

**THE ROLE OF DIASPORIC MEDIA IN
FACILITATING CITIZEN JOURNALISM AND
POLITICAL AWARENESS IN ZIMBABWE**

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**THE ROLE OF DIASPORIC MEDIA IN FACILITATING
CITIZEN JOURNALISM AND POLITICAL AWARENESS IN
ZIMBABWE**

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CERTIFICATE OF THE THESIS

I certify that the ideas, research, results, and analysis and conclusion reported in this thesis are entirely mine, except where otherwise acknowledged. I further certify that this work is official and has not been previously submitted for any award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

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Date: 26 March 2014

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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this thesis to the marginalized sectors of the global community whose voice it the only weapon they have to free themselves from domination. They have embraced what Hamilton (2000) refers to as technologies of liberation to create public spheres on which their voices can be heard and their political, social and economic circumstances changed. I congratulate them for waging a civilized warfare of ideation.

I dedicate this thesis to my grandfather Mkhumbuli whose name means the one who remembers it all. When I was a small boy he used to say things I could not make sense of by then. He departed when I was beginning to know him better. It was only when he was gone that I began to appreciate the oasis of knowledge in him, an oasis I never had the chance to quench my thirst from. He used to tell me folk stories about the rabbit, small as he is, using ideation to outwit animals like the lion who controlled all institutions of power in the jungle. He would conclude by saying ‘Child of my son (Grand son) only when you become a man, will you be able to comprehend what I have just said to you.’

I also dedicate this thesis to my late brother Themba whose name means Hope. Because of his inquiring mind and his hope for change, he verbally articulated issues that used to leave people baffled. They were too complex, very few people understood him. There was something extraordinary about his approach to life. If I had taken time to listen to him, I would have benefited from the wisdom that came from beyond the ordinary. I shall forever remember his passing on and the ideologies he embraced when he was still among us. To him every voice mattered. I shall always remember his rebellious nature and how he held on to his convictions against dominant views. It is his desire for freedom that eventually led to his passing on. He left a lasting impression on me and today I am talking about human freedoms and advocate for the use the liberated public spheres to fight for them.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|---|
| AM | Amplitude Modulation |
| ANZ | Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| AIPPA | Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act |
| AU | African Union |
| BAZ | Broadcast Authority of Zimbabwe |
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation |
| CIO | Central Intelligence Organization |
| CNG | Community Newspaper Group |
| CNN | Cable News Network |
| Comesa | Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa |
| CPJ | Committee to Protect Journalists |
| CPJ | Commission for Peace and Justice |
| FM | Frequency Modulation |
| GNU | Government of National Unity |
| GSM | Global System for Mobile communications |
| IBB | International Broadcasting Bureau |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| IMC | Independent Media Centers |
| IWPR | Institute of War and Peace Reporting |
| JIT | Just In Time |
| KPA | Kimberly Processing Authority |
| LOMA | Law and Order Maintenance Act |
| MABC | Munhumutapa African Broadcasting Corporation |

| | |
|--------|--|
| | |
| MAZ | Media Alliance of Zimbabwe |
| MDC | Movement for Democratic Change |
| MIC | Media and Information Commission |
| MISA | Media Institute of Southern Africa |
| MISA-Z | Media Institute of Southern Africa-Zimbabwe |
| MMPZ | Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| MSI | Media Sustainability Index |
| NGO | Non Governmental Organization |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OTI | Office of Transition Initiatives |
| POSA | Public Order and Security Act |
| RTLM | Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines |
| SADC | Southern African Development Conference |
| SADCC | Southern African Development Coordination Conference |
| SAPA | South African Press Association |
| SMS | Short Message Service |
| SW | Short Wave |
| SWRA | Short Wave Radio Africa |
| RBC | Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation |
| UG | Use and Gratification |
| USA | United States of America |
| USIP | United States Institute for Peace |
| VOA | Voice Of America |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| VOP | Voice Of the People |
| VOR | Voice of the Revolution |
| ZACRAS | Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations |
| ZANU | Zimbabwe African People's Union |
| ZANU-PF | Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front |
| ZAPU | Zimbabwe African People's Union |
| ZAPU-PF | Zimbabwe African People's Union Patriotic Front |
| ZBC | Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation |
| ZCTU | Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions |
| ZEC | Zimbabwe Electoral Commission |
| ZIANA | Zimbabwe Inter-Africa News Agency |
| ZimPapers | Zimbabwe Newspapers |
| ZIS | Zimbabwe Information Service |
| ZMMT | Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust |
| ZRP | Zimbabwe Republic Police |

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a contribution to the debate on the role of diasporic media in effecting political change in Zimbabwe in the current period. Using a constructivist paradigm whose point of departure is that the world is changeable, the thesis uses three case studies to explore how a conscious engagement with these media helps understand how people using minimum resources can engage in an activity that has a potential to create change in a restricted political environment. The case studies are: a radio station Short Wave Radio Africa (SWRA), a news website NewZimbabwe.com, and the newspaper The Zimbabwean. These media are located outside Zimbabwe owing to the thinning of media democratic space in the country. In what ways do media created by nationals in the diaspora manage to use affordable communication technologies to link with the population, providing an alternative public sphere? Despite the Zimbabwean government's control of the media, in particular, radio broadcasting, evidence shows the rise of an oppositional communicative space conducted by a small number of poorly resourced social players. Civilians are therefore able to respond to disenfranchisement using a few resources as part of democratic ideation in a hostile environment. This constructivist argument states that the social world is not a given, but is part of a marked discursive and communicative process. This thesis further argues that diasporic media play a pivotal role in the social world in influencing notions of human consciousness; as forms of social, political and economic interactions that project thoughts, world-views, beliefs, ideas and concepts that underpin their relationships.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for, and to see realised. But my Lord, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

(Nelson Mandela, defence statement during the Rivonia Trial, 1964. Also repeated during the closing of his speech delivered in Cape Town on the day he was released from prison 27 years later, on 11 February 1990)

1.1. Introduction

This thesis seeks to facilitate understanding the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe. In order to understand the Zimbabwean diasporic media activity that is directed at challenging the political landscape in the country, one needs to understand the diasporic community as a socio-political formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration, whose members regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries (Sheffer, 2003: 9). As Ogunyemi (2014) argues, the migration of Africans to the diaspora decimated Africa, as professionals, business elite, students and refugees emigrated to escape crisis, famine and infrastructural decay. According to Ogunyemi the World Bank estimates that Africa, has lost roughly 100,000 university graduates, fully or partly educated in Africa, to western industrialized countries. This figure does not include the millions of western educated Africans who stayed on because they could not see a future for themselves in returning home. Because of the availability of communication technologies that transcend political boundaries nowadays, these diasporic communities establish a link with their home countries. One such activity is the establishment of diasporic media. Diasporic media are media whose content is relevant to, representative of or produced by or for these groups of people who are far away from their homeland. According to Ogunyemi these African

diaspora media outlets help to complement and extend the role of the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) by providing ‘an open, multidisciplinary platform to debate, discuss and exchange knowledge on migration issues.

The Zimbabwean model shows diasporic media which do not only facilitate communication among the communities in the diaspora as is traditionally known, but which also link with citizens in the countries where they migrated from. Such a link is made possible by the use of modern communication technologies that can operate instantaneously across political boundaries. Such media help to maintain cultural ties and unity between those who left the country and those who remained behind.

These media can be understood as a response to the limited information access in a restrictive political environment where information generation and propagation is the preserve of the political elite. If that is the case, then restrictions on information access could be seen as leading to innovative ideas generated by the populace to constructively create a cross national public sphere where they can engage dialogically on issues affecting the governance of their country. If they cannot operate freely within their country, evidence shows that they will do so clandestinely.

Mosia *et al*, (1994) observe that clandestine (nationalist) radio on the African continent came to an end with the shutdown of the ANC’s Radio Freedom in 1991 when the station’s broadcasters joined the stream of exiles heading back home to witness the birth of a new South Africa, yet clandestine radio is still operational today in countries like Zimbabwe, its focus though, according to Last Moyo, (2012) no longer being the liberation from colonial occupation. Their focus is a new form of liberation from emerging forms of oppression

perpetrated by the former liberators on the people they are supposed to have liberated. Whilst domination by white settlers was the motivation for the establishment of diasporic media by the nationalists during Zimbabwe's war of liberation, the same media are now operating in Zimbabwe and considered to be seeking to free the people, not from white domination on blacks, but black domination of blacks. There is therefore a need to understand the existence of diasporic media in an independent country as it is an indication of how far the citizens can go to challenge any form of domination by the ruling class. To echo Mandela's famous statement, if needs be, the fight against any form of domination is an ideal *for which the people are prepared to die* (my emphasis). The Reverend Jesse Jackson, American Civil Rights leader and politician, famously said:

If my mind can conceive it, and my heart can believe it, I know I can achieve it.¹

Whilst other countries in the sub Saharan continent are embracing the principles of democracy, it is the concern of some people in Zimbabwe that democratic principles are yet to be observed in their entirety in the country. Evidence shows that some members of the diasporic community are doing something to help establish this viable journalistic activity that is directed at creating a democratic environment in the country. This involves the establishment and use of diasporic media by Zimbabweans domiciled abroad. The aim of this thesis is to understand the extent to which the use of diasporic media can influence political activism in Zimbabwe, which at the time of this research has been under 33 years of autocratic rule. The existence of such media in an independent country raises a lot of interests

¹See BrainyQuote. 2013. *Jesse Jackson Quotes at BrainyQuote.com*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/j/jessejacks385104.html> [Accessed: 09 12/2013].

among researchers. The affected citizens have used minimum resources at their disposal to create communicative spaces where they exchange ideas without interference from the Zimbabwean authorities. These citizens seem to be bypassing the restrictive environment that exists in the country to establish their own public sphere in which they are able to articulate issues they want to change for the country to have a democratic model they need.

