimbabwe's perceived political paranoia that prompted the promulgation of media debilitating policy and regulations in the post 2000 epoch. In doing so, the chapter seeks to respond to the following question: what are the issues which influenced the promulgation of media laws such as the Broadcasting Service act of 2001 and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act of 2002? The chapter argues that the developments, "occasioned by the political, economic and cultural forces at play during the colonial and post-independence epochs, have had a lasting impression on the mass media of this country" (Moyo, 2003: 1). However, in trying to address the colonial legacy and reassert national sovereignty which had been eroded by liberal market ideologies of the 1990, Zimbabwe reregulated the media space sparking controversy with the West along the way.

It is not within the purview of the present chapter to give a detailed history of the events that characterised media policy from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe. However, the chapter pays attention to the basic frameworks of the process of media policy development in this era in order to locate the historicity of the current contestations in Zimbabwe's media policy and regulations regime. The chapter is divided into two major parts, the colonial period and the post colonial period. The chapter gives an overview of the political economy of the media from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe addressing the development of the press from its inception in 1891 to 1999 which marked a shift in the Zimbabwean media policy environment. In the same category, the chapter traces development of broadcasting and broadcasting policy since 1932 when radio was launched in Rhodesia to 1999 focusing on the effects of ownership, funding and control of both broadcasting and the print media in order to understand the conditions that led to modern day media policy and media policy reform activism to democratise communication. Through this narrative, the chapter seeks to understand issues that motivate media policy intervention and an upsurge of media reform activism in Zimbabwe at the turn of the millennium.

From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe: the political economy of the Media

To understand the debate surrounding media policy and regulation reform in Zimbabwe, it is important to dissect and plunge into the past and bring forward issues that invoked government's ire, insecurity and suspicion which later informed the media policy processes at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In that expedition, the research is mindful of the need to understand how the dynamics in the forces which control the production and distribution of media products enhanced or limited communication democracy from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe. In addition, the research would not pay a blind eye to the nature of the relationship that existed between the state regulation and communication institutions in different eras of media development as they are pertinent to issues that influenced not only the media policy build up in Zimbabwe but the counter hegemonic media reform activism. In doing so, there is need for this chapter to focus on the history and ownership patterns of Zimbabwean media. In particular, the chapter will concentrate on the influence of the patterns of ownership on the nature of media activities and production.

The development of the Press in Zimbabwe

The history of the press from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe is analysed alongside a racial divide, i.e. the "white" minority who happened to be the elites and the "black" majority who represent the subjects. In addition to the racial division, the difference symbolises the power struggle that exists between these two since the colonial times and how it affected the development of the media and media policies today. Zimbabwe was under colonial administration of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) which subjected the indigenous people to colonial bondage. On 27 June 1891, the Mashonaland and Zambezia Times were published albeit in a hand-written form by the Argus group which had very strong ties with a prominent businessman and politician Cecil John Rhodes from Cape Town (Ronnings, 2003). Drawing from Mararike, Tendai Chari described this newspaper thus, "...William Fairbridge, a South African born columnist of the Cape Argus had kept the settler community in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) informed through a cyclostyled pamphlet called The Mashonaland and Zambezia Times which became The Herald in 1892...Its aim was "to advance to the fullest" the agricultural interests of the owners of the newspapers" (Chari, 2016:150). These were to be replaced by, The Rhodesia Herald on October 20, 1892 as the country's major daily newspapers. The paper was later renamed The Herald, and survived up to this day but is controlled by the government owned Zimpapers group which took over from the Argus

Company at independence in 1980 (Ronnings, 2003). On October 12, 1894, it opened another publication, the Bulawayo Chronicle in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city (ibid). These two publications were owned and controlled by the white elites whose interests were to advance their political ambitions and business interests in the African colonies. At this time, "Newspapers such as the Rhodesia Herald, Chronicle, their weekly sisters Sunday Mail and the Sunday News, as well as the Financial Gazette, were clearly aligned with the ideology and interests of the white ruling elite in Rhodesia" because they were owned, funded and controlled by the white elites (Mukasa, 2003: 172).

Although the journalistic tendency of the times was to promote European cultural standards while denigrating African culture (ibid), there was also the church whose budding press was always aligned to the development of evangelical work devoting a lot of space in the newspapers to sermons by priests. The totality of it is that political and Christian agitations through the media became paramount in its intention to influence the indigenous people and subject them to Christian values or political forces or both. Although some general issues would be discussed in the early newspaper publications, most of the publications were based on missionary's religious teachings and the promotion of literacy and culture (Dombo, 2014). Notwithstanding the discussion in the preceding paragraph, the "news" by such newspapers was predominantly Christian religion and moral education (Nyamnjoh, 2005; Dombo, 2014).

It could also be said that the publications for religious denominations would write about "the evil of beer drinking, strengthening the faith and general education for the Africans, paying tithes, world events, events at the missions and their outposts and articles on the relations between the missions and the government" (Dombo, 2014: 33). Although this media would not delve much into national politics, more often than not, it would promote European cultural standards and denigrate the African ones. At the core of this production was the colonial determination to dictate what indigenous people must know and do for their colonial masters (ibid). The need for the production of African newspapers to influence Africans on what to think about became imminent. At times, the decision for both the state and the missionaries to work together to determine what content was suitable for the Africans and would not jeopardise settlers' interests would be reached (ibid). It was in such meetings that information prejudicial to the colonial administration would be discouraged for that which served to perpetuate colonial hegemony (Nyamnjoh, 2005). Such arrangements implies that from the onset, media was conceived as an instrument of ideological manipulation and

support of either, the dominance of the church or the colonial government or both advancing the will of the elite class at the expense of indigenous black people. The framing of the relationship that exist between the church, state and the black indigenous people indicates efforts to inculcate into the mind of the black indigenous people a sense of self-denigration so that they would accept their fate as second class citizens whose subjugation was justified.

According to Dombo (2014), the Dutch Reformed Church produced the bi-monthly newsletter called *MunyaiWashe*. Besides, in 1918, the American Methodist Church publication, *UmbowoHweUkristo* was established. These publications were to extend the evangelical work and publicise the good works of the church so as to influence public opinion aligned to Christian values. The idea to increase, christian influence to Africans saw the Dutch Reformed Church publishing a semi-secular press called the *Rhodesia Native Quarterly* in 1926 then *Mashonaland Quarterly* and later the *Rhodesia Quarterly* (Dombo, 2014: 128). The demise of the *Rhodesia Native Quarterly* marked the beginning of the *Native Mirror* (Chiringiro) in Shona in 1931, or *Isibuko* in Ndebele (ibid). It was printed and distributed by the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company at the Chronicle offices in Bulawayo. To a greater extent, the publication allowed some Africans to contribute content although contributions were subjected to scrutiny and serious gate keeping so as to keep Africans in check in case they may publish issues that may tilt the balance of power and subvert state authority. Major topics such as agriculture were preserved for the whites who encouraged Africans to abandon their traditional farming methods ostensibly to increase their yields when in actual fact they wanted to have full control over agricultural land and pastures and practices for their own benefit (Dombo, 2014). Although, there was no official policy to administer the functions of the press, the conditions above indicates that the colonial state was worried about opening the gates to absolute media freedom and access to information that could influence the regime's downfall yet they continue to use the media to exert their on influence and monopoly.

Another, significant factor is that the paper was printed in Karanga¹⁰, Zezuru¹¹ and Ndebele¹², as well as in English (Dombo, 2014). The use of indigenous languages by the media was not benign. It was for encouraging indigenous black people to read and understand religious

¹⁰ Karanga dialect is spoken in the southern Zimbabwe, near Masvingo.

¹¹ Spoken in Mashonaland central and Mashonaland east, near Harare.

¹² African language spoken by the Matabele people of Zimbabwe.

doctrine and the need to perpetrate colonial ideologies (Salawu, 2015). More importantly, the government wanted its notices and reports to be translated into all three languages so that they are understood along language variances of the people they were trying to reach out and govern (Dombo, 2014).

In the broadcasting sector, the Rhodesian Federal Broadcasting Corporation (RFBC) came into operation around 1958 serving the Central African Federation of Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (CAFSNRN). At the break-up of the federation in 1963, separate broadcasting corporations were established in the three territories with the Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation (RBC) coming into existence on 01 January 1964 (Mabika, 2014). Later in the years, other stations were built in the old Post Office building on Manica Road in Salisbury. However, since its inception to the early sixties, the Southern Rhodesia Broadcasting relied on broadcasting from outside the country (Mabika, 2014). At this moment, Ian Smith did not only see within broadcasting some kind of threats which needed to be dealt with before they destroyed his ambitions but he also discovered a tool in which he could use to advance state hegemony to both his white counterparts and the majority black people. When his Rhodesian Front (RF) unilaterally declared independence from Britain (UDI) in 1965, it became obvious that the use of both print and broadcasting media was imperative. This was so because Smith's action of defiance raised confidence crisis among settler population and the international world and there was need to restore the confidence as a matter of urgency (Windrich, 2010). Given that such development coincided with the intensified liberation struggle waged by the indigenous black political movements, the proclamation was wrongly timed as it compounded Rhodesia's challenges which were already putting pressure on the new government (ibid).

Finding himself in such uncertain situation, Ian Smith had no option but to undertake confidence-building measures which to some extent entailed resorting to "extra-ordinary means of propagating information locally and internationally in an effort to win the hearts and minds of white Rhodesians" (Msindo, 2009: 663). The regime intensified media politicisation through manipulation of the media to strengthen its rule in Rhodesia. Among its strategies was the launch of a propaganda assault through the radio, television, press and some newsletters (Windrich, 2010).

According to Windrich (1981), a series of events to legitimise the monopoly of broadcasting began with the RF congress voting for the use of the only broadcaster in the country to “boost morale and patriotism” (Windrich, 1981: 32). The same congress agreed the prohibition against “nationalist” publicity through broadcasting stations and all licences to televise from Private Corporation were cancelled and the government was urged to invest in public broadcasting corporation (ibid). Indeed, professional broadcasting was inimical to the goals of the state hence a board of governors with no knowledge of broadcasting but had vast knowledge in terms of the government’s political goals was appointed (Windrich, 1981). Eventually the state took over ownership of both the Rhodesian radio and television as they were necessary to win “the war for the minds of men” Windrich, 1981: 37). In 1968, the RBC expanded its services further with a number of local community stations such as Radio Jacaranda in Salisbury, Radio Matopos in Bulawayo and Radio Manica in Umtali. In 1975, the first FM stations opened in Salisbury and Bulawayo areas and the network was gradually expanded to 22 stations covering the whole country (Miller, 2007). This expansion would improve the reach and access of the government’s hegemonic information by public.

The broadcasting developments greatly increased the growth in African radio broadcasting in Rhodesia. The African broadcasting served the purpose of disseminating government policies to the natives. Based on the fact that most of the natives could neither read nor write, the only means of communicating to them was through radio broadcasting using indigenous language (Moyo, 2000). Broadcasting media was used as a tool to control the hearts and minds of the indigenous people, described as too dangerous to be left idle as they could be easily manipulated by the communist ideologies (Masuku, 2011; Msindo, 2009; Windrich, 1981). Having realised this, the Rhodesian government banned foreign communication as a measure to intensify its control of the Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation (RBC). The Ministry of Information embarked on propaganda assault through productions built on frames which paint a bad image of the speculated independent Africa. As the liberation struggle in Rhodesia gained momentum, propaganda war also escalated with the appointment of Mr Ivor Benson as the Director of information. This development marked a period of ruthless psychological warfare to project a favourable image of Rhodesia both internally and externally (Windrich, 2010). Among the material manufactured by Mr Benson were booklets such as News and Newspapers, Know your enemy, the problem of unfree press and opinion

makers.¹³ To make their case strong, the government would distribute leaflets which contained threatening messages as envisaged by the Catholic Commission for Justice and peace (CCJP).

Tigers
Terrorist informers
Terrorist agents
Sympathisers and feeders of terrorists
Recruiters for terrorist training
There are still some people who continue to help the terrorist and a few even try to do
evil work for them. These people are counted as terrorist and will be killed by the
security forces (CCJPR, 1977:1)

The above message was a signpost of the intensification of the ideological battle to win the hearts and minds of the people (Msindo, 2009). In such bad logic, statements which insinuate that “feeding terrorists” is tantamount to being one and is punishable by death thus presented a higher order of fear-inducing statements by the state. These statements further intimated that the society should have nothing to do with those who claim to be fighting a war to liberate them from the shackles of colonialism. Instead, it should be contented by subjecting itself to a system which abuses it. In fact, through name-calling the state intended to differentiate those who were actively involved in the liberation struggle and those who passively supported it from home. As a result, the government would implore the people to join the bandwagon of supplying information about the so called terrorists to the state.

Notwithstanding such criticism, the government began to write interpretative press articles, discourses, and the use of hatred in the use of names like, “communists, traitor, dirty Jews” as conveyed by the media position. The press became one of the most fundamental instruments to propagate such hate speech and influence. These measures were to disseminate information that would establish the government’s identity and spruce up its image as a legitimate government in the face of the critical world and the local indigenous people waging a war in protest of the colonial rule (Windrich, 1980). The government put up a media structure to propagate its colonial ideology through misleading the people, distortion of information, exaggeration of the facts, subjectivity in information and inaccuracy and fabrications. By engaging in the costly propaganda war, the regime sought to win support from the international world which had declared sanctions and placed a trade embargo on

¹³ LA Debates, Vol. 57,12 August 1964, Col.660

Rhodesia. Among other strategies, the state reorganised the information department, introduced press censorship, closed African newspapers and then took over Rhodesian Broadcasting in 1965. This indicated a new twist on media policy in the colonial Rhodesia which had far reaching implications in the current media policy environment in Zimbabwe in the sense that the government of Zimbabwe at Independence adopted all these media policy in a manner described by Dumisani Moyo as “Change without Change” (Moyo, 2004).

The state’s uneasiness with power of the media organisations and their huge contributions to the defense of fundamental human rights seemed to have been a clear justification for censorship. To increase the influence, press censorship was twin played with propaganda. Full press censorship was realised after the UDI in November 1965 (Windrich, 1981). Although it was briefly removed in 1968, self-censorship was evident throughout the Rhodesian rule.¹⁴ The African Daily News had introduced a fierce ideological competition in Rhodesia mainly because of its objective reporting and a hard hitting stance on the colonial administration in Rhodesia (Dombo, 2014). Thus the press was a counter hegemonic source of news in the struggle against colonialism. By creating a bifurcated narrative within the Rhodesia media system, the African Daily News advanced the narrative of the plight of the subjected majority at the same time exposing the ills of the ruling class (ibid). The outspoken African Daily News was put on the radar by the repressive state as it was making it difficult for the state to impose its idea without being opposed (Dombo, 2014). On 26th August 1964, the African Daily News was proclaimed a prohibited publication in terms of the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act (LOMA) (Dombo, 2014). The publication was charged for abuse of the press freedom to intentionally subvert the government (ibid). Regardless of protests against this ban by the public, the government refused to reverse the ban leading to the closure of the African Daily News.

Upon realisation that it would not automatically succeed in reproducing the ruling class structures of production, the Rhodesian Front (RF) decided to reinforce ideological state apparatus by using coercive power through revoking repressive state apparatus. To this end, the Rhodesian government introduced security legislative provisions which impinge on media democracy. Among these legislative provisions, was the infamous Law and Order

¹⁴ Rhodesian cabinet Memoranda, 1963, R.C (F) (63) 46, Parliamentary secretary-Information and Propaganda, Anti-Subversion, 2 February 1963.

Maintenance Act (LOMA) of 1965. This instrument became the major security law to ruthlessly assault media democracy by prohibiting turning on a radio in a public place “in case it picks up broadcasting which may be unfavourable to the state” (Moyo, 2008: 15). Anyone found guilty of this offence could be jailed for up to two years (Zaffiro, 1984). Before this, the RF had introduced the Emergency Powers Act of (1964). Under this Act, the state would make laws without going through the parliamentary process. This was clearly an affront to the constitutional democracy as it was used to attack those publications which dared not toe the Rhodesian Front’s (RF) correct political line and those who had divergent views to the state. However, most of these laws were security laws rather than media laws, meaning that media at this point was being treated as a security threat. Clearly, these policies were put in place to muzzle the media from playing its normative watchdog role in society.

Other extra judicial infringement of media democracy such as, harassment of journalists and editors became a regular feature of RF campaign against alternative ideas. The correspondents were continually hauled before parliamentary committees or courts of law to answer trumped up charges arising from normal conduct of their daily duties. For instance, Tony Hawkins was called to answer the charges of contempt of parliament at the instigation of a RF Member of Parliament (MP) (Windrich, 1981: 59). The editor of the Chronicle Sidney Swadel, was charged for publishing a report of bomb throwing at a stadium. John Parker of the Sunday Mail was arrested and deported for having obtained a memorandum of UDI prepared for associated chambers of commerce. Eeline Haddon of the Central African Examiner was issued with a restriction order for publishing a poem likely to endanger feelings of hostility towards the police. Eugene Wason of the African Daily news was charged on publication of a false report (Windrich, 1981: 59). The harassment of media personnel was meant to make them conform and frame their views in favour of the RF government. In order to stay out of trouble, the media began to practice self-censorship (Wylie, 1972: 163). As censorship intensified, the information department of the regime moved the government press officers into the Rhodesian Herald and Bulawayo Chronicle offices (Msindo, 2009). The rationale was to censor news during gathering and production process. The printing of articles, photography or any other material was subjected to seeking for permission from the censorship office first. All editorial matters were submitted by the publication to the censorship board which would either sign it to signal authorisation or crossed out to signal disapproval without giving any explanation (Windrich, 1981). This further entrenched colonial domination through obstructing access to information and further

ingrained suppression of information to combat black activism by nationalist social movements (Ndlela, 2003). Indigenous publications which were suspected of supporting the black African revolution were banned too. For instance, Solomon Mutsvairo's first novel, *Feso* (1956) was banned by Rhodesian censors for containing a poem titled *Nehanda Nyakasikana*¹⁵ which narrativise the suffering of the black people in their own country and castigated the white colonial administration for the appropriation of indigenous wealth. The commandeering of the media by the Rhodesian government indicated that the colonial administration understood and venerated information power. The colonial administration believed that it was only the white settlers who "knew what was in the 'best interests' of Africans" (Dombo, 2014: 33). The colonial Zimbabwe celebrated the media as a tool for ideological manipulation and control.

Media policy changes and continuities in the post-independence Zimbabwe

Well, that is the contradiction of African nationalism. It fights hard against the oppressor using the need for a system change as a rallying cry, only to embrace the oppressor's governance template, (Bango cited in Dombo, 2013: 129)

The 1980 independence from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe marked the end of a colonial administration that was highly draining to the development of media democracy and other forms of media freedom. Naturally, one would have expected the beginning of a democratisation process from the ebbs of colonial regime to the much anticipated democratic freedom across the social, political and economic divide. However, drawing from Kuper and Kuper (2001), it became apparent that in a new and fragile democracy that was emerging from the settler authoritarianism, the serious dispute over whether the media should accentuate their critical role as watchdogs, or their constructive role in development and strengthening the new emerging black government's ability to effectively rule was unavoidable. To a greater extent, the media policy of the new and emerging Zimbabwe was laced with contradictions which were deep rooted in the colonial epoch when the press and broadcasting media served the interests of the government (Ronning & Kupe, 2000).

Regardless of the fact that the Argus Company was at loggerheads with Ian Smith's administration over issues of editorial independence and government censorship,

¹⁵ Nehanda Nyakasikana was a Zimbabwean Spirit medium believed to have fought the battles with the colonial administration. She was caught, tried and hanged.

nevertheless, it was viewed by the new government of ZANU-PF as part of the Rhodesian legacy (Ronnings, 2003). Therefore, there was need to correct this by removing the influential media from the hands of the Argus Company based in apartheid South Africa and replace it with a new indigenised, nationalised and democratised media structure which would reflect the objectives of the liberation struggle and the will of the black majority. On the other hand, ZANU-PF was inherently authoritative and it was not within its policy to have a media that would meet media democracy standards. This state of ambivalence within the new administration brought in a new media policy dilemma (Ronning & Kupe, 2000).

In a move which brought temporary hope and trust in the dispensation of 1980, the new government set up a “new” structure in 1981, the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT). It was setup as an articulation of a media policy in the new era of governance (Nyahunzvi, 1987; Ronning & Kupe, 2000; Ronning, 2003). According to Dombo, the ZMMT was established to;

...ostensibly to guarantee media independence from the state... it inherited an infrastructure built over nearly a century of colonial and settler rule that had enabled it convincingly to beat competition for popular newspaper readership. It took over control of two dailies, two weeklies and a provincial weekly.... the whole idea of a trustee ownership was initiated as a democratic experiment aimed at supposedly protecting the press from state power and business interests as an assurance of autonomy to the print media (Dombo, 2014:140).

The view that ZMMT was established to guarantee editorial independence is supported by Chari (2016) who draws on Article 19/MISA’s assertion that the ZMMT, “Was a trustee company...set up...to provide a buffer between the government and the newspapers... The ZMMT offered some protection to the newspapers against direct government control and ensured that there was a degree of editorial independence” (Chari, 2016:135). At least this solved the first predicament. Through the Trust the government disbanded or morphed the configuration of the two daily newspapers in the country, The Rhodesian Herald in Salisbury and The Chronicle in Bulawayo by buying out the controlling share of the Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company from the Argus group of South Africa in January 1981 through the ZMMT. This was seen by others as an articulation of its commitment towards a democratic media policy in Zimbabwe (Mazango, 2005; Ronning & Kupe 2000). Zimpapers private Limited was created and immediately assumed the duties of publishing The Herald, The Chronicle, The Manica Post and the weekly Sunday Mail, Sunday News and the local vernacular newspaper, Kwayedza. In the process it established the Community Newspaper

Group (CNG). The CNG was to advance community information access and sharing. Community based newspapers would be distributed in provincial capitals of Zimbabwe. For instance Masvingo Star for Masvingo province, Ilanga for Matebeland North province, the Telegraph for Mashonaland West province, Chaminuka for Mashonaland East province, Nehanda guardian for Mashonaland Central province, The Times for Midlands province, Pungwe for Manicaland province, and Indosakusa for Matebeland North province. In addition, the Zimbabwe Inter Africa News Agency (ZIANA) which became New ZIANA later in the years was established to support news gathering and tell a new Zimbabwean story (Mutsvairo, 2012).

The stated goals of the ZMMT were to promote the interests of ordinary Zimbabweans in the national media through an independent board of non-government individuals (Ronning & Kupe, 2000; Ronning, 2003; Mazango, 2005). Though not necessarily so, the government had no intention and interests in monitoring and mentoring the news media but in reality, ZMMT would become an ideological control hub of the newly established ZANU-PF administration to establish and maintain its own hegemony and to contest for power from any oppositional forces. To a greater extent, this strategy worked well in the first decade of independence (1980-1990) because the media began to play a dual role as a constructive critic at the same time setting the agenda for different groups of publics. In doing so, the media tried to create a very particular balance for each group thereby enhancing both personal freedom and political effectiveness (Kuper & Kuper 2001).

According to Ronning (2003), inconsistencies were glaringly inherent within the ZMMT from its inception. For example, its “Deed of Donation” was made by the government and was subject to change by the government alone (Ronning, 2003), this indicates the government’s intent to maintain its monopoly in the Trust. More so, the Trust had no legal autonomy and it was heavily depended on the government for financial, political and economic support (Ronning, 2003). This weighed heavily against the new Trust and direct influence from the Ministry of information and its control over the Zimpapers which was supposed to be under the authority of the Trust began to creep in. This rendered the Trust a political tool used for scoring political scores. Such configuration of the media sphere brought in chaos within Zimpapers as elements to maintain principles of editorial independence would more often than not clash with the needs of the ruling ZANU-PF government.

To further entrench their power and influence, the government through their proxies within Zimpapers engaged in a strategic movement of people by promoting, demoting and transferring those who did not align themselves with the new order as is sought to establish total control over the press. Among the victims of these fissures was Geoff Nyarota of the Willogate scandal¹⁶, Willy Musarurwa who was moved from the Sunday Mail for giving too much prominence to the Zimbabwe African People's Unity (ZAPU) a rival of the Zimbabwe Africa National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). Henry Muradzikwa was transferred again from the Sunday Mail when he became critical of the mistreatment of Zimbabwean students who were in Cuba at a time when the Cuban ambassador was visiting Zimbabwe (Moyo, 2003; Ruhanya, 2014).

The Ministry of Information continued to exert tremendous influence over Zimpapers publications. The state control of public journalism was so pronounced that some government officials complained that the media had lost all semblance of credibility (Chuma, 2007). The Zimpapers press began to enjoy a monopoly of the press in Zimbabwe through its national dailies, national weeklies and regional weekly publications such as The Herald and The Chronicle, the weekly Sunday Mail, and Sunday News. Regional weeklies like the Manica Post for Mutare, H-Metro for Harare, B-Metro for Bulawayo, Kwayedza for Shona speakers and Umthunywa in Matebeleland. From its inception, publications from this stable would promote the cause of the ruling elite. Sadly, the mainstream media in Zimbabwe has made sure that the ruling class culture reigned supreme. Such corporations would only allow news that supports the government programs and government officials to flourish.

Coming to the broadcasting services, the radio services shortly after independence in 1980, were reorganised ostensibly to align them with the new dispensation in the new Zimbabwe just as the public press was organised. RBC was changed to Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). Today, the ZBC operates four radio channels namely, Sport FM, Radio Zimbabwe, Power FM and National FM. Sport FM broadcasts for 24 hours a day in English, thus covering a broad spectrum of listeners. Its programmes include news and information, a

¹⁶ In 1989 Geof Nyarota, the editor of *The Chronicle*, by then wrote an investigative story that exposed a scandal involving cabinet ministers like the late Morris Nyagumbo and Cain Nkala who bought cheap cars from a national car assembly plant and resold them to the public at exorbitant prices amassing huge and unjustified profits.

variety of music, light entertainment, sport, comedy, quizzes and drama. Radio Zimbabwe broadcasts for 24 hours a day, in Shona, Ndebele and other local languages. The station serves the majority of the rural and urban population that is largely indigenous Africans. Two thirds of the music played on Radio Zimbabwe is produced locally owing to the Jonathan Moyo led policy of seventy-five per cent (75%) local content enshrined in the Broadcasting Service Act (BSA).

The station's programme line-up includes discussions, features and drama on social, cultural, sporting and economic issues. Power FM is a 24-hour commercial and music station aimed at the youths. It provides fast-paced music, entertainment, information and education. The majority of its listeners are young people who are highly receptive. The station broadcasts in English from Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe. Its programmes include youth discussions, current affairs, commercially sponsored programmes and live phone in programmes. The National FM is an educational channel, which broadcasts for 24 hours a day in Shona, Ndebele, English and the minority languages of Nambya, Chewa, Tonga, Venda, Kalanga and Shangani to appeal to all the constitutionally recognised sixteen languages. The audience demographics depend on the nature of the educational programmes being broadcast at the time. The stations works closely with the Ministry of Education's Audio Visual Services, as well as other relevant government ministries and non-governmental organisations

Towards media policy change: a decade of tumult

The coming in of a profoundly new dispensation ushered in by liberal policies coming from the Washington consensus institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) around 1990s further compounded the government's media policy dilemma. This period saw new forces in international governance increasingly affecting national politics and the way the media sphere was configured and operated in Zimbabwe. In this new development often called the 3rd wave of democratisation in Africa, neo liberalism continued spreading much across the African continent and a number of policy adjustment were witnessed. During this re-democratisation process, the formulation of policy was aligned to the "Western ideology of promoting free speech, diversity and plurality in order to continue enjoying aid from donor countries" (Akpojivi, 2018; 55). Naturally, the process of liberalising and deregulating the economies and different sectors meant shrinking the role of the state in the economy and the media in this instance. In essence, neo-liberalism entails

pushing government out of media spaces so that private players can come in and operate with very little government interference in terms of both financing and control. This landed squarely against the government's authoritarian model of running the media in Zimbabwe further complicating the government afflictions.

Liberal policies advanced by the Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAP) in 1990 witnessed an emergence of new media entities like newspapers, magazines, and other publications critical of the government's policies. Regardless of the envisaged contradictions, the 1990 decade witnessed an expansion of the press buoyed to a large extent by the liberal approach to the economy adopted by the government (Chuma, 2007). A number of black privately owned publications were launched. Elias Rusike teamed up with his business associates to buy Modus publishers, publishers of the Financial Gazette. In 1992, they launched the Daily Gazette, the first daily publication to challenge Zimpapers's Herald and Chronicle. Furthermore, in 1993, they launched the Sunday Gazette. Similarly, other privately owned press such as the Sunday Times (1991) were registered. Trevor Ncube, Clive Murphy and Clive Wilson launched the Independent in 1996 and were later to add the Standard in 1997. These publications adopted a critical approach in their coverage of the government and ZANU-PF issues (Chuma, 2007). Their reportage was inspired by the radicalism of liberal politics in Zimbabwe, representing the class wars that the state aimed to destroy.

Magazines such as the Parade under the editorship of Andrew Moyse began to hit hard on the state by exposing the government's ill dealings. With regards to this development, Moyse explained that they were writing "public interest stories"¹⁷ which concern the "national interest". Among the stories were concerns about the ESAP, the colonially adopted education system and the land question. These controversial issues were being reported in the magazine when other newspapers were unable to do so due to fear and self censorship. At that time, it (Parade) had become popular and controversial that Nathan Shamuyarira¹⁸ wrote a threatening letter to the publisher directing the publication to change its editorial policy.

¹⁷The public interest has been described as referring to considerations affecting the good order and functioning of the community and government affairs for the wellbeing of citizens. It has also been described as the benefit of society, the public or the community as a whole.

¹⁸Nathan Shamuyarira (29 September 1928 – 4 June 2014) was a Zimbabwean nationalist. He later served as the Information Minister of Zimbabwe and as the Information Secretary of ZANU PF.

Andrew Moyse a former reporter at the Herald and editor of the Parade and later the Horizon explains that,

The government noticed that we were questioning their policies and Gukurahundi, turning people out on the street, revealing mass graves and the brutality of the elections. We would expose the lack of development in Bulawayo and centralised developments in Harare. The threats on our lives also increased, too many disappeared and some were found hanged mostly soldiers who were trying to expose ivory smuggling. Eventually, I was fired by the editor due to a directive from Nathan Shamuyarira and the ZANU-PF government. I was given eight hours to leave the office... (Interview Andrew Moyse 2017, Harare).