Given the importance of the subject, this research investigates the extent to which these media domiciled in the diaspora as a result of the limited democratic space in Zimbabwe are managing to facilitate citizen journalistic activities in the country. This thesis seeks to facilitate an understanding of the role played by newspapers, radio stations and internet publications produced by citizens of Zimbabwe outside their country and directed at their fellow citizens to give them a dialogical engagement about the political situation prevailing in the country. As Soley (1995: 114) says, a society's lack of openness is the surest predictor that clandestine media will appear, whether the nondemocratic government is a military junta, communist or capitalist. Soley argues that, wherever authoritarian regimes, political conflict or civil wars exist, there is always a clandestine radio to open channels of free expression. The emergence of such oppositional media by citizens from outside the boundaries of the state poses a lot of questions about the observance of democratic principles that are impacting on the people's ability to enjoy freedom of expression.

1.2. Aim and objectives of the research

The research therefore aims to provide an enriched conceptual understanding of the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe.

. In service of this aim, the research has the following objectives:

- To catalogue the history of political change in Zimbabwe since the 1970s.
- To critically evaluate literature on the role of media activism and regulation in promoting and delivering democracy.
- To describe and determine the core features of media ownership and regulation in Zimbabwe since 1980.
- To describe and evaluate the significance of the growth of the Zimbabwean diasporic Media since 2000.
- To determine the impact that media convergence has exerted on the ability to regulate and control key constituents of the media in Zimbabwe.
- To determine the extent and pattern of consumption of diasporic media output in Zimbabwe and the implications of this.
- To provide an enriched conceptual explanation of the political and socioeconomic consequences of diasporic media activities.

Using a constructivist philosophical approach which argues that the social world is a product of thoughts and ideas of the people as they establish social, political and economic relations with one another (Pompa, 1982: 26) this thesis examines the impact of poorly resourced diasporic media created by nationals outside their country of origin. These are the media which are a response to the political environment that is not supportive of the activities of media institutions that offer alternative discourse to that churned by the state controlled media. These diasporic media are therefore seen as the conduit by which the citizens' concerns, hopes and aspirations are communicated to those in power, using enabling environments and technologies, which the government has no control over. They have assumed a role to keep the citizens informed and educated about political alternatives the country has. The content of such media is consumed by the citizens alongside content from state media like Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, The Herald Newspaper and The Chronicle. Some of these citizens seem to be using their natural urge for freedom to establish for themselves communicative spaces with which to create, disseminate and share information they consider to be emancipatory and empowering. In the absence of a conducive environment in which to establish these communicative spaces within the country, evidence shows that alternative media emerge offshore and engage with the populace in a way that is

challenging to the status quo. It is against this backdrop and the availability of affordable new media technologies which are also in the hands of the citizens that the journalists in the diaspora have started a range of media which include radio stations, websites and newspapers to give their communities a platform on which to share and access different views from which they can make informed political decisions.

The thesis will examine what factors led to the establishment of Zimbabwean media operating from outside the country in an independent Zimbabwe where the interests of the marginalised sectors of society are supposed to be articulated from inside the country. At the moment the research community is interested in understanding the impact of these media which get information from the citizens, process it outside the country and send it back into the country to be consumed by the citizenry some of whom seem to be eager to get alternative information to that propagated by the state institutions. The reaction of the populace in independent Zimbabwe will be closely analysed to understand if the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe, an activity that is impacting on the political climate in the country. It is the interest of this thesis to understand how these media have raised the interest of some sectors of the international community to speak out and encourage the implementation of reforms that can create a democratic environment that is compatible with the expectations of the populace.

This research is conducted at a time when the democratic space in Zimbabwe is raising a lot of concerns as it has narrowed significantly under three decades of Mugabe's autocratic rule. Zimbabwe is also an interesting case study for this thesis as it has a long history of diasporic media activity with the black nationalists having started these media as far back as 1958 when they were responding to the lack of democratic space and freedom of expression in

Rhodesia. They had to open radio stations outside their country to inform their fellow citizens about the war that was going on, something the government controlled media in the hands of the white regime of Ian Douglas Smith would not be able to facilitate. They used diasporic media as an important arsenal in the information warfare that was waged alongside physical combat. The recruitment drive for the fighters was done using mainly radio stations domiciled outside the then Rhodesia. It can be observed from the discussion above that diasporic media inspired Zimbabwe's war of independence. And it further provided both the currency and infrastructure of communication, which enabled those who opposed the Smith regime to share and articulate their positions to the general populace; thereby rallying them in support of the war of liberation. However, thirty-three years after independence, history seems to have repeated itself through the re-emergence of diasporic media. There are now diasporic media operating from as far as South Africa, Britain, The Netherlands and America. It is the interest of this thesis to have a deep understanding of the role played by these media in conjuring a space for voices for social and political emancipation in Zimbabwe.

1.3. Synopsis of the chapters in this thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. The following is a brief synopsis of what each of these chapters contains.

Chapter One: Provides an introduction to the study. It gives reasons and justifications for the research and identifies the problem and its setting. It outlines the aim and objectives of the study.

Chapter Two: Provides background information about the state of the media in Zimbabwe and its effect on the ability of the populace to freely express themselves. The chapter explains

the changes that the country needs for it to have a democratic environment that will allow the populace to enjoy freedom of expression, access to information and freedom of association without denigrating the African government democratic model system which is influenced by historical cultural values of society. The chapter outlines the way the government responds to these media which it tries to discredit and close down as a result of its recognition that these media can have an emancipatory impact on the population of Zimbabwe.

Chapter Three: This chapter provides the literature review section of the thesis. It provides the explanatory framework of the thesis. It defines democracy and examines how democratic principles are observed in Zimbabwe. It examines how media restrictions were implemented in Rhodesia through a plethora of legislation and how such restrictions are still used in Zimbabwe 33 years after independence. It looks at how some members of the populace have migrated to other countries to establish oppositional media to counter the restrictions imposed by the government in their country. The chapter examines how citizens, using modern communication technologies, manage to link up with these diasporic media to create a public sphere in a restricted political environment. This is the chapter which helps to draw the analytical framework for this research.

Chapter Four: This chapter explains the research methodology used in this thesis. It introduces Constructivism as the explanatory paradigms for the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe. It explains the research design and introduces the three case studies that are used to understand the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe.

Chapter Five: This chapter examines the emergence of diasporic media in Zimbabwe and gives a detailed analysis of the three case studies which represent radio, websites and newspapers. The chapter examines the aims of these media, how these media generate content and how they link with the populace in Zimbabwe.

Chapter Six: This chapter provides the research findings generated by the bulk of the empirical work carried out. It examines the way the populace engages with the case studies in order to provide an understanding of the extent of the connection between these diasporic media and the people on the ground. It analyses the role these media have on the populace, something which has a potential to create an emancipatory environment in Zimbabwe.

Chapter Seven: This chapter draws conclusions on how the diasporic media are able to effect political change in Zimbabwe. It identifies areas that can be further investigated to contribute to the body of knowledge about the role of media in empowering society.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined how a restricted political environment leads to the establishment of alternative communication channels that are oppositional to the status quo and emancipatory to the marginalised populace. It has established how the restricted political environment and the establishment of these oppositional media motivated this research. The chapter has clarified the aim and objectives of the research and provided a brief synopsis of the chapters of the thesis. The next chapter examines the state of the media in Zimbabwe and the changes that are needed for the country to enjoy a participatory environment in which everyone has a

right to be heard and respected. It also raises concerns about how the government responds to oppositional voices and how it attempts to silence them so as to maintain dominance in message propagation in the country. This response from the government further explains the emergence of diasporic media and the active participation in journalistic activities by the citizens of Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER TWO:

CONTEXTUALISING ZIMBABWE'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

2.1. Introduction

In order to investigate the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe, one needs to have a clear understanding of the political climate that prevails in the country during this research (2010-2013). It is the interest of this research to examine the recent political climate in the country and, more broadly, to understand what changes are needed in the political system to facilitate the establishment of a government by consensus and not coercion. The research examines the prevailing media democratic space with the idea of understanding how it affects the democratisation of Zimbabwe, a situation that could be responsible for the creation of diasporic media, which try to create alternative spaces of communication and participation which are vital for the democratisation process in the country. It should be emphasised at this juncture that the democratic environment envisaged by the citizens of Zimbabwe is not necessarily the western model. It must be a model based on the culture of the people, which gives them equal opportunities as citizens who at the same time maintain their identity.

This chapter will show how the government has tried to discredit these media, something which indicates that the presence and effect of these media is felt in the high echelons of the state. This chapter seeks to outline the concerns that some sectors of the Zimbabwean population have about the political situation in the country. It then outlines the political changes that the people want to see taking place in the country for the country to become a democracy. It is hoped that an understanding of how media activity can empower the masses

to influence the course of their lives will come about as a result of this research. This will then facilitate the understanding of the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe.

2.2. Putting the socio-cultural history of Zimbabwe into context

To facilitate an understanding of the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe, this section will first of all try to clarify the historical and social relations in the country, relations, when looked at critically, may be seen as having a bearing on the social-political climate that currently prevails in the country. As Gatsheni (2011) explains, a number of myths and distortions of history have combined to fuel misunderstandings, conflicts and violence in Zimbabwe. These myths have been passed on from generation to generation. They have also been consolidated by history books and the media in both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe for the benefit of those in power who seem to benefit from the divide and rule policy.

Zimbabwe is a country whose population of about 13 million people is composed of people who, despite having eighteen languages, align themselves to two major Bantu tribes, the Shona and the Ndebele. As Gatsheni writes in www.bulawayo24.com (14/04/11), the combined Shona population constitute about 82% of the population, while the Ndebele make up about 14% of the population. The other 4% is composed of Whites and Asians. Gatsheni explains that the original inhabitants of the land named Zimbabwe in 1980 are the San and the Khoi Khoi. The groups that today call themselves the Shona came to the Zimbabwe plateau ahead of the Ndebele and subdued the San and the Khoi Khoi. The Ndebele were the later arrivals. They originated from the coastal areas lying between the Indian Ocean and

the Drakensburg Mountains, in KwaZulu Natal, a land that was to be later called South Africa. They were originally part of the Nguni groups comprising the Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, Gaza and others. They migrated into the part of Africa which is now called Zimbabwe in 1837-8 under the leadership of king Mzilikazi Khumalo, the son of Matshobana. They had broken from King Shaka, the son of Senzangakhona. After breaking away, the followers of Mzilikazi gained a new name, Matebele from the Sotho King Moshweshwe, which eventually became Ndebele. Matebele was a Sotho name for strangers from the coastal areas who encroached on their territory. Prior, to the adoption of the name Ndebele, the followers of Mzilikazi were known as Zulus and they spoke IsiZulu.

Just like all other pre-colonial people, the Ndebele raided other tribes as a security and defence measure. Neighbours of the Ndebele such as the various Shona groups were raiders too, and could not be taken for granted. As Gatsheni writes, they needed to be kept in check as they posed a danger. The Shona, just like other African groups took the form of raiding and conquest of weaker groups as well as assimilation and incorporation into the new state. No wonder that Mutapa, the great Shona kingdom that once existed in this part of the world meant pillager and Rozvi meant destroyers. Therefore raiding, according to Gatsheni was, a political ploy rather than a branch of the tribal economies.

Oral and written history have fuelled antagonistic relationships between the two major groups, the Shona and the Ndebele, with the Shona accusing the Ndebele of having raided them when they arrived in the land now called Zimbabwe and taken away their cattle and women. This is seen by social scientists like Gatsheni as having in later years, led to the Shona nationalists pulling away from the liberation movement Zimbabwe African People's

Union (ZAPU) in 1963 to form a predominantly Shona party Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). ZAPU was led by Joshua Nkomo, a Ndebele. The Shona nationalists are seen as having used this old myth to break away and stand on their own, taking advantage of their numerical strength which was to later prove to be an advantage as ZANU won the first democratic elections by large numbers in 1980.

When ZANU won the elections in 1980, they immediately appropriated nationalist history, including raiding and taking ZAPU and ZIPRA archives to make sure their contribution to the liberation of this country is down-played (see Chapter 5). This was to sustain the myth of PF-ZAPU and ZIPRA as a danger to the post-colonial nation and state. In the 1980s the Fifth Brigade was dispatched to Matabeleland, the stronghold of ZAPU where they killed over 25000 influential people. As Gatsheni notes the Fifth Brigade was comprised of ideologically whitewashed Shona-speaking men. They were a political party army that was used to politically and physically eliminate PF-ZAPU and ZIPRA. It targeted influential Ndebele-speaking people on the basis of a myth that PF-ZAPU was a Ndebele party and ZIPRA was comprised by Ndebele-speaking men and women. This, it is believed, was designed to subdue the Ndebele people and make them insignificant in the country. As will be seen later, all ideological institutions were put in the hands of the Shona speaking people. This included broadcasting, newspapers, the schools, the judiciary, the police and the army. This further fuelled the mistrust between these major groupings in the country.

From 1980 to mid 1990s the Shona people enjoyed a privileged status in Zimbabwe. Infrastructure was developed in Mashonaland. Major industries were moved from Matabeleland and relocated to Mashonaland. Best jobs, housing and business opportunities

were given to those who aligned themselves to the ruling party. The country became polarised along ethnic lines.

When the war veterans forced the government to give them payouts for their service in the war of independence, the Reserve Bank had to print out more money that did not correspond to the wealth of the country. This led to inflation and job losses. The country's economy suffered. Every citizen felt the hardships as shall be explained in subsequent chapters. The workers united to confront the government through strikes and demonstrations. All tribal differences were put aside as the people tried to find a solution to the economic problem they were in. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) under the leadership of Morgan Tsvangirai formed a political party to challenge ZANU-PF. This party was named Movement for Democratic Change, (MDC). This became a national party which, despite it being led by Morgan Tsvangirai from Mashonaland, enjoyed support from all over the country as a result of the economic hardships everybody was feeling. For the first time Zimbabwe became united against the former liberators who, according to them had become their oppressors. Evidence shows that, to a certain extent the Zimbabwean population did put aside traditional cultural differences to confront their political and economic problems as a united front.

When some citizens left the country, they maintained a link with their homeland using what is referred to in this thesis as diasporic media (see subsequent chapters). They made an attempt to reach the masses in the three main languages which are English, Shona and Ndebele to cater for the diversity of the Zimbabwean population. Short Wave Radio Africa, (SWRA) broadcasts in English, Shona and Ndebele. The Zimbabwean Newspaper is written in English, with the stories translated into vernacular languages on the same paper. New

Zimbabwe.com is written in English with a mixture of both Shona and Ndebele. These media have helped Zimbabwean overlooks the traditional myths that promote traditional hostilities to confront the national problems as a united body, although it is difficult to predict if this unity among the citizens will last when ZANU-PF, the common enemy according to the research, is gone.

2.3. Challenges to the democratisation of Zimbabwe

This research has been conducted during a time when there is concern about the limited democratic space in Zimbabwe, a situation which is considered to have been instrumental in encouraging the migration of Zimbabweans to form diasporic communities abroad. Media practitioners who have migrated with their communities to the diaspora as a result of the repressive environment in Zimbabwe continue to use new media technologies to establish a public sphere with which to engage dialogically with the populace back in the country in an attempt to address the political situation on the ground. This is a period when the Zimbabwean government has orchestrated a plethora of media laws and regulations in addition to those it inherited from Rhodesia to limit the democratic space in a way that is designed to ensure that only the hegemony of the ruling party is propagated to the population at the expense of democracy. This, it can be argued, has facilitated class domination and abuse of authority by the ruling party through coercion instead of consensus (Hay, 1996: 25).

The term hegemony refers to “loosely interrelated sets of ruling ideas permeating a society, but in such a way as to make the established order of power and values appear natural, taken-for-granted, and commonsensical” (McQuail, 2000: 97). It is the process through which the dominant ideology is crafted, propagated and spread; “consciousness formed, and social power exercised” (Lull, 2000: 287). Instead of depending on the outright manipulation of the

masses, hegemony depends on ideology-modelling measures that normalize the status quo in a manner that defies objection. This state of affairs silences dissent and also supports the advancement of autocratic tendencies.

In Zimbabwe the resistance to hegemonic control has led to the use of new technologies by the citizens in a de-professionalised, de-capitalised and de-institutionalised environment as Hamilton (2000) puts it, to empower themselves to establish a democratic space through which they can give themselves meaningful freedoms. They use these technologies to respond to the prevailing domination by blacks on blacks, something they never thought was going to happen in an independent Zimbabwe.

There is concern that Zimbabwe uses a set of institutions operated by state personnel, who according to Hall and Ikenberry (1981: 1) employ coercive and violent tactics to achieve their goals (Hay, 1996: 4). Contrary to what the people of Zimbabwe expect, there is a concern that the government is employing a repressive ideological state apparatus as a means of monopolising rule making within the country in order to create dominance and subordination. The state institutions primarily involved here are what Althusser (1968) terms the repressive state apparatus. In Zimbabwe these include education, the judiciary, the military, the media and the police and ruling party apparatus such as the war veterans and the youth militia who at the time of this research are going to unprecedented lengths to stifle freedom of association, freedom of expression and access to information. The state security forces continue to be enlisted in political operations. They maintain a presence in urban areas, particularly during election periods. They are involved in campaigns, election monitoring and food distribution which favours members of the ruling party (see SWRA report 01/03/2013). They have publicly affirmed that they are not in any position to support any opposition party

should it win the elections. They say they are not ready to salute any president who did not participate in the 'liberation struggle', saying they will revolt should such a president come into power (Africa News and Analysis, 19/10/2012). The Minister of Justice during this research, Patrick Chinamasa has even hinted that the military would stage a coup should the opposition ever win the elections.

According to the findings of this research, the de-politicization of state institutions like the police, the army and the judiciary will be a much needed political change if Zimbabwe is to become a thriving democracy. As the situation stands, state power exists in what Cawson (1966: 58) calls the specific relations of domination that the state form embraces, the successful upholding of the claim (ultimately through force) to represent the maximum collective unit of social organisation, which is in this case, the ruling party. According to Cawson, the structure of domination is facilitated by legal-rational procedures developed alongside domination based on traditional obedience (because things have always been done that way) and domination by charismatic leadership (obedience based on acceptance of the claim of the leader to be able to achieve desired ends). ZANU-PF, the current ruling party in Zimbabwe, believes it alone must rule and nobody should be president other than Robert Mugabe because they say he is the one who led the country to independence. On the contrary, history shows that a lot of people other than ZANU-PF were involved in the protracted conflict which led to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. This, according to Dr John Makumbe (interviewed 07/07/12) is an anomaly which needs to be addressed.

Cawson observes that domination through bureaucracy requires a specific kind of legitimation and acceptance of due processes and formally rational procedures. At the moment the Zimbabwean government is using what Hall (1985: 52) describes as the ways in

which politicians construct popular consent by making reference to historical events, which stir popular discontent among the followers in order to justify their relevance and win the support of the masses. This is the way political parties use to neutralise the opposing forces, desegregate the opposition and incorporate some strategic elements of popular opinion into their own hegemonic project. As will be shown later in the thesis, the Mugabe regime constantly preaches about how the ruling party fought against white domination (popular discontent) for independence and how the opposition would like to reverse the gains of independence (neutralise and denigrate the opposition) by making Zimbabwe a colony again (strategic element of popular opinion).