The Minister's intervention in the editorial policy of a publication points towards a government which had plunged into a state of paranoia creating some form of panic reactions (Alfandika, 2018). These sentiments were supported by one respondent who explains that, "The state had seen that the press was playing a real watchdog role, and sooner all their ills were going to be flushed resulting in a panic mode" (Interview Legislator (1) 2017, Harare). The liberalisation of the strategic sectors such as the media during this era took away from the state some power to name and define the national reality to its people and the international world in a way which was favourable to the interests of the ruling ZANU PF government (Mugari, 2014). This however, placed on the government a challenge on how to win back the power and authority of defining reality which had since been usurped by the adopted liberal agenda.

As the disintegration of the state monopoly over information and ideological control deepened, the mid 1990s saw the coming in of some equally hard hitting magazines like the Horizon which had set up the counter hegemony tone after it was established by the editor and journalists staff dismissed from the Parade as elaborated by the founding editor Andrew Moyse,

...we set up the publication with the help of Judy Todd¹⁹ and some journalists whom I had worked with at the Parade such as Jacob Mutambara, Tendai Madima and later, Ray Choto. Although, the publication operated on a small budget, struggling in terms of financial resources, it managed to keep the government on its toes by exposing corruption and other unscrupulous government dealings. In trying to frustrate us, the government opened a barrage of lawsuits to discourage us from investigative journalism...for instance, in November 1998, "Horizon" won an appeal case at the

¹⁹ Judith Todd is the daughter of Garfield Todd (1908–2002), Rhodesian Prime Minister 1953-58, and a political activist in Zimbabwe. She was a manager at the Zimbabwe Trust when the Horizon Magazine was set up.

Supreme Court to reverse a Z\$40 000 (US\$1 100) defamation judgment against former army commander Solomon Mujuru (Interview Andrew Moyse 2017, Harare).

Defamation lawsuits were used by the state essentially to protect their hypocritical reputation and to muzzle the media and deter journalism from playing its normative watchdog role. Lamenting abuse of power by one of the army generals in Zimbabwe, Moyse said,

It was mainly government or government associated people or military like General Solomon Mujuru²⁰ and he was awarded damages but we appealed and the whole thing was thrown out and he was ordered to pay the costs of the suit. When the High Court Sheriff went to collect what we were awarded from Solomon Mujuru, he pulled a gun and “said get off my property or I will kill you” and that was the end of our lawsuit cost... (Interview Andrew Moyse 2017, Harare).

The state’s desperation to win back its authority created another problem of lawlessness as members of the elite class refused to be punctuated by the rule of law in a constitutional democracy like Zimbabwe. General Mujuru defied a directive of the law in an insolent manner that was read as the collapse of the rule of law. Ironically, the state and its agents would always turn to legal attacks in order to whip the private press into line. For instance, 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 (1970) 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 Marufu²¹. However, incidents of arrests, detentions or legal action against journalists by state officials were justified by the state controlled news outlets under Zimpapers and ZBC.

The Zimbabwe media policy dilemma, created by a lack of a composite media policy that should guide the operation of the Media in Zimbabwe, worked negatively for the state as the available legal structure where either elite class oriented or state oriented or both. It is worthwhile to understand that all policies that control the media in Zimbabwe prior to 2000

²⁰Solomon Mujuru (born 5 May 1945 – 15 August 2011), also known by his nom-de-guerre, Rex Nhongo, was a Zimbabwean army general and politician.

²¹ Grace Marufu was later married to President Mugabe and became Mrs Grace Mugabe.

were class and state security oriented laws. For instance, LOMA and Official Secret Act (OSA) laws reflected some extent of class orientation in their preoccupation with class sensitivity as they probably try to protect the powerful and the ruling class. These laws would protect the state against invasion of privacy by the media as argued by the Legislator (1) who said,

...the powerful and dominant interest classes considered notorious in their pursuit of profit and power would not want the world to know about it. Instead, they protect their hypocritical reputation by creating laws around the powerful elites to shun off the media because of its potential to undermine elite reputations by exposing it (Interview Eckson Legislator (1) 2017, Harare).

When the dominant class in society feel infringed or disturbed by the behaviour of the media, it would take away a portion of media freedom through some clauses in the laws that prohibit the media from carrying certain duties which exposes the elite class. For instance, LOMA, would bar the media from reporting on issues that may jeopardise the position of the Rhodesian forces against the nationalists. Technically, the media was denied the opportunity to play its normative watchdog role. Thus, LOMA and OSA were made in a way which sought to create larger than life characters in the ruling leadership. Admittedly, one Zimbabwean government official explains that,

...bringing the office of the president in disrepute would myth make²² the character of the President and portray him as a larger than life character. Such legislation and other batteries of laws created for the same purpose would build some kind of assurance against the possibility of the media picking on that myth” (interview Zimbabwe government official (1) 2017, Harare)

Naturally, this would create an honourable aura around a governing class and shroud power with some kind of mystery to induce fear and respect among the subjects. What is debilitating in this issue is that a portion of media democracy is taken away leaving media vulnerable to the laws and self-censorship.

In addition, Pedzisai Ruhanya, a media scholar and activist avers that,

media sapping laws adopted from the Rhodesian era are in place today and are being selectively applied to defend the state’s ideology against alternative media which provides a point of ideological variance or diversity of ideas by allowing public engagement on matters that are hitherto taboo in the state controlled media. In a way, the distrustful government is unwilling to let go off their grip on the media due to

²² Making the president a mythical character who is beyond reproach.

uncertainty of what the private media may report on (Interview Pedzisai Ruhanya 2017, Harare)

Ruhanya believes that the state is aware of the power of the media in terms of shaping public opinion; setting the agenda; mobilizing and energising citizens and building citizen agency to demand and act on matters they feel have a bearing on their lives. As a result, the government maintains a grip on the media. Besides, the economic consequences of ESAP generated several foes for the ZANU-PF government such as retrenched workers, striking University and College students and the demanding war veterans among several others. Although, some constituencies blame the nationalism ideology and believe that it should have served its time and replaced by a post-nationalist ideology to embrace global trends, the real challenge surrounding these problems lies in economic policy confusion (ibid). To a greater extent, this prompted the government to start working on policy reorientation. Among the policies which were on target was the media policy (Moyo, 2004).

However, before attending to the media policy, the government had to solve the hot issue of the war veterans who were demanding compensation for fighting the liberation struggle. To mute the war veterans, Mugabe's government curved in and acquiesced to the demands of the war veterans and agreed to pay each of the 50 000 members of the Zimbabwe National War Veteran Association (ZNWVA) (Moyo, 2004). A once-off payment of Z\$50 000 and a monthly pension of Z\$2000 was offered and paid (ibid). The total amounted to an unbudgeted Z\$4.5 billion which was a lot of money by Zimbabwean standards in 1998 (Bratton and Masunungure, 2011). The Zimbabwean dollar crushed to an all-time low on 20 November 1997; commonly referred to as "Black Friday" (ibid).

This triggered a series of convulsions in the economy resulting in a pattern of violent politics and a gruelling "battle for the state" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011, 7). Rising labour related strikes and riots were led by a labour board once loyal to the state, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU). As a result of soaring unemployment level, rising inflation and debilitating poverty marked a new chapter in Zimbabwean politics. Drawing from Bond and Manyanya, Chuma (2007) noted that 1997 recorded around 55 national labour actions, rising from the usual 15 per year which had characterised the last 10 years. This was just the beginning; more was to come as indicated in the next section about the land acquisition.

By 1997, the economy was now showing signs of distress and the ruling ZANU-PF's popularity began fading due to some neo liberal policies such as economic adjustment programmes which favoured market competition and media democracy adopted at the beginning of the decade around 1990. The neo liberal policies had a strong negative impact on the lives of the ordinary population. For instance, while the policies advanced free market economy based on market competition, the basic amenities such as health and education which the people had enjoyed for free since 1980 were subjected to some sort of payment.

Indeed, these signs indicated that the state was now under some sort of danger and quickly needed policy reorientation coupled with some propaganda to change the people's mindset. To some extent, these challenges prompted the state to think of making new media laws in 2000. Contrary to the above assumptions, what prompted media law making in the post 2000 era was the need to create one stop legal shop for the media industry as the media control clauses were all scattered around security laws since the colonial era. To reinforce this analysis, 'the then Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services, George Charamba said, "... the situation we had in the country before 2000... There was no composite law which deals with the media as an estate. Essentially what really prompted law making in 2000 and beyond was a bid on our part to then create a one stop legal shop for the media industry" (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare). Besides the Broadcasting Act of 1957, there was no a clear media policy framework to guide how the media should operate and be regulated in Zimbabwe. What was available were adhoc pieces of prohibitive clauses found in different security laws. For instance, one would find media prohibitive clauses in the law and order maintenance act (LOMA), 1962 Official Secrets act (OSA), 1965 Censorship act, 1976 Emergency powers act, and 1962 among others. Although to some extent, this debate holds water, the interpretation has not been without its detractors.

Although, the government denies that, media policy making in the post 2000 era had nothing to do with the liberal policies of the 1990s, proponents of the government critics have also suggested that media laws in Zimbabwe were fashioned as a hegemonic force to reinforce and safeguard the weaning power of the ruling elites during these turbulent times. Clearly, the government had seen that it was quickly losing ground from the liberalism supported by the West. Besides, what was happening in the region especially to those states which had accepted liberal policies, starting with the dethroning of Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Kamuzu Banda of Malawi and Mobutu Seseko of Zaire was not going to spare it. As said before,

measures had to be taken to avoid dangers the government was staring in the face. One law maker sheds light on the way the government reacted to the above developments insisting that,

The government began begging for the re-integration of the polarised society so as to strengthen its power base. Increasingly, the government began to make serious movements in order to win the minds and hearts of the people who had been polarised by liberalisation policies in the economy and the media. To do this they sought to address two vital issues in the history of Zimbabwe, the compensation of the liberation war heroes (War veterans) and the land question which happened to be in the few hands of the whites (Interview Legislator (2) 2017, Harare).

The government realised too soon that the Western liberal policies had disintegrated society in such a manner that the people would not vote the incumbent ruling party mainly because of the sufferings brought by the liberal policies such as ESAP. Thus, in trying to compensate and win the people back, it sought to give them land and compensate those who had fought the liberation struggle. Still, there was need to use the media as a propaganda tool to legitimise the compensations process. The television, radio and the press were therefore largely deployed as means to spread government information and to create a patriotic audience in touch with local notions of culture (Willems, 2014: 6). Willems argues further that the government had confidence in the hegemonic power of the media because,

...after the 2000 parliamentary elections, it increasingly began to use the state-funded media in order to win the hearts and minds of Zimbabweans for its fast-track land reform exercise. A music album named “Hondo yeMinda” [the struggle for land] was launched and a variety of jingles and video clips were introduced such as “Chave Chimurenga” [it is now war] and “Rambai Makashinga” [continue to persevere]. These would appear on state radio and television several times per hour (Willems 2004, 1).

As the government sought to reassert its authority and influence, the land, compensation and the media became tools for legitimising and de-legitimising its waning authority. The masses were subjected to some reality which carried the visions of the liberation struggle to win their consent ahead of the strong opposition supported by the West.

The land question, nationalism agenda and the media

Responding on what might have caused the introduction of media laws in the post 2000 period, one legislator elaborated that,

New developments on both the political and media fronts seem to have caused some panic and hysteria in the government. The government realised that the ESAP which

had ushered neo-liberalism and free market economy in Zimbabwe had within it some mechanism of pushing the authoritative ZANU-PF out of power... In order to win back the hearts and minds of the people, the government embarked on a “cultural nationalism” project heavily supported by the state controlled media. ZANU popularity was waning away and the public was now warming up to the newly introduced labour party the MDC, the new source of alternative news in the form of the Daily News (Interview Legislator (1) 2017, Harare).

In support, another legislator from the Movement for Democratic Change (Alliance) the main opposition party in Zimbabwe avers that,

Combined opposition efforts handed over ZANU-PF’s first defeat ever, in a referendum election of early 2000. Additionally, losing an important constitutional case in *Capital Radio (Private) Limited v The Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunications* where Capital radio was fighting against ZBC monopoly of the airwaves dealt the government another blow. As a result, the government embarked on a serious nationalism campaign. Among the instruments used to win back the minds and hearts of the people was “land” supported by a strong media anti-colonial rhetoric and a well re-packaging of the land debate as both an economic issue and a fundamental part of the cultural heritage of Zimbabwe (Interview, Settlement Chikwinya 2017, Harare).

This indicates that land occupies a very important part in the cultural politics of the Third Chimurenga²³. To propagate such feelings, revolutionary songs, campaign slogans such as, “The land is the economy, and the economy is the land” began to take their toll. The urgent need within the ZANU-PF government to relook into the agenda of nationalism which was built around the land question marked a significant shift in the power relations in Zimbabwe. In February 2000, a referendum was held on the new draft constitution as captured by Willems when she said,

The referendum...was, to its own surprise, rejected by 55 % of the voters... The state media explained the rejection of the constitution by whites as motivated by the clause that would allow the government to compulsory acquire land without compensation for the land... Obviously, whites could never really have had a significant impact on the final results since they only constitute a small percentage of Zimbabwe’s population. But with the establishment of the MDC, whites did come to play a more public role in political activities and some held positions in the party. This was quickly taken up by ZANU-PF and the state media who portrayed the MDC as a party

²³ Chimurenga is a shona word which means liberation struggle. The third Chimurenga was the struggle by the black landless Zimbabweans to repossess their land from the white settlers in a government programme known as “the land redistribution programme”.

“funded by white farmers” and dominated by “Rhodesian interests” (Willems, 2004, 7).

The clause that allows the government to acquire the land without compensation in the rejected draft constitution created anxiety and panic in white community. To a certain point, the white farmers’ community began to wonder whether the ZANU-PF government could still be trusted with power. In the end, they concluded that the ZANU-PF government could not be trusted to mind the status quo and began sponsoring a barrage of political activities to reverse the government’s proposed move of taking the land. For instance, towards the end of the second decade after independence, the government encountered an intensity of challenges buoyed by the formation of a strong opposition political party in Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) which coincided with the coming on board of a firebrand hard hitting Daily News to challenge the monopoly of Zimpapers through alternative news reporting and political analysis. Whether this convergence of politics and the media was by design or coincidence, it had a strong bearing on trajectory which the media policy and politics of Zimbabwe was to take in the next decade.

In further explaining what motivated the state to embark on the land reform, the Presidential Spokesperson acknowledges that due to land redistribution exercise, the political economy of Zimbabwe was changed in a way that created a variegation of classes, thus, he avers that,

...I don’t give a damn what it is that motivated ZANU PF to embark on a land reform, the issue is, the impact of that whatever it is that motivated them, it changed the power relations, it changed the political economy of Zimbabwe in a way that created a variegation of classes, your black elites who then replace the white commercial farmers and became a class in itself and therefore a class with self conscious and that would seek to defend its own interest and then landed peasantry with small holder pieces of land but still conscious enough that it had gained from the process of elites a set of a finite asset on the base of which it could change its own circumstances. So we now have a situation where we have a true peasant class with land and which is ready to defend that land, we also have your middle class which is African and whose claim to class is ownership of a piece of land again, there are ready to defend it. You also have an end of a racial and capitalist class by way of your ex white commercial farmers (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare).

The citation explains the government allegedly sanctioned farm invasion and expedition of land distribution out in a manner viewed as voter buying ahead of the year 2000 election. The parcelling of land confirmed the desperate need by the government to restore its lost legacy and diminishing popularity (Sachikonye, 2003). In addition, it may have been meant to

destroy the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) political base which was strong amongst farm-workers and with source of funding among white commercial farmers as well as to appeal and garner support among landless peasants in Zimbabwe. The appointment of Jonathan Moyo after the 2000 parliamentary elections, as the Minister of Information and Publicity in the President's Office changed Zimbabwe's media landscape. Around the time of the presidential elections in March 2002, the government introduced new legislation which had important implications for both local and international media (Willems, 2004). Looked at politically, the state media became a mouth piece of the new revolution termed the "Third Chimurenga"²⁴. A real radio and television and press propaganda was set in motion by the Ministry of Information headed by Professor Jonathan Moyo. Although the state media became a messenger for state hegemony, the general representation of the land reform in the whole media spectrum reflects a contestation of hegemonic and counter hegemonic discourses (Chari, 2013). The state embarked on a vigorous hegemonic campaign using the land as a trump card. The propaganda messages insinuate corrections of the colonial legacy by returning the land to its rightful owners. These ideas would buy consent and strengthen national awareness and reorientation of the black into the ZANU-PF fold. Moreover, this action was taken to inspire the manufacturing of consent among the general populace who should take the process of land acquisition as "common sense" especially after it was forcibly taken from them in the first instance.

Using the "land" question as a means to encourage national cohesion, the media played a crucial role to force this dispensation into the mind of the ordinary men. Based on the fact that "land" has a violent history in Zimbabwe dating back to the days of the scramble for Africa in around 1890s, the subsequent battles fought along the way such as, the first Chimurenga²⁵, the second Chimurenga²⁶ would be shaped and recasted by the state media to pose as a reminder of the battles fought so that they become critical and aggressive towards the settler regime in the "Third Chimurenga". Because the press and broadcasting are intimately connected with the national consciousness songs like *Rambai Makashinga* (Continue to persevere) and *Sendekera mwa-wevhu* (Dance child of the soil) were composed and sung after every thirty minutes on ZBC TV and radio stations across. The jingles played here were mainly used to influence the public to support ZANU-PF government ideologies

²⁴Liberation struggle

²⁵ Liberation struggle fought in the 19th Century

²⁶ Liberation struggle fought in the 20th Century between 1963-1980

penetrating through the cover of “land” (Willems, 2004). Thus the government would use musical jingles drilled through a continuous thirty minutes interval replay to capture the subconscious mind of the public and build consent and raise national consciousness within the masses. In addition the nationalism rhetoric was played out in a range of bashes, national galas and *Mzee Biras*²⁷, national commemorations as well as a dramatization of ZANU-PF’s legacy through well-selected television programmes and documentaries, a revival of war “Chimurenga music”²⁸ among others (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems, 2009). Moreover, organic intellectuals such as Claude Mararike, Vimbai Chivaura, Sheunesu Mpepereki, Godfrey Chikowore and Tafataona Mahoso among others played a crucial role in supporting the status quo by lining up consensus building programmes on the National Television. These intellectuals would use ZTV as platform of expression to create hegemonic narratives emphasising and re-emphasising the importance of land in the built up of the nationalism agenda.

Besides, the use of the radio, stories in the national dailies and Sunday publications of government controlled press would reflect the dichotomy of similar reportage. The broadcasting radio and Television station programming was not spared from this nationalism onslaught. During this dispensation, the news media would determine issues of debate, thus the state controlled press would create various discursive practices and interpretative frameworks which would direct the public’s attention to issues of the land and enforce the formulation of certain mental pictures or perceptions about the land (Chari, 2013). Using the concept of framing and priming, the state media became aggressive in pushing nationalism, building consent among Zimbabweans by selective publication of news and creating hatred towards the former settler class as Tendai Chari would show that,

...state-owned newspapers published opinion pieces historicising the land issue, primarily suggesting that it was an unfinished historical item on the decolonisation project. Examples include an opinion piece by Kenneth Kaunda headlined “Western Countries Wrong” (The Herald, 14 June 2007) and Neil Thomas’s “Zim’s suffering externally driven” (The Herald, 14 January 2007). The public media, therefore, harked back on history to show that the ZANU-PF leadership was being unfairly blamed for the situation unfolding in the country, when, in fact, the West, particularly Zimbabwe’s former colonial master, Britain was to blame for the crisis (Chari, 2013: 304).

²⁷ National commemoration of the late Vice president Simon Vengai Muzenda

²⁸ Liberation struggle music

The sentiments expressed in the citation, embodies the view that the public media advanced an understanding that land redistribution was necessary to address colonial imbalances. It would project the issue as a bilateral dispute between Zimbabwe and Britain (ibid). The government believes that,

...white farmers' community in Zimbabwe's calculations were that, Lancaster House Agreement had within it some slow down mechanisms which were meant to empty, from the heart of the politician, the argument to change society in favour of the black majority. Instead, it would delay the process in such a way that several years later down the line there would emerge black elite whose interest become almost synonymous with interest of the white settler. In which case, instead of having a conflict, they would have a sense of partnership thereby creating a comprador class. However, such models has worked well in South Africa and other parts of the world where independence had been given on a silver platter. In such scenarios, the emergence of black elites did not seek to transform society but rather joined the white elites in dominating the rest of the society (interview senior government official (1) 2017, Harare).

In Zimbabwe this model could not be applied probably because there was need to transform the society in a manner which makes the incumbent ruling party remain unchallenged by a stronger force because the sudden strength exerted by the commercial farmers backed MDC had taken the government by surprise. The government's state of paranoia at this point exudes the extent to which it understood the power of the media as a tool of control (Alfandika, 2018). It backs the notion that media is a critical fortune of political actors and without it power and politics will not conquer.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the historical and political economy of the media from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe in a bid to create a background which builds an understanding of the [media] insecurity issues currently bedevilling media in Zimbabwe. The chapter has also interrogated the policies and regulations governing both the print and broadcasting media. The major highlight of the discussion in this chapter was the revelation of chaos and media crisis that rocked the nation in the second decade of independence where the state suffered an ambivalence of either accepting Westernised liberal democracy or remaining with the authoritarian communist ideology. What emerges from this historical narrative is that from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, the nature of the media policy is deep rooted in class interest. The

next chapter discusses the contestations surrounding media policy and regulations formulated in the post 2000 era.

Chapter Five
Media policy and regulation contestations in Zimbabwe
Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the historicity of media development and the concerns that led to the promulgation, intensification and selective application of media laws which manifested in the early years of the new millennium. This chapter seeks to examine the media policy contestations in the post 2000 era. The major argument in this chapter is that media policy regulation of the post 2000 period in Zimbabwe sparked a heated debate between the government and other media policy actors fronted by Western donor funded media reform activists among other opposition players. The chapter further argues that while challenges of media democracy in Zimbabwe have been widely researched (Willems, 2014; 2013; 2010; 2004; Windrich, 2010, 1981; Chuma, 2010; 2007; Moyo, 2004; Kupe, 2003; Ronnings & Kupe, 2000), few studies have focused on the nature of the changing media policy contestations in the post 2000 Zimbabwe. Fundamentally, the study seeks to respond to the question; what are the key contestations in the Zimbabwe media policy reform process?

As the socio-political situation changed towards 2000, especially with the dearth of a class that was almost coincident with race by way of the ex-white commercial farmers, a new milieu emerged. The destruction of the settler class saw a spirited counter hegemony effort from the white farmers who did not only invest in the opposition political movements such as the “Movement for Democratic Change” (MDC) but also in the Daily News and in broadcasting through Capitol radio as outlets of alternative information (Ruhanya, 2014). In response to these new developments, the government reacted by drafting a raft of media and security laws marking the coming in of the dreaded Broadcasting Service Act (BSA) of 2001, and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2002. This development, triggered debate and agitation for media reform led by Western funded media reform activists such as the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Media Monitors (MM), Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ), Media Centre (MC), Zimbabwe Association of Community Radios Stations (ZACRAS) among several others. In examining this debate, the sequence of presentation, analysis and discussion of data in this chapter is framed as follows; Radio broadcasting licencing and appointments of media regulatory board members; Community radio licencing in Zimbabwe at cross roads and the paradoxes of media regulation: implication on statutory and self regulation. The discussion positions the

central argument among media policy stakeholders in Zimbabwe as the struggle for media reform and democratisation of communication continue.

Media regulatory framework in Zimbabwe

Although some scholars believe that media should be free from regulation, evidence shows that if media is not regulated it can cause more damage than good to the innocent public. According to Lichtenberg cited in Akpojivi (2018) the need to protect the national interest has informed the necessity for content and structural regulation of the media to a large extent. In Zimbabwe, there are two boards that attend to media regulation which are the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) and the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ). While the ZMC is a constitutional board provided for in the constitution of Zimbabwe (2013), BAZ is provided for in the BSA (2001). The rationale behind having these regulatory authorities hails from the understanding that information is power and it should not be left uncontrolled as it can be used to destroy a nation. Leaving information unrestricted is like conferring rights and freedom to citizens while exposing society to danger as citizens may exceed their freedom and cause harm to the society (Mill, 1869). It is therefore understood that regulation is unavoidable, even in a purely competitive market (Hem, 2014). As a result, all products destined for public consumption including news should be subjected to certain standards (ibid). Taking from the Western style journalism, there is a metonymic adage which says, "...the pen is mightier than the sword" indicating that communication, or advocacy of an independent media, is an effective instrument than direct violence such as war. According to Tafataona Mahoso, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the ZMC "If a pen is mightier than the sword, then it requires a national management and control system far more elaborate than which has been developed over several years to manage national security forces..." (Mahoso, 2015: 32). Using this stand point, Mahoso justifies the need for media regulations in Zimbabwe. Based on this, one should imagine how powerful is the pen if it is mightier than a sword where a sword is managed by a national command system. Similarly, Academy Chinamhora a senior manager at the ZMC asserts that,

...when the pen is mightier than the sword, one should be inclined to understand that there is need for the media in Zimbabwe to adopt a powerful regulatory framework for exercise of this power because every measure of power should come along with commensurate safeguards. This has always been illustrated through the "Golden rules of a firearm" which apply to the use of a gun (Interview Academy Chinamhora 2017, Harare).

This is an attempt to justify the stringent measures which the Zimbabwean media regulatory authority has put in place in the years 2001 and 2002. The regulations put by the government in the post 2000 era became the first media policy to licence both media institutions and journalists in Zimbabwe (BSA, 2001; AIPPA, 2003). Under the new provisions, the government has the power to renew or not to renew a licence without giving reasons. To some extent, it is like hanging a sword over the heads of media houses and practitioners so as to induce them to practice self censorship (Hem, 2014: 16). As the debate whether to regulate or not to regulate the media rages on, what needs to be assessed first is whether if regulations are put in place, they will serve “public interest”. It should be so because; the idea of public interest serves as a “normative guidepost” for media regulation (Iosifidis, 2013). In Zimbabwe, media regulation regime is always disputed because it “is often seen as pursuing the selfish interest of the state and the state cannot be trusted to act as a mechanism for enforcing regulation because...it hides behind the complex nature of society to overestimate the threats of free speech and media freedom has on national security in order to justify regulation” (Akpojivi, 2018: 33). This renders the regulation regime in Zimbabwe concocted because the government seem to use it as a weapon of limiting access to the means of media production.

Appointment of media regulatory boards

The appointment of media regulatory boards in Zimbabwe has always been marred by controversy over lack of transparency and the unfair advantage of the ruling party among other debatable issues. As noted earlier, there are two boards in Zimbabwe which police and regulate the media, ZMC and BAZ. The ZMC is a vanguard of media operations in Zimbabwe functioning at a constitutional level. A brief background of the ZMC indicates that it,

...was initially created through Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) promulgated in 2002...it was elevated to a Constitutional Commission by Constitutional Amendment 19.... with expanded mandate powers over regulation and development of the media in Zimbabwe. The first Board of Commissioners under the Constitutional Amendment 19 took office in February 2010 through the gazetting of names of members by His Excellency President R.G. Mugabe during the tenure of Government of National Unity (GNU). The tenure of the Board of Commissioners is five years. The Board consists of nine members. Both the chairperson and the other eight members are appointed by the President in consultation with the Standing rules and Orders Committee of Parliament. Commissioners are chosen on the basis of their integrity and their competence in administration and their knowledge and understanding of the human rights issues as well as best practices in media matters. When appointing the Board of Commissioners, the President takes into

consideration gender and regional representation issues as provided by the Constitution (www.mediacommission.co.zw).

The appointment of the ZMC Board is done through a parliamentary process where first the Zimbabwean publics are invited to nominate people whom they think are conversant to mediate' issues of culture and who can represent these cultural issues and enforce regulations as indicated above. When these nominations are made, the names are publicly published (AIPPA, 2008). In 2009, "an advertisement was placed in the media calling for nominations and applications to be made to Parliament for eligible interested members to be ZMC commissioners" (AMB, 2010: 10). The parliament shortlisted those with required qualifications and the candidates were called for a public interview. After the interview, twelve (12) names were sent to the President who then chose the Chairperson of the commission and other commissioners (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013). The AMB (2008) argues that since the law is silent on the way the President will go about choosing the final nine commissioners from the list of twelve sent to him, the assumption is that the choice is entirely his. Taking into consideration that the president is also a member of a political party whose interests he shares, the ZMC and its board can not be said to be independent. The law cited above seem to have ignored political inclinations of individual actors as it play a critical role in influencing decision making. This was also shared by a member of the parliamentary portfolio committee on Information, Media and Broadcasting Services who maintains that, "...within the interviewing panel there are politicians who are obviously partisan members of parliament (MPs) with their own preferences and their own people... it is not a water tight kind of thing" (Interview Paradza Kindness 2017, Harare). Such an opinion indicates the extent to which the parliament is polarised along political divide and how one's political orientation influences political decisions.

In contrast to the argument above, Mhiripiri avers that; "... we can say it is a democratic process in that it is inclusive of every Zimbabwean citizen who is interested in media issues who can be nominated or nominate" (Interview Nhamo Mhiripiri 2017, Gweru). This view is supported by Mathew Takaona, a former commissioner of the ZMC who said that,

As far as the process was concerned it was fair. Then of course, because of political expedience and other reasons, some of those who were in the top nine (9) could not make it but it was also quite democratic in that there was hot debate, the appointment of those (9) had to take place in consultation with the leaders of two other political parties in the Government of National Unity (GNU) (Interview Mathew Takaona 2017, Masvingo).

What is interesting to note in this context is the glaring forced compromise of the Government of National Unity (GNU) where every decision made was supposed to balance among political parties to the agreement. The arguments above reveal that regardless of written laws and procedures, politics manipulates procedures for own preferences. As a result politically appointed media regulatory boards reduce the extent of freedom of expression in practice regardless of written laws and constitutions (Odongo, 2012). This context confirms the argument that, although, “formal democratic institutions are widely viewed as the principal means of obtaining and exercising political authority... incumbents violate those rules so often and to such an extent, however, that the regime fails to meet conventional minimum standards for democracy” (Levitsky & Way, 2002: 52).