2.4. Concerns about the state of freedom of association in Zimbabwe

Of interest to this research is the way the state enforces obedience through physical force, oppression and censorship. It uses state apparatuses to silence the critical voices in order to promote its hegemony. As will be seen later in the thesis, there are reports of the military personnel and members of the police Law and Order Section perpetrating a series of attacks against opposition party activists, members of Parliament (MPs) and media practitioners. As a result, hundreds of opposition supporters and members of civic organisation who express oppositional ideas have since independence in 1980 been arrested, tortured, raped and even killed by the state agents in order to silence any form of dissent, thereby succeeding in maintaining an autocratic state (NewZimbabwe.com 11/12/2009). As is seen in the pictures that were sent to Short Wave Radio Africa from Zimbabwe during the 2008 presidential

election in which opposition members are reported to have died, torture is reported to have been used to scare people from voting for the opposition.²

There is concern that those suspected of supporting the opposition are beaten, driven from their homes, and forced to attend ZANU-PF rallies. The killing and arbitrary arrests of opposition members continued during the period of this doctoral research (2010-2013) when there was the inclusive government formed by the ruling party ZANU-PF and the opposition MDC. As can be seen in the picture sent to SWRA by citizens during the 2008 presidential election, many political activists are reported to have died in the hands of the ruling party supporters. During this research some MDC members are languishing in jail over charges they felt have been made up. Others had died in police custody, something which questions the validity of the peace accord signed between President Mugabe's ZANU-PF and Prime Minister Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) on 13 February 2009 to form the Government of National Unity (GNU).

Zimbabwe is a heavily militarised state that has the intrusion of the security sector into the political arena. As will be shown in the subsequent chapters the military stands ready to act against any resistance to Mugabe's dictatorial regime. Its militarization has contributed to deteriorating human rights conditions in the country and an increasing impunity demonstrated by non-state actors like the youth militia and war veterans. The government employs what can be termed the systematic and routine repression and physical coercion of groups within civic society. This strategy is effected through the deployment of the state's coercive machinery. It can be observed that systematic and routine repression and physical coercion of

² See <http://www.slideshare.net/ActivateSummit/gerry-jackson-sw-radio-africa>

groups within civic society is prevalent in repressive political settings where coercion overrides consent.

2.5. The state of media freedom in Zimbabwe

Hall and Ikenberry see a state like Zimbabwe as monopolising rule making within its territory, leading to the imposition and propagation of common culture shared by all its citizens. The government achieves this goal by sanctioning media institutions under its control to propagate its ideologies. Such regimes use the media outlets they sanction to perpetuate their hegemony and thus marginalize, and criminalize the underground voices (cf. Moyo, 2005; Soley and Nichols, 1987; Frederikse, 1982).

Autocratic regimes like Zimbabwe achieve their hegemonic power through the information systems under their control to silence oppositional voices by portraying alternative information sources as social deviants and political dissidents who have departed from the normal standard of operation (cf. Saunders, 1991; Moyo, 2005; McQuail, 2000). This autocratic activity by the government forces citizens to crave for alternative democratic media space which gives them alternative communication channels with which to organize themselves and express their views without fear. They respond by establishing oppositional media domiciled outside the state's boundaries to provide the marginalized sections of the population a voice with which to counter the ruling party's hegemony onslaught. Within the country they face threats as they pursue their profession to uncover and expose the undemocratic activities of the state. They constantly face harassments from government security agents who use repressive statutes to try to silence them from articulating issues critical of the government (Moyo, 2005).

Of concern has been the arrest of scores of journalists for activities current statutes deem unacceptable, something that has led to the closure of some independent media organisations (see chapter 4). According to The Committee to Protect Journalists, the majority of former Zimbabwean broadcasters is now working for private radio stations such as SW Radio Africa in London; Studio 7 which is hosted by the Voice of America (VOA) in Washington; Radio *Mthwakazi* FM run by exiled journalists in South Africa; *Inkundla*, an internet Radio Station broadcasting from the UK and Voice of The People (VOP) whose base is believed to be in Hilversum, The Netherlands. Meanwhile, former Daily News journalists and others affected by the closures have started online publications such as Newzimbabwe.com, Zimnews.com Zimbabwejournalists.com, ZimOnline.com, ZimDaily.com, and The Zimbabwe Times.com among others. At least 90 Zimbabwean journalists, including many of the nation's most prominent reporters, were by 2005 living in exile in South Africa, other African countries, the United Kingdom, and the United States, making it one of the largest groups of exiled journalists in the world, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (19/10/2005). These exiled journalists left Zimbabwe as a direct result of political persecution. Others left because the government's crackdown virtually erased opportunities in the independent press. Authorities routinely detained and harassed journalists in the past years to quash reporting on human rights, the economy, and political opposition to the regime, CPJ research has found. This makes Zimbabwe one of the most hostile legal and political environments for media and opposition forces in the world. The Reporteurs Sans Frontieres 2006 world freedom index places Zimbabwe 140th out of 168 in terms of hostility to alternative media activity and goes as far as saying "Freedom of the press simply does not exist in the country" (Moyo, D: 2008). Freedom of expression which is enshrined in the Zimbabwean constitution, (see Appendix 6), and in the Lancaster House Agreement (see appendix 7) is not honoured in practice. Former

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice described Zimbabwe as one of the world's "outposts of tyranny," as she noted that the deficit of freedom in the country is among the world's worst and has put Zimbabwe at the top of lists of human rights violators (NewZimbabwe.com 11.12/09).

The US imposed sanctions on ruling party officials as a result of the undemocratic environment in the country. The US State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki said:

'We have made clear to the government of Zimbabwe and the region that a change in US sanctions policy will occur only in a context of credible, transparent, peaceful reforms that reflect the will of the Zimbabwean people,' (mg.co.za/article20/08/2013)

The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) has also expressed concern about the safety and security of journalists in Zimbabwe as a result of the political environment and the legislative controls that are in force. They have said that they are worried about the lack of access to information by citizens and the abuse of public media resources. In a statement they have said:

'All this is of concern to us because the necessary media legislative reforms required to align the existing laws with the new constitution have not yet taken place. MISA has previously stated the urgency of these reforms, noting that they are of significant importance...' (<http://allafrica.com> Accessed 23/7/13).

The lack of free political debate through mainstream media and the lack of freedom of association led to highly disputed elections and the extensive controls on media activities by the state. Media control by the state is seen as having had some influence in the re-emergence of Zimbabwean diasporic media which seek to address the democratic space which has been restricted in the country since independence in 1980, and whose restrictions intensified even

more at the beginning of the political and economic crises in 2000 (cf. Chiumbu, 2004; Mano, 2005; Moyo, D 2004, 2007; Ranger, 2004; Rønning and Kupe, 2000).

The emergence of diasporic media in Zimbabwe is a response to the democratic climate especially the thinning of media democratic space in the country (cf. Moyo, 2010; Adroit Consultants LLP Report 2010). Political attitudes and current laws in the country are designed to limit freedom of expression and information access, factors which under an ideal setting should form the platform for democratic debate and activity. In Zimbabwe diasporic communities have developed a media activity that engages with the populace through a convergence of radio, print and internet technology to respond to mainstream media and state hegemony in a bid to create an alternative dialogical environment in which a liberated approach to information gathering and dissemination is made possible. These diasporic media function in a way that shapes the coverage of issues the political environment in Zimbabwe does not allow media to address from inside the country. Operating off shore creates a space to articulate issues without political interference from the state, and arguably to challenge the authority of the state. It is a crucial research question in academic, political and humanitarian terms, to investigate if these media are able to facilitate political change in Zimbabwe, a change which might embrace freedom of expression, liberal media activity and freedom of association that allows free political activity by all citizens. The restrictions put on independent media have been seen by this research to have affected the people's ability to express themselves through democratic means. Once home to a robust press corps, Zimbabwe is now experiencing a limited media space. At the beginning of this research in 2010, Zimbabwe had no independent daily newspapers, no private radio news coverage, and just two prominent independent weeklies The Zimbabwe Independent and The Zimbabwe Mail. Most independent papers had been forced to close down. Recently, though, a few

independent newspapers have come up, but they are operating under stringent laws which limit their freedom of operation. Also in 2010, there was no independent radio station as the only independent radio station in Zimbabwe, Capital Radio only worked for six days in 2000 before being closed down at gun point (see Chapter Five). The Broadcast Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) has not licensed a single private broadcaster, although it is mandated to do so (CPIJ, 2012). They are concerned that Zimbabwean authorities have a long record of stifling independent broadcast media using any regulatory means available to them.

BAZ has only issued two broadcast licences, not to independent broadcasters, but to Zimbabwe Newspapers (ZimPapers) a government subsidiary and AB Communications run by Supa Mandiwanzira, a prominent ZANU-PF stalwart and publicist, who in 2013 became Deputy Minister of Information, something that was deeply opposed by the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS) (see SWRA, 02/02/2013). They are part of the government and ruling party, and they use the same editorial policy as the state broadcaster. Asked to comment of the supposed liberalisation of the airwaves the late Dr Makumbe said:

No, no, no! The airwaves are not liberated at all. ZimPapers is a government subsidiary and Supa Mandiwanzira is a known ZANU-PF sympathiser. In other words ZANU-PF has awarded itself two new licences for what we can call ZBC radios 4 and 5 respectively. These stations drink from the same well with ZBC and they interview the same people all the time. They maintain the same editorial policies... (Interviewed 07/07/2012)

ZACRAS believes that 'BAZ's awarding of licenses to ZimPapers and AB Communications is questionable and shrouded in suspicion. In a spirit of transparency and accountability, they believe there was need for rigorous scrutiny of the adjudication process and publicizing of the

qualifications and requirements which BAZ considered in awarding licenses to the two successful applicants.’³

Because of the monopoly the state has on media in Zimbabwe, the only trusted alternative voices are those coming from the diasporic settings which do not fall under legislations prescribed by the state apparatus. According to Atton (2002: 25) alternative media’s purpose is to enable wider social participation in the creation, production, and dissemination of content. Media participation by citizens creates a communicative process, which empowers non-professionals across societies to have a say in issues that affect their lives in a democratic environment, (Bailey *et al*, 2008: 11). The nature and extent of citizen participation and the participatory environment in the media is limited in Zimbabwe due to the criminalization of divergent voices by the state. The alternative media activity presents a threat to the status quo which believes that alternative voices are set to promote perceived imperialistic agendas which have the potential to derail the so called gains of independence which ultimately seem to have replaced one dictatorial regime, that of Ian Douglas Smith, with another, that of Robert Mugabe. White domination or black domination is retrogressive to democracy. In the hands of a dictatorial regime, state media do not serve the interests of the populace as they tend to become an effective tool used to legitimise the status quo in a conflictual environment.