Although some respondents in this study believed that Zimbabwe media regulatory boards are democratic and support freedom of expression, freedom of the media and access to information as noted above, evidence on the ground shows that the ZMC and the BAZ are not independent boards hence far away from democratising the media in Zimbabwe. For instance, the ZMC is configured along ruling party ideologies and manned by the ZANU PF government stewards like Dr Tafataona Mahoso, a presidential appointee described by Bruce Mutsvairo as one among, “...academics who regularly contribute to *The Herald*²⁹ trumpeting nationalist positions” (Mutsvairo, 2013: 86). This draws closer links between Mahoso and the ruling government. Mahoso, as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ZMC is regarded as a key player in reversing the gains of media democracy because of his political orientation. Further links can be drawn from how he was redeployed from the disbanded Media Information Commission (MIC)³⁰ to be the new Chief executive officer (CEO) of ZMC. Media reform activists describe the current media regulatory framework in Zimbabwe as untenable because, “ the ZMC’s Chief Executive Officer, Dr Tafataona Mahoso, is also the Chairperson of BAZ” (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2013: 5). Given, the current high profile debate with regard to appointment of Mahoso in these regulatory authorities, it is quite surprising how one person continues to be in charge of the two controversially established boards; regardless of the public outcry that ensued immediately after he was appointed. The uproar emanated from the private media who were protesting that, “the ZMC controversially

²⁹ a state-owned daily newspaper published in Harare, in Zimbabwe

³⁰ Media Information Commission (MIC) was a media regulatory board under the AIPPA before it was repealed in 2007 and the regulatory board was elevated to be a constitutional commission and renamed Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC). What is peculiar about these two boards is that Mahoso was the chairperson of the MIC and he became the CEO of ZMC. MIC is known for closing down several media houses in Zimbabwe such as the Daily News in 2001.

engages the ‘Media Hangman’, Mahoso” (VOA, May 18, 2010). Besides, the role of Mahoso in the ZMC was greatly compromised by his previous appointment as the Chairman of Media Information Commission (MIC). During this time, Mahoso clamped down on media democracy by prohibiting several publications which played a watchdog role in the country (Chuma, 2008). The closure of The Daily News was followed by the closure of the Tribune newspaper creating a regression in terms of freedom of expression, freedom of the media and access to information (AMDI report, 2006). It is because of these past experiences that Mahoso is perceived as a hard man and more of a political demagogy than a professional media personnel. Confirming this description, Eric Matingo said, “... he (Mahoso) just went...hard at the Daily News...and when you are seen to be personalising an issue instead of professionally discharging your duties it becomes clear that you have an agenda which is not in line with the professional ethics of media regulations”(Interview Eric Matingo 2017, Harare).



Fig. 2 Dr Tafataona Mahoso-CEO of the Zimbabwe Media Commission

Another concern expressed regarding Mahoso was whether he would be able to exercise impartiality especially given that his roles in ZMC and BSA intermingle. Providing evidence of the confusion which results from this complication ZUJ avers that “...at one moment as the chairpesron of BAZ he was asked to write to the CEO of ZMC...literally meaning that he was supposed to write to himself” (Interview Eric Matingo 2017, Harare). Elsewhere,

responding to the question posed by the then Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Information, Media and Broadcasting Services, Mr Settlement Chikwinya, Mathew Takaona a ZMC commissioner by then commented that, “Mahoso’s two fold positions had a negative impact on the functions of the commission” (News day March 12, 2013). Likewise, Takaona holds the view that, “If the ZMC wants to write a letter to BAZ, it is our CEO Mahoso who will write to himself as the BAZ chairman, making the situation very untenable,” (Takaona Mathew cited in Newsday March 12, 2013). MISA-Zimbabwe, describes such overstepping of roles in media regulatory boards as unfortunate and an untenable regulatory framework (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2013: 16). As a consequence, the perceptions built around the person of Tafataona Mahoso and the ZMC is bad for a democratised media environment. According to Eric Matingo of ZUJ, “...the ZMC is viewed as a personal instrument to score personal scores rather than to serve a national responsibility...that’s how it is generally viewed from the private media because the private media are the one who suffer... (Interview Eric Matingo, 2017, Harare). Mahoso is imagined as a person who thrives much in Zimbabwean media not because he serves his profession well but because he serves the political interests of the ruling class and satisfies the ideological and emotional needs of the ruling government, a role confirmed by Mahoso himself when he admits that, “...those who felt offended by my posts should raise their complaints with Media, Information and Publicity Minister Webster Shamu. I did not appoint myself to those positions, I was appointed by the Minister...” (Newsday March 12, 2013). According to Tafataona Mahoso himself,

...these boards were set up according to laws that these boards all agree to.... Do they want me to go back and change the law? They are confused, we go to Parliament when we are called and we always say this is what you gave us as law makers, don’t ask us to change what you have agreed on as reformers because you have asked us to implement what you reformed as lawmakers so what is wrong? (Interview, Tafataona Mahoso 2017, Harare).

It’s the parliament which makes laws and the Minister who makes appointments, so as an appointed administrator; Mahoso argues that his role is to serve the two posts as an appointed member. Should there be any need to change the status quo, it should be the parliament and the Ministry not himself. Mahoso sees himself as a professional administrator rather than a politician. The ZMC CEO further argues that he takes instructions from the parliament and his job is to implement and he can not refuse to carry the mandate. While fully aware of the conflict his roles are playing in the media environment, Mahoso believes that his job is to

simply play the roles given to him by the parliament. In short, Mahoso is playing what Baryat described as “the politics of the belly” (Baryat, 1993). Mahoso has worked so tirelessly in institutions that control information flow for the good of the dominant class’s hegemony. His role is to advance patriotic Journalism for the good feel of his masters (Ranger, 2005). Regardless of the fact that the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) is set up to create a liberal licencing regime, Tafatona Mahoso, continues with media oppressive tendencies due to lack of transparency, failure to set up critical arms of the commission such as the Media Council of Zimbabwe (MCZ) to enhance transparency and fairness in media regulatory issues.

Selective placement of the ZMC board members for regulatory authorities indicates that the playing field for democratising communication is skewed towards the incumbent government which manipulates the system so that they remain in control over dominant ideas. Furthermore, through selective appointments, gate keeping becomes real and has always been used as the centurions minding state’s ideological position such that reality is never coterminous with the media, what is coterminous with the media is a packaging of reality in a way that upholds power through ideological manipulation of the people. The selection process of the ZMC board members has been marred by excessive influence of the state politics which finance and control its operations (Freedman, 2008). It is because of this that Mahoso and other like minded people have always been enjoying the privileged positions of controlling the flow of information in Zimbabwe in a manner they so desire regardless of what is in the public interest. In confirmation, one government official (1) adds that; “...people should not confuse news with truth, news with reality. News is a falsification of reality in a way that serves a dominant interest in society” (Interview Senior government official 2017, Harare). This clarifies that the media plays a crucial role to determine the outcome of news. News is a manipulated by-product of the media and only speaks to the interests of the dominant class (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). It further reveals that news has never occurred to be synonymous with reality hence to create a preferred news falsification hub, the state has to manipulate the media regulatory system through strategic appointments such that the media structure and its content are regulated in a manner that favours its ideologies. In fact, the media regulatory framework is made in such a way that the processes of news reproduction aims to continue giving preferential admittance to social resources and legitimization of such discrimination.

Another source of contention in the realm of appointment of media regulatory boards is based on failure by ZMC to appoint a Media Council. The amendments of AIPPA in 2007 provides for the formation of the Media Council through the ZMC. The Media Council should be headed by a Chairperson and should consist of representatives from various media sectors nominated by,

- an association of accredited journalists
- an association of publishers
- an association of advertisers
- an association of mass media trainers
- an association of churches
- an association of trade unions
- an association of womens' groups
- an association of youth (AIPPA, 2007)

From outside, the configuration of the council seems to be fairly composed bringing together both parties to media policy in a co-regulatory sort of compromise. The 2007 development in media democratisation process gave some positive indications in terms of participatory media regulation. Nevertheless, since these amendments were passed, no meaningful implementation has ever happened regardless of several calls by media reform activists (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2013). The ZMC insincerity in not constituting the Media Council is striking. In the wake of this glaring reluctance, media reform activists resorted to a voluntary regulatory board; the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) created in June 2007 by the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ) (AMB, 2008). It is interesting to note that the VMCZ runs parallel to the ZMC mandate. The commission's failure to constitute Media Council of Zimbabwe (MCZ), which should exercise disciplinary control over the media as stipulated by the law (AIPPA, 2007) remains a critical concern. According to one retired journalist, "...the ZMC did not do anything...The ZMC was supposed to set up a council... to set up a code of ethics for practicing journalism" (Interview Moyse 2017, Harare). These sentiments embody some sense of deliberate failure on the part of ZMC as the configuration of the Media Council would have compromised the state's hegemonic control of the regulatory board. However, according to Tafataona Mahoso, the reason for not composing the board is that, "There is no funds to carry out such a project...the number of representatives, their perks; we cannot afford the budget at the moment" (Interview, Tafataona Mahoso 2017, Harare). Prioritising funds ahead of public interest indicates that the state is not ready to let the people enjoy their constitutionally given rights to freedom of expression, the media and access to information (Zimbabwe Constitution, 2013).

Reluctance rather than resilience to implement media regulatory changes that would provide for a democratised media system in Zimbabwe seem to characterise the government and aligned statutory boards. This Council would work with the ZMC in developing and enforcing a code of conduct and ethics for media practitioners. If so required by the ZMC, the Media Council would investigate complaints against media services and journalists. Should there be any breach of the code, the Council would recommend a penalty to be imposed by the Commission. Penalties should include monetary fine, restitution of expenses incurred by the Council and the Commission during investigations, suspension of accreditation, cancellation of media service registration licence and publication of an apology and or corrections in the event of “injurious allegations” (AIPPA, 2007). To a greater extent, this has not been operationalised. One informant was particularly critical of the government and the Tafataona Mahoso run ZMC when he said,

...as you know, there is no board that controls the media, there is Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC)...it is underfunded and right now there is no Commission because the Commissioners appointed in 2010 mandate ended some 2 years ago and it's a one man band right now, Tafataona Mahoso is running it as CEO and the other thing is that since it was formed, it has never done anything tangible to control or give direction to the media, we also do not have any Media Council of Zimbabwe provided for under section 42A of AIPPA for the purpose of exercising disciplinary control (MCZ) in this country (Interview Legislator (1) 2017, Harare).

The mandate of the ZMC appointed in 2010 by President Robert Mugabe ended in 2015 as their term is supposed to be a five year term before other interviews are held to appoint new commissioners. Although nominations were made and interviews were held no new appointments were made and no reasons were given. For the past three years, ZMC was running without a board making Tafataona Mahoso run with the Commission without any restrictions. Supporting the argument against failure to constitute ZMC board, Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ, 15) reveals that,

The Parliament of Zimbabwe hosted public interviews to appoint commissioners for the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) on Wednesday the third of June 2015. The ZMC is one of the 5 "Independent Commissions Supporting Democracy" as set out in Chapter 12 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Of the 24 prospective candidates interviewed, 16 were men and eight were women (MMPZ, 2015: 1).

It is unfortunate that such gaps are now being used in different court cases to indicate some weaknesses of Zimbabwean media regulatory authorities. For instance, MISA-Zimbabwe raised this concern to support its claim that BAZ and ZMC should not participate in media

monitoring of the 2018 harmonised elections because neither BAZ nor ZMC had boards with sitting board members or commissioners, respectively (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2018). As a result of this deliberate vacuum, in terms of the appointment of the ZMC board and the formation of the MCZ, Mahoso continues to run the Commission without any restrictions and directives. This creates a room for Mahoso to serve his masters' political interests with no objection at the detriment of some media stakeholders.

The state, in setting the codes and principles does so in a way which enhances its capacity to perpetuate its own hegemony over the people. It codes the media laws and regulations in such a manner that it protects their interests and chastise those who seek to endanger them. For instance, the ZANU-PF led government of Zimbabwe have massive interests in what the news media say and would always seek to protect its image and stronghold on power by tilting the balance of information flow in their favour. The government through promulgation of media debilitating laws such as the BSA and AIPPA as well as other security laws indicates its inclination towards shooing away any predisposition that seeks to expose it or play a watchdog role. In short, the state would want to enjoy its monopoly of ideas and creates enmity with those who seek the emancipation of media to play its constitutionally guaranteed role of being a watchdog. Failure to set up the MCZ, has done more damage than good to Zimbabwe media development. It is this Council which should spearhead the development of a code of conduct and ethics with rules of conduct to be observed by journalists and mass media service providers in Zimbabwe.

Notwithstanding the controversy that marred the development of media democratisation process and the media regulatory regime in Zimbabwe, the broadcasting regulatory authority structure and the disputes emanating from its composition and operations occupies a critical position in the debate for media democracy. Unlike the ZMC which is governed by the constitution and operationised by AIPPA, broadcasting governance is provided for by the BSA (BSA, 2001). Under the BSA, BAZ is established as a regulatory and licencing authority for the broadcasting industry in Zimbabwe. It was set up in the aftermath of the Capitol radio debacle of 2000 (see chapter four). The operations of the authority is controlled and managed by a board (BSA, 2001). However, given the current high profile debate with regard to broadcasting policy and regulation, it is quite unlikely that a fair and open selection process is done in the appointment of board members. The setup does not inspire media reform that would break up the monopolistic structure of state ownership and control. The

selection process of BAZ board is critical if one is to understand the independence and its ability to democratically regulate broadcast media in a manner which inspires confidence in media stakeholders. The board is composed of twelve members as indicated by the following excerpt from BSA (2001).

- (i) Two shall be persons chosen for their experience or professional qualifications in the field of broadcasting technology and broadcasting content respectively and
 - (ii) one shall be a Chief as defined in the Traditional Leaders Act [Chapter 29,17] and nominated by the Council of Chiefs referred to in that Act and
 - (iii) one shall be a legal practitioner of not less than five years' standing registered in terms of the law in force relating to the registration of legal practitioners and
 - (iv) one shall be a public accountant of not less than five years' standing registered in terms of the law in force relating to the registration of public accountants and
 - (v) one shall be a representative of churches or other religious boards chosen from a list of nominees submitted by groups considered by the Minister to be representative of churches or other religious boards and
 - (vi) three other members
- b) three members shall be appointed by the President from a list of six nominees submitted by the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders (BSA, 2007).

The above twelve members are appointed by the President in consultation with the Minister and the Committee on standing rules and orders (BSA, 2001). Regardless of the procedure laid down in the legislative policy above, MISA-Zimbabwe insists that the appointment process for the BAZ board lacks transparency and accountability ([www.http://zimbabwe.misa.org](http://zimbabwe.misa.org)). According to Mhiripiri, "...the Ministry of Information Media and Broadcasting Services is much more involved in the appointment of BAZ board members..." (Interview, Nhamo Mhiripiri 2017, Harare). The assertion above shows that the MIMBS has influence in how the board is appointed and run. Evidence in support of this position can be found in the fact that the former Minister of Media, Information and Publicity, Webster Shamu (ZANU-PF) appointed the new board in September 2009 using names previously nominated for the ZMC board. "The Minister further ignored protests from media organisations pointing out that ZMC and BAZ boards are established through separate pieces of legislation and must be appointed in separate processes" (AMB, 2009:2).

It was during that appointment process that Webster Shamhu appointed Tafataona Mahoso discussed above, creating more controversy.

Given, the advantages of the ruling government in the appointments outlined in the previous paragraph, it is quite predictable that the Zimbabwean media regulatory institutions are ostensibly democratic yet they are composed of deep seated loyalists of the ruling party (ZANU-PF). In this context and largely borrowing from Levitsky and Way (2010) one media reform activists and scholar observed that,

Zimbabwe has what I call a competitive authoritarian regime, the kind of rule we have is what can be defined as a civilian regime in which formal democratic institutions exist and are widely revealed as primary means of staying in power but in which abuse of power by the state and the president is wide and untamed. Taking advantage of the opposition, such regimes are competitive in that opposition political parties use democratic institutions to contest for power and media laws changes but they are not democratic because the playing field is unfair, the competition is there but is unfair and it is because of that unfair competition that is put in place by an authoritarian regime that causes decontestation (Interview Pedzisai Ruhanya 2017, Harare).

As discussed, appointments based on relationships have played a major role in media control in Zimbabwe. Appointments based on personal ties, family members, and cronies and more importantly on political affiliations to head media boards have become an important, “means of enhancing intra-regime trust and reducing the likelihood of elite defection” (Levitsky & Way 2010: 54). Furthermore, appointments into some media boards are based on ethnicity. In this sense, the Zimbabwean society is deeply divided into two major ethnic groups, the Shona from northern Zimbabwe and the Ndebele from the southern part of the country, it is common to find a dichotomy of Shona, Ndebele relationship in media institutions which are supposed to be democratic. Moreover, Zimbabwean autocrats have enhanced loyalty within media boards by packing them with former military allies, as well as those whose cohesion are rooted in solidarity ties forged during the liberation struggle (Levitsky & Way, 2010: 54). Media law on paper remains liberal but the actions in terms of licencing, selection and appointments is manipulated on the ground (Levitsky & Way, 2010). As a result media democracy remains aversive on the ground but well upheld on paper. This has an effect of making those who do not toe political line inconsequential by denying them licences and broadcasting opportunities. As a result, most private media players and the general public’s rights to contribute to the marketplace of ideas are continuously abridged

while those who align their agenda with the government are commissioned and given some kind of monopoly in terms of dominating in national and other discussions. To a great extent, this shows that in Zimbabwe the real power of the media is not in carrying messages but, in distributing the right to communicate. The media's role is not found on its status as a carrier of messages but it is on how it distributes the right to speak. In fact, the media is used as a way of delegitimising and legitimising certain boards of knowledge (Happer & Philoa, 2013).

The unfair staffing of the supposed democratic institutions and boards is further evidenced in the inclusion of traditional chiefs in BAZ. The opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) argues against the inclusion of chiefs in BAZ board. Chiefs in Zimbabwe have always been known to be associated with the ruling party as openly declared by the president of chiefs' council Fortune Charumbira who remarked that "We work with government and the ruling ZANU-PF. I know people say this should not be said, but that is the truth. We are ZANU-PF" (Newsday 18 January, 2018). Such public utterance by the president of the chiefs' council, disregards section 281(2) of the Zimbabwe Constitution which stipulates that traditional leaders must not,

- (a) be members of any political party or in any way participate in partisan politics
- (b) act in a partisan manner
- (c) further the interests of any political party or cause or
- (d) violate the fundamental rights and freedoms of any person. (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013)

The behaviour of chiefs in political sphere has made their role questionable in a board that supervises broadcasting media and meant to promote media democracy in Zimbabwe. To a greater extent, these chiefs are loyalist of the ruling administration and they have to be seen to support and defend it so that their appointments and benefits subsist. Such appointments have made these boards negative agents to freedom of expression and access to information mainly because of how the selection and recruitment of those who man them is done. The need for excessive control over public boards through appointment of the ruling party's own partisan carders for gate keeping can be confirmed regardless of how such behavior affects media regulatory mechanism in Zimbabwe. Just like have been discussed above, to some extent, some boards' tenure expires and no new appointments are made as long as they remain aligned to the needs of the ruling elite. According to another lawmaker said, "... there is no board right now at BAZ as well as at ZMC, nothing has been happening and the government and the ministry are happy because they are in control... the ideal situation

should be...take away responsibility from both the government and the ministry” (Interview Legislator (2) 2017, Harare). This indicates that the Zimbabwean politics of patronage continue to make it impossible for media democracy to function properly. This has always been the media activists’ contention “Unfortunately, the Zimbabwe Media Commission, which should be an appeals board, is firmly under government control hence lacks enough autonomy to take on some of these task” (Interview Eric Matingo 2017, Harare).

Such appointments can be considered to have been done to enhance the ruling class’s stronghold on power and access to information (MISA, 2010). To a greater extent, this confirms Levisky and Way (2002) argument that Zimbabwe is a competitive authoritarian as it has samples of democratic institutions in place in boards like the ZMC, and BAZ. However, the composition of these boards is manipulated for the interest of the ruling incumbent. Furthermore, even the appointment of board members is subjected to some ostensible competition which is at the end of the day real but unfair. For instance, the process of appointing members in these boards seems to be open, clear and transparent. Members can contest vigorously and at times successfully, however, the ruling government subjects this real competition to unfair means of selecting the winning candidate through electoral fraud, biased appointing authorities, in fact the playing field is heavily in favour of the incumbent government. That is, while competition is real, it` remains unfair (Levisky & Way, 2010). To make sure that all media regulating boards operating in Zimbabwe toe the political line, the government manipulates the process of appointing authorities in controlling boards such as the ZMC where they have placed their own centurions to guard their own interests. What it therefore means is that regardless of how much vigorous opposition contenders contest for position in these boards, they will not make it to the final selection because the system itself is made up in such a way that those who do not conform to the ruling ideas are automatically excluded. As a result of this behaviour, media remains controlled and regulated in a manner which support the status quo and shun any possible opposition.

This discussion concludes that the major debate on appointment media regulatory board members rest in the manipulation of the appointment procedures by the ruling ZANU-PF government. Consequently, both ZMC and BAZ have not been ideal independent Media and broadcasting regulators established to promote the creation of a diverse public, private and community media and broadcasting sector which defines media democracy in Zimbabwe

according to the African Charter on broadcasting (2001). ZMC and BAZ set up has not been governed by current international best practices, instead it has been guided by political orientation of Zimbabwean politics led by the ruling ZANU PF. In addition, ZMC and BAZ as public authorities set up to regulate and allocate operating licences are not properly constituted and independent thus, they are staffed by ruling ZANU-PF's loyalists who toe the political line for their own political interest. The authorities are not empowered with a clear mandate nor do they have a guaranteed autonomy as politics takes precedence over professionalism. Decisions are done along political lines. At the end of the day, ZMC and BAZ are instruments established to counterfeit media democracy confirming Levitsky and Way (2010)'s description of competitive authoritarian. They therefore stand out as democratic institution established within an authoritarian regime to create competition which never become fair as the playing field remain skewed heavily in favor of the ruling class. In other terms, competition is real, but unfair (Levitsky & Way, 2010). Undoubtedly, the same pitfalls that befell the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT) in 1981 (Ronning & Kupe, 2000) are the same pitfalls that are visibly befalling ZMC and BAZ. The appointments made to ZMMT board of Trustees were partisan as it saw members that were loyal to the ruling ZANU-PF being appointed to the board. This compromised the impartiality of the board and ZMMT became "an experiment that failed" (Nyahunzvi, 1987). The only difference between the two is that ZMMT was not under any immense pressure or threat from any opposition as the ZMC and BAZ would experience from various counter hegemonic media reform activists, civic organisation and opposition political parties such as the MDC. Such contestations would, however, suffer still births as ZANU-PF fledged a strong political muscle to push through the lethal legislative pieces to shut out counter hegemony voices.

Radio broadcasting and licencing in Zimbabwe

While there seems to be a fair distribution of print media licencing in Zimbabwe, broadcasting media is dominated by the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), Zimpapers and AB communications respectively. ZBC and Zimpapers are government controlled institutes, but also the owners of AB have close links with the ruling party, ZANU PF. Although, Broadcasting media in Zimbabwe is policed and regulated under the Broadcasting Service Act (BSA) of (2001) which licences radio and telviosion broadcasting under its broadcasting authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), no private radio or television station licences were ever granted as the space was always monopolised by the state owned ZBC regardless of the repeal of the ZBC act of 1957 by the supreme court in 1999. Under BSA,

BAZ is established to plan, manage, allocate, regulate and protect the broadcasting frequency spectrum (BSA 2001). In addition, BAZ regulates and licences signal carriers among other roles and duties (ibid). Viewed through the lens of democratisation of the media, BSA seems okay but its application is often flawed and marred by incompetence and corruption in licencing radio broadcasters. In that instance, the application of the law is highly selective resulting in the creation of a broadcasting regime with plurality of stations but with no diversity in terms of content and ideas (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2014). Such a media structure is established to serve the interests of the ruling power, instead of the public interest as argued by MISA-Zimbabwe,

...the legal framework for broadcasting should include a clear statement of the principle underpinning broadcast regulation, including promotion and respect of freedom of expression, diversity and free flow of information and ideas as well as a three tier system for broadcasting...public service, commercial and community broadcasting as enshrined in the Africa Charter on broadcasting of 2001 (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2014:1).

It is true that some of these democratic aspects have been met by the act. For instance, statements underpinning broadcasting regulation and promotion are clearly outlined and the issue of three tier broadcasting is well articulated. Nevertheless, the implementation of the act including selecting regulatory board members as noted above and how they use their discretion to licence media outlets remains far from being democratic. Opposition politicians who usually feel the brunt of being excluded from the mainstream media as it is perceived to be pro-government always complain. According one opposition political party leader,

...the bulk of them (radios) are owned by existing media houses, they are owned by Zimpapers, we talk of StarFM, Diamond, Capitalk and others. Some are even owned by politicians for instance, HevoiFm, ZiFm and if you go to Matebeleland's Skies FM, Breez FM are owned by political activists so I don't foresee any change anytime soon and that is the tragedy of this country's broadcasting environment (Interview Settlement Chikwinya 2017, Kwekwe).

Concentration of broadcasting media ownership within one political party is tragic to development of diverse content and ideas for the nation. The fact that the newly established radio stations are owned either by existing media houses such as the existing government owned Zimpapers or by politicians and ZANU PF loyalists like Super Mandiwanzira speaks more to plurality in broadcasting media rather than to the much needed diversity of ideas which should foster a wide range of voices in the public sphere (Freedman, 2005: 16). Indeed it is unfortunate to note that media policies such as the BSA designed and introduced to

increase plurality and diversity because of the proved inability of the broadcasting act of 1957 to permit a wide range of broadcasting outlets to articulate different opinions to different audiences are being applied in a manner which promotes dominant ideologies only. Thus selective allocation of broadcasting licences is one of the levers that a government can pull to get the media it wants (Curran, 2002).

Licensing of radio broadcasting in Zimbabwe is a predetermined affair that signals the emerging media freedom wars. Continuation with licensing “surrogates” of the ruling party radios influences plurality without diversity of content, where diversity is concerned with nurturing a wide choice of voices in the public sphere. The need to implement pluralism and diversity is imminent since political organisations are unable to express a wide choice of voices to a wide range of audiences. Freedman (2005) insists that public interest can be best met through a provision of a dynamic, public-led approach to communications regulation. Diversity hails directly from the idea of dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources (Napoli, 2007). Further arguing in terms of diversity, Napoli (2007) indicates that diversity should actually begin from the source which includes ownership, and workforce to influence programming of diversified content. Even though the setting up of the regional commercial private radios in the second decade of the 2000s is supposed to have brought up plurality and diversity, media activists have not been convinced that broadcasting has been correctly configured. Overall, the advent of private radios in Zimbabwe has not provided citizens with alternatives, hence there is need to rework the broadcasting sector so that it represent a diverse broadcasting environment as indicated in the African Charter (Ruhanya, 2014). The cosmetics adjustments by the state fake a plural media sphere but diversity remains at large.

Due to selective application of media policies, privately owned broadcasting media applications for broadcasting licensing are dismissed on flimsy grounds, those that broadcast illegally have their equipment risk confiscation by the government. The government through BAZ has made it very difficult for other private players who are not inclined to the ruling party to obtain radio broadcasting licences. For instance, despite being the first media house to apply for radio broadcasting licences, Hot Media Productions’ Kiss FM and Vox Media’s VOP FM were denied licences by BAZ. Among the reason why Kiss FM lost the opportunity to be licenced was that Hot Media Productions did not show programming schedules and

could not perfectly demonstrate that they could use other languages other than English in their production (Ndlovu, 2014). Instead, the government licences those that it believes do toe the political line hence practising selective licencing for both national and regional radio stations. In 2011, the government licenced the first two national privately owned commercial radio stations, Star FM owned and operated by Zimpapers and Zi FM owned and operated by AB Communications. While these newly licenced radio stations looked private from a general view, their ownership is completely aligned to the ruling party (ZANU PF). Nhlanhla Ngwenya, the then Director at MISA-Zimbabwe describes the newly licenced radios stations in Zimbabwe as controversial, “...because we know they are owned and operated by the proxies of ZANU PF” (Interview Nhlanhla Ngwenya 2017, Harare). It is a widely held view that the supposed opening of the airwaves around 2011 to private players was not genuine as it resulted in the licencing of the government loyalists (Ndawana, 2015). According to Pedzisai Ruhanya,

...the Broadcasting media, ... is worse in the sense that there is no diversity and there is no plurality..., there has been attempts to give licences to radio ... but if we look at those who have received licences for radio stations, they are surrogates of the establishment...talking about ZiFM owned by government Minister and Member of Parliament for ZANU PF, Super Mandiwanzira, Star FM is owned by Zimpapers³¹. The “Skies Metro” in Bulawayo is owned by Khubani Moyo a Commissioner in the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) (Interview Pedzisai Ruhanya 2017, Harare).

This broadcasting media ownership criteria does not inspire plurality and diversity in the Zimbabwe media as the ruling ZANU PF’s dominant views are echoed through out broadcasting airwaves. As highlighted above, in terms of opening up the space, the government has slightly done that through commercial broadcasting which saw introduction of Zi FM, Star FM and some of regional projects. The availability of plural platforms is encouraging but lack of diversity is tragic. Confirming the argument above, the ownership of private radio stations is distributed like; Zi FM, Hevoi FM and 94.8 FM are owned by ZANU PF cabinet minister, Supa Mandiwanzira, Star FM and Diamond FM are owned by Zimpapers, a government owned newspaper Production Company. Capitol radio is owned by a state institution, Kingstons limited (Ndawana, 2015). From a general point of view, the air space has been opened. There are more radio stations but there is still that challenge on genuinely private and community radio stations which go down to the masses. Alternatively,

³¹ Zimpapers is a printing organisation which prints the pro government public press like, The Herald, Chronicle and their Sunday sisters like The Sunday Mail and the Sunday News.

the public had to resort to listening to radio stations based outside the country. These include “Voice of the People (VOP), Studio 7 (a Voice of America programme produced by Zimbabweans), SW Radio (broadcast from London and produced by Zimbabweans in exile) and Zicora (Zimbabwe Community Radio) which broadcasts from South Africa, (AMB, 2010: 33). According Studio 7 bureau chief, Godwin Mangudya, “...the impact of these stations is limited by the shortage of SW radio receivers in Zimbabwe and the broadcasting time is restricted to one or two hours per day” (Interview, Godwin Mangundya, Harare 2017). Despite these setbacks, this alternative media has afforded the public who are excluded from the public media and national dialogue an opportunity to listen and participate in national debates.