Exposing the government’s unethical conduct can lead to death in Zimbabwe, (see chapter 5). It is for such reasons that some media practitioners have left the country to establish

³For more information please refer to the following link: www.swradioafrica.com/zacras-statement-on-awarding-of-broadcast-licenses/#sthash.TuvXk5Jr.dpuf

alternative media from diasporic contexts to try to develop a democratic dialogical space within the country. It is against this backdrop that this thesis seeks to create an understanding of the impact of diasporic media on the political landscape in Zimbabwe, something which might facilitate freedom of association, freedom of expression and easy access to information.

The research will outline the state of the political system before the establishment of the diasporic media under investigation. It will highlight the factors that led to the establishment of these media and how the political situation has evolved as a result of the activities of the diasporic media. The thesis aims to provide a better understanding of the role the voices of the nationals domiciled outside the county can play in processes of political change in Zimbabwe. George Orwell (1941) says the war is a determinant of political and social change in periods of ideological conflict. The extent to which citizen involvement in voluntarily and consciously creating change using minimum media resources at their disposal instead of military power challenges this argument by Orwell.

2.6. Projected democratic changes in Zimbabwe

The widely held view by most social actionists on the case of Zimbabwe's democratic ideation is that there is a need for political change that will bring an enabling environment with a political system in which citizens are capable of choosing a government through free and fair elections. Scholars like Brown and Gray hold that

Political change is a response to the subjective perception of history and politics, the fundamental beliefs and values, the foci of identification and loyalty and the political knowledge and expectations which are the product of a specific historical experience of nations and groups (977: 1).

It has been argued that Zimbabwe needs active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life to be able to make and influence decisions that affect their lives. Michaels (1962) quoted in Blaug and Schwarzmantel (2000:14) adds that elected representatives should represent the will of the people and desist from elitism. There is a feeling among marginalized sectors of the community that the will of the people has yet to be expressed in Zimbabwean elections. Vote rigging and the manipulation of election results has been an issue of concern in the Zimbabwean political landscape since independence in 1980. This is widely believed to have been also evident in the 2013 elections, which were described by Morgan Tsvangirai as a farce and coup by vote rigging.⁴ Local and international observers claim that the Zimbabwean elections are neither free nor fair.⁵ They are flawed by irregularities, violence, and intimidation, patterns that have persisted throughout the post-independence era. Civilians are usually threatened with severe punishment should they vote for the opposition MDC party which is labelled by the ruling party as agents of imperialists who want to reserve the gains of the so called liberation struggle and make Zimbabwe a colony again.⁶

If Zimbabwe is to become a true democracy this political climate which does not embrace plurality has to change. It is the concern of the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) that without a culture of respect for law and belief in democratic governance, the situation in Zimbabwe could well deteriorate, leading to a total failure for meaningful political change in

⁴See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23530095>

⁵ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDpaUWS59cg>

⁶ See <http://gowans.wordpress.com/category/zimbabwe/>; <http://m.voazimbabwe.com/a/1711785.html>

the country.⁷ It is therefore the aim of the diasporic media organisations to facilitate the achievement of these values in order to lead Zimbabwe towards a democratic political change and not change that will come through violence. Their impact on this issue is the subject of investigation in this thesis.

Since independence in 1980 there have been violent restrictions on the opposition party's ability to campaign, whereas Zimbabwe needs political plurality to afford citizens a choice of how they want to be governed. Zimbabwe is experiencing corruption in which access to facilities and services depends on political connections and illicit financial exchanges.⁸

Corruption in Zimbabwe has become endemic within its political, private and civil sectors. Zimbabwe ranks joint 163rd out of 176 countries in the 2012 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, ranking alongside Equatorial Guinea. On a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (very clean), the Corruption Perceptions Index marked Zimbabwe 2.0.

The de-politicisation of food distribution, access to resources and an independent land audit aimed at bringing the land situation to a just closure have to come to pass (see Chapter Five). There is currently a strong sentiment that the corruption associated with politicians and their supporters acquiring vast amounts of prime land and mining concessions must be rectified.⁹ This has been an issue especially at the Marange Diamond Fields where citizens are reported

⁷ See <http://www.usip.org/publications/usip-zimbabwe-s-beatrice-mtsetwa-describes-repression-legal-challenges>

⁸ See [http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/2012_TI_CPI/\\$FILE/2012%20TI%20CPI.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/2012_TI_CPI/$FILE/2012%20TI%20CPI.pdf)

⁹ See <http://www.voazimbabwe.com/content/zimbabwe-mugabe-admits-land-reform-was-chaotic/1740895.html>.

to have been murdered or forcefully removed to give way to the military and the politicians to access the lucrative stones, (see Chapter Five and Six). As the Minister of Finance in the Government of National Unity Tendai Biti has always complained, corruption drains the state coffers, plunging the once prosperous country into poverty as the proceeds of the diamond deals do not get to the treasury (see swradioafrica.com/2013/04/15).

Zimbabwe is a signatory to the Windhoek Declaration of 1991 and is expected to ensure that freedom of expression and access to information is made a constitutional and democratic right for all citizens in the country. All citizens, regardless of political affiliation, should be able to express themselves without fear. As the Windhoek Declaration observes (see appendix 8) the rich and diverse voices and stories of African people, especially marginalized and stigmatized groups, need to be equally reflected in the news media. In an essay entitled ‘Democratic Theory and Public Opinion’ Berelson says that a voter must be empowered to have among other things, interest in public affairs, information and knowledge, stable political principles good moral standards, the ability to observe accurately, the ability to engage in communication and discussion, rational behaviour and consideration of community interests (quoted in Habermas 2011: 212). Only then can s/he make informed choices capable of bringing about political change and all universal democratic principles outlined above.

2.7. Ongoing tensions between the state and diasporic media in Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean government sees the diasporic media as being counterproductive to the state’s hegemonic programme. There is evidence that the Zimbabwean government is being put in a compromised situation by diasporic media where it is forced to respond to their activities by putting measures to reduce their influence on the populace (see Chapter Five). These responses include the criminalisation of these media, the jamming of their signals, the

propagation of counter information, the soliciting of support from other nations to stop their operations and the participation of government officials in the diasporic media as will be shown later in Chapter five.¹⁰

2.8. Conclusion

It can therefore be seen that there have been gross human rights violations in Zimbabwe in the context of media, and that the violators enjoy the protection of the government. The government institutions serve the narrow interests of the ruling party at the expense of the broader interests of the people whose freedoms the government has an obligation to protect. Zimbabwe employs a set of institutions that are used as a means of coercion and violence to facilitate the monopolisation of rule making within the country in order to create subordination at the expense of democracy. Political activity outside the ruling party is criminalised or curtailed using state and ruling party apparatus, thereby making it difficult for Zimbabweans to elect a government of their choice. Freedom of expression and association exist on paper and not in practice. There is endemic corruption in the allocation of services and resources in a way that favours those who are connected to the ruling party. Whenever the citizens draw the attention of the government to these irregularities they get criminalised. They are left with no other choice but to establish dialogical spaces outside the controls of the government, the spaces they hope will help to effect political change in the country.

¹⁰ See http://www.journalism.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3463:short-wave-radio-africas-signal-jammed&catid=165:media-freedom&Itemid=100009

The next chapter reviews literature on what a democratic government ought to be. It then analyses the Zimbabwean situation to see how the democratic principles are applied in the country. It looks at how the media have historically been used as a tool of domination in Zimbabwe as far back as before independence and how this use of media persists long after independence. The chapter examines the repressive legislation that was inherited from Rhodesia and how these legislations have been augmented by new stringent legislation to enforce media control. The chapter goes on to analyse how the citizens, using what Hamilton (2000) refers to as technologies of freedom, manage to link up with diasporic media to open spaces of discussion and democratic participation.

CHAPTER THREE: THE LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE EXPLANATORY FRAMEWORK OF THE THESIS

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has contextualised the circumstances surrounding this research into the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe. These include the erosion of media democratic space, limited access to information and limited freedom of association as a result of the monopolisation of political power by the ruling party. The chapter has also raised concerns that the ruling party ZANU-PF is not ruling by consensus, but by coercive means, something which defies basic democratic principles. The chapter has shown that Zimbabwe needs a vibrant democratic environment in which every citizen has a right to be heard, a right to access information and a right to participate in political activities. Such a state of affairs, the chapter has argued, can be made possible by the establishment of a vibrant public sphere where citizens articulate issues pertaining to governance from an informed point of view without fear of any recrimination. The chapter has highlighted that the absence of such a liberated public sphere has led to the creation of diasporic media whose aim is to give citizens a voice that has the ability to create meaningful democratic changes that can inspire citizens to influence their destiny. This chapter therefore seeks to critically evaluate literature on the role of media activism and regulation in promoting and delivering democracy. The chapter illuminates how media have evolved from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe and how this evolution has shaped the political system in the country. It analyses how repressive legislation, some of which were inherited from Rhodesia are used to stifle freedom of speech, access to information and freedom of association, something that is impacting negatively on democracy. It shows how citizens, using affordable communication technologies, are actively involved in the activities of diasporic media which have created a public sphere in which citizens engage dialogically on

issues affecting their lives. By practicing citizen journalism the chapter argues that the citizens have a potential to create political change in Zimbabwe, change that can ensure the establishment of a democratic environment where the country is governed by the will of the people.