The licencing regime supports the claim that the government controls broadcasting media in Zimbabwe either through direct state ownership or ownership by close allies of the ruling party such as the AB communications group and Zimpapers among others. The broadcasting licencing regime has skewed the playing field profoundly in favor of the government. It is from such configuration of a radio licencing regime that one can confirm that while competition for broadcasting licences in Zimbabwe is there and real, it has largely remained unfair (Levitsky & Way, 2002). It is unfair because of the composition of the licencing board and the manner in which determinations to award licences to the applying radio stations are reached. To a large extent, sentiments expressed in the discussion above, embodies the view that, there is no disagreement on the fact that ownership of licenced radio stations in Zimbabwe is closely aligned to the ruling ZANU-PF creating a likelihood of a consensus on content building based on common ground rooted in the ruling party’s ideology. Furthermore, any production going against the ruling class editorial grain is considered far-fetched and is usually uprooted.

Contrariwise, in the face of such criticism, proponents of the government broadcasting media licensing regime remain disconcerted by such an attack on the government’s integrity and dare argue that there is no media rights that “media democracy” imputes on media industry. The government strongly rejects the notion of media democracy and advance the argument that media is just an accessory which sides with those who are either in power or those who are seeking power. According to the then permanent secretary in the MIMBS,

... media democracy is a concept that has never found favour with me intellectually for the simple reason that media democracy imputes on to the industry a certain righteousness which is non-existent. There is an assumption that there is a happy relationship between the media and democracy but.... the search for democracy always polarise society, and that when the society get polarised in the quest for democracy, either side of the polarisation still boasts of media support (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare).

Through this argument one can deduce that the government believes that far from being an estate in its own right, the media simply appends itself to various political forces that are operating in a society. Although at some time, part of the media will be aligned to the forces that are pushing for democracy, at other time; the media will be on the other side which is against the forces that are supposed to be pushing for democracy. The major argument here is that, it may be simplistic to equate or impute some positiveness to the media in relation to the quest for democracy. In fact if one looks at the “political economy” of a media outfit, it becomes clear that the media is owned and controlled meaning that it should take positions depending on the editorial policy of those who owns, funds and control it. Golding and Murdock (1989) argue that the media production depends on the relationships between proprietors, editors and their sources not on the quest for democracy. By and large the argument proffered by the government is that media is traceable to class interest. To a great extent, the media does not live up to the ideal as they are hobbled by some media laws, monopolistic ownership and even the threat of brute force by the state. As a result, the media are being used as proxies in the battle of politics (Coronel, 2003). This position challenges the traditional liberal normative function of the media which advance that media should check the day to day functions of the state and monitor state activities whilst exposing abuses of authority without fear (Curran, 2002; Mansell & Nordenstreng, 2006). In other words, the government views the media as its appendage in advancing its own hegemony and legitimation of its system of ideas. The government believes that media is an accessory to consolidate its own power and further its interests through the use of propaganda so as to manufacture consent of the general public (Chomsky, 1988). Interestingly, the government readily admits that it uses the rule of law as instruments of press control in furthering interests rather than the public interests. According to the government, “...we do so yes, they are ways just to show you that we are in the terrains of power not of democracy” (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare). To a larger extent, the government believes in the authoritarian press theory where it controls the press and encourages it to operate in solidarity and union with the state (Mutsvairo, Columbus & Leijendekker, 2014). In this context, the media’s role

is to strengthen the power and authority of the head of state (Mutsvairo, Columbus & Leijendekker, 2014: 9). The media is used as a tool to maintain state hegemony and advance ruling class wishes under the pretence of national security and national sovereignty. Although Curran (2002) observes that public media is subjected to compromising constraints by the state, so too is private media by the business, in Zimbabwe both public and private media are subjected to compromising constraints by the government through licencing among other tactics. As a result, both public and ostensible private broadcasters become mouth pieces of government by default.

Another, challenge in the battle for radio broadcasting licencing is that the applicants for a broadcasting licence can only submit applications for licencing when BAZ has invited such applications (BSA, 2001). In the absence of such invitation, no applications can be accepted creating another bone of contention with media reform activists and other stakeholders. According to MISA-Zimbabwe, “BSA empowers BAZ to decide when to publish invitations for prospective broadcasters to apply for licences...the law does not provide for intervals within which invitation must be made...no time frames within which BAZ should examine or process application licences...” (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2014: 4). This argument is sustained by Mhiripiri who asserts that,

The hindering aspect of the act ... is that you cannot submit an application for licencing... in the absence of initial invitation from BAZ... So we have this stand still where no radio station have been granted a community radio licence...we still have no players in the field yet...they cannot come or apply for a broadcasting licence regardless of their different levels of preparedness...” (Interview Nhamo Mhiripiri 2017, Gweru).

While it has been acknowledged in this study that in the past the BAZ has called for and issued commercial licences at both regional and national level albeit in a controversial manner, the wide discretionary powers vested in BAZ in deciding when and how to call for licence applications and the fact that there is no legal measure within BSA which compel BAZ to make the call, creates monopoly in the board. To a great extent such a licensing framework as supported by section 10 of the BSA, *ultravires*³² section 61(3) of the constitution which provides for the freedom of establishment of broadcasters. There is need for periodic calls for licences because the current configuration of the BSA gives large space

³² A latin phrase meaning beyond the scope or in excess of legal power

of monopoly to BAZ, it is empowered to act in the manner it wants regardless of the public interest. The laxity has resulted in arrogance on the part of the BAZ board albeit in the interest of the appointing powers (ruling power). Based on the fact that these stations are ready and prepared to start broadcasting yet the responsible authority is not inviting applications in the community radios category, they have organised themselves under ZACRAS and use different strategies to pile pressure on the government to licence community radio. However, it must be noted that such wide discretions subject the BAZ board to political and administrative abuse resulting in a stand still situation where no community radio station can be granted a broadcasting licence as no calls has ever been made as further discussed in the following section.

Community radio licencing in Zimbabwe at cross roads

At the root of radio licensing discourse in Zimbabwe lays a strong critique of how the government is handling the community radio licensing issue. Media reform movements have argued that, the government failed to licence community radio stations despite the existence of enabling law, like the Broadcasting Services Act of 2001 which recognises a three tier system in public media broadcasters, commercial broadcasters and community broadcasters. According to MISA-Zimbabwe; “The delay by BAZ in calling for broadcasting licence applications following the coming into force of the BSA remains a major concern particularly in respect to community broadcasting...” (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2009: 3). Nevertheless, no invitations to licence community radio have ever been made in Zimbabwe since the establishment of BSA sparking debate over community radio licencing. However, those fighting against the lack of community radio licences in Zimbabwe argue that they have established at least 28 community radio initiatives and are still fighting to be licenced by BAZ (Amnesty International, 2015). These are called community radio “initiatives” because they are not yet registered to use the bandwidth. The need to obtain community radio licences has ignited a bitter argument between the government and community radio activists registered under the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radios Stations (ZACRAS).

The controversy for community radio licencing has raged unabated for over a decade and a half now. According to the national acting programme officer of ZACRAS, “Our argument is for the government to licence community radios... We have no community radios in Zimbabwe because they have not been licenced and the government is not willing to...What is available are community radio initiatives” (Interview, Kudzai Kwangware 2017, Harare).

The reason why there are no operational community radios in Zimbabwe is that the government has not licenced them as they are ready to broadcast since they have already set up community radio “initiatives” currently broadcasting online because online platforms are not yet regulated in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, it seems the government’s sceptism and fear to be scrutinised by the media is the major reason why it is reluctant to register community radios. Besides, community radios can be pervasive and have the ability to penetrate the rural areas which are strongholds of the ruling ZANU PF, and the fear within the ruling government that if people are conscientised by alternative media, they may become rational to broad political options available thereby compromising the ruling party’s political market share. The debate over “community radio” suggests that the government is unwilling to reform its own media systems as a means to starve marginalised communities of critical information as it strengthen its hegemony.

In contrast, the government argues that lack of proper conceptualisation of the term “community radio” has always been the reason why BAZ has not been able to grant community radio licences in Zimbabwe. According to George Charamba; “...our dispute with people from community radio ...is that, conceptually, they don’t seem to know what a community radio is as all radios serve communities...I think you are better serving by calling it local radio because you are now talking in terms of its closeness to the listener” (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare). As can be seen from the above analysis, a difference in the conceptualisation of a “community radio” is one of the key issues that generated debate between community radio advocates and the government. The government takes the issue of conceptual definition serious and is certain that its meaning should indicate what it does. The concept, “Community” should at all times be differentiated with “local” as speaking in terms of closeness to the listener. This position is affirmed by another ZANU PF legislator and a member of the parliamentary portfolio committee on Information Media and Broadcasting Services who posits that,

There is no community radio ever licenced in Zimbabwe because... there is a problem on the definition of what is a community radio? who is the community? Who is to run those community stations? Who are going to fund those radio stations? So these are the issues which are forcing the government not to issue those community radios licences as of now we are seized with that (Interview Kindness Paradza 2017, Harare).

It sounds like being a community radio is not much more about closeness to the listener but has much more to do with the community the radio is supposed to serve, in terms of

geographical location, culture, beliefs and values. The African charter on broadcasting definition of “community” seems to suggest a common definition of people living in a same place with face-to-face contact. The inadequacy of this “community” is challenged by the new technologies creating communities which cross over physical boundaries and could connect with each other using technologies but still fulfil most of the functions of the community (Goel, 2014). Based on Goel’s (2014) analysis one can realise that the common definition of community, refers to “a neighborhood, which might be a town, or a village yet it does not take into cognition the absences of cohesion, in addition, it ignores the glaring differences and shared interests that crosses physical boundaries and unite people to act together”. In support Bhattacharya cited in Goel (2014) argues that a place-based understanding of community does not take into account social changes brought by digital technology. It is important to note that while section 6(2) of the Broadcasting Services Acts authorises the licensee (BAZ) to provide a licence for a “community broadcasting service”, the act does not provide an explicit definition of a “community radio”. On section 2(1) of the same act, the following definition has been provided,

Community broadcasting service means a free-to-air (radio or television) broadcasting service not operated for profit or as part of a profit-making enterprise which—
 (a) Provides programmes—
 (i) For community purposes and
 (ii) is capable of being received by commonly available equipment and
 (b) Does not broadcast programmes or advertisements on behalf of any political party... (Section 2(1) of the BSA Chapter 12, 06).

There is need to operationise the concept of “community”, questions like who or what is a community especially in this digital age needs to be answered with specificity to avoid doubt. Surprisingly enough, there is nothing in the act which explicitly defines what a “Community” is. Defining community in the context of a community radio needs a wide definition that includes a variety of issues such as place, interest and other forms of emerging communities that traverse physical boundaries and relate with different people in diverse locations.

This exposes the argument of ZACRAS about the need for community radio licensing as a borrowed concept specifically from UNESCO manual which takes a community radio as a third tier of broadcasting distinguished from commercial and public service broadcasting (Ngugi & Kinyua 2014:1). Although Zimbabwe is a signatory to African charter on broadcasting which provides and emphasises on the three tier model of broadcasting, there has been much division between the state and media reform activists on this issue in

Zimbabwe. Moreso, international provisions are subjected to the laws and provisions of the Republic of Zimbabwe meaning that the provisions of the international and regional boards are not compulsory nor are they enforceable because of the African Union policy of non-interference (Akpojivi, 2018). It therefore exposes the need to warn that broadcasting must not be premised on a one size fit all model but rather on the needs of the people as claimed by the government,

...It's a fallacy to say there is a three tier, there can be as many tiers as society deems necessary... In America, there are conglomerates ABC, NBC, CBC and around them we have constellations of little broadcasters... but there is also... NPR which is educational then the Voice of America (VOA) which constitutionally is not allowed to broadcast in America. In fact, it is a weapon of Americans in trying to hegemonise the rest of the world through public diplomacy (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare).

Charamba's statement goes beyond to question the normative ideas around media structure in Zimbabwe. It rejects the Western models that have been adopted by most African countries without taking into cognisance their own situation, needs and cultural environment. Thus, to him, the needs of the people being served by the media must be considered first before taking care of other international conventions. Although, some may argue that the government's shifting position from the international agreements in the debate of community radio licensing is not genuine and is based on its insecurity and fear of external influence (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2012), it seems that the debate goes far beyond fear and is premised on political and sovereignty issues. The generic three tier system cannot be extrapolated to all countries across the globe as it may be problematic to capture the needs of certain societies which fall outside the dictated ambit. In addition, such acceptance of international conventions and the embracing of concepts that do not support local orientation have a bearing on the subversion of government control thereby creating a powerless nation-state (Chakravartty & Sarikakis, 2006: 6). This exposes the challenges associated with framing media democracy at transnational contexts as diverse cultural, political, and economic issues may need to be taken care of and addressed (O Siochrú, 2005).

Building on the work of UNESCO, Ngugi and Kinyua (2014) argue that community radios should not only be run by but also serve the interests of the community. At best they are viewed as media that give a voice to the voiceless and the marginalised and they should form the central part of a democratised communication system (2014: 1). The definition by Ngugi and Kinyua (2014) augurs well with government's sentiments that, "a community radio must

be an establishment by a community and needs to reflect the needs of the people it serve in the community concerned rather than following a Western model as different communities have different needs to fulfill through the use of broadcasting services” (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare). The need to delink with Western models needs no emphasis. Delinking from the Western based models enables opportunities for local broadcasters to adequately address cultural, political and economic issues in community broadcasting. There is need for the establishment of a common understanding in terms of references especially when one is dealing with controversial issues like the community radio in Zimbabwe. Akpojivi (2018)) revisits this debate and updates Ake’s (1979) argument that there is need for the exploration of the degree of universality of the Western concepts (2018:37). He claims that it is only after such examination and understanding of the conditions under which the universal standards can be applied that Africans can decide on what to take and what to leave depending on their cultural values, religions, languages, and artefact among several others. On the same note, postcolonial scholars confront universalistic tendencies in most of the Western models and challenge Africa to bring forth relative theories which suit non-western countries of the Global South. Ncube (2010) revisits Hann’s (1996) argument that the dilemma with Western based models is that they have “a specific currency in the history of Western ideas” (Ncube, 2010: 71). As a consequence history may not be generically shared.

While the three tier systems has demarcated the radios broadcasting into three, it is not disputable to say that all radios stations serve communities regardless of being community, commercial or public service. It is from such arguments that Zimbabwe has registered what it called “regional commercial” radio station to serve both commercial and communities desires. While these radios were initially confined to a 40 kilometer radius, in some areas they have been reaching as far as 60 kilometres to such an extent that the government is muting to officially increase their reach as elaborated by the permanent secretary when he said,

So we have to go to the metro stations which should operate within 40km radius until we made a follow up to see how were they doing technologically and commercially then the horror! We discovered that transmitter’s reach even the weakest is 60 km, yet we have limited them to 40 km radius. So you notice that it did not make technological sense... Hwengwere³³ station was a classical example from a commercial point of view, he is confined in Zvishavane, there are few advertising

³³ Munyaradzi Hwengwere, the former Chief Executive Officer of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation now the Chief executive officer of YaFm located in Zimbabwe’s town of Zvishavane

businesses... the few they have cannot sustain a radio station, it cannot break even yet it is a commercial station. So we then realise that even forty km did not make commercial sense. We now have to revise that approach that we can harmonise service provision, technological reality and commercial sustainability and community needs. You don't want to plan a service of failure you want to plan a service that grows... so you notice that in the intervening weeks we will move away from metro stations to regional stations so your HevoiFM³⁴ will now cover the whole of Masvingo (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare).

The need to harmonise service explained by Charamba insinuate the need to put together the commercial service and community service of these broadcasting stations. To some, it sounds like there is a hidden agenda of making sure that no alternative media should explore the marginalised community hence the need to extend the reach of the already existing pro-government voices. Yet to others, there are glaring differences between interests of commercial broadcasters and interests of community broadcasters. Collapsing the two into one has detrimental effects on the community side. A community radio is non-profit making regardless of the need to have equipment. This makes it difficult for the establishment of community radios that are free from the influence of external funders, the state or the market.

While the above debate has noted challenges facing the government to licence community radios, it is imperative to describe a community radio in a manner which advance that; “a community radio station must belong exactly to communities” (Interview Senior Government official (1) 2017, Harare). Emphasising the argument on the ownership of community radios, the government official further expressed that, “a community radio belongs exactly to that, it is a community radio not in terms of who it serves only but also in terms of ownership” (Interview, senior government Official (1) 2017, Harare). They should be community radios in terms of both ownership and who they serve. This indicates that the concept, “community radio” is an ownership statement which explains that the radio has been seconded to the community. Therefore, in Zimbabwe, proponents of community radio licensing and those who make a case for its being cannot be the urbanites or media activists such as the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radios Stations (ZACRAS) which are funded by the Western donors and foreign governments. Mhangama (2016) advances that donor funding, although it is important to sustain the station, it can affect their identity mainly because these stations end up concentrating on courting donors to provide sponsorship to more programmes

³⁴ HevoiFM is a radio station covering around 40KM radius of the city of Masvingo and is owned by the former government Minister and ZANU PF legislator Mr Supa Mandiwanzira through his company AB Communications

thereby affecting content and a community agenda. To increase participation of ordinary people in the media, community radio projects should be home-grown and not influenced by external forces who peddle Western ideologies and the regime change agenda. According to Kindness Paradza, “As a parliamentary portfolio on broadcasting and media services, we would wish to see a lot of these community radios being set up but who is going to fund them? Are they going to be commercial? Are they going to be free, these are issues which need clarification” (Interview Kindness Paradza 2017, Harare).

Amnesty International (2015) argues that there is a public demand for community radios in Zimbabwe as evidenced by the 28 community radio initiatives across the country. However, Amnesty International could not explain that the available community radio initiatives in Zimbabwe have been established by the Western funded media activists fronted by ZACRAS which mobilise communities to campaign for community radio licensing. There is no research to establish “public demand” for community radios in Zimbabwe so far. ZACRAS’s National Acting Programme Officer, Kudzai Kwangwari avers that ZACRAS picks community members from their respective community structures and train them on community radio licencing advocacy. He adds that; “...once trained, the newly trained advocates will work with the target community radio initiatives (CRIs) in community advocacy work and citizen mobilisation for action towards CRIs licensing” (Interview Kudzai Kwangwari 2017, Harare). This confirms the government’s fear that, all community radio licensing agitations are just agitations for foreign donors’ initiatives and interests not the interests of the public. The government elaborates the process of establishing a community radio station and disparage that which is supported by foreign funding. To make it clear, a senior government official went through a supposed to be process of establishing a community radio in Zimbabwe, thus he avers,

...we must arrive in the community... and we ask... can I have an idea what the local authority is? I know there is Rural Development Council (RDC), who is into it? There is the District Administrator (DA), there are councilors, but there are ladies too in the community, so I will need a representative of women, youth, farmers and teachers. Now, I will create a structure that balances the interest around a Community whereas for a Commercial Station, I look for person who is well resourced as potential licencees. For a community radio, I look for a structure that is licensable and that structure must be a sum total of the personages, interest activities that you find in that particular community (Interview, senior government official (2) 2017, Harare).

This view is supported by Mhiripiri who adds that “some of these people are trying to take over identities of communities yet they are just regime change agents who want to subvert

the system hence, the whole idea of what is to be a community radio has to be revised...” (Interview Nhamo Mhiripiri 2017, Gweru). A broader perspective has to be adopted by arguing that if these licences were to be given, they have to be given to historically marginalised communities where media concentration or access is limited especially in outlying places. However, what is ironical with these community radio initiatives is that they are urban centred which are already media rich. The contestations of ideas over what constitutes a community radio or community occupies a central part of the debate in Zimbabwe.

However, it must also be considered that delaying in licencing community radios by the government does not only undermine the ability of communities to take part in debates which involve matters of public interest but also violates their right to freedom of expression and access to information guaranteed in the constitution of Zimbabwe as well as enshrined in the regional and international treaties to which Zimbabwe is a signatory (Amnesty International, 2015: 3). Without a proper definition of “Community radio” the government persists to dawdle and prevaricate on when and how it is going to proceed with the licensing of community radios as provided for under the Broadcasting Services Act.

The paradox of media regulation: Implications for statutory and self regulation

The media regulatory sphere in Zimbabwe is defined by “restrictive and inhibitive media policies and laws” (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2018). Regardless of the adoption of the 2013 Constitution which embodies universally acceptable bill of rights, the government has not reformed any media policies and regulations to align them with the constitution. The statutory Zimbabwe Media Commission is a constitutional board which empowers AIPPA to formulate and implement media regulations such as registration and licencing of media houses and accreditation of journalists ([www.http://zimbabwe.misa.org](http://zimbabwe.misa.org)). The notion that “the pen is mightier than the sword” discussed earlier continues to play a critical role in deciding how the media should be regulated in Zimbabwe. Undoubtedly, the fact that a media regulatory authority should adopt a powerful regulatory framework for every measure of power should be met with commensurate safeguards proposed by Mahoso. This has sparked controversy within the Zimbabwe media regulatory sphere resulting in the establishment of the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) a voluntary media self-regulatory board discussed earlier. The availability of VMCZ as a self regulatory authority in the presence of

ZMC and BAZ (two statutory regulatory boards) effectively means that Zimbabwean media has a double regulation system. While the statutory boards ZMC and BAZ have the legislative powers to enforce their decisions, VMCZ relies on the benevolence of the parties involved.

As discussed, the VMCZ was formed in 2007 with the assistance of other media reform activists such as MISA-Zimbabwe among others. Besides promoting self regulation of the media, the goal of VMCZ is to promote media ethics and a democratic society within policy and legal environments to enable the growth of an independent, diverse and plural media ([http, //www.vmcz.co.zw/](http://www.vmcz.co.zw/)). Proponents of self regulation strongly believe that, statutes are not for the regulation of the media because they criminalise the profession. Instead, they agitate for the provision of an alternative media regulation in the form of the VMCZ. According to Loughy Dube, the country Director at VMCZ,

...the biggest problems of statutory regulation is that it criminalises the profession and... when you look at the statutes and how things have been applied, it's not meant to benefit any ordinary member of the public. I don't know or have seen any member of the public that has taken a newspaper to court, it's the big people, the politicians and the ministers are the ones who take people to court and even if you look at how statutory regulation has been used, it has been used to try and frighten and to scare away media. You have the police being the implementers... If a journalists makes a professional mistake you have the police coming in, but why doesn't it happen in other professions... The problem with statutory regulations is that it does not benefit the ordinary person it is meant for those with power who can influence law enforcement agencies to act on their behalf. We thought this was not to the best of interest of the ordinary (Interview Loughy Dube 2017, Harare).

The media profession has been criminalised, any professional mistake is administered by the police mostly to scare the media from playing a critical watchdog role or make them practise self censorship so as to avoid altercation with the law. Such type of regulation restricts journalists from fully performing their duties of advancing information for the public to make informed choices. Such regulatory regime is usually averse to John Stuart Mill's open discussion discourse for the discovery of the truth. This approach is similar to Fentuck and Varney's unrestricted media concept which seeks to provide open discussions for information dissemination (Fentuck and Varney, 1996). Moreover, if the speech is restricted people are likely to make wrong judgements based on lack of adequate information to guide them (Fentuck and Varney, 2006). Furthermore, the belief that self regulatory mechanisms are cheap and accessible and effective to the satisfaction of ordinary people can be sustained to some extent. For example, Loughy Dube confirmed that,

Though enforcing the decision of the board is a concern for everyone in terms of enforcement, I would like to assure you that in the last four to five years, our enforcement rate has been 97%. The 3% outstanding were cases of associates who had brought their cases. They had differed before on other cases and they had failed to solve the issues sometimes in courts. They then came to us and we had a big challenge because these people are already compromised... For instance,...the Nyarota vs Daily News case. In this case, Nyarota went to court and sued the paper (Daily News) and besides they had five pending court cases. You see, there are already dark positions when they came to us and it was complicated... (Interview Loughty Dube 2017, Harare).

According to UNESCO report on community radios in Africa, “in recent years about 9 out of 10 complaints have been resolved through self regulatory system to the ordinary complainants satisfaction” (UNESCO, 2011:12) confirming the VMCZ’s statistics. Besides, there is a general belief among self regulatory pundits that self-regulation is effective than statutory regulation because it makes it easy to modify rules in response to the fast changing nature of media technology (Campbell, 1999). Self-regulation is not very expensive to the state as the cost of running the organisation is kept to the Industry (ibid). Campbell adds that self-regulation gives a better incentive for complainants who may be willing to comply with rules developed by their peers with their input than those made in parliament (ibid). VMCZ receives, mediates and adjudicates media related complaints by individuals and organisations (VMCZ, 2017). The organisation seeks to protect both interests of the media and the public through mutual and ethical arbitration.

As noted above, the issue of self and statutory regulation has been the subject of intense debate in Zimbabwe resulting in both statutory and self regulation operating at the same time regulating the same media environment. It is however disappointing to note that the government strongly believes that media must be regulated to safeguard national sovereignty which is derived from the national interest at the expense of the broader “public interest” as announced by George Charamba when he said; “Now when it comes to the public interest, it is now deriving from national interest, our constitution spells out these. If derived from the national interest then the public interest must subordinate itself to national interest” (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare). The difference between Charamba’s explanation and contemporary public interest is striking. The government’s understanding of the public interest contrasts, to a great extent, with the public interest described by other scholars. For instance, Kupe avers that, “public interest is broader than the national interest because public

interest speaks to and reflects the values that no single social organisation or individual or entity can claim sole ownership of” (Kupe, 2005: 1). The author further elaborates that public interests embodies the national interest without conflict. A possible explanation for this might be that, broadly speaking, what is in the public interest is in the national interest although what is in the national interest may not be in the public interest (Kupe, 2005). Another possible explanation for this is that the government’s position is clear in that when pursuing media regulation, the state is interested in the national interest which is not necessarily the public interest but may be the ruling class interests supporting the idea that “most often, national interest and public interest reflect the interest of a selected few and a means by the state to limit critical media and views” (Wasserman and de Beer cited in Akpojivi, 2018: 33).

Using the national interest vague perspective which connotes that “national interest is the totality of things that ensure the survival of a nation and it is the responsibility of the democratic government to make such decisions which should reflect the wishes of the public” (Netshitenzhe cited in Akpojivi, 2018; 33), the Zimbabwe Media Commission posits that,

...the media cannot be left to its own whims... You cannot have power without responsibility because that power can be prone to abuse other people’s rights. Until and unless the media is mature enough, when they can have a self-correcting mechanism within themselves then there won’t be need for state intervention in media regulation (Interview Academy Chinamhora 2017, Harare).

The sweeping definition gives the government too much freeplay in its application of media regulation in Zimbabwe. The government seems to have overstated its mandate to such an extent that it fails to recognise the importance of other policy actors. Moreso, the maturity referred to here is likely to be the ability of the media to align itself with the dictates of the government which is synonymous with the ruling elites. The state does not have enough trust in the media to leave it unattended. Accordingly, the media must be controlled to make sure that it exercises responsibility in its operation. There are, however, other possible explanations such as, the state acts like a big brother to prevent the weaker members of the community from being manipulated by some media which seeks to further their market or own self interests. However, what is ironical is that, the state regulates the media in such a manner that the public interests are injured leaving the public at its mercy. As if to support, Fentuck and Varney aver that, “The power the mass media wields in a large-scale society ...is clear and, if this power is not constrained by adequate accountability mechanisms, it might be thought to be in breach of fundamental constitutional expectations” (Fentuck and

Varney, 2006:15). While, the need to keep the media in check can not be disputed, the question which continues to linger on remains, how? To a greater extent, the state authority has hijacked the democratic process of appointing personnel in media regulatory institutions thus negatively affecting the media democratisation project in Zimbabwe as shown in the above discussion.

Using the adage, “a pen is mightier than the sword” the state has found some justification in its manipulation and excersive control of access to information, freedom of expression and freedom of the media regardless of being constitutinally guaranteed rights. To further prop up this idea, Loughty Dube said,

If you look at the flow of information the biggest person with key interest is the politicians because proper flow of information affects their stay and rise to power. They want to control that for their benefit, if you look at what is happening at ZBC a lot of politician don't want a self-regulatory system because their people won't get employed. There won't be partisan journalism. If you look at editors at Zimpapers some have no qualifications and the easiest way to a profession is of having an entry point...This is because you have a scenario where those in power would want to use people who have no professional qualifications and are not guided by ethics to advance their cause (Interview, Loughty Dube, 2017, Harare).

The sentiment expressed in the quotation, embodies the view that, appointments of media personnel in strategic positions is through loyalty tests. Those whose loyalty is doubted do not land crucial posts within the public media sector. Those who are appointed make sure that their effort is spent on spinning the news for senior government officials as well as giving a blind eye to some bad exhibitions by the senior government authorities. Another possible explanation for this result may be that, media regulation should be seen as an instrument of the elites to protect themselves against the sprawling eyes of the poor. It protects the elites because they have diginity and the poor as Charamba said is like “...a villager, a peasant who has no reputation beyond that of attending to the earth, breaking the clod, making earth give somekind of wherewithal for his poor family...” (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare). It must therefore follow that the poor are not concerned about reputation basically because they have none. It then takes us further to understand that reputation is a construct of class.

Another argument on media self regulation emanates from the fact that in Zimbabwe statutory regulation sets up some demand on media profession such as codes and principles to be adhered to without consultation with media stakeholders. As discussed above there are

two principle laws which regulate the media in a manner which has caused controversy in the Zimbabwean media sphere: the BSA and AIPPA. More controversially these laws carry within them regulatory structures whose composition perpetuates inequality among stakeholders and strategically act against freedom of expression and access to information which forms pillars of a democratic media. Media activists in Zimbabwe argue that statutory regulation's role must be limited to the promotion of media interest as well as to defend freedom of expression and rights of the media as given by Section 61 and 62 of the Zimbabwean constitution amendment number 20. Thus, the process of registering and licensing of journalists is a violation of the freedom of expression which must be enjoyed without undue force of registration. In this sense, statutory regulation in the current set up undermines the right to freedom of expression to a greater extent. The Zimbabwe Union of Journalists contends that, "...it is an overbearing policy in its mandate to accredit journalists on yearly bases, its demands to register media houses and to prohibit journalists from operating without registration" (Interview Eric Matingo 2017, Harare). It seems the state concentrates more efforts on controlling the media through statutory regulation while neglecting the role of media promotion. This was supported by some media activists who continue to call for the reform of the ZMC to focus on other roles other than that of accrediting media houses and journalists and other media professionals. In this context, ZUJ further advanced that,

Instead, ZMC must focus on promoting the interests of the media and if they are to give journalists any accreditation it must help them to do their work so that when they go to high security areas like the parliament and others, they can produce the accreditation and be assisted to get access to news stories and not necessarily to stop them like what is obtaining with the current media regulatory framework, Zimbabwe (Interview Eric Matingo 2017, Harare).