3.2. Perceptions of democracy and its ideation

The word democracy is in fact the Greek words *demos* (people) and *kratos* (power). Thus democracy means power in the hands of the people (Taylor *et al*, 1996:19). In the phrase of Abraham Lincoln, democracy is a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people," (Young, 1996). It is the ideal form of governance of a modern state (Linz and Stepan, 1996). In a democracy, the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system. This model of democracy puts the Zimbabwean model into question as there is concern that the principles mentioned above are not incorporated as they should be.

Barber quoted in Benhabib (1996: 15) says that democracy is a regime/culture/civil society/government in which we make common decisions, choose common conduct, and create or express common values in the practical domain of our lives in an ever changing context of conflicts of interests and competition for power. Such an environment fits Theodore Parker's famous definition of democracy as Government of all the people, by all the people for all the people (Townroe & Yates, 1990: 196). Democracy enshrines the notion that every citizen has a right to elect legislators who are to make decisions on their behalf. This ensures what Linz and Stepan (1996: 16) viewed as a modern democratic state which is based on the participation of the *demos* (the population). It is opposed to a situation where

decisions come from the top and the citizens do not have the ability to use their democratic vote to influence the way they are governed. According to Stepan democracy is opposed to a situation where the ruling party retains the sole right to enforce decisions without the mandate of the electorate. This is against a situation where oppositional voices are criminalized forcing them to go underground and re-emerge from the diaspora.

3.3. The applicability of democratic principles

According to Duncan (1985: 187), democracy must rest upon judgments about human needs, desires and capacities and how far they can be satisfied or fulfilled. Any theory of democracy contains assumptions about what people can and cannot achieve through their free will, an act which is compatible with a constructivist paradigm which states that the social world is a product of thoughts and ideas of the people as they establish social, political and economic relations with one another (Pompa, 1982: 26).

According to Radical Democratic Theory, people have the potential capacity to run their own affairs and in the right circumstances, the will to do so (Duncan, 1985: 198). They have the power to shape their destiny, to govern themselves or to determine how they want to be governed and to decide who should govern them. Democracy brings out potentials that are otherwise suppressed by autocratic political systems. According to the liberal or Lockean view, the democratic process accomplishes the task of programming government in the interest of society where the government is represented in an apparatus of public administration and society as a market structured network of interactions among private persons (Benhabib, 1996: 21). Politics is seen as facilitating the civilians to build together

and push private interests against a government apparatus specializing in the administrative employment of political power for collective goals. According to Taylor *et al* (1996: 197) totalitarian systems create no ground for citizens to exercise their right to decide on how they want to be governed. They use the media to propagate hegemony of the dominant group at the expense of the rest of the population. According to Duncan (1985: 187) power influences the dynamics of political engagement and the propagation of ideologies. It also generates opposition and tension as the population starts to resist manipulation by the state and seeks to create an environment in which it can deliberate on issues without fear. In the case of countries like Zimbabwe they resort to establishing oppositional media outside the boundaries of the state where the state laws cannot inhibit their activities of linking with the masses to deliberate on issues they need to consider to promote democracy. This political engagement makes societies aware of their interdependence and coexistence as equals. Media as democratic platforms can facilitate the conscious engagement of the citizens in dialogical discourses where they constructively make use of their voice to change their circumstances. Democracy according to Young (1996: 122) requires an equal voice for all citizens to press their claims regardless of social position or power. Participants put down their proposals and expose them to scrutiny and criticism. A conclusion is drawn from the force of the better arguments and not from dictatorial forces that impose dominant ideologies on the citizenry using force. According to the liberal view, the citizen's status is determined primarily according to the rights they have and as bearers of these rights, they enjoy the protection of the government (Benhabib, 1996: 21). Where citizens are not protected divergent voices emerge within the state or clandestinely outside the state where citizens can express themselves robustly, something which offers a formidable challenge to the government.

According to the Republican view the status of citizens is not determined by the model of negative liberties to which these citizens can lay claim as private persons. Rather, political rights, preeminently rights of political participation and communication are positive liberties. They guarantee not freedom from external compulsion, but the possibility of participation in common praxis through the exercise of which citizens can first make themselves into what they want to be politically, autonomous authors of a community of free and equal persons (Benhabib,1996: 21). This authority emerges from the citizens' power produced communicatively in the praxis of self legislation and it finds its legislation in the fact that it protects this praxis by institutionalizing public liberty. A democratically run state guarantees an inclusive opinion and will formation in which free and equal citizens reach an understanding on which goals and norms lie in the equal interest of all. According to the Republican views, rights owe their existence to an objective legal order that both enable and guarantees the integrity of an autonomous life in common, based on mutual respect.

Deliberative democracy involves people coming together to talk about collective problems, goals, ideas and actions. Democratic processes are oriented around discussing this common good rather than competing for the promotion of the private good of each (Young, 1996: 121). Citizens deliberate about what they want to achieve collectively and put together ideas that will help them achieve their goals. They engage in free dialogue where divergent views are accommodated and given equal consideration. Participants only stop when a better argument emerges that compels them intellectually to accept its conclusion. Public ends and policies are in this way deliberated in a rational way.

The Zimbabwean situation is problematic when it comes to dialogical engagement. Since independence, there hasn't been an enabling environment in which divergent voices are accommodated. Evidence on the ground shows a systematic suppression of divergent voices through violence and legal instruments that are sympathetic to the ruling party and hostile to oppositional voices. This can be seen as impacting negatively on the people's ability to engage in a process that empowers them to democratically elect a government of their choice and to participate freely in political, social and economic activities.

Powerful groups and individuals have privileged and routine entry into news itself and to the manner and means of its production (Glasgow Universality Media Group, 1980: 114) in Atton (2002: 11). This subdues the voices of other sectors of the community, something which leads to domination of one group of people by another, a situation which has a potential to make the suppressed sectors of the community engage in activities that challenge the status quo.

Democracy requires a political system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections. It advocates for the active participation of the people as citizens, in politics and civic life. It ensures the protection of the human rights of all citizens and a rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens. In Zimbabwe, there appears to be laws that allow only members of the ruling party to freely carry out their political activities while the opposition and civil societies are subjected to restrictive regulations that defy democratic principles. Michaels (1962) quoted in Blaug & Schwarzmantel (2000) asserts that it is important for elected representatives to represent the will of the people and not to be prone to elitism. If they do not, this is a sure predictor that

divergent views, whose expression is facilitated by technological innovations, will emerge internally or externally with the aim of consciously and constructively creating a liberating public sphere for the marginalized sectors of the society.

Democracy is indeed a set of ideas and principles about freedom, but it also consists of a set of practices and procedures that have been moulded through a long, often tortuous history. In short, democracy is the institutionalization of freedom. For this reason, it is possible to identify the time-tested fundamentals of constitutional government, human rights, and equality before the law that any society including Zimbabwe must possess to be properly called democratic. Democracy is more than a set of constitutional rules and procedures that determine how a government functions. In a democracy, the government is only one element coexisting in a social fabric of many and varied institutions, political parties, organizations, and associations. This diversity is called pluralism, and it assumes that the many organized groups and institutions in a democratic society do not depend upon government for their existence, legitimacy, or authority. Gill (2000: 2) argues that the creation of a stable democratic regime is linked to the type of culture to be found in a country. He emphasises that a regime is more secure if its structure and processes accord with popular values than if they are in conflict.

In an essay entitled ‘Democratic Theory and Public Opinion’, Berelson details the components of the voter’s ‘personality structure’: Interest in public affairs; possession of information and knowledge; of stable political principles or moral standards; ability to observe accurately; engagement in communication and discussion; rational behaviour; consideration of community interests (Habermas, 2011: 212). Excessive media control as is the case in Zimbabwe deprives the population access to information and knowledge. The

population is indoctrinated with propaganda which is created to prop up the status quo. The stream of political opinion flows in a vertical direction from the higher status groups downwards. The opinion leaders in public affairs are those in the ruling party who enjoy a better social position than the masses. They are usually wealthier, better educated and have a better social position than the group influenced by them. It has been observed that these politically interested, informed, and active core strata of the public are themselves the least inclined to seriously submit their views for discussion. Precisely among the carriers of this two tiered process of communication, mediated by the opinion leaders, an opinion once assumed often becomes fixed as a rigid habit (Habermas, 2011: 213). Such a scenario defies all principles of an ideal democratic setting in which opinions are subject to scrutiny and debate.

The Zimbabwean politicians who happen to have been able to amass considerable wealth wield power they use to influence opinion in the country. When they make a decision they attribute the decision to the government of the people and go as far as labelling those who oppose the decisions as traitors (see Chapter Two). They employ all coercive vices they command which include the military, the police, the judiciary, war veterans and the youth militia to silence oppositional views. Most of all they use the state communication infrastructure to undemocratically propagate ideologies that are designed to keep them in power and to undermine divergent voices.

Access to information enables the creation of a democratic process by an informed citizenry which is capable of making rational decisions that affect the governance of their country. A

vibrant communication infrastructure empowers the citizens to influence change in their country. Where citizens are not able to access information, they are often subjected to propaganda by those who control the means of communication, until some sectors of the community decide to empower themselves by creating alternative media outlets, even if it means establishing them outside their country where the state's laws will not affect them.

This section highlights the elements in the literature that should be present in an ideal democratic setting where the will of the people is respected and their participation in the governing process is guaranteed. This, it has been shown, is made possible only when there is a vibrant communication system which gives all citizens an equal voice. In the absence of a conducive communication environment, citizens will proactively establish alternative media outside the political boundaries of their state and create a communicative space for the marginalised citizens. This communication activity from the diasporic contexts tends to be oppositional and antagonistic to the status quo. It informs the citizenry in a way that empowers them to challenge bad governance. Evidence shows that a lot of improvement may be necessary for the media operating within Zimbabwe to be able to create a democratic environment capable of empowering people to influence governance. In the absence of these improvements, alternative oppositional media are bound to emerge from the diaspora.

3.4. Media evolution from pre to post independent Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe independence was expected to liberalise the media to give the populace a platform on which to freely articulate issues that affect their lives. However, looking at how media has evolved from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe raises some concerns. The state of media in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe still shares significant parallels. Like what happened in Rhodesia,

there seems to have been no attempt to liberalise the media in Zimbabwe, leaving important institutions like broadcasting still under government control where it is used to propagate the ideologies of the ruling party. As Moyo, D (2000: 1) argues, broadcasting has always been rendered as a political tool in the hands of the government of the day and has always been a hegemonic tool at the mercy of those in power. This section examines the state of media in Rhodesia and how it has evolved since Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 with the aim of understanding how the state of media has affected what Habermas (2011) refers to as the public sphere, i.e., a realm of our social life in which public opinion can be formed.

3.5. The state of media in Rhodesia

The use of radio for hegemonic purposes can be traced right back to the colonial days when, according to Franklin (1949: 12) in Moyo D. (2000), radio broadcasting for Africans in Rhodesia was established to help in the dissemination of government policies to the natives, most of whom were illiterate and could only be communicated to through a spoken word in their native languages. As Moyo explains, broadcasting in Rhodesia started in the 1930s as predominantly white and English. The first broadcasting in native languages was started in 1941 from the then Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). It was followed shortly by the formation of the Federation of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Malawi, and became a pivotal tool used to influence the masses in favour of the controversial federation which had a potential to start a protracted conflict in the sub Saharan part of the continent. The black nationalists were opposed to the federation and they wanted each state to be independent under black rule. They were willing to fight for the liberation from colonial rule if negotiations failed. The then Director of Information in Northern Rhodesia, Harry Franklin said that broadcasting to Africans was started as an experiment to see if it was worthwhile from the view point of war propaganda and getting to people quickly in the event of serious

war emergency (Franklin, 1949: 12). In 1947 the government then set up an African Broadcasting Service in Lusaka the capital city of Zambia in order to peddle state propaganda to the natives in their indigenous languages. Broadcasting is seen as having been designed to promote white domination by portraying whites as agents of civilisation who had come to the dark continent of Africa to introduce civilisation. Existing literature shows that broadcasting for natives was not introduced for their benefit, but to promote white supremacy and undermine the quest for African liberation. The extension of the media to the native population was especially designed to interpret the government policy to the black population as well as make them employable in the new economies as skilled labour (van der Veur, 2002: 82-86). Broadcasting developed this way as a tool of British imperialism, not as an institution for democratic participation. The colonial powers did not consider the natives as citizens, but as subjects to be manipulated and not engaged with intellectually (Moyo, D. 2000). Mandani (1996) asserts that African natives under the colonial state were never considered citizens as they did not have civil political or social rights.

Considering that the majority of Africans were illiterate, Franklin saw broadcasting as the only way capable of getting to them in their masses. He emphasised the importance of getting to the masses and avoiding a situation that prevailed in other states where he said there was a small group of intelligentsia and a complete group of underprivileged and excluded mass who had no access to education opportunities and who could be easily misled by a few agitators of the intelligentsia class. He expressed how the black mind which was getting thirstier for knowledge was at risk of picking up the wrong knowledge that could be dangerous, especially knowledge propagated by the communists. As Moyo, D. (2000) observes, broadcasting had to intervene and bombard the blacks with ideologies and entertainment to keep their minds off what Franklin described as potential mischief.

According to Moyo, the Southern Rhodesian government also followed suit and formed the Rhodesia Broadcasting Service which was controlled by the Post-Master General. It was split into the European Broadcasting Service which was based in Salisbury and the African Service which was based in Lusaka in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). The African Service catered for Malawi, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). These Broadcasting Services were funded by the British Government through the Colonial Development Welfare Fund. The Colonial Development and Welfare Funds were made available for the setting up of broadcasting institutions in various colonies to combat the growth of communist influences through direct counter propaganda (Armour, 1984: 362). Britain was interested in funding broadcasting because broadcasting was to facilitate the flow of information between Rhodesia and its colonial power, Britain. It kept Britain informed of the developments in the colony and the colony informed of the interests of the colonial power. It was a tool to control the economic and political developments in Rhodesia especially the minds of the natives which were, according to Franklin, too dangerous to be left idle as idle minds could be easily corrupted by the communist powers who were at the time broadcasting communist ideologies from Moscow into Africa.

Because of the low literacy rate among natives, print media would not be effective in reaching and influencing them. Radio which could address the natives in their languages was considered more effective and very crucial in the governance of the colony. The break out of the Cold War also made it imperative for the world powers to battle for the control of minds of Africans who were considered to be pivotal in the way the war was going to be won. According to Hyden *et al* (2007: 1) communication shapes democratisation and has the power to influence political change hence the desire by the Rhodesian government to control what information got disseminated to the natives. When examining how media has

evolved from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe and how they have impacted on public sphere, Moyo, D. (2007), Chari (2006), Keane (1991), Lichtenberg (1995) and Nerone (2002) note how the governments in most parts of the world put more attention to broadcasting, a medium which has the power to reach more people and to create and disseminate divergent discourse. This makes broadcasting a medium to keep under government control.

Following Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1964 the Rhodesian Government took profound steps to prevent the natives from receiving nationalists broadcast from outside the country by criminalising accessing external broadcasts. Laws were put in place to make sure natives did not access any other publication that would influence them otherwise. The 1965 Emergency Regulations Act prohibited turning on a radio in a public place "if it picked up broadcasts that could endanger public safety or interfere with public order" (Moyo, D. 2008: 15). According to Zaffiro (1984) anyone found guilty of making it possible for others to hear an objectionable broadcast or speech, statement, poem or song could be jailed for up to two years and fined the equivalent of \$1,400. As a result villagers used to gather privately in the homes of those who owned SW receivers and listened to the nationalist radio stations in the diaspora which featured revolutionary messages and songs as well as addresses by revolutionary leaders. They listened to Radio Egypt which was started in 1958, Radio Tanzania which started broadcasting as early as 1963, Radio Ghana which was launched in 1964, Radio Zambia launched in 1967 and the Voice of Zimbabwe in Maputo Mozambique (Windrich, 1981). These radio stations gave the natives an alternative political voice to that of the colonial powers, thereby affording the masses an opportunity to engage intellectually in issues affecting their lives. Not everybody had access to radio broadcasts. As a tradition, word of mouth commonly referred to as *radio troitor* would then help to disseminate messages to those who did not listen to the broadcasts in order to create a

democratic environment the government denied them. The radio according to McLuhan (2005) can be seen as an extension of oramedia (the traditional word of mouth used by the African community). Once received the radio messages were further shared on through oramedia with the rest of the community. As McLuhan argues, media are an extension of man. The radio complemented and enhanced the traditional way of communication among natives who were, as Franklin acknowledged, thirsty for information.

To further distract blacks from listening to revolutionary messages from diasporic radio, the government introduced affordable short range FM saucepan radio receivers to blacks. Thousands of FM receivers called Chief were distributed to traditional chiefs who, as opinion leaders and influential leaders, would distribute them to their subjects to make sure everyone listened to Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation's propaganda messages (Moyo, D. 2008). Propaganda means to sow or propagate ideas. As Burnett (1989) (quoted in Jowett and O'Donnell, (1992: 1) argues, propaganda is how dominant ideologies are constructed by the mass media.

Radio batteries were made easily accessible to rural areas in order to ensure that locals passively received only the state propaganda. Communication was mono modal in which the natives were being communicated to and not afforded the opportunity to contribute to political and social debates contrary to what democracy as a political system requires, an informed citizenry capable of participating effectively in public debate and in the overall political process where they have to make informed decisions (Moyo, D. 2008: 12). The African language broadcasters did not have any input to the news content, According to a former broadcaster Japhet Masuku (Interviewed 20/01/2010), they translated English news

scripts into Shona and Ndebele word for word. People could only get to know alternative perspectives on a story if they listened to nationalist radio stations domiciled outside the country.

The Rhodesian government used restrictive statutes that affected the free flow of information that would end up in the domain of the natives. In 1960 the government promulgated restrictive statutes such as the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA). This law, according to Windrich (1981) provided for the prosecution of the media journalists and individuals for making statements which might cause despondency. POSA allowed for the detention of offenders without trial, deportation of individuals deemed to be a security risk and banning of publications that challenged the Rhodesian government. According to Windrich (1981) this law is reported to have led to the execution of many nationalists and the banning of a number of publications. These publications include *The African Daily News*, *Moto Magazine*, *Umbowo*, *Zimbabwe News*, and the *Zimbabwe Review*.

LOMA was followed by the Emergency Powers Act 1964 which gave the state powers to clamp down on the media and individuals who held divergent views to those of the state. It empowered the regime to create emergency laws as they saw fit. The Emergency Powers Act led to the creation of the Emergency Powers (Censorship of Publications) Order of 1965 which played a crucial role in censoring publications. The 1970 Official Secrets Act provided the regime with powers to suppress information about its policies and combat resistance from black nationalists and white liberals (Ndlela, 2003: 185). It prohibited the disclosure for any purpose, information prejudicial to the safety of interests of Rhodesia and any information which could be useful to the enemy. In Rhodesia media had to serve the interests of the state.