Besides, the argument above, Loughty Dube believes that the state to some extent plays a double role in media regulation. The respondent avers that, "the government must not be both, a player and a referee in the same game" (Interview, Loughty Dube 2017, Harare). Based on its position as a major news maker, the government of Zimbabwe is essentially part of the matrix of news production and because of such position the government cannot be both a player and a referee in the same game. In a society like Zimbabwe where the state media and the private media dominate, the government is inclined to take action against private media as it plays a watchdog role and criticize government policies and actions. On the other hand the state media propagates support for its policies. What has emerged here is that state

media regulation is one of the surest ways of promoting media polarisation because the state is an interested party in the role of the media in our society. The role of the state may be neutralised if there was a media council composed of members who represent the configuration of media organisation operating in a society such as registered media associations, registered media houses and accredited journalists and professionals. Although established by the statutes, the board should be owned by the media sector. Even though the Media Council should be a statutory set up, the board should be given an opportunity to define its own councilors and its agenda.

The major fear seems to be that, such a situation cannot create a level playing field as the laws are likely to support the government and attack other private players who may want to keep the government in check. In support of this agreement Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ), avers that journalists should be in a position to disbar or sanction any journalists who writes falsehood and who would have gone outside the code of the ethics, “As journalists we should be in a position to regulate ourselves” (Interview, Nigel Nyamutumbu 2017, Harare). What this means is that, should journalists fail to abide, it should be their own colleagues who should censure them rather than the government. It is generally believed that professional people, build a much stronger appreciation of ethics in a profession if they self-regulate rather than being regulated by a third and interested party (Ravikumar, 2014). In Zimbabwe, statutory regulation has caused the general defiance within the media sphere because the regulator is coming from outside the media profession. In support of this debate, Mathew Takaona adds that “ self-regulation sets standards for itself and it engages the society which it should regulate to take part in coming up with the code of conduct rather than imposing on them. Here, stakeholders participate in the codes and principles that govern their professional conduct” (Interview, Mathew Takaona 2017, Masvingo).

Against these arguments, some believe that it will be very difficult for the industry to comply more with its own regulations than the statutory imposed ones without any enticement. One member of the parliament portfolio committee on Media and Broadcasting services in Zimbabwe argues that, “To think that the industry will simply comply based on such flimsy ideas is a dream come true”, (Interview with Kindness Paradza, July, Harare). Tafataona Mahoso weighed in by arguing that self-regulation creates Laissez-faire. He avers that “In fact the government has not refused the media to self-regulate, it is the media which is not ready for self-regulation as we are yet to see journalists being deregistered for lying, through

their own organisations and for attacking people” (Interview with Tafataona Mahoso, July, 2017, Harare). Mahoso’s argument is that, if journalists are to be taken serious in their self regulating mechanism, they should be stringent with each other in passing decisions so that the duty of the courts will be just to confirm decisions made by journalists and editors themselves. However, journalists have not been punishing each other for malpractice hence inviting the government and statutory regulation mechanism which protects the “public interest”. Even though, Campbell (1999) avers that expulsions may also be an ineffective deterrent, it depends with the benefits a member is deriving from the membership. However those who vouch for media self-regulatory believe that journalists need to be rooted in media ethics through training and retraining. As a result, VMCZ conducts in-house training in Zimbabwe (VMCZ, 2017). The organisation hires reputable scholars and online media experts to train media practitioners and online content creators. Loughy Dube, the Director of VMCZ, acknowledges that VMCZ have been doing in-house training in almost “all media houses in Zimbabwe including the Zimpapers group to enhance professional journalism and improve their knowledge on media ethics” (Interview with Loughy Dube July 2017, Harare).

Conclusion

This chapter analysed the nature of the debates in Zimbabwe on media policy and regulatory frameworks. The major debates that came out in this study include: the unfairness of the media regulating framework in Zimbabwe, appointments of media regulatory boards such as the ZMC and BAZ, the consistent failure by the state to licence community radios in Zimbabwe and the debate on statutory and self media regulation. ZMC and BAZ have not been ideal independent media regulators which should promote diverse public, private and community media in Zimbabwe. Appointments in media regulatory boards are characterised by government loyalists. Regulatory authorities are not empowered with a clear mandate nor do they have a guaranteed autonomy as politics takes precedence over professionalism in the Zimbabwean media management sphere. Decisions are done along political lines and anyone who does not toe the political line will be sacrificed. In another debate, community radio licencing has not been done as laid down in the statutes and the inability to licence community radio stations by the Zimbabwean government does not only undermine the ability of communities to take part in debates which involve matters of public interest but also violates the rights to freedom of expression and access to information guaranteed in the constitution of Zimbabwe. However, without a proper definition of a “community radio” the government has not been able to licence community radios as it fears possible infiltration by

the Western influence. In a bid to show how determined media reform activists are, they formed their own voluntary media regulatory organisation (VMCZ) which runs parallel to the government's statutory boards (ZMC and BAZ). At the end, it is important to conclude that, the major contestations in the Zimbabwe media system are based on policy and regulatory framework. This has been a perennial problem in Zimbabwe and the state is reluctant to solve it as it derives some benefits from it.

Chapter Six

Media activism, reform and democracy in Zimbabwe

Introduction

This chapter seeks to establish the extent to which media activism has influenced media reform and how such reform has democratised communication in Zimbabwe. It presents the views and experiences obtained from respondents and documents data. The methodology used in data gathering in this chapter is largely in-depth interviews with purposively selected informants and analysis of relevant documents as discussed in research methodology section of Chapter One. This chapter discusses two objectives of this research, media activism influencing media reform processes and the media reform contribution to media democratisation. In doing this, the chapter intends to address two fundamental research questions (1) to what extent has media activism influenced media reform processes in Zimbabwe? (2) How has media reform contributed to media democratisation in Zimbabwe? The analysis and discussion is done in four segments. While the first two segments focus on the influence of media activism on media reform in Zimbabwe, the other two seek to understand how media reform contributed to media democratisation in Zimbabwe. The presentation, analysis and discussion follows the following sequence; From media activism to media reform; Media activism and constitutional changes, towards freedom of expression, freedom of the media and access to information; Media reform usurped, a miscarriage of the media democratisation process and In defence of national sovereignty and national interest, fighting the tragedy of a borrowed mind-set.

From media activism to media reform

In this study as discussed earlier, media activism is conceptualised as a form of civil society or social movement which advances the ability to act and make or change the history of media related sphere (Cammaerts, 2013). It represents the practice of struggling for media change through intentional action to bring about transformation in the media environment. In doing so, it engages in protests and demonstrations, strikes, sit-ins, consumer boycotts, nonviolent civil disobedience and direct action. Some practices or forms of activism are less direct action and operate more with the dominant political and judiciary systems such as “judicial activism” to challenge the state through courts and lobbying to influence legislators or governments. In addition, alternative media, media literacy, public journalism, media

monitoring, policy advocacy and micro-radio remains variables used by media activists to influence changes (Carrol & Hacket, 2006). In Zimbabwe, media activists have been existing under the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ). The coalition consists of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) (Zimbabwe chapter), Media Monitors (MM), Gender and Media Connect (GMC), Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ), Zimbabwe National Editors' Forum (ZINEF), Media Centre (MC), Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) and the African Community Publishing Development Trust (ACPDT), Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS) and some media scholars.

These groups work together in the struggle for media reform using different strategies. Media reform denotes the manner in which an alteration, modification or restructuring is employed to the media institution for positive change towards media democracy. Media democracy on the other hand literally designates the manner in which the media exercises its role in society without the burden of laws and regulations stifling its operations. The relationship between media reform and media democracy ought to be understood in the manner in which the other serves as a measurement of the other, this is to mean that, the more the media environment is reformed, the more media democracy becomes apparent. In this context, media democracy is an ever ending cliché that requires continuous modifications and improvements to be fully attained. Media democracy is not static but it is always in a constant state of flux. Accordingly, media democracy may be delineated as an aggregation of ideas centered on the essence of reforming the media. In this study, "media reform" is conceptualised in a manner informed by Kurban (2011) who submits that, ideas surrounding media democracy through media reform are influenced by various factors, among them improving public service broadcasting, participating in various forms of media and journalism, offering various platforms for public discussions and expressions of opinions, conscious of the fact that, the goal of media democracy is to establish an overall democracy for the public.

In the Zimbabwean case, a manifestation of media reform can be observed in the various media laws that have been enacted from the year 2000 and have been engaged in a democratisation process ever since. While these laws govern the operations of the media on a day to day basis, it becomes inherent to evaluate the manner in which these reform contribute to the attainment of democracy by the communications space in Zimbabwe. Moreover, while classifying media laws as reform, it is also important to examine the extent to which they guarantee the development and modification of the industry at large, void of which it may be

argued that there are no media reform in Zimbabwe or vice versa. Furthermore, it must be understood that the democratisation of the media is ideally vital in ensuring that citizens' social demands are met in the public domain and this points to a reform of legal frameworks and ownership of media houses at large. To a larger extent media reform in Zimbabwe has been influenced by the Western funded media activists whose terms of reference are domiciled in the need to implement and protect the inalienable human right of free speech, a universal entitlement usually used to measure a nation's democratic disposition (Akpojivi, 2018: 53). This has become problematic as most of the reform is viewed as disingenuous creating since a source of perennial media policy and regulation debate in Zimbabwe. To understand the nature of media reform that ensues, this chapter begins by establishing the influence of media activists on media policy reform in Zimbabwe.

To achieve this reform, there is need to engage in action packed engagement with authorities through the use of media activists. The configuration of media reform movements in Zimbabwe is informed by Carroll and Hackett's (2006) concentric circle model. In this model, the central part is composed of groups which operate within and around media industries (*ibid*). These media activists stimulate awareness of the "alienation, exploitation and/or constraints on creativity and public information rights generated by a commercialised corporate media system" (Carroll and Hackett, 2006: 85). However, in Zimbabwe, activism is against the authoritative state rather than a commercialised corporate media system hence to suit this narrative the core circle is adjusted to represent the authoritative state. Groups in this circle comprise of media workers, journalists, and several others who work within the media professional. In the middle strata of the circle are subordinate social groups normally referred to as the subalterns (see Fig 1) (Moyo & Mutsvairo, 2018). Usually the interests of the subalterns brings them into conflict with the social order especially when they organise themselves into some movements to speak back to power and make efforts to access public communication in their pursuit of a political project (Carroll & Hackett, 2006). The outermost layer of the circle is composed of elements not directly linked to communication policy and neither is it a threat to their existence. However, they occasionally get organised to repel some threats that media may pose to democratic values (Carroll & Hackett, 2006). Among these groups are religious groups, parents and others advocating for ethical publications by the media (*ibid*). In Zimbabwe, commercial media has never been a significant threat to media democracy, the major worry has been the fight for media democracy as threatened by the authoritative state. It is from this configuration surrounding the concentric circle that this

study is interested in the innermost circle as it augurs well with the nature of media activism in Zimbabwe.

In the model described, media activism in Zimbabwe occupies the core circle made up of media workers, journalists, and independent producers and scholars. At times these media activists are known as “media reform movements” (Wongrujira, 2008) which pull their resources together and share responsibilities to build broader coalitions for media reform resulting in the formation of the, Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ). MAZ shares the diagnosis of media democracy deficiency within the Zimbabwean media landscape and introduced strategies of eradicating them. It was established in 2012. According to Nigel Nyamutumbu, the programmes Manager of MAZ, “...as MAZ, we share common positions...media speaks with one voice and that is important and powerful...partly, the formation of MAZ solved the problem of jostling over donors. MAZ coordinates funding among media activists organisations in Zimbabwe” (Interview Nigel Nyamutumbu 2017, Harare). This network of non-state actors work with governments, “parliamentarians, regional and international boards, regulators, and others to play an important role in supporting a conducive legal, regulatory, and economic environment for media and in defending independent voices...when under attack” (Wasserman & Benequista 2017).

According to Nhlanhla Ngwenya the then national Director at MISA-Zimbabwe,

...the involvement of activist in the reform process has been effective regardless of the problems it has faced... In Africa, it's not a stroll in the park engaging the government. They throw all manner of spanners along your way, try to avoid you as much as possible if not criminalising your work. To get them to sit around the table and listen to you is an achievement on its own especially when you look at the militarisation of states in this region. So I think we have done quite a lot against the odds (Interview Nhlanhla Ngwenya 2017, Harare).

This rather intriguing finding could be due to the level of hard work, consistency and insistency put forward by media reform activists in Zimbabwe. This finding is consistent with that of Mhiripiri who observed during the Information and Media Panel of Inquiry³⁵ (IMPI, 2015) that;

³⁵ A twenty eight member panel comprising various persons from the media, academia, arts and legal sectors appointed to spearhead an inquiry into the state of information and media industry in Zimbabwe. The team was appointed in 2013 by the ministry of Media, Information and Broadcasting services.

..media activism makes several noteworthy contributions towards media policy reform in Zimbabwe...for instance before the referendum these civil society organisations would go into communities and articulate their voices within communities sensitising people before they make their own submissions...to the constitutional committees...I also saw this when we were conducting the IMPI programme (Interview Nhamo Mhiripiri 2017, Harare).

Mhiripiri exposes media reform activism strategies in winning the hearts and minds of the policy makers through influencing the process of policy making in a way which increases their voices although under the ordinary person's voice. Indeed, these members would be strategically placed to communicate positions of the media reform activists to policy makers such as the IMPI among several others. It is encouraging to note that the push for media reform by media reform activist using ordinary people to articulate their voice was consistent through out the IMPI inquiry, Mhiripiri states further that,

...In every district we find people articulating the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radios' (ZACRAS) position of licencing community radio in Zimbabwe... It is interesting to note that these lobbyist would attend such occasions without wearing their hats which can make them to be identified as ZACRAS, instead, they merge with the local community... (Interview, Mhiripiri 2017, Harare).

A possible explanation for this might be the media reform activists endeavours, in these circumstances, to create a counter-hegemony strategy based on the subaltern, and the organic intellectuals. This strategy offers a point of departure for media reform activism, especially some kind of consistent articulation of the position of the community from the ordinary people who are much more insightful and decisive on those issues to do with reform in community radio licencing and other areas. This kind of mobilisation, although it requires massive investments in resource mobilisation, ultimately wins the day. A number of villagers have been initiated into this struggle to such an extent that they have adopted the struggle into their communal struggle.



Fig.3 Community radio station public discussion invitation poster (ZACRAS, 2016)

This illustration supports the discussion on the ability of strategies employed by media activists to mobilise the general populace and equip them with information to confront power demanding reform. Media reform activists organisations like ZACRAS draw communities into programmes and initiate them in a way that they see the project as theirs. Thus, using discussions such as the one advertised above, ZACRAS initiates communities into the programmes.

The emergence of media activism and grassroots efforts which intends to influence media practices and strategies builds citizen urgency and the appetite to access information (Carrol & Hackett, 2006). ZACRAS ensures regular monitoring and evaluation follow ups with participants so as to ensure effective implementation of the learnt concepts in communication reform advocacy. To enhance their influence, their strategies include community radio advocacy and radio dialogue advocacy training in communities. The national acting programme officer Kudzai Kwangwari said, “These would be picked from their respective community structures, once trained, the advocates will work with the target community radio

initiatives (CRIs) in community advocacy work and citizen mobilisation for action towards CRIs licensing” (Interview Kudzai Kwangware 2017, Harare). In the training programme, ZACRAS emphasises community mobilisation, advocacy, power and stakeholder mapping at community level, research support and data gathering among other modules. After training, the graduate advocates become local change agents and community mobilisers for action towards community improvements. In addition, the organisation engages in capacity building projects to speed up the establishment of community radios in Zimbabwe (ZACRAS, 2018).

Arguing on the extent of media activists contributions towards media reform, Eckson Mugari, a senior lecturer in the department of media and society studies at the Midlands State University in Zimbabwe believed that “you can never...gauge, how much the civil society has contributed but you can be assured that media activists consistently brought critical issues to public attention” (Interview Eckson Mugari 2017, Harare). Mhiripiri corroborated these sentiments by adding that “...previously we only had the ZBC but now we have some pluralism... the lobbyist, activists are really playing their part but...also...members of parliament... these are also the people who eventually changed the policies and the laws and some of these people... were media practitioners and some of them have even suffered from these laws (Interview Mhiripiri 2017, Harare).

Although media democracy has not been achieved in the broadcasting sector, some movements have been noted indicating that the state has heeded the calls of the media reformers although to a lesser extent. Furthermore, it is true that some of the members of parliament were formerly media practitioners, for instance those who have made it into the parliament like Supa Mandiwanzira who is among the first to be awarded with three radio licences,³⁶ Kindness Paradza who had his Paper closed (The Tribune), Anele Ndebele Member of Parliament (MP) for Mpopoma, James Maridhadhi, MP for Mabvuku, Luke Tamborinyoka, Paul Nyathi among several others. Perhaps former media professionals who became politicians and are in parliament have also played their part as media policy activist, they may want to ignore it but some of them still sit or have once sat in the parliamentary portfolio committees to do with information media and broadcasting services.

³⁶ One national radio broadcasting for Zifm and two regional commercial licences for Hevoifm and 98.4fm all under the parent company “AB communications”

Although controversial, the banishment of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Act of 1957 and the creation of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Service Act of 2001 can be viewed as one of landmark reform brought about by media activists in the Zimbabwean broadcasting sector since independence. The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Service Act (BSA) [Chapter 12:01] of 2001 is the first Broadcasting Act since 1957 which removes broadcasting monopoly from Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation and acknowledges a three tier broadcasting system. This act provides opportunities for private players to exercise their rights provided they obtain a radio or television production licence (BSA, 2001). The act was born out of a Supreme court challenge of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Act by Capital radio on the basis that Section 27 of the Broadcasting Act [Chapter 12:01] which gave ZBC monopoly of being the sole broadcaster of radio and TV in Zimbabwe ultravires Section (20) of the Zimbabwean constitution which gives rights to freedom of expression and freedom to impart information. In its judgment the Supreme Court ruled in favour of Capital radio. The affirmation of the judgment meant that during that time there was nothing to prevent anyone willing to broadcast from proceeding to operate and provide a broadcasting service from within Zimbabwe (*Capital radio (pvt) ltd v Minister of Information Posts and Telecommunications*, Judgment No. S.C. 99/2000 2000).

The decision by the Supreme Court created a vacuum in the Zimbabwean broadcasting policy and Capital Radio commenced broadcasting on 28 September 2000 (Article 19/MISA-Zimbabwe 2004). The government responded by raiding its offices and closed it down. It then promulgated the Presidential Powers (Temporary Provisions) Broadcasting Regulations, 2000 (*ibid*). According to George Charamba, “the temporary measures were to cover up for the state of policy emptiness in broadcasting media” (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare). The temporary measures enable broadcasting regulations which operated for six months only. Later on the temporary law paved way for the Broadcasting Services Act (Chapter 2, 06) of 2001. Ostensibly, the new BSA ended broadcasting monopoly and introduced a three-tier system of broadcasting in Zimbabwe. In addition, it put up a regulatory authority known as the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) to control the media (Ndelela 2007), plan, manage, allocate, regulate and protect the broadcasting frequency spectrum as discussed in chapter five. In addition, BAZ would regulate and licence signal carriers among other roles and duties. The Authority became the broadcasting licensing authority and is mandated by the Act to publish a notice in the Gazette and in a national newspaper inviting applications for licences in national free-to-air radio broadcasting services

and national free-to-air television broadcasting services as well as the national free-to-air broadcasting services provided by the public broadcaster. These calls would only be made as soon as the band spectrum is available. This is one area which has caused debate in the media as it limits democracy (BSA, 2001).

Furthermore, the strength of media activism in Zimbabwe is evidenced by the fact that, on the 11th of November 2010 George Charamba as the Permanent Secretary in the then Ministry of Information and Publicity, vowed that the government will not be licencing new private broadcast players anytime soon as it does not have the capacity to monitor and regulate activities of more broadcasters (MISA, 2010). This indicates that the government had no plans whatsoever to reform the broadcasting sector at that moment. However, barely two years later and in 2011 two new national radio stations, Starfm and Zifm were licenced. To some extent, this was a response to external pressure mounted by the civil society as elaborated by Mr Rashweat Mukudu, a former director at MISA- Zimbabwe and now a media activist, "...I don't believe that without civil society push we would have slight opening of the broadcasting sector. Yes, the journey is still too long that we need to travel but we now have another voice except the ZBC" (Interview Rashweat Mukudu 2017, Harare). This however was attained following years of media reform movements campaign for broadcasting diversity and the opening up of the broadcasting sector to include public, community and commercial broadcasting. However, these were partial opening of the broadcasting sector by licensing two national radio stations: Zifm and Starfm in 2011. Later in 2013 some more eight regional commercial radio stations were licenced (Ndawana, 2015) further increasing evidence for the work being done by the media activists in Zimbabwe.

This marked the arrival of some controversial regional private commercial broadcasters in Zimbabwe. They are controversial mainly because it is believed that most of them are owned and operated by the proxies of ZANU PF (Ndawana, 2015). Supporting this argument, Nhlanhla Ngwenya, contends that,

Through these actions we now have this controversial regional private commercial broadcasters in Zimbabwe,... But the fact is we now have more radio stations than in 2005, because of the push for the diversification and democratisation of the broadcasting sector and all this I attribute to civil society activists (Interview Nhlanhla Ngwenya 2017, Harare).

Indeed, while we acknowledge the controversy over awarding of licences discussed in the previous chapter, we appreciate incremental gains in terms of media democracy in

Zimbabwe. It has been discussed that all new radio broadcasting licence holders are linked somehow to the ruling ZANU PF but the truth is that, there is competition and the monopoly of ZBC has been greatly countered. What is still outstanding is diversity of broadcasting ideas. Thus, although, the IMPI report (2014) advances that, “the licencing of radio stations by the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) has been alleged to be unfair as the majority shareholders of the organisations that got licences were sympathetic to the ruling ZANU PF (IMPI Report, 2015: 54), media reform activism has shaken policy makers to concede some changes.

One can strongly argue that media activists have done so much work in bringing a positive change towards media democracy in Zimbabwe regardless of the fact that a total media democracy status is yet to be attained. Commenting on these changes, Nhlanhla Ngwenya said,

Zimbabwe would have been much worse off had it not been for these activists groups. If you look at the manner they have tackled these legislative controls trying to push government backwards. They have even gone to seek recourse from our regional boards such as Southern Africa Development Committee (SADC), African Human Rights Courts (AHRC), Africa Commission for Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR). Remember that the first judicial interpretation of AIPPA outside Zimbabwe came out of the initiative of these activists in (2005) when the ACHPR found some provision of AIPPA to be undemocratic and it is that ruling we would like to believe that influenced the superficial amendment of the law in 2007 ahead of the 2008 election (Interview Nhlanhla Ngwenya 2017, Harare).

It is simple to understand the link between such a magnitude of agitation and the changes that are taking place within media policy in Zimbabwe. Taking the Zimbabwe issue to regional boards is clearly a strategy to put pressure on the power to change. This is so because, Zimbabwe is a signatory to the regional and international instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR); African Charter on Broadcasting,(ACB); African Platform for Access to Information, (APAI); Windhoek Declaration (WD) and Banjul Declaration on the Principles of Freedom of Expression (BDPFE).

On several occasions, when Zimbabwe seems to wantonly violate this international consensus on developmental conditions conducive for media democracy, MISA has approached the regional and international boards to help bring the country to order. For instance, on July 30, 2018 harmonised elections, MISA complains to SADC on the need for the nation to reform

media laws before the harmonised elections. The National Chairperson of MISA- Zimbabwe said, “We have reported the government of Zimbabwe to SADC for it to exert pressure on Harare to reform the state media before this year’s elections” (Interview Golden Maunganidze 2018, Harare). On other occasion, MISA has lobbied the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to exert pressure on the government to “comply more fully with the directives outlined in the SADC protocols signed in 2001 by all member states, including Zimbabwe” (Mahoso, 2015). Although to some extent, these lobbying activities yield positive results, international provisions are subjected to the laws and provisions of the incumbent state, meaning that they are not compulsory as well as enforceable due to the African Union policy of non-interference (Akpojivi, 2018: 54).

It has been established that due to pressure emanating from non state actors such as the Media Institute of Sourthen Africa (MISA) Zimbabwe chapter, its allies and some political players in the conception and delivery of media policy change in Zimbabwe, the government began to reform the media by promulgating several media policies amendments such as, AIPPA reform of 2007 as well as the broadcasting reform of 2008 (Chuma & Moyo, 2010: 1). Initially, AIPPA was drafted during the days of the then Minister of State for Publicity and Information in the President’s Office, professor Jonathan Moyo, and enacted in 2002. According to the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC), “the spirit of the law aims at providing the public with access to information held by public boards and the protection of personal privacy, professionalisation of the journalism profession and adoption and promotion of sound business principles by mass media services (Interview Chinamhora Academy 2017, Harare).

However, before its amendment, clause 38 of AIPPA created the Media and Information Commission (MIC) a commission which used to regulate the operation of the media and journalists in Zimbabwe. Under the leadership of Dr Tafataona Mahoso, the MIC immediately went on a rampage with Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ) with titles such as Daily News and the Daily News on Sunday, the Tribune and the Weekly Times found contrary to some provisions of AIPPA and were closed down earning the MIC and Mahoso the tag “Media Hangman” as dicussed in the previous chapter). This further compromised the position of media democracy in Zimbabwe as media democracy entails freedom of expression, access to information and ability to participate in a public sphere. In 2007,

AIPPA was repealed and a number of changes were made. Firstly MIC was disbanded and a number of Newspapers were allowed to register marking the return of the Daily News. Secondly, the Zimbabwe Media Commission was created and at the same time it was elevated into a constitutional board responsible for monitoring the media. Although, complains about its constitution and the personnel in charge are rife, what is encouraging is that some reform has been noted within the media policy framework.

Media reform movements such as MAZ discovered a fundamental opportunity in the above scenario to use different strategies to lobby and advocate to the relevant stakeholders to recognise freedom of expression and access to information and to uphold constitutionally guaranteed rights. One of the strongest strategies was to form coalitions with other like-minded organisations within and without the country such as ZUJ; MM (Formerly MMPZ); ZINEF; FAMWZ and Article 19 (Chimhutu, 2009). Asked about what role MAZ played in media democracy, MAZ programme manager explained that “the fundamental role of media freedom advocacy was mainly about the struggle for media law and policy reform in Zimbabwe so as to achieve freedom of expression and the right to information and we partially got that towards 2008 elections...” (Interview Nigel Nyamutumbu 2017, Harare). More reforms were witnessed from 2008 when newspapers that had been banned were licenced again. That signalled the coming back of the Daily News and other newspapers such as the Southern eye, and other new publications. For instance, the Commission announced the licensing of five newspapers namely The Daily News, Daily Gazette, Newsday and The Worker (published by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions) and The Mail on 26 May 2010. Moreover the ZMC further announced that it has registered four more media houses such as Cable News Agency, Berimark Enterprises, Feyjay Investments and Africa Media Initiative on 30 July 2010. Adding more to this argument, Mukudu said,

The ZMC registered more than 80 publications although some had suffered sustainability challenges but the fact is that we have pushed for the opening up of the media sector, yes, challenges are still there but I think this should be attributed to the kind of work and lobbying that civil society have been pushing for. Even as we speak right now, the minister of information has acknowledged reviewing AIPPA and BSA as part and parcel of aligning the laws with the 2013 constitution (Interview Rashweat Mukudu 2017, Harare).

In 2010, MAZ petitioned the government of Zimbabwe over continued intimidation and harassment of journalists and the continued detention of the Standard newspaper journalist Nqobani Ndlovu, at Khami Prison. The petition was further copied to the then SADC

President Jacob Zuma (Kubatana.net, 2010). This struggle by media reform movement in Zimbabwe seeks to restore media to assert its constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression and access to information which it has been denied by the government through the use of judicial and extra judicial means. The reformed AIPPA established the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) as the regulatory authority of the media in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Media Commission is set up by a parliamentary process in which the public is invited to nominate people whom they think are conversant to mediate issues of cultural concern and who can represent these cultural issues and enforce regulations. When these nominations are made, the names are publicly published on national TV and parliament then shortlists people who are invited to interviews and a parliamentary committee has a responsibility of conducting public interviews for ZMC and when they have conducted those interviews, they will select between 10 and 12 people and the names are sent to the President who will then choose the chairperson, so we can say it is a democratic process in that it involves people's participation in choosing their own commissioners (AIPPA, 2007).

It is also interesting to note that some of the pressure has been done on ad hoc basis through civil rights organisations. As the Director of VMCZ as well as a former vice Chairperson of MISA-Zimbabwe, Loughy Dube notes,

Pressurising the government started in Banjul where Minister Chinamasa³⁷ was embarrassed by civil rights organisations until he promised media reform. The annual Banjul conference has embarrassed the government as MISA presented one paper every year for six years until the government conceded (Interview Loughy Dube 2017, Harare).

In spite of the work above, MISA supports a legal fund for defending independent voices when attacked by media repressive agents of the state. Ngwenya reveals that “we also do provide to a smaller extent legal protection to our journalists because, we understand that hiring the services of a lawyer in this country is astronomical” (Interview Nhlanhla Ngwenya 2017, Harare). Over and above, the organisation has assisted several media practitioners who had been affected in one way or another in legal issues all in the spirit of promoting media democracy in Zimbabwe. Cammaerts (2013) describes this action as “judicial activism”

³⁷Patrick Chinamasa is a former Minister of Finance and Economic Planning. Previously Chinamasa served as Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs in Zimbabwe.

which is less direct and operates more with the dominant political and judiciary systems to challenge the state through courts and lobbying as a way of influencing legislators or governments. Using the same resources, for instance in 2015, MISA Zimbabwe challenged the constitutionality of criminal defamation law at the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe and the law was repealed. In mid-2018, MISA (Zimbabwe) filed an urgent chamber application in the High Court of Zimbabwe challenging the constitutionality of a Media Monitoring Committee created by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) towards the 2018 harmonised elections in Zimbabwe.

In this discussion, it has been established that media activists in Zimbabwe played a pivotal role in advancing media reform. One of the grand strategies of the media reform groups was to form a coalition under the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe. Through this group, they would engage the government through different foras, internally and externally. In addition, the groups would approach regional boards reporting the government for violations of some media freedom granted under some international treaties. As a result of these activities the government conceded to a number of reforms starting right away with the first grand reform of 2000 when the Broadcasting Act of 1957 was repealed by the Supreme Court. Shortly afterwards, there was a new law which recognised a three tier broadcasting system in the BSA of 2001. Later in the next year the law of access to information was passed. These reforms looked good from face value, however, they would be manipulated in the implementation process by the state to cause pandemonium in the media especially with the deregistration of a number of media houses mentioned above. Further agitation led to further reform of the same legislative pieces resulting in the BSA amendment of 2007 and AIPPA amendment act of 2008. These new amendments in the broadcasting policy opened up the airwaves, allowed cross ownership and a number of national and regional commercial radios were registered albeit controversially. In the print media sector, the amendments saw the registration of over 80 print media, the new look AIPPA which provides for the establishment of a Media Council regardless of the fact that these amendments are still to be operationalised. More reform will be discussed in the following segment.

Media activism and constitutional changes: towards freedom of expression, freedom of the media and access to information

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, promotes freedom of expression as “the right of every individual to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers” (Freedom house, 2016). Mutsvairo explains that, “It has been repeatedly claimed that freedom of speech and expression is the lifeblood of democracy (Mutsvairo, 2013: 188). Quoting Barber, Mutsvairo further acknowledge that, the real process of media democracy must involve some learning and sharing of information. The author then concludes by saying that freedom of expression is a vital component of media democracy as it facilitates participation, and the formation of public opinion (Mutsvairo, 2013: 191). To a greater extent, this assertion augurs well with the new Zimbabwe constitution of (2013) which provides for freedom of expression and access to information (Section 61) and freedom of the media (Section 62). Regardless of this freedom provided for in international, regional and constitutional provisions, these rights have been commonly restricted by the Zimbabwean government through strategies like censorship, restrictive media policy and regulation regime, harassment of journalists, bloggers and several others who dare voice their opinions. The struggle for media democracy entails the need to establish freedom of expression and access to information as media democracy cannot exist without the freedom to express new ideas, and advancement of opinions.

As for access to information, it promotes political participation as it makes the participants realise their human rights to freedom of opinion and expression. More so, access is important for persons to realise their right to participate in the governing of their country. Most interestingly the laws of access to information tend to reduce corruption within government departments by availing information about tenders and tender procedures making it difficult for officials to engage in shoddy practices (Roberts, 2002). The study’s contention here is to justify the extent to which the media reform discussed above contributes to access to information as a requirement of a democratic media. As already alluded to in chapter one, a democratised media contributes to the public sphere by providing citizens with information about their world, by nurturing debate about various issues and by encouraging informed decisions about available courses of action. It creates a site of free contestation in which diverse positions are advanced, significant opinions are heard, interests and inner-workings

are exposed and input is received (McConnell & Becker, 2002). Consequently, democratised media is expected to act as “watchdogs” on government and industry, while upholding participation by stakeholders at all levels without fear or favour (ibid). Section 62 of the Zimbabwean constitution of 2013, presents a base for enabling this as it provides that,

Every Zimbabwean citizen or permanent resident, including juristic persons and the Zimbabwean media, has the right of access to any information held by the state or by any institution or agency of government at every level, in so far as the information is required in the interests of public accountability (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013).

A democratised media must access information held by public boards to help the public to understand the role of government and how decisions are made on their behalf. Well informed citizenry can hold the government accountable for their policies and regulations, and citizens can make informed choices. Moreover, access to information laws should enable the public to access information about health care, education among other services so that they can improve their lives (Neuman, 2002: 3). While the constitution provides for this access, it further operationalizes it through the enactment of a legislation to give effect to this right (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013). Thus AIPPA came into operation ostensibly to provide access as discussed in Chapter five. However, access to information in Zimbabwe is still evasive.

As far as access to information is concerned, failure to release information violates citizens’ rights to freedom of expression.³⁸ A court’s decision made on Chile’s case that access to government-held information is a human right is the latest development in a global movement promoting access to information³⁹. Many international nongovernmental organisations, scholars and reports from United Nations (UN) entities are arguing that access to information is a quickly emerging human right and they strongly link this claim to the right to freedom of expression (Bishop, 2009: 4). In developing this concept, Bishop (2009) advanced that a right to information forces obligations not only on government, but also on “all those who withhold information which an individual is entitled to receive – be they governments, corporations, quasi-governmental agencies or individuals” (Bishop, 2009:4).

³⁸ Inter-Am. Ct. H. R. (ser. C) No. 15 (2006)

³⁹This movement includes several international and regional nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) promoting access to government information, such as Transparency International, Article 19’s Global Campaign for Freedom of Expression, the Open Society Justice Initiative, the Global Transparency Initiative, Access-Info Europe and the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative.

The essential aspects which are required to create a democratic media space have largely been captured in Section 61 and 62 of the constitution of Zimbabwe amendment number 20 of 2013. The Zimbabwe Constitution amendment number 20 of 2013 replaces Zimbabwe Constitution Order of 1979 (S.I. 1979/1600) of the United Kingdom brought about by an agreement among three parties, the United Kingdom, the Zimbabwean liberation movements and the Rhodesian government. While this constitution served its purpose to protect freedom of expression among other rights, the right to freedom of expression as a human right could not be extended to media and access to information. Prior to constitution amendment number 20 of 2013, the constitution of Zimbabwe did not provide for an explicit constitutional guarantee for freedom of the media and “this has been on the agenda of MISA-Zim since its inception” (Chimhutu, 2009: 61). The peculiarity of the new constitution of 2013 was that Section (61) recognises freedom of expression and freedom of the media and Section (62) recognises Access to information, the rights which never explicitly existed in the previous constitution of 1979.

Section (61) of the constitution unequivocally advances freedom of expression and freedom of the media (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013). Whereas the right to freedom of expression involves the freedom to seek, receive communication ideas and other information, freedom of the media necessitates the protection of the confidentiality of the journalist’s sources of information. In addition, the constitution gives freedom of establishing broadcasting and other electronic media. However, the constitution makes it mandatory to those who aspire to be broadcasters to obtain a licence as a form of controlling frequency described as a finite resource. More importantly, the constitution gives state owned media the freedom to determine the editorial content independently and impartially as well as to present divergent views and dissenting opinions. To reinforce the above argument, Section (62) of the constitution provides for access to information (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013). The supreme law gives every Zimbabwean the “right of access to any information held by the state or by any institution or agency of government at every level, in so far as the information is required in the interests of public accountability” and for the exercise or protection of a right. The constitution encourages freedom of expression and access to information as captured here freedom of expression and freedom of the media entails that “every person has the right to freedom of expression”, which include:

- (a) freedom to seek, receive and communicate ideas and other information
- (b) freedom of artistic expression and scientific research and creativity and
- (c) academic freedom. (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013).

Media activists groups played an important role in making sure that the rights of freedom of expression and access to information are explicitly captured by the new constitution. This was a milestone towards the success of media activism in Zimbabwe. Commenting on the activists' influence in this regard, Nigel Nyamutumbu of the media alliance of Zimbabwe said,

We should really pat our backs following the constitutional reform we did not really participated in the constitution making team but we submitted our position to the constitution making teams and our demands were largely captured in the constitution... I think the Zimbabwean constitution with all its weakness and deficiencies it stands among the best in Africa that sufficiently provides for freedom of expression, that exclusively guarantees access to information, that exclusively guarantees media freedom and protection of sources of journalist that exclusively guarantees the right to privacy of communication and artistic freedom, the right to propagate your views...and all these issues were part of our demands and push. I credit, Zimbabwe Media civil society for ensuring that these issues were captured in the constitution (Interview, Nigel Nyamutumbu 2017, Harare).

The constitution being a supreme law of the land provides the first port of call for all legal structures such as media policies and regulations. Although some may argue that since these constitutional changes have been done, the harmonisation of the primary law and the operation laws have not been done hence reversing the gains of media reform in this respect. Contrary to this claim, this study believes that media reforms made at the constitutional level are enough for media stakeholders to claim the provided rights regardless of the unavailability of the operational law. In support of this argument, a senior government official (1) avers that "... it does not matter what piece of legislation the state is holding onto, it has to be tested against the constitution" (Interview Senior government official (1) 2017, Harare). Thus, critics have the option to challenge these laws to force the pace of harmonisation of the junior law to the primary law. In other words, the essence of the argument is that media actors who feel obliterated by any constitutionally ultravires law such as AIPPA and or BSA should deliberately go out of their way and break the law so as to precipitate court action or to start fresh challenges of such laws in the constitutional court so as to pray for them to be struck down. This approach is similar to Earnest Mudzengi, the Director of the Media Centre's call that "the constitution reform indicates some of the gains emanating from the works of activism and it should be the basis for enjoyment of

rights...what should happen now is the litigation to push the political society to come up with frameworks for operation” (Interview Earnest Mudzengi 2017, Harare). In total agreement with Mudzengi, the government avers that,

In law there are two concepts, intravires and ultravires. Intravires means a piece of legislation is consistent with the constitution, outravires mean its outside...What is not being admitted to is the ability to challenge laws thereby force the pace of harmonisation of the junior law to the primary law. I would not lose sleep... over sections in AIPPA or BSA which Ultravires the constitution...The courts can also make laws by tricking off some section which are ultravires the constitution...In my office , I will not goad a journalist in respect of an area where I notice that I am not on all fours legally, like just now, you see Ruvheneko is doing her broadcast on social media and she does not have a licence, there is no law to regulate that area meanwhile...so I will not pick a fight until I mend my things.. and in that area you find out that media is developing ahead of the law and the trouble is you can't create a law that works in retrospect. There is no inhibition, these civil societies are not practitioners, and they have a reflex of just crying (Interview, George Charamba 2017, Harare).

The above quotation acknowledges some extent of agreement between some media activists and the state on how to go about the impasse that has developed over the promulgation of the new constitution and junior laws. They must approach the courts which have the mandate to strike off all those that ultravires the constitution. Regardless of the seeming impasse, what is also encouraging is that the works of media activism have been noticed and encouraged by some scholars such as Moyo, Oluyinka and Chabwinja who contend that,

Although there have been notable changes to the constitution with regards to freedom of the press, on the ground the situation is still as before the amendment. This is largely because there is a disconnect between the new constitution and the legal instruments in place. The Zimbabwean parliament has not done anything notable to align the legislative framework with the new constitution. Hence there are still arrests and victimisation of media personnel (journalists and editors) (Moyo, Oluyinka, & Chabwinja, 2014: 1552)

The above quotation insinuates that regardless of the part played by the media lobbyists in the struggle for democratic media reform in Zimbabwe, the government has a bigger role to play. It is disturbing to note that some provisions under AIPPA continue to limit media rights regardless of the constitution provisions. Section 80 of AIPPA punishes “abuse of journalistic privilege”. This section limits freedom of expression without giving clear indications of “abuse of journalistic privileges”. The legislative ambiguities, therefore, riddled a number of escape clauses through which the state and the conservative judiciary may use to clamp on freedom of expression and the media.

Regardless of the glaring ambiguities in Zimbabwean media laws and the constitution, the government has remained mum on the possible way forward and the situation has become so deplorable that the existing media law gaps and inadequacies ushered in by the constitution have intensified the existing media polarity bringing in diasporic media and the non-legislated online media that is directed at challenging the political landscape in the country (Ndlovu, 2014). This has sovereignty risks to the nation as contemporary digital social media platforms such as YouTube and other social media platforms will take over the role of the media to “speak back” to power that have distorted realities, and denied them access to mainstream media outlets (Ginsburg, 2016). However, they do this without responsibility as they cannot be pinned down by any law.

As the land mark reform which came along in 2013 in the promulgation of the new constitution which recognises freedom of expression, access to information as well as freedom of the media; media freedom activists are still battling with the state to align media laws on the ground and the dictates of the new constitution which seems to be good on face value. This reform is remarkable in the history of Zimbabwean media, it was a major reform in the sense that media in Zimbabwe has never been explicitly guaranteed such rights. However, while the government insists that they have done a good job and need not to be further pushed on this issue, some media activist continue to agitate for further reform in the operational laws such as AIPPA, BSA and POSA so as to harmonise the primary law to the operational laws. In the same argument, some activists believe that the ball is still in their court to take up the struggle with the courts as a way of having all those media laws which ultravires the constitution to be struck down. The next segment develops this discussion offering a discussion on whether media reform discussed above has democratised the media as envisaged.

Media reform usurped, a miscarriage of the media democratisation process

Media reform is not done for its own sake but is done to fix a challenge which would have arisen (Freedman and Obar, 2015). One of the major motivations of seeking media reform is to democratise communication. The media democratisation process does not have value in the eyes of media activists if it cannot stabilise at the status level of “media democracy”. In Zimbabwe, there is need to examine whether all the struggles of media activists in the democratisation process have at the end of the day achieved the much sought status, of “media democracy”. In an effort to explain how media reform in Zimbabwe’s

democratisation process has not yielded to media democracy as the much sought after media status in Zimbabwe, the study analyses how different stakeholders in Zimbabwe's democratisation process conceptualise media democracy. Thus it seek to review how each category which includes, media scholars, media practitioners, media activists and the government itself see their points of convergence and divergence. Media scholars in Zimbabwe admit the complexity of the concept "media democracy." One scholar understands media democracy as,

...a diverse and plural media, facilitated by the environment and the legislation...the media should be inclusive, and strive to cover all shades of opinion of a society, all groups of people, women, youth, disadvantaged should all feel represented by media messages and images (Interview Eckson Mugari 2017, Gweru).

Thus a democratic media should enable a journalist to do work without fear, undue hindrance, harassment, beatings and illegal detentions. It should be an environment where journalists can freely gather news and disseminate information with no worry of what would happen to them. These sentiments were reiterated by the ZUJ which said, "Media democracy is a situation whereby media is allowed to operate... free from state control... which is missing at the moment as the state has not freed the media..." (Interview Eric Matingo 2017, Harare). Matingo insinuates that the state is still holding onto most of the media in Zimbabwe as it continues with its domination over the control of radios, television (broadcast media) and the print media. In support of the above definition, MISA, said, "We should be striving for a media environment where freedom of expression does not attract harm upon those who express themselves, our policy and laws formulation are in line with international best practice which provides a framework within which we can abrogate some of these liberties..." (Interview Nhlanhla Ngwenya 2017, Harare).

In general media activists understand media democracy through the eye of the human rights, where freedom of expression takes the centre stage. These rights have also been enshrined in the constitution of Zimbabwe where freedoms of expression and access to information have become pillars in establishing a democratic media in Zimbabwe. What this means is that any effort to democratise the media must focus on the two among others. In short, this argument has been summed up to mean media democratisation implies removing media from direct/indirect government control, including that of political parties (White, 1995). Thus advocating for the state to reform the media system and policy is an indication of media

democratisation (Hackett, 2000). To confirm the controversy in discussing the concept of democracy, on the other hand, the government has never agreed to the definition offered above. It vehemently denies the existence of such terminology as far as the media in Africa is concerned. It is interesting to note that the two factions are vital players in the construction of media policy in Zimbabwe.

In support of the above ideas, a senior government official (1) argues that before we look at the definition, there is need to look at the “political economy of a media...ownership, funding and the editorial policy ... my understanding is that, the media has always been under control of such powers as oppose” (Interview, Senior government official (1) 2017 Harare). The senior government what provoked a more enduring way of looking at media by situating it in a class nature of a given society in a bid to bring out how that has an impact on ownership, editorial policy and definition of democracy. Bearing in mind Marx’s assertion that in every age dominant class gives the dominant ideology meaning that the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas such that, “a class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force” (Marx & Engels, 1867: 1), one is inclined to understand how the government understands the media as a tool to control ideas within the society although in competition with other players. Chomsky (1992) argues that media is considered as part of the apparatus to manufacture consent or building consent with the mass for the owners to advance their interests rather than opening up for democracy. In the end, media is best described as an accessory of power rather than being in opposition with power.

To a greater extent, the pursuit for media democracy tends to be a void pursuit in an authoritarian country like Zimbabwe. Supporting these ideas, Tafataona Mahoso would argue that “I do not believe that there is such a thing as “media democracy”, the media is part of industry, and it is the society which can be democratic but not the media. They are part of industry and as a subsector of industry they will respond according to the commercial interests in that society...” (Interview Tafataona Mahoso 2017, Harare). On elaborating further on “media democracy” Mahoso said, “I do not even use the term media democracy, I see media ownership, advertising and entrepreneurship...It is people who create democracy, the media cannot create democracy because they are fighting amongst themselves...” (Interview Tafataona Mahoso 2017, Harare). The debate ensuring between the state and media reform activists seem to be ideologically informed. While the government understand

media from an authoritarian perspective where it has always been used as an instrument of controlling the masses, media reform activists are liberal and strongly believe in the free market ideology where freedom of the media takes precedence, a concept which is rooted in Western and American democracies (Mutsvairo, Columbus & Leijendekker, 2014).

It seems possible that there is a general consensus building among government institutions to reason in a manner which supports that the media is an instrument of power (Curran, 2000; Chomsky, 1988). As a result, they are tucked far away from the people who are the “demos”. This is so because power does not dwell with the “majority” but instead with the “minority” who are the elites. It is only through a counter hegemonic revolution that the people can organise, mobilise and wrestle for power. The elites always need the media to influence public opinion and to set an agenda in a society struggling for power. In essence these differences in understanding a key concept in media operation affect the nature of media policies that are put in place mainly because there is no consensus between key media policy markers, the government and the civil societies. To some extent this can explain the situation why most of the media reform achieved in Zimbabwe have not been implemented as they were negotiated reform in the first place between MDC and ZANU PF during the period of the government of national unity as explained by one legislator,

Firstly it is because the constitution is a negotiated document between ZANU PF and MDC so some of the aspects were coming into the constitution were coming from the MDC and ZANU PF. Those aspects which came from MDC, ZANU PF have no appetite to amend them and ZANU PF is in the majority and they are happy with the status quo (Interview Legislator (2) 2017, Harare).

Key stakeholders in the Zimbabwe media policy regime construed the concept “media democracy” differently. The construction of media democracy from two opposite angles has become problematic and has remained the source of conflict in the Zimbabwean media democratisation process. For example media reform that were pushed forward by opposition political forces during and or before the government of national unity of 2009, were either usurped by the government or simply remain unimplemented regardless of awareness of the importance of media democracy among the media policy makers.

As discussed above, there were some gradual changes in broadcasting policy since 2001. Some of the changes experienced by broadcasting media over the past one and a half decade remain unprecedented. For instance, a major milestone was brought along by the

broadcasting services amendment act of 2007. This important step allowed cross ownership of both print and broadcasting media and had been advanced mostly by media reform movements and opposition political parties as part of their negotiation during the Government of National Unity in Zimbabwe (GNU). Among the parliamentarians who fronted the campaign for this reform was Welshman Ncube a leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-N). This was confirmed by George Charamba who said that although the first broadcasting regulation in 2000, was not accepting cross ownership, Welshman Ncube (a senior member of the opposition) said; “...allow cross ownership...we now have guys dominating in print going to electronic” (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare). The push for cross ownership in the Zimbabwe broadcasting reform of 2007 which were accepted and enacted as the “Broadcasting Services amendment Act [Chapter 12, 06]” created the loophole which is now being used by the government to licence its own cronies.

The fact that in Zimbabwe cross ownership of both print and electronic media is legal, state sponsored and enabled oligopolies are gradually emerging. One government official (1) explains, “before...if you are in print you were not allowed to own a television or radio...that is no longer the issue, parliament changed the laws and that is how the opening up happened and it was done by the opposition,... the reformers themselves...”(Interview Senior government official (1) 2017, Harare). The implication of this reform is that those who are well aligned with the government can cross own media in Zimbabwe that is having more platforms and more channels. Based on the allocation of licences discussed in chapter five, this cross ownership has not benefited the media in general but it had benefited individuals and monopolies with links in the ruling party. Upon the enactment of the law, Zimpapers a government institute became the first beneficiary to own both the print media and the radio in the form of StarFM around 2011 and they are preparing for the television licensing now as further elaborated by George Charamba,

I will make sure that by the end of digitalisation, ZBC has six channels to control and I will use the argument that its a public media, and we are imposing on it certain social burdens so it must have more channels. Then the other six there is a dog fight, which is not so general, these are people who are in print who are coming to electronic because they want to create an integrated media service and we have already suffered a blueprint of Zimpapers which started as a print institution, went to radio, now they are preparing to be licenced for television (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare).

It seems the direction intended by the state indicates a slow emergency or drift towards media monopoly along government outlets and their allies. This has been seen as a means of using the media to build consensus across the media platforms, consensus which speaks to the ruling interest. It encourages concentration of media power not media democratisation but in the suppression of freedom of expression and access to information. According to Mhiripiri, “...at times when regimes...want to retain power they strategically implement reform but still keep it in their control in the sense that they might make certain concession so to speak but they should not be too radical as to hand over that control of spaces of public communication...” (Interview Mhiripiri 2017, Gweru). The more surprising correlation is the manner in which the government gives in to the demands of the media reform movements and then stabilise the democratic process before it reaches the democratic status. It is probably because of this understanding of media democracy that the governments continue to usurp even the seemingly won battles of media reform and reverse the gains.

This finding is consistent with the interpretation of circumstances around the previously discussed case titled “Capital radio Vs Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunication”. Indeed, this case provides a classic example of the state’s mastery in reversing the gains of media reform movements thereby stalling the media democratisation process in Zimbabwe. In this case a judgment by the Supreme Court confirmed the state of media policy vacuum making it possible that whoever had ambitions of establishing themselves in the broadcasting media would do so lawfully, thus opening the airwaves. This culminated into the establishment of Capital radio broadcasting from Monomotapa hotel celebrating victory. Politically, the state had not evolved an argument to defend state monopoly of the ZBC and to make matters worse, there was no Ministry of Information, but a department of Information and Publicity under the president’s office. As the government found itself squarely facing an adverse judgement, it sought to reverse such media freedom gains through promulgating a new law to curtail broadcasting media freedom again. In doing so, they sought to regulate frequencies because frequency is not freely available in a given polity, nor can it be created, but it can only be used or misused. Based on the fact that frequency is a finite resource, the government then created an agent that would regulate access to it under the new Broadcasting Service Act (BSA) and named it BAZ as discussed in chapter five.

This study claims that the process of media democratisation should be able to stabilise at a certain time when it attains a “media democracy” status. This stabilised status has been elusive in Zimbabwe regardless of the efforts being made by media reform activists. However, most interestingly, this study, establishes that, regardless of the struggle to free the media, the gains of the struggle are being periodically usurped and reversed by the government either by establishing more stringent laws such as AIPPA and BSA or by just not implementing the new changes. This makes the works of media activists a nullity at the end of the day. Journalists continue to do work with fear, undue hindrance, harassment, beatings and illegal detentions. The state is still holding onto most of the media in Zimbabwe as it continues with its domination over the control of radios, television (broadcast media) and the print media through licencing its own proxies and controlling the content. Media has not yet been removed from direct government and political parties control. More surprising are the findings that the government does not want to subscribe to the term media democracy because they believe that the media has always been aligned to power than to the people. Should the media seem to align itself to the people, it is basically about manipulation not democracy. Those who own, fund and control the media are the ones whose interests are represented by the media. It is because of this relationship that those who seek political power need to conquer the media first. Change, or reform which took place in the media between 2001 and 2013 did not attain a total media democracy status although a lot of give and take was witnessed. Commenting on this failure and encouraging media activists, Mudzengi said, “...the envisaged incremental gains were never incremental at all...media activists must not fight for partial reform but for total changes” (Interview Earnest Mudzengi 2017, Harare).

In defense of national sovereignty and national interest: fighting the tragedy of a borrowed mindset

The process of democratising communication emphasises achievement of democratic values or frames such as freedom of expression the right to communication, participation and competition (Wongrujira, 2008). To achieve this, the media is expected to operate with minimal intervention from dominant elites (i.e state, government, politicians, political parties, businesses, and capital). A broader perspective has been adopted by White (1995) who argues that the two indicators of media democracy are the removal of the media from reliance on capital and market forces as well as removing it from government and political parties control. Unlike White, Carroll and Hackett (2006) further argue for the need to establish alternative media to serve as public communication channels for the marginalised people, and

to empower citizens to be an active audience by enhancing media literacy or media watchdogs. The process of democratising the media seems to have stabilised but the media sphere in Zimbabwe is still undemocratic. The need to understand the rationale behind this anomaly led the researcher to question the government on why it has remained optimistic about media democracy yet acting in another way.

It is the contention of the government of Zimbabwe that the mounting media related policy challenges were being driven by western motives of regime change fronted by MISA in the Southern Africa and supported by its western allies such as the Commonwealth Parliament, the World Bank, and Article 19 among others. Commenting on the motive of Western sponsorship of media reform and democracy agenda in Zimbabwe, Tafataona Mahoso argues that,

The motive was very clear...those who were leading media debates were sponsored and by 2007, the Americans were also admitting by themselves that they were forming 25 civil society organisations every month in Zimbabwe... They admitted in their state Departments Human Rights report on Africa...Bush actually bluntly said that they were working with editors and newspapers in the independent press as part and parcel of regime change...(Interview, Tafataona Mahoso 2017, Harare)⁴⁰.

The illustration by Mahoso is substantiated by Voltmer's (2008) findings in her examination of the trend in the Brittonwoods institutions such as World Trade Organisations (WTO); International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB). The author came to a conclusion that they have a significant role of institution building in the new democracies to advance a market oriented reform and privatisation of the media. They then exert additional pressure on the new democracies to adopt liberal models of public communications through setting up and funding media reform movements. The evidence presented above confirms the state's skepticism over restructuring broadcasting and deregulating the media in Zimbabwe.

Futhermore, the relationship between Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and other Western boards is pertinent to this discussion. Figure 4 on the next page explains this relationship.

⁴⁰ The Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) at first was created through section 68 (1) of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA)(which became law in January 2008) and later reaffirmed through Constitutional Amendment Number 19 of February 2009 which elevated it to a Constitutional Commission

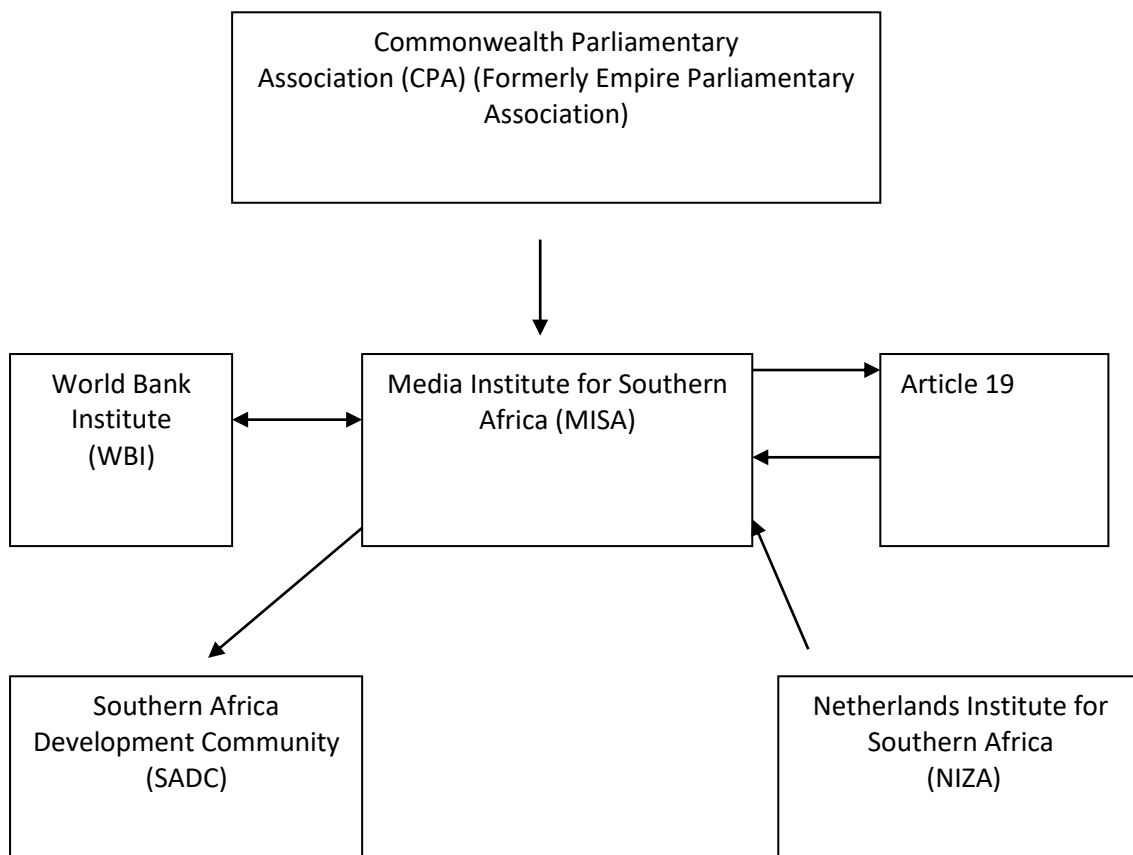


**Fig.4 Relationship between MISA and other regional and International institutes
(Adapted from the consultancy Report, Free Press and Good Governance in Southern Africa)**

Fig 4 may partly be explained by identifying the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association⁴¹ as the parent of MISA. Accordingly, one can infer that MISA is an imperial project for directing thought in the former British, German, Belgian and Portuguese colonies in the SADC region with assistance from the (European Union) EU and the United States (US) (Mahoso, 2015). In addition, CPA and Article 19 are British organisations and their position in the diagram demonstrates the dominance of the British in the conception of MISA project (ibid). Besides, the directions of the arrows are strategic in that they indicate the flow of sponsorship among the five organisations. Mahoso (2015) further argues that the sixth organisation, SADC is meant to be totally passive and receptive to both funds and

⁴¹Formerly known as the British Empire Parliamentary Association (EPA) based on the First World War British idea of “directing the thought of most of the World”.

propaganda direction. In Fig 4, MISA is represented as the central conduit for imperialist training, information, propaganda and money for externally sponsored media activities in SADC. The above views are supported by Ncube (2010) who draws on Makumbe's (1998) observations that Africa's civil society continues to require material, financial and moral support from non-African donors endowed with these resources. Thus, the question of media reform movements' independence from Western influence is central in the process of analysing the ideas they are pushing for. At times it is prudent to contrast civil society and opposition politics in Zimbabwe, for instance, Ncube would say, "It was evident when the MDC was formed that it would function as the political face of civil society. In other words, the MDC would directly compete for political power against ZANU-PF on behalf of its varied constituent members, of which civil society were its core institutional members" (Ncube, 2010: 191). Consequently, the MDC's organic links to civil society is designed in a manner which make it a de facto affiliate member of the civic society coalition that form it (ibid) creating animosity with the national sovereignty stewards.

However it is this connection between the civil society and the opposition political parties that irks the government making it treat them as enemies of the state or sell-outs as explained by George Charamba "If you start from a premise that you don't recognise government presence in the media industry meanwhile you want to turn to the same government for facilitation by way of laws, policies...you have burnt bridges so that is the first weakness of media activism in Zimbabwe. It has given the dog a bad name so as to damn it" (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare). As a result the government bites and barks to these western sponsored media reform activists. It does not see the reform movements as bonafide activists, so the relationship is feral. Writing about the "onslaught on the Zimbabwean media", Chakaodza et al (2005) confirmed that,

Unlike the state media which studiously ignored opposition views, the Daily News joined...in giving civic organisations and newly formed MDC...voice. The government ...labelled the independent papers the opposition press and accused them of being funded by the west, while MDC were said to be British puppets (Chakaodza, 2005:9)

These arguments are illustrating the problematic marriage between the media, media activists (civil society) and the West. A further analysis of this relationship was done by Chari who understands the over-reliance on civil society as an incestuous relationships to the opposition (Chari, 2016: 170). Instead of mediating between the policy makers and policy implementers,

Media activists damn the policy makers to dine with opposition politicians. In other words the media reform movements operating in Zimbabwe's task have become difficult because they have essentially repudiated their essence. These have caused them to be labelled sell-outs. The discourse of "sell-outs" is pregnant with double standards as revealed in this study. For instance in "1962", "radical elements of ZAPU were labelled "stoogies" for receiving external funding and support yet ZAPU was also the recipients of foreign financial support and had links with America, (Tendi, 2010:148). Such dichotomy remains at the centre of the state, civil society relationship today. This complexity is based on a relationship which lacks mutual trust between the state and the non-governmental organisations. In the same spirit, media freedom activists confirm that donor funding in NGOs is not a secret just as international health funders supports the health sector. Thus media freedom activists are victimised by the state agents as representatives of regime change. Nhlanhla Ngwenya, bemoans the criminalisation of media freedom activism in Zimbabwe, thus he reasons "... in Zimbabwe, an activist is viewed as anti-government and an appendage of regime change as if regime change by its nature is illegal... but regimes are there to be changed should I feel they are not serving my interests (Interview Nhlanhla Ngwenya 2017, Harare). The government's treatment of donor funding projects as criminal and as interference by an outside country indicates some double standards levels. This is so because donor funding in Zimbabwe is not peculiar to "media freedom activist". Adding to his argument, Ngwenya said, "overall, donor funding has always been the panacea to Zimbabwean crisis, the liberation movements were donor funded and gladly receive donor funds when it suits them for their own government projects. More funds were put into the government coffers by the United Nations Development Partners (UNDP)..." (Interview Ngwenya 2017, Harare). What is remarkable is the outcry by the state when these funds are directed to some civil societies to counter check and play the oversight role on the government and the media in Zimbabwe.

Activism remains important in the process of media reform and as a feature of civic involvement in democratic public spheres (Taib, 2006:1). However, the government remains adamant that the work of activism is for the reform movements to influence policy yet they are repudiating the government. They have repudiated the government through accepting funding from external sources at a time when the sovereignty of the country is being challenged by the same funders creating some form of a problematic relationship. The assault on Zimbabwe sovereignty has been media led which is what makes funding external to activism inherently a political question. To further support this argument, Mahoso confirmed

the US Secretary for foreign affairs, Kanstainer's statement in his defense of challenging the sovereignty of Zimbabwe. According to Mahoso, Kanstainer said, "we are looking for partnership with opposition powers in the region but more importantly with media" (Interview Mahoso 2017, Harare). Arguing further, a senior government official adds that, "this has become so much entrenched that if you say MISA, my first reflex is to say, oh! those regime change agents" (Interview Senior government Official (1) 2017, Harare). To some extent, these media reform movements have confirmed as agents of the West by virtue of the source of their funding and the interests they represent. In June 2004 the then British Prime Minister Tony Blair admitted that his government was working with the opposition MDC to effect regime change in Zimbabwe. Blair said,

We work closely with the MDC on the measures that we should take in respect of Zimbabwe although I am afraid that these measures and sanctions are of limited effect on the Mugabe regime. We must be realistic about that. It is still important that we give every chance to, and make every effort to try to help those in the Southern part of Africa to put more pressure for change on the Mugabe regime, because there is no salvation for the people of Zimbabwe until that regime is changed (Grebe cited in Moyo, 2014:42)

It is because of statements like this one that the government prepares itself against any possible attack by the West and one of the mechanisms used is the media restructuring. Should the government relax and allow the touted Western democracy, there is a high risk of new Western interests taking over and the emergence of a sweeping restructuring of markets resulting in continuous commercialisation, deregulation and privatisation of many sectors. National culture may become integrated into a global culture structure. National boundaries fade away in many other respects and individual nations' cultures and sovereignty will be under threat (Chakravathy & Sarikakis, 2006). Thus, liberal media ideologies being advanced by the western sponsored media activists in Zimbabwe as the ideal forms of media democracy distort and slow down the pace and rhythm of cultural growth and the trend of civilisation in Africa as they attempt to uproot reigning ideologies and replace them with Western values, beliefs and cultures. This confirms Ake's (1997) sentiments that the consequence of allowing liberal media is the creation of a new unbridgeable cultural gap between the African ideologies of unity, communality and the Western individualism.

Therefore, the government seems to use hegemonic influence to maintain its position in power under the pretext of "national interest". Unfortunately, in its interest to protect protect the national interest, it harms media democracy. According to Cabral cited in Akpojivi

(2018), this is an “ideological weapon of struggle against both the external impasse of these ideas and internal factors that necessitate them (political, economic, cultural and social)” (Akpojivi, 2018: 149). Akpojivi (2018) concurs that in the process of stalling media democracy in Africa and Zimbabwe, the government is combating an ideological warfare capable of over-taking the African media and capture the heart of a number of people in Africa.

In addition to this discussion, the fig 4 motivates the idea that MISA’s work is the work of the British Empire Parliamentary association, the British Article 19, the WBI and NIZA and has been the reason why the BSA and AIPPA has been established to counter and mitigate national interest regardless of the fact that, “the Public Interest is definitely broader than the national interest in that it speaks to and reflects the values that no single social organisation or individual or entity can claim sole ownership of” (Kupe, 2005:1). However, such communications and claims by the media and politicians that some information is not in the national interest may be an attempt to avoid transparency and accountability and that would be inconvenient for their positions (ibid).

This study argues that efforts by the media reform movements against media regulation in Zimbabwe represent a caricature of potentially a strategic national media policy supported by five international organisations which are; Commonwealth Parliamentary Association; World Bank Institute; Article 19; Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NIZA) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). Accordingly, this confirms that the real father of MISA is the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association formerly Empire Parliamentary association (EPA). Thus, the intention of MISA is to influence the Third World countries of Southern Africa with British ideologies and this is being rejected by the Zimbabwean government (Mahoso, 2015).

To this end, the government’s intensification of its stronghold on media is intended to bar the Western influence fronted by MISA in the Sourthen African Countries. As a result, the old broadcasting law’s negative reform are meant to disbar externally funded private broadcasters in Zimbabwe. Confirming, the government’s fortitude in protecting the broadcasting airwaves in Zimbabwe, George Charamba said,

We invoked presidential powers because if we were to wait, it would take forever. Remember, MDC was there in parliament so we had to pick on a law making

instrument that would allow us to have a law overnight...deliberately, we wanted to find an instrument on the basis on which to nail this girl (Georgina Goodwin) and get that equipment that she had smuggle in to be forfeited to the state thereby stopping her... (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare).

The above experience exhibits the government's determination to protect its ideologies by baring possible ideological competetors. Besides, Georgina Goodwin's Capital radio was viewed as a Western imperial project and the state needed to defend its territory from the threats which were being posed by media reform movements. As a result, the government came up with measures which veered the Western media democratic concept off the course. Drawing conclusions from this experience, the government has shown some deliberate actions towards reversing the efforts of the Western donor funded media activism. In fact, by usurping media reform efforts, the government sought to acquire and maintain its hegemonic dominance through the use of voices aligned to its ideology. Interestingly, the government is clear in this policy as justified by George Charamba who said, "Even the British media power has never been democratic, it has been woven around media moguls or magnets such that the notion of democracy does not come into play. So yes, argument will be used to say the state is usurping media democracy power! That is very consistent. We do so yes, they are ways just to show you that we are in the terrain of power not of democracy (Interview George Charamba 2017, Harare). In the government's views the likelihood of a democratic media envisaged by the Western sponsored media reform activists is a fallacy as the government will continue to frustrate media democracy efforts by intensifying media monopoly through licensing its own proxies. This view was confirmed by the government when it said, "the environment...was an environment where ZANU PF was at stiff odds with very powerful forces... So you find that all laws were meant not to pass the democratic test you talk about, but they were meant for the preservation of the state under ZANU PF" (George Charamba in Ruhanya, 2014:146).

To further show that the state has always been a non believer of the media democracy concept, the then Minister of Information and Publicity, Jonathan Moyo wrote that no political party, whether incumbent or contender commits to democracy. All political parties are enemies of democracy (Jonathan Moyo cited in Moyo, 2001). In support of this position, George Charamba argues that, "media has never been democratic from the beginning and media has always been a tool of acquisition and maintenance of power" (Interview with George Charamba, 2017, Harare). This indicates that the control of the media to advance the

wishes of the state or the market is consistent world-wide because the media is located in the terrain of power not of democracy.

Besides the argument proffered in the preceding discussion, another way of looking at this can be that, the demands for media democracy by media reform movements may not be media related. In this sense, the media is just a conduit of Western political power interests that Western powers want to achieve through the instrumentalisation of the media. In other words, there is a political interest that is growing and manifesting behind the liberal media platform meaning that the Western sponsors of media reform movements in Zimbabwe, may not be interested in why ordinary Zimbabweans lack freedom of expression and access to information but may be interested in conscientising them about some political interest such as regime change. Confirming this assertion, Mahoso argues that Amnesty International indicated that the West are interested in using media reform agenda as a Trojan horse for regime change in Zimbabwe. Thus, Mahoso avers,

For me it started off with the Amnesty International report in the 1990's about ...media monopoly in Zimbabwe...that Amnesty International report indicated that there was immense interest to use media reform as a Trojan horse for democratisation or for regime change as later articulated...In 2000 we were already late into the struggle because for us the main reason for Western interest had to do with private property which was synonymous with white property (Interview Tafataona Mahoso 2017, Harare)

To the government, democratisation of the media is synonymous to regime change making it difficult to convince the state to liberate the media. The government is well aware of a sour relationship with the West rooted in the land redistribution exercise of the early 2000. During this period, the government amended the constitution to come up with the “Constitutional Amendment Act Number 16 (Act 5/2000), which empowered the government to compulsorily acquire land without compensation” (Chari, 2013:295). It is presumed that from this historic incident, the West continues to seek the use of the media in its effort to reverse agrarian reform in Zimbabwe.

While, the process of democratising communication emphasises achievement of democratic values such as freedom of expression, the right to communication, participation and competition (Wongrujira, 2008), to a large extent media reform achieved in Zimbabwe has not been able to democratise communication. Among other challenges that are preventing a complete circle of democratisation of the media in Zimbabwe is the government's mistrust of

the motive behind the Western sponsored media activists or reform movements such as MISA and its allies. What further irks the government is that MISA is facilitated and financed by Brittonwoods institutes whose agenda has always been to influence non westerns with Western ideas. This mistrust which sacrificed media democracy augurs well with Chinweizu cited in Akpojivi (2018) who avers that “the challenge of confronting the African continent is to have a media that is realistically African with African ideologies that reflect African realities” (Akpoji, 2018:148). More interestingly, the government throughout its structures seems to concur that the search for media democracy is a futile exploration because media has never been found in democratic terrain but rather in the terrains of power. Thus, those who are seeking control over media are simultaneously seeking political power. Furthermore, the media reform activists continue to require material, financial and moral support from non-African donors endowed with these resources compromising their relationship with the government whilst revealing their handlers. As a result, they are treated as enemies of the state and their voices, advocated for ideas and requests are not honoured.

Conclusion

In conclusion, several media reforms have been witnessed in Zimbabwe since 2000 as a result of media activists agitation. For instance, the formation of MAZ coalition played a crucial role towards improving media reform activism in Zimbabwe. As a result, a number of media reforms such as the reform of the Broadcasting act of 1957 in 2000; the promulgation of BSA in 2001; the promulgation of AIPPA in 2002; amendments of the BSA in 2008 and AIPPA in 2007; reregistration of closed and registration of new print media; licencing of two national and seven regional commercial radio stations between 2011 and 2013 and the landmark amendmend of the constitution in 2013 which saw the promulgation of section 61 and 62 which recognises freedom of expression, freedom of the media and access to information were hailed. As a result of these changes, one would naturally expect that the democratisation process will stabilise into a fully fledged media democracy status in Zimbabwe. Contrary to that, the study established that the gains of the media reform struggle are usurped by the authoritative government through establishment of more stringent laws thereby reversing the gain of media activism. Media control in Zimbabwe is still in the hands of the government and every decision made is made in the favour of the government to the detriment of media democracy agitated by media activism organisations. Furthermore, the prospects of media democracy in Zimbabwe is bleak as the government remains adamant that it's a western concept that can only be applied in our context after major adjustments to suit

the local media sphere. The hidden motive behind the Western sponsorship of media activists or reform movements such as MISA and its allies has attracted a nasty response from the government which always finds solace behind the claim of guarding national sovereignty and national interests.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter draws together key findings, lessons and questions to summarise the study which explored media activism and its influence on media policy reform in Zimbabwe. The research further sought to establish the extent to which media reform has democratised communication in Zimbabwe. The delimitation reached out to the Zimbabwe crisis period of 2000-2013, a period that saw an upsurge on media regulation legislations such as the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Service Act (ZBS) of 2001 and the infamous Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2002 as well as the famous constitutional reform of 2013 among other reform discussed. The promulgation of the laws above created a deep seated media oppressing regime which gave appetite to the rise of a counter hegemonic media reform activism fronted by Western sponsored organisations such as MISA and its allies from the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ), opposition political parties and civic societies. A number of government concessions leading to media reform and creating a new media policy dispensation in Zimbabwe took place from 2000-2013. The shift in media policy in Zimbabwe was a departure from the deregulation policies of the 1990s to a new radical re-regulation of media policy to safeguard the national interests under threat from the Western sponsored media liberalism as discovered in chapter four. The study utilised knowledge obtained from media reform activists operating in Zimbabwe under MAZ, media professionals, academics and other media policy stakeholders. The research interviewed 22 informants purposively sampled from the categories listed above because their knowledge and experience provided a panacea for the posed research questions.

Basically, the thesis endeavoured to answer questions pertaining to the extent and the mechanics of interrogating and communicating the contradictions embedded in the media policy furore of 2000-2013 in Zimbabwe. In other words, the thesis sought to explore the media policy debate in the Zimbabwean media policy discourses expressed through media reform activism and democratisation. The thesis went on to question the extent to which media activism influenced media policy reform and media democratisation. In this instance, the study focused on the efforts of media reform activists in Zimbabwe and the resultant reform before analysing whether such media policy reform would be said to have democratised the media space as envisaged by media reform activists themselves. The study

focused on the process of democratising communication in Zimbabwe through media reform activism between the period 2000-2013. The gap that this thesis addressed is the analysis of media reform activism and democratisation process in Zimbabwe using two theories, the Gramsci's theory of hegemony and the Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT) premised in the Social Movement Theory banner. This was achieved through addressing the following questions: What were the issues which influenced the promulgation of media laws in the early 2000 in Zimbabwe? What are the key contestations in the Zimbabwe media policy and regulatory reform process? To what extent has media activism influenced media reform processes in Zimbabwe? And how has media reform contributed to media democratisation in Zimbabwe?

The thesis is located within media policy studies because media reform and democratisation entails policy reform. The available literature buttresses this location of the study under the media policy realm in which all communication is subjected to policy and regulations (Akpojivi, 2018; Chakravathy & Sarikakis, 2006; Chuma & Moyo, 2010; Fentucky & Varny, 2006; Freedman & Obar, 2015; Iosifidis, 2013; McQuail, 2010). Freedman further avers that media policy is a public policy and it should seek to respond to, "the distinctive characteristics of and unique problems posed by mass-mediated communication" (Freedman, 2015:1). The author further claims that it is the systematic attempt to promote some types of media structure and behaviour while suppressing alternative structures and behaviour that influence media policy and regulation (ibid). The intention was to analyse the extent to which media reform activism in Zimbabwe had influenced idealised media reform and democracy.

Using Gramsci's perspective, the study established how the state hegemony embedded in the media was enforced through a combination of consent building where authoritative state permeates society through a loosely but interrelated set of ruling ideas which make the established order of power and values appear natural, taken-for-granted and "common-sensical" (McQuail, 1994:99). On the same note, Gramsci's counter-hegemony theory foregrounds the media reform activists idea of defiance and resistance to such forms of media subjugation and oppression regardless of time and place. The use of counter hegemonic media activists to overthrow media hegemony can be better explained by the fact that since a ruling regime legitimises its domination through cultural hegemony, its overthrow must begin by countering that hegemony (White, 1996). This has motivated media reform activists under the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ) and other media activists who sought to challenge

the media status quo through a counter hegemonic media reform activism supported by the West.

To give a clear explanation on how media reform activism movements in Zimbabwe were mobilising individuals and organisations to participate in the media reform and democratisation agenda in Zimbabwe, the study employed a Social Movement Theory of Resource Mobilisation (RMT). Resource mobilisation theory underlines the importance of resources in social movement development and success of activism (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Resources in this instance refer to knowledge, funding, media, labour, unity, legitimacy as well as support from internal and external power elite. To a great extent, this has created challenges for media reform activism in Zimbabwe as those who have provided a whole package of resources are accused of sponsoring regime change as well as freezing the relationship between the state and those advocating for media reform and democracy in Zimbabwe who are funded by the Western donors such as the IMF, World Bank and Commonwealth parliament among others. Furthermore, the frozen relationship has burnt bridges of engagement resulting in differences in the terms of reference. For instance, where media reform activist talk about “media democracy”, the government declared that it was a Western ideology which is at odds within Africa and Zimbabwe in particular where people believe in communalism rather than individualism associated with liberalism. The government further argues against media democracy as a transplanted idea which is being forced on Africa without making adequate adjustments in terms of culture, politics and economics. As a result of these fundamental differences, the gains of media reform activism have remained stagnant and media democratisation process has not reached a democratic media status in Zimbabwe.

Summary of Key Findings

This section looks at the patterns of media reform activism and democratisation efforts within Zimbabwe’s media policy discourse that emerge when media reform activists engage stakeholders in an effort to democratise communication. The analysis is based on data gathered from both documents, and interviews which revealed a number of significant conclusions.

Economic liberal policies in the last decade of the 20th century: a bad start for Zimbabwe in the new millennium

The findings of this study revealed interesting concerns on the causes of media regulation in the post 2000 era. In fact, there were several issues which contributed towards the promulgation of media laws such as the BSA of 2001 and AIPPA of 2002 among others. As noted in chapter four, liberal policies coming from the Washington consensus institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) around 1990s saw these new forces in international governance increasingly affecting national politics and the way the media sphere was regulated. Naturally, the process of liberalising and deregulating the economies means shrinking the role of the state in the economy and the media and pushing the government out of media spaces so that private players can come in and operate with very little government interference in terms of both financing and control. This landed squarely against the government's authoritarian model of running the media in Zimbabwe thereby complicating the government afflictions. In no time the Liberal policies advanced by the Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAP) in 1990 witnessed an emergence of new media entities in the print. Magazines such as the Parade began to hit hard on the state by exposing the government's ill dealings while advancing "public interest stories" which concern the "national interest". The government noticed that the media was questioning its policies and the Gukurahundi influencing people out on the street; revealing mass graves and the brutality of the elections; exposing the lack of development in Bulawayo and centralised developments in Harare. The liberalisation of the strategic sectors such as the media during this era took away from the state some power to name and define the national reality to its people and the international world in a way which was favourable to the interests of the ruling ZANU PF government.

At some instance the government used defamation lawsuits essentially to protect the government's hegemonic reputation and to muzzle the media and deter journalism from playing its normative watchdog role. This did not deter the media to continue with its onslaught on the state. Furthermore, the use of legal machinery premised in the security laws like the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) and Official Secrets Act (OSA) were instituted resulting in arrests of several journalists. The use of security laws to bring order in the media proved futile as most of the charges preferred against media personnel were not sustained in the courts of law. This exposed a lack of a composite media policy framework to

deal with the issues of journalists and the media in Zimbabwe. Besides, the economic consequences of ESAP generated several foes for the ZANU-PF government. Retrenched workers, striking University and College students and the demanding war veterans among several others all added up to the government's mounting woes. With the availability of the liberal print media in Zimbabwe, people were given a voice to challenge the government's policies on public fora damaging its reputation and closing down the prospects of winning another election. Seeing the negative impacts of liberal policies, the government began to take measures on policy reorientation starting with receding on the decision to open the broadcasting airwaves as had been promised (Moyo, 2001). Further findings points to the fact that the coming in of the hard hitting Daily News around 1999 worsened the government's situation leaving it with no choice but to reconsider policy reorientation, among the policies which were on target were the media policies (Moyo, 2004). Another finding worth taking note of is that, losing the broadcasting battle to Capital radio marked the beginning of ruthless media reform activism to end the government monopoly over broadcasting media in Zimbabwe and this challenge was not taken lightly by the government. Presidential powers were revoked and temporary measures were put in place to safeguard broadcasting from being hijacked by media activists using resources and experience mobilised from the West so as to infiltrate the nation with the Western liberal ideologies.

This required the government's prompt move in to stop the sprawling private media domination and onslaught on the government. As a result, the government turned authoritative by putting stringent laws that protected the ruling interests under the guise of national interests and national sovereignty yet at the same time attacking public interest. New laws such as the BSA and AIPPA were promptly crafted and assented for hegemonic purpose, reinforcement and safeguarding the weaning power of the ruling elites during these turbulent times. The implication here is that the government had realised too soon that the Western liberal media policies had disintegrated state hegemony and people were becoming conscious of their rights as evidenced by demonstrations. The impact of the new media laws were soon felt across the media and political divide. Firstly, efforts of private broadcasting were harassed by the newly created BSA which entailed that any broadcasting station would obtain a licence issued by the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ). Secondly, all newspapers were required to register with the newly established Media and Information Commission (MIC). Those who failed to register were banned leading to the demise of the

Daily News. Furthermore, newspapers facing various offences under the new law were also closed.

Further findings in this research confirm Nyamnjoh's assertion that hegemonic states like the United Kingdom and the United States use the ideas of free trade and global media policies to maintain their influence in developing countries. The claim that this system benefits everyone and has been so widely accepted that it has attained "common sense" status. However, free trade and global media policies benefit the hegemonic power as it is the most efficient producer in the global economy, and it can produce cultural goods which are competitive in all markets. The peripheral countries do not benefit from free trade and global media policies as much as the hegemonic states do. In as far as free trade and global media policies are concerned, this research contends that they prevent the development of the periphery economically and culturally while serving to maintain hegemony of the Western world. Thus, the power of the United States is based on the hegemony advanced by the introduction of neo-liberalism concepts in developing countries. For instance the concept of democracy advanced by the Western countries may be hidden behind the neoliberal agenda (Nyamnjoh, 2005). These findings acknowledge the Gramscian perspective that media occupies a central stage in the world of influence since it cannot be separated from the desire to control the minds and hearts of the people. This study has no doubt that the new media dispensation ushered around the year 2000 sparked several debates around media policy as addressed in the next section.

Debates on media policy processes in Zimbabwe

One of the major debates that erupted in the democratisation of communication in Zimbabwe is the criteria of regulatory authority board members' appointments. While media reform activists envisage a media regulatory system free from the state and market influence as posited by White (1995), the scenario evident in Zimbabwe is contrary to this normative structure. It was observed that while on paper the law is clear on the criteria of appointing board members at ZMC, on the ground, the process favours the ruling elites as the final list of commissioners remains the prerogative of the President and the law does not provide room for questioning the President's final list of commissioners. An implication of this is the possibility that he has the lee way to pick those that he wishes to work with regardless of their performance in an interview and drop those with alternative views. This analysis has provided a deeper insight into why Robert Mugabe chose Tafataona Mahoso to lead media

regulatory bodies starting as the chairperson of MIC and then appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of the ZMC regardless of the controversy surrounding his appointments. Furthermore, the nature of the appointments elaborated above confirms the central role played by traditional intellectuals like Mahoso to prop up the ruling class hegemony through cultural industries. The appointment of board members in media regulatory authorities is based on political expedience rather than competence and experience. It is without doubt that the president is inclined to appoint those whom he shares political ideologies with. More so, on the selection panel for ZMC board members, although it is done in the full glare of the general public, the panel is made up of politicians who also have their political preferences which run along the political divide and would at the end of the day select someone whom they share the same vision with. The results of this research support the idea that lack of transparency in the process of appointing media regulatory board members has become one source of debate between the government and the liberal media reform activists as they argue that the process is skewed towards the ruling class.

A further investigation of media policy in Zimbabwe has shown some reluctance towards duty by some constitutional boardies like the ZMC. For instance, there is a general dispute over the failure of the government to appoint a commission at ZMC since 2015 when the mandate of those who were appointed in 2010 ended. Interviews were done in 2015 but neither appointments nor adequate explanation have ever been offered on this aspect resulting in speculation. In general, therefore, it seems that this has created a vacuum as the commission relies on the efforts of Tafataona Mahoso's administration which is suspected to have been impartial because of its inclination towards the ruling party. There are several possible explanations for this action by the government. One of the explanation maybe that the commission as it stands supports the ruling class ideas as the man at the helm of the commission is like a centurion guarding the interests of those who have appointed him better explained as the "politics of the belly" (Baryat, 1993). Yet another reason might be the general fear that by appointing the commission, the powers of the chief executive officer will be reduced as he will be subjected to the instructions of the commission. Another dereliction of duty by ZMC is its failure to appoint a Media Council of Zimbabwe (MCZ) whose composition should be fairly distributed along professional, cultural and legal categories to oversee the ethics and discipline aspects of media regulation in Zimbabwe. The Media council should consist of 12 other members, representing different sectors. Among these members, two are journalists, two from advertising agencies, media trainers, religious

leaders, business people, trade unions, women's league, youth, and the legal profession (AIPPA, 2007). The ZMC board operates within a statutory framework and decisions are affirmed or reaffirmed by the ZMC creating a compromise going either far statutory or far self-regulatory thereby neutralising the powers of the state in media regulation. Failure by the ZMC to constitute the Media Council of Zimbabwe can not be taken likely. In fact, it may be concluded that the government is paranoid and sceptic to open up the media (Alfandika, 2018). The current data highlights the importance of following statutory obligations as such neglect has sparked debate resulting in a court application to bar such inadequate organisations to participate in public issues as they are not properly constituted at law. For instance, MISA-Zimbabwe applied to the court barring BAZ and ZMC from participating in media monitoring of the 2018 harmonised elections because neither BAZ nor ZMC had boards with sitting board members or commissioners (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2018).

Another finding that emerged from this study is the debate embedded within the selection criteria and appointment of BAZ board members. While media reform activists argue that the set up does not inspire media reform which will break up the monopolistic structure of state ownership and control and usher in a media democratic dispensation in Zimbabwe, the government looks very much comfortable in the current dispensation. It is a fact that in Zimbabwe, all cabinet ministers belong to the ruling party and tend to support the ruling ideas. Given that scenario, it is unlikely that the President and the Minister of Information can appoint a fair and balanced board. The evidence from this procedure suggests that the crooked staffing of the supposed-to-be democratic institutions is inimical to media democratisation in Zimbabwe. These findings provide insights into what Levisky and Way (2010) called competitive authoritarian regime. Levisky and Way (2010) advanced that, while democratic institutions are available and functioning, the abuse of power by the state and the President is wide and untamed. The government's criteria for appointing regulatory boards and licencing of broadcasting media is based on a faulty and unfair competition. This piecemeal approach to media reform is the major source of dispute amongst stakeholders such as opposition political groups, civic organisations and all media related organisations which feel downplayed by the ruling government.

Another notable finding that emerged from this study is that the state has used its power to appoint boards of media regulatory authorities in order to deny private media an opportunity to be licensed. Through the loyalist board members, applications for broadcasting licences are

selectively issued based on loyalty to the ruling party and government. Those who have no clear links with power and those who are clearly aligned to the Western donors are not considered for broadcasting licence although they are given the opportunity to compete. Such actions are confirmed by the fact that the currently established broadcasting stations in Zimbabwe are owned and controlled by ZANU PF stewards. For instance, Zimpapers, a government owned organisation controls Zimpapers print media and two licensed radio stations Star FM and Diamond FM while AB communications believed to be owned and controlled by a ZANU PF legislator, controls three licensed radio stations and a newspaper. These are just a few of the many licenced broadcasters who have a clear link with the ruling party. These findings have significant implications for the understanding of how and why the current broadcasting dispensation in Zimbabwe lacks diverse ideas regardless of their plural establishments.

Interestingly, the study further discovered that in the Zimbabwean broadcasting media, no applications for a broadcasting licence are submitted before BAZ has invited applications for broadcasting. In the absence of such invitations, no applications can be entertained by BAZ. The implication of this is that, it has created a bitter argument with media reform activists who advocate for the licencing of community radios because the government has never invited such applications. Such results support the idea that the wide discretionary powers vested in BAZ, in deciding when and how to call for licence applications and the fact that there is no legal measure within BSA which compel BAZ to make the call, creates monopoly in the board and as a result Zimbabwe has never had a community radio.

In an aggressive counter hegemonic stance, the community radio association has mobilised resources and established community radio initiatives. There are about 28 community radio initiatives across Zimbabwe which are ready to broadcast to the community as soon as licences are issued (Amnesty International, 2015). It has emerged in this study, through interviews and document analysis, that the major argument from the government is that the act does not provide a definition for a community radio hence it cannot licence a community radio because it is not properly defined. Besides, the government questions the sincerity of a community radio established and funded by donor funding. Naturally, questions like: What is the donor's interests; who is going to control it? And who is going to own it, are foregrounded. Based on the lack of a conceptual definition of a community radio, no

community radio has ever been licenced in Zimbabwe. A definition offered by the BSA is not comprehensive enough to characterise a community radio in Zimbabwe.

In the end, the government debased the media reform activists argument of disparaging media democracy in Zimbabwe based on the lack of a three tier broadcasting system becomes irrelevant and Westernised. It advances that the media structure must not be based on a model but rather on the needs of a society (O Siochrú, 2005). Finally, while there is need for the government to expedite and address the issue of the conceptual definition of “community”, it should be realised that community radios should serve the interests of the community and give a voice to the voiceless and the marginalised community (Ngugi & Kinyua, 2014). There is need for a common understanding of the terms of reference based on culture, politics and economy first before foreign models are advanced to other sovereign spheres. In the final analysis of the debate on media policy in Zimbabwe, the study concludes that it should not be for international organisations like Amnesty International to argue for community radios in parts of Africa but rather, it should be for the communities themselves to advocate for the establishment of community radios should the need be.

Another intriguing debate established in this study lies in the controversy over self regulation versus statutory regulation. Proponents of self regulation accuse the state of criminalising the media profession. In this instance, the police become enforcers of media policies and regulation to such an extent that professional mistakes warrant arrests by the police thereby scaring media from playing a critical watchdog role and creating some form of self censorship among media professionals in Zimbabwe. Such a regulatory regime is usually averse to John Stuart Mill’s open discussion discourse for the discovery of the truth. An unrestricted media concept which seeks to provide open discussions for information dissemination among the public is effectively shrouded in the maze of these coercive laws. These findings raised important theoretical issues that have a bearing on the perception that the ruling class maintains its dominance over society through coercion and consent (hegemony). In this case coercion entails the use of the “political society” such as the legal system of the ruling class to force other stakeholders to accept its role. It is imperative at this juncture to understand that the communication system in Zimbabwe has been coercively captured through promulgation of media restrictive laws and regulations that impinge on its democratisation.

One unanticipated finding was that, the government believes more in the narrow national interest rather than the broader public interest in its effort to regulate the media. Scholars have always argued that public interest is broader than the national interest because public interest speaks to and reflects the values that no single social organisation or individual or entity can claim sole ownership of. Therefore, public interest embodies the national interest (Kupe, 2005). Perhaps it is because of these narrow interests pursued by the state that media democracy has not been attained in Zimbabwe. The interviews carried out with some selected government officials have revealed that following this rationale behind media regulation in Zimbabwe, the government declared that the media cannot be left to its own whims because it is powerful and power should always be accompanied by responsibilities to protect the weaker from the stronger, thus, the state sees as its responsibility to prevent the weaker members of the community, from being misled by innumerable vultures in the form of several media outlets. To some extent, the findings unveil the government's scepticism of the media power, which it describes as "mightier than the sword" hence it needs stringent measures. In spite of this explanation, another suggestion may be that the media is not yet mature enough to have self-correcting mechanism, accusing the available VMCZ of lacking the mechanism to enforce its findings. As the debate between the two registration mechanism rages on, the government believes that if this power of the mass media is not constrained by adequate accountability mechanism, it might end up breaching the fundamental constitutional expectations (Fentuck & Varney, 2006). Clearly, the debate over self regulation and statutory regulation is a never ending because of the different interests embodied by the debating parties. Having discussed key findings in response to issues which influenced the promulgation of media laws in the post 2000 era and elaborated main findings on key contestations in the Zimbabwe media policy reform process, the next section highlights key findings based on the extent to which media activism influenced media reform processes in Zimbabwe.

Changing the course of media regulation in Zimbabwe: the impact of media activism on media reform

The study established that through the use of different strategies, including resource mobilisation and legal means, media reform activists made several noteworthy contributions towards media policy reform in Zimbabwe. The study establishes that media activism immensely contributed to the banishment of the monopolistic Zimbabwe Broadcasting Act of

1957 and the creation of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Service Act of 2001. This is one of the landmark media reform in Zimbabwe. On paper, the newly introduced BSA is liberal and acknowledges a three-tier broadcasting system. The affirmation of the Supreme Court judgment deregulated the broadcasting media at that time and there was nothing to prevent anyone willing to broadcast from proceeding to operate and provide a broadcasting service from within Zimbabwe (*Capital radio (pvt) ltd v Minister of Information Posts and Telecommunications*, Judgment No. S.C. 99/2000 2000). This saw the establishment of Capital radio officially operating at Munhumutapa Hotel in Harare. Although, the freedom was short lived, it is important to note that the levers of the state had been tested and lost the struggle. No matter how short lived, the incident changed the broadcasting milieu in Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, in an attempt to answer the question: to what extent has media activism influenced media reform processes in Zimbabwe?, the study established that media reform activism has built citizen agency and the appetite to access information, through engaging media policy makers and researchers speaking their experiences and their information needs. These communities have been mobilised by the media reform activists such as ZACRAS among others. The upshot of the findings is that more space and voices were created. For instance, during the IMPI process, interviews in this study reveal that ordinary people articulated Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS) position on the licensing of community radios in Zimbabwe. The central argument on the influence of media activism on media reform gains currency from such establishments as these, considering the concession of the government. Besides, the government is now speaking about the need to register community radios. This gesture is an indicator of some influence from the media reform activists. This has seen some people listening to the community radio online, through pre-recorded programmes on CDS and flash discs distributed to individuals in commuter omnibuses (Kombi casting). In this regard, an element of media democratisation is realised considering news and information uptake through these various channels.

Besides, another revealing feature of the impact of media reform activism on media reform is the way activists have tackled legislative controls in different ways of trying to push the government to concede to all embracing reform. They have gone to seek recourse from regional boards such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), African Human Rights Courts (AHRC), Africa Commission for Human and People's Rights

(ACHPR) and it was in in ACHPR that the first judicial interpretation of AIPPA outside Zimbabwe came out in 2005 and some provisions of the law were found to be undemocratic and that ruling is believed to have influenced the superficial amendment of AIPPA in 2007 ahead of the 2008 election. In Banjul, the government of Zimbabwe was embarrassed as MISA presented one paper every year for six years until the government conceded to media reform.

The landmark victory which marked the inclusion of section (61) and section (62) in the Constitution, giving rights to freedom of expression and the media, and access to information is another major highlight of the study's findings. However, like in the broadcasting sector, there are still some outstanding issues which need continuous agitation to resolve. Interviews carried out in this study have shown that to some, these incremental gains are meaningless but to others, they indicate a strong influence of media reform activism on piling pressure on the government to reform media laws. These discrepancies have formed the core of the discussion in chapter 6. An amendment of the Constitution has been applauded as a great step by media activists and political actors in the opposition parties. It is encouraging to note that the state at times recedes on its decision due to pressure of the media reform activism. For instance, at times the government vows that it will not licence new private broadcast players anytime soon as it does not have the capacity to monitor and regulate activities of more broadcasters (MISA, 2010) but at the end of the day some players are licenced though in a controversial manner.

Indeed, media activism consistently brings critical issues to public attention. The research found that, although media democracy is still far from being attained, there are signs indicating some incremental gains towards media democracy in Zimbabwe as the government continues to give in, albeit at a very slow pace. The opening of the broadcasting media through the controversial licensing of the ruling party's proxies is regarded as an incremental gain towards media democracy.

It has been established that due to pressure emanating from non state actors such as the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zimbabwe chapter, its allies and some political players in the conception and delivery of media policy change in Zimbabwe, the government began to reform the media by promulgating several media policy amendments such as, AIPPA reform of 2007 as well as the broadcasting reform of 2008 (Chuma & Moyo, 2010: 1). In this

grand amendment, clause 38 of AIPPA created the Media and Information Commission (MIC) a commission which used to regulate the operation of the media and journalists in Zimbabwe under the leadership of Dr Tafataona Mahoso. Due to pressure from media reform agitators, in 2007, AIPPA was repealed and a number of changes were made. MIC was disbanded, and a number of Newspapers were allowed to register marking the return of the Daily News. The Zimbabwe Media Commission was created as a constitutional board to oversee the operation of the media in Zimbabwe. As a result, more newspapers were registered marking the coming back of the Daily News and other newspapers such as the Southern Eye as well as other new publications. The Commission announced the licensing of five newspapers namely The Daily News, Daily Gazette, Newsday and The Worker (published by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions) and The Mail. In the final analysis, the ZMC registered more than 80 publications although some have suffered sustainability challenges. Reform without democracy is meaningless as the rationale behind the agitation and resource mobilisation is to democratise communication in Zimbabwe. Whether, the media has been democratised or not over the period under study remains the prerogative of the next section.

The national interest and sovereignty at stake: reform without democracy

Regardless of all the efforts and reforms, the media in Zimbabwe remains far away from the envisaged media democracy. In this case, the state is still holding onto most of the media in Zimbabwe as it continues with its hegemonic domination over the control of radios, television (broadcast media) and the print media. In introspecting what may be the reasons behind this standoff, the research found out that there is a huge difference in understanding the concept of “media democracy” among media policy actors. The state unequivocally believes that media is never democratic, instead, they are instruments of power, either for acquiring it or for protecting it. What this means is that media is situated in classes of a given society just like discourses, media has class character (Ramos, 1982). Following, one can argue that the dominant media in Zimbabwe is situated within the ruling class and is used by the state as a means of ideological manipulation and control. To a large extent, the media is considered as part of the state apparatus to manufacture consent or build consent with the mass for the ZANU PF government to advance its interest (Chomsky, 1988). The government

seems to understand media reform activists as agents of cultural imperialism or emissaries of the global North whose intentions are to impose their culture on Zimbabwe.

At the end of the day, one can note that some concessions by the state towards media democracy are just fake admission to allay the mounting pressure. For instance, during the GNU, the government compromised a number of media reforms. It is during this period that major reforms discussed above were witnessed but a closer look indicates that the government remains authoritative and in control reaffirming Levitsky and Way's (2010) concept of competitive authoritarianism. In this respect, the study has found that, the regime usurps these reforms and uses them to continuously advance its own interests. The amendment of AIPPA in 2007 discussed above led to the banishment of MIC and the creation of the ZMC in 2010. However, the key personnel that were a menace at the MIC, remained in charge at ZMC casting doubt on whether real change has been attained. Looking into the broadcasting sector, we are confronted by a real reform of the media where the law that does not allow cross ownership is disbanded by the Broadcasting Service Amendment Act of 2008, but the licensing regime allows only government cronies to own both broadcasting media and print media like Zimpapers and AB communications. Besides, while the authoritative broadcasting regime that did not allow other broadcasters than ZBC collapsed, a new seemingly liberal regime allows licencing of other broadcasters, but the licencing criteria remains unfair (Levitsky & Way, 2010). This confirms the janus-faced nature of the ruling government and the lip service that it paid to media reform. Interestingly, all capable broadcasting players are given the opportunity to compete for broadcasting licensing but, at the end the competition is unfair as those who are aligned to the ruling elites will emerge as winners.

An introspection into this behavior indicates that because the state perceives the media as an instrument of power, whoever wants to control the media may also be in need to wrestle power, the research has established. The state remains adamant that the motive behind the media reform activism in Zimbabwe is aligned to a political regime change agenda. This should justify the state's stronghold on the media, an instrument which is liable for use in the fight to dethrone the government. In fact, as the state analyses the etymology of ideas of media reform and democratic communication, the study finds that it is so much convinced that the interests being pursued by the ostensibly local organisations are actually backed by their big brothers domiciled in the Brittonwoods institutes such as the Commonwealth, IMF,

and the World Bank among others whose agenda is to influence change, a change which is skewed in the Western world's favour. Thus, this research believes that MISA is an imperial project for directing thought of the former British, German, Belgian and Portuguese colonies in the SADC region with assistance from the (European Union) EU and the United States of America (USA) (Mahoso, 2015).

As if to confirm the above links, the connection between Western funded media reform activists and oppositional political parties such as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and the nature and coincidence of their programmes makes the whole issue complicated. Commenting on such issues, Chakaodza (2005) said, unlike the state media which studiously ignored opposition views, the Daily News joined in giving civic organisations and newly formed MDC a voice. In another incident, the former British Prime minister, Tony Blair was quoted saying they work closely with the MDC on the measures that they should take in respect of Zimbabwe (Moyo, 2014). Based on this, this research infers that this may be the reason why the government treats them as enemies of the state or sell-outs. It is unfortunate that media reform activists start from a premise that they do not recognise the government's presence and authority in the media industry, yet they want to turn to the same government for facilitation by way of media law and policies reform. It is a case of burning the bridges thus making it the major weakness of media activism in Zimbabwe. There seem to have been a fight created between the state and the Western sponsored media reform activists making it difficult to create a fruitful dialogue for creating common terms of reference in terms of media democracy. As established by this research, there is no common ground to reach a consensus regardless of some moves which look positive. Interviews in this study have established that the state is clear on its media policy, it wants to keep those media reform activists and their Western handlers at bay and it does not believe in "media democracy" because it believes that even back at their home, the British media has never been democratic, it has been woven around media moguls or magnets such that the notion of democracy remains an illusion. In the same manner, the state uses the state media and media policies to safeguard its power and national sovereignty against infiltration by other media which are being used by Western counter hegemonic power to effect regime change in Zimbabwe. Therefore, one of the most significant findings to emerge from this study is that the government has clearly outlined that its ideas are not premised in the search for democracy, but it is more inclined to the search for power while media is used as an accessory to consolidate power by those who are either in power or are seeking it. Then, far

from being an estate in its own right, the media simply appends itself to various political forces that are operating in a society. In the end, the “political economy” of the media should play a pivotal role in determining that a media outfit is owned and controlled, and its positions depends on the editorial policy of those who own, fund and control it (Curran, 2000).

Limitations

There are several limitations that have impacted this research regardless of the fact that they were outweighed by the solutions. It is true that not all relevant documents have been accessed to come out with a flawless analysis of the circumstances of media reform and the media democratisation process in Zimbabwe. However, the study has made enough effort to bring all relevant documents together for analysis. In addition, interviews with relevant stakeholders were carried out to either verify, query or fill the information gap opened by the lack of relevant literature. Other stakeholders like , Gender and Media Connect (GMC), and the African Community Publishing Development Trust (ACPDT) declined to respond to research questions nevertheless, the study is satisfied by the responses gained from the vast majority of the relevant actors.

In addition, other activists were not comfortable to divulge information to the researcher for fear of persecution. Besides the above limitation, the researcher discovered that some media activists were not comfortable to give documentary evidence regardless of accepting to offer the opportunity for an interview. The researcher had challenges in getting document evidence from ZACRAS and Media Monitors. Later on the organisations referred the researcher to their websites which did not have as much information as required to support the major arguments of this research.

This fieldwork was carried out at a time when Zimbabwe was going through a major transformation which was the removal of President Robert Mugabe through a military coup. This impacted on the research as people who were implicated to be aligned to Robert Mugabe under the Generation 40⁴² (G40) faction and had master-minded the sacking of Emmerson Mnangagwa had to run away from the country. It was unfortunate for this study as one of the key respondents in this research Professor Jonathan Moyo was implicated and he went into

⁴² A ZANU PF faction aligned to President Mugabe

exile before interviews. Despite this, the researcher interviewed the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services, George Charamba to rescue some vital information.

Theoretically, the choice of the critical Gramsci's cultural theory of hegemony in this study was informed by several reasons. One of the reasons is the approach's interest in describing how states use cultural institutions such as the media to maintain power. The study discovered the above attribute of Gramsci's cultural theory of hegemony suitable because it informed the analysis of media activism's influence towards media reforms as well as ascertaining whether the reforms has democratised the media in Zimbabwe. However, one criticism of Gramsci's which has impacted on this study is that it does not emphasise much on the authoritative state as a threat to media democracy, but does so much on big businesses. Generally in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, the state has become a powerful threat to media diversity and pluralism. The Gramsci theory of hegemony's tendency to largely focus on capitalist societies rather than the state has to do with its origins. The theory is rooted in liberal democracies of the Western world where a civil society plays a critical role in the political matrix. In bringing the theory home, this study is cognisant of the fact that the role played by the capitalist's society in liberal democracies can be replaced by the authoritative state. It therefore means that, the state takes a central position in analysis as it also plays an influential role in media policy and regulation formulation, implementation and evaluation. To some extent, the universality of the Gramsci's theory as a Western-centric approach is exposed.

Suggestions for future research

Certainly, one of the outstanding key issues has been the failure of media democracy because of the existing disparities of conceptualisation of the concept of "media democracy" between the media reform activists organisations and the state. There is need for research to determine a proper workable model between the state and the western sponsored media activists. One of the laudable criteria is to bring the Western donor funded groups, the media scholars and the government together and find a workable definition of media democracy agreeable to all stakeholders.

Another area which needs further research is based on the conceptualisation of a "Community radio". There is need for research to tweak this concept into its proper constituency and define it along with its characteristics. As it stands, the term is vague and

does not clearly define the concept clearly leading to arguments as the ones founded in this study. The funding structure, ownership and control of a community radio must be outlined clearly in this postmodern Zimbabwe. Further studies in this area have a good opportunity of unlocking great knowledge thereby providing solutions to current challenges bedevilling the nation and beyond.

Recommendations

In light of the above discussion of findings and conclusions, the study offers a number of recommendations. This study has delved into how media activism has influenced media policy reform in Zimbabwe. It further sought to establish the extent to which media reform has democratised communication in Zimbabwe. In this spirit, the study provides learning points for consideration by media policy actors, media activists as well as media scholars. Thus, recommendations are divided into three categories as above. For media policy actors in Zimbabwe, it is recommended that, the media policy as a public policy must be based on all stakeholder consultation so that the interests of all stakeholders are captured for easy implementation. Failure to capture the interests of all stakeholders in a policy creates problems when it comes to the implementation process. In addition, the state as the custodian of the media policy should also play a critical role of safeguarding the broader public interests rather than the narrow national interests in media policy formulation and implementation. The broader public interest creates a balance among interests operating within a policed environment of which the national interest is one.

Media activists are recommended to balance between the interests of their funders and the interests of the public and authorities of the environment they are seeking policy change for. Such an understanding of the culture, politics and the economics of spaces one is seeking policy change for helps to reduce tensions and antagonism. There is need for a constant and bonafide dialogue between media activists and the state on the real meaning of media democracy and on whose interests should they be implemented. If this is not respected, media democracy will remain elusive, not only in Zimbabwe but in most parts of the developing world who suspect that the Western world has a tendency of imposing its interests on the global south whom they consider under developed. In spite of the above recommendations, media activists must endeavor to find home grown solutions to challenges of media repression rather than over reliance on the Western donors who then try to impose their own

type of democracy on another country without due respect for the incumbent's culture, politics and economic dynamics.

Conclusion

This chapter summarised key findings of the research, research limitations, suggestions for future research and recommendations. In summarising the key findings the chapter was guided by the four research question of the study which are; What caused media regulation in the post 2000 era?; What are the key contestations in the Zimbabwe media policy and regulatory reform process?; To what extent has media activism influenced media reform processes in Zimbabwe? and how has media reform contributed to media democratisation in Zimbabwe?. Discussions were made pointing out that the liberal policies of the 1990s and the events that followed threatened the government into the promulgation of stringent media policies which became the subject of intense media policy debate that has rocked Zimbabwe for a period which stretches over a decade. While the main debate is hinged on media policy and regulation in Zimbabwe, there are some outgrowing but relevant debates based on the appointments of board members at BAZ and commissioners at ZMC as well as the broadcasting licencing regime. More controversy emanates from a perennial failure to register a community radio by BAZ regardless of the availability of the enabling law. Although the debate over self regulation and statutory regulation occupies a pivotal role in Zimbabwean media regulation, the issue of the state's pursuance of narrow "national interest" at the expense of the broader "public interest" is a cause for concern. Further findings indicate that media reform activists have to a great extent influenced media reform in Zimbabwe. However, such reform have either not been implemented or have been usurped by the state hegemony to consolidate power. Certainly, media reform have been established in Zimbabwe, however, the implementation mechanisms have not been for the advancement of media democracy but for the establishment and consolidation of the ruling power.

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Appendices

Appendix A

List of informants

1. **Andy Moyse**- Retired journalist and former director of the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ). Former editor of Standard newspaper, Parade and Horizon magazines.
2. **Charamba George**– The Deputy secretary to the Cabinet and Presidential spokesperson. He is the former permanent secretary in the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services.
3. **Chikwinya Settlement** –A Member of Parliament for MDC Alliance, a former Chairperson of the parliamentary portfolio committee on media and broadcasting services.
4. **Chinamhora Academy**-Research manager at Zimbabwe Media Commission.
5. **Dube Loughty** – Director at the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ).
6. **Godwin Mangudya** – A senior reporter at Studio 7 “Voice of America” based in Harare. Former Daily News on Sunday News reporter.
7. **Government official (1)**—Official in the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services.
8. **Government official (2)** Official in the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services.
9. **Kindness Paradza** – A ZANU PF member of Parliament for Makonde, Publisher of the Weekly Tribune and former President of the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists.
10. **Kwangware Kudzai** -Acting programme manager at Zimbabwe Association of Community Radios.
11. **Legislator (1)**, -a Member of Parliament who refused to be named.
12. **Legislator (2)** – a Member of Parliament who refused to be named.
13. **Maunganidze Golden**-National Chairperson of Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA-Zimbabwe) and publisher of Tellzim Newspaper.
14. **Mahoso Tafataona**-Chairperson the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) and Chief Executive Officer of Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC).
15. **Mhiripiri Nhamo**- A Professor of media studies in the Media and Society Studies department at Midlands State University, Zimbabwe. He was a committee member the Inquiry into the Media Panel (IMPI).

16. **Mudzengi Ernest** – Director of Media Center and former senior member of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA).
17. **Mukudu Rashweat**—A former Zimbabwe Independent reporter and director of media MISA.
18. **Mugari Eckson**- Is a senior Lecturer in the department of Media and Society Studies at the Midlands State University, Zimbabwe.
19. **Ngwenya, Nhlanhla** – Former Director at MISA-Zimbabwe.
20. **Nyamutumbi Nigel**-Coordinator of the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ).
21. **Ruhanya Pedzisai**- Political analyst, media activists and scholar.
22. **Takaona Takaona** – Formerly at Sunday Mail as news editor, former ZUJ president and Commissioner of the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC). Now a Director at Masvingo Mirror.

Appendix B

Interview questions guide

What are the key debates in Zimbabwe media policy reform?

1. What major issues have played out in the Zimbabwean media democratisation process?
2. How have these issues been addressed and to what extent was the address satisfactory.
3. What are the goals of the Zimbabwe media reform?
4. What is/are your expectations of change after the reform, including the media system, broadcasting policy, and regulators?

How has the reform of media contributed to media democratisation?

5. What do you understand by the concept media democracy?
6. In your view, do you think the media in Zimbabwe is democratised?
7. To what extent do you think media reform can influence media democratisation in Zimbabwe?
8. What media reform have been executed in Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2013 and to what extent did they impact on media democracy in Zimbabwe?

How has media activism contributed to Zimbabwe media reform?

9. What does “media activism” mean to you?
10. Who are media activists?
11. What role did media activism play in the reform of media in Zimbabwe?
12. In your opinion, have media activists’ involvement in the reform been effective or ineffective? Why or why not?
13. What programmes are being done by media activists to achieve their objectives and to what extent have they been successful?
14. What activities have been done by media activists to influence reform and how useful have they been?
15. What are the challenges being faced by media activists in their efforts to influence media policy change and how are they dealing with them?

Why did the government of Zimbabwe pass new media laws in the post 2000 era?

16. What were the issues that prompted the state to pass new media laws in the post 2000 period?
17. How did these laws impact on the media?

Appendix C

Human Subject ethics committee clearance certificate



HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/4B Alfandika

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: H17/05/02

PROJECT TITLE

Democratising communication: Media activism and media reform in Zimbabwe

INVESTIGATOR(S)

Mr L Alfandika

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT

Literature, Language and Media Studies

DATE CONSIDERED

19 May 2017

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Approved

EXPIRY DATE

22 June 2020

DATE 23 June 2017

CHAIRPERSON


(Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor: Dr U Akpajivi

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

Signature

Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix D
Participant Information Sheet for media activists.

Good morning/ afternoon! My name is Last Alfandika and I am a student at the University of the Witwatersrand doing a Doctor of Philosophy (Media studies) degree. I am carrying out a research study titled, **Democratising communication, Media activism and media reform in Zimbabwe**. The study explores media activism as a way of reforming the media to create a democratised communication system in Zimbabwe.

I am inviting you to be a participant in this research study. Your selection to participate in this research is based on the fact that you one of the media activist in Zimbabwe.

As a participant in this research study, I would request an interview session with you which would be conducted outside your office. With your permission, I ask that this interview be recorded through the use of an audio-recorder. This will allow for accurate results and analysis to be done. This interview session will be approximately one hour in length.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and I guarantee that your personal details will remain anonymous throughout this research study as well as in the final research dissertation. However, unless you so wish, your names or pseudonyms may be used in a final research report.

Also, as a participant, you may refuse to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with and may feel free to withdraw from this study at any time and will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. By being a participant in this research you will not receive payment of any form and the information you disclose will be used only in the research report.

This research will be written into a Doctorate degree dissertation that will be available online through the University's website. Should you require a summary of the research, I can make this available to you.

In the event that you need further clarifications, please, feel free to contact me or my supervisor, Dr Ufuoma Akpojivi through our contact details below.

Researcher

.....

Mr Last Alfandika (Researcher)
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alfandikalast@gmail.com

Supervisor

.....

Dr. Ufuoma Akpojivi (Supervisor)
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Ufuoma.Akpojivi@wits.ac.za

Appendix E

Participant Information Sheet for media and communication scholars

Good morning/ afternoon! My name is Last Alfandika and I am a student at the University of the Witwatersrand doing a Doctor of Philosophy (Media studies) degree. I am carrying out a research study titled, **Democratising communication, Media activism and media reform in Zimbabwe**. The study explores media activism as a way of reforming the media to create a democratised communication system in Zimbabwe

I am inviting you to be a participant in this research study. Your selection to participate in this research is based on the fact that you are one of the media and communication scholars in Zimbabwe who have published some works on media policy, activism and reform in Zimbabwe in a peer reviewed journal.

As a participant in this research study, I would request an interview session with you which would be conducted outside your office. With your permission, I ask that this interview be recorded through the use of an audio-recorder. This will allow for accurate results and analysis to be done. This interview session will be approximately one hour in length.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and I guarantee that your personal details will remain anonymous throughout this research study as well as in the final research dissertation. However, unless you so wish, your names or pseudonyms may be used in a final research report.

Also, as a participant, you may refuse to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with and may feel free to withdraw from this study at any time and will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. By being a participant in this research you will not receive payment of any form and the information you disclose will be used only in the research report.

This research will be written into a Doctorate degree dissertation that will be available online through the University's website. Should you require a summary of the research, I can make this available to you.

In the event that you need further clarifications, please, feel free to contact me or my supervisor, Dr Ufuoma Akpojivi through our contact details below.

Researcher

Mr Last Alfandika (Researcher)
+263773897016

Supervisor

Dr. Ufuoma Akpojivi (Supervisor)
+271171741

Appendix F

Participant Information Sheet for media professionals

Good morning/ afternoon! My name is Last Alfandika and I am a student at the University of the Witwatersrand doing a Doctor of Philosophy (Media studies) degree. I am carrying out a research study titled, **Democratising communication, Media activism and media reform in Zimbabwe**. The study explores media activism as a way of reforming the media to create a democratised communication system in Zimbabwe.

I am inviting you to be a participant in this research study. Your selection to participate in this research is based on the fact that you are a media professional.

As a participant in this research study, I would request an interview session with you which would be conducted outside your office. With your permission, I ask that this interview be recorded through the use of an audio-recorder. This will allow for accurate results and analysis to be done. This interview session will be approximately one hour in length.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and I guarantee that your personal details will remain anonymous throughout this research study as well as in the final research dissertation. However, unless you so wish, your names or pseudonyms may be used in a final research report.

Also, as a participant, you may refuse to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with and may feel free to withdraw from this study at any time and will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. By being a participant in this research you will not receive payment of any form and there will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled. Information you disclose will be used only in the research report.

This research will be written into a Doctorate degree dissertation that will be available online through the University's website. Should you require a summary of the research, I can make this available to you.

In the event that you need further clarifications, please, feel free to contact me or my supervisor, Dr Ufuoma Akpojivi through our contact details below.

Researcher

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Supervisor

.....
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Appendix F

Consent Form for Research Participants

I, MATHEW TAKAONA, acknowledge that I understand the research and that the research has been fully explained to me. I also understand that the information which I give to the researcher will be used in the research report.

I further acknowledge that the researcher has promised me the following:

- That my participation in this research is voluntary
- That my personal details will remain anonymous throughout the research study as well as in the research dissertation unless I agree that my name will be used in the research report.
- That I can refuse to answer any questions which I feel uncomfortable with

I hereby consent to being interviewed for the research study, "Democratising Communication: Media Activism and Media Reform in Zimbabwe."

I agree / ~~I do not agree~~ that my name will be used in the research report.

Alfancura last Mfandau

Researcher

Mathew Takaona

Participant

24/06/19

Date Signed

24/06/19

Date Signed

Appendix H

Consent Form for Research Participants

I, GOLDEN MAUNGANBIE acknowledge that I understand the research and that the research has been fully explained to me. I also understand that the information which I give to the researcher will be used in the research report.

I further acknowledge that the researcher has promised me the following:

- That my participation in this research is voluntary
- That my personal details will remain anonymous throughout the research study as well as in the research dissertation unless I agree that my name will be used in the research report.
- That I can refuse to answer any questions which I feel uncomfortable with

I hereby consent to being interviewed for the research study, "Democratising Communication: Media Activism and Media Reform in Zimbabwe."

I agree / ~~I do not agree~~ that my name will be used in the research report.

Alfredina East Affandue C. G. "dye"
Researcher Participant

29/10/17

Date Signed

29/10/17

Date Signed