According to Ziegler and Asante (1992), once Governments began to control the media and compel them to serve primarily as instruments of official propaganda the media eventually loses its rightful role. Media control is seen as an onslaught on democracy, a situation that can lead to an activity that encourages oppositional message creation and propagation by the disenfranchised masses.

3.6. Media evolution from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe

Ian Douglas Smith declared Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain in 1964. This did not stop the protracted war when blacks fought for an independence that was going to give them equal rights as nationals of the country. Smith's government came to an end in 1980 when the country became independent under black majority and rule changed from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe.

As Chari (2006) notes, in 1980 there was a fairly diversified media landscape characterised by vibrant state owned media and a blossoming private press in the country. He observes that at the onset of independence the ruling ZANU-PF focused on media control by first acquiring the Rhodesia Printing and Publishers from the South African based Argus Newspaper Group using a grant provided by the Nigerian government, thus making the government the major shareholder in the newly formed Zimbabwe Newspapers Group (Ltd) (1980) - publishers of dailies *The Herald* and *The Chronicle*. ZimPapers and the state owned news agency, Inter-Africa News Agency (ZIANA), the Zimbabwe Information Service (ZIS), and the Community Newspaper Group (CNG) fell under a newly created trust, the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT) while the state broadcaster, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), which has remained the only broadcaster up to the time of this research, fell directly under the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications.

The state, acting largely in the interests of the ruling party ZANU-PF, maintained and established a communication policy and legislative infrastructure whose main purpose was to complement the construction of the ruling party's hegemony through media (Chuma, 2010: 91; Chuma, in Raftopoulos and Savage, 2005: 122). In addition to having sole control over the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) that has five radio stations and one television channel, this left the government claiming control of the media space, owning the vast newspaper empire under ZimPapers namely *The Herald* and *The Chronicle* which are both dailies, *The Manica Post*, *The Sunday News*, *Kwayedza*, and *Umthunywa*. *The Sunday News* is a regional weekly published in Zimbabwe's second largest city Bulawayo, while *The Manica Post*, also weekly, is published in the eastern border town of Mutare, in Manicaland province. *Kwayedza* and *Umthunywa* are vernacular – Shona and Ndebele words for 'dawn' (Shona and Ndebele are the main and second major vernacular languages spoken in Zimbabwe respectively). In addition, government owns the financially struggling New Ziana, a multimedia news organisation and the Community Publishing Group that runs newspapers in the country's ten provinces. New Ziana was supposed to operate a television station and a number of radio stations but at the time of this research (2010-2013) had not been able to do so because of financial constraints. On the other hand the Community Newspaper Group's provincial newspapers are almost extinct. Most of them have not been able to publish regularly and their circulation figures have dropped drastically to become insignificant.

In terms of reporting, the media in Zimbabwe are polarised along political lines. According to Moyo, D. (2004: 5) both the privately owned and state owned media hold entrenched positions on almost every issue, be it sport, entertainment, business or politics. The state

media support the ruling ZANU-PF government while the private press seems to have signed a pact with the opposition to ‘hear no evil’, ‘speak no evil’ and ‘see no evil’ regarding its affairs (Moyo, D. 2004: 5). After the closure of *The Daily Mirror* and *The Sunday Mirror* and the *Tribune* there is no third reference point during this research in terms of news since the above two media camps hold extreme views. As a result Moyo thinks news reporting has become predictable and readers are forced to read all the newspapers available in order to make up their minds on what position to take. If they do not do that, they may not be able to make informed decisions as the truth is hard to get from one source. Newspaper columnist Pathisa Nyathi’s observation succinctly illustrates the extent of the situation (MMPZ, 2002: 87). He sees the press as either pro-government or anti-government and is concerned about how objectivity is sometimes ‘sacrificed on the altar of expediency in order to be true to their chosen position such that if someone buys newspapers from one divide, they will get half the story.’ Online newspapers and websites that focus on Zimbabwe that should have provided a true picture are also embroiled in polarisation, if not worse according to Nyathi. They are domiciled abroad and because of this he advances an argument that they are practically detached from reality on the ground, a situation that makes it difficult for them to be balanced and objective.

The government owned and controlled media help the government to consolidate its grip on power. At independence the new government, like its predecessor attached a lot of attention to broadcasting to the masses in their languages within their cultural contexts. According to Windrich (1981: 5) quoted in Chuma (2012: 92), the then Minister of Information Nathan Shamuyarira maintained that the rationale for this policy on Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) was to transform the state broadcaster into an agency reflecting the realities of democratic rule. According to Ndlela (2007: 69) Zimbabwe Broadcasting

Corporation (ZBC) remained the preserve of the ruling party and narrowly defined elite interests at the expense of democracy.

The ruling party turned Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation into its mouthpiece and propaganda machinery to propagate its ideologies to the populace in a mono modal approach. According to both Moyo, D. (2007) and Mathuthu (interviewed 13/08/11), The Herald, The Chronicle and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation went to unprecedented lengths to uncritically support the government's actions and policies, thereby helping the government consolidate its grip on power at the expense of democracy.

The second decade of independence (1990-1999) is described by Chuma (2007) as the 'golden age' of the press in the country as it saw phenomenal growth in the privately owned press. In Moyo, D.'s view (2008), privatisation of media helped to create change and introduce interactivity and grassroots participation. It was important in creating an informed citizenry that could engage intellectually in the democratic process of the country and drive the country towards prosperity and stability. Independent publications that came up included the investigative monthly Horizon (1991), The Daily Gazette (1992) and The Sunday Gazette (1993). According to Waldahl (2004) these two Gazettes did not last long due to financial reasons and folded in 1994. There was also The Zimbabwe Independent (1996), The Standard (1997), The Zimbabwe Mirror (1997) (later became The Sunday Mirror) and The Daily News (1999) which was owned by The Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ). These newspapers changed the face of the Zimbabwean media landscape.

Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ) launched newspapers in almost every province in the country thus challenging government dominance in the information business. As Waldahl (2004) notes, most of them did not last over a year due to viability problems as they struggled to attract adequate advertising revenue to sustain themselves. The Daily News had a greater impact on Zimbabwean society because it was published five days a week. It started publishing six days a week from December 2000 because of its strong financial base compared to previous newspapers (Waldahl, 2004). As of 2001 The Daily News's readership grew phenomenally and its circulation surpassed that of the state run The Herald. The Daily News reached a readership of 100 000 compared to The Herald's 90 000 (Makore cited in Waldahl, 2004: 37). Prior to the Formation of The Daily News, state dailies, namely The Herald and The Chronicle had been the only daily newspapers in the country.

The formation of the Daily News in 1999 coincided with the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a new political party backed by a coalition of civil society organisations (see Chapter Five). Up to that time there was no formidable opposition party to challenge the ruling party in Zimbabwe. According to Moyo, D (2008) the independent newspaper The Daily News became a strategic conduit for venting popular discontent about the deteriorating economy. Its approach meant that a conflict with the state was inevitable.

As Jafari (2005) points out, the government reacted to the establishment of independent newspapers and the new political party by restricting the rights of journalists to express themselves freely, the rights of opposition political parties to hold rallies and meetings, and the rights of citizens to assemble freely (see SWRA, 07/03/13). Independent media were viewed as being anti-government because of their coverage of the activities of the opposition. The government of Robert Mugabe ensured that legislation that limited the activities of

independent media was applied. In addition to the legislation inherited from Rhodesia the government introduced new legislation like the Broadcasting Services Act (2001), Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) (2002) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) (2002). It is important to note that POSA is not a media law *per-se* but a security law whose precursor was the Law and Maintenance Order Act (1965). The law was drafted in the late 1990s ostensibly to deal with security issues associated with rising dissent within the country such as demonstrations and strikes.

The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) sees AIPPA as an instrument designed to shrink the media landscape leaving the media unable to fulfil its public watchdog role, something which deprives citizens of freedom of expression and access to information. This restriction is seen as a catalyst to the formation of oppositional media from the diaspora. AIPPA has been designed by the government and the ruling ZANU-PF to restrict independent media reporting in Zimbabwe. Several other laws have also been formulated namely the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform Act), General Laws Amendment Act, Constitutional (No 17) Amendment Act and the Interception of Communications Act in 2007.

Most acts were instituted prior to the contentious presidential race in March 2002 which makes them seem as having been designed to give the ruling party advantage and absolute power over the opposition. As Chuma (2007) observes, the impact of the triangular (press-state-capital) relationship has a profound impact on the way media operate. This relationship according to Chuma has a bearing on the way media frame the contest for power particularly in the transforming post-colony. He notes how the public sphere role of the post colonial press in Zimbabwe is enhanced or constrained by its relationship to the dominant political

and economic hierarchies in the country. As Chuma notes, the government's strong economic base gives it control over media institutions and influence the way they cover stories. He further argues that the media both in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe have been used to establish and maintain the status quo using laws that impact on the communication democratic space, making the media the most powerful weapon used by both governments of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe to control the information that gets to the people. It can be argued therefore that media control has had an influence in the creation of an alternative public sphere by media domiciled outside the boundaries of the state where they are not subject to laws that control Zimbabwe. These media are creating oppositional discourse to that churned by the state controlled media.

To complement Chuma's argument, Chari (2005) Jafari (2005), Makore cited in Waldahl (2004: 37) and Nyakunu (2005) have shown how turning vibrant media into a tool of control in the hands of the government in post-independent Zimbabwe impacted on the media democratic space in a country which once had at one stage and albeit briefly, a relatively pluralist media environment. This became especially apparent since the year 2000 when the ruling party started losing to the newly formed Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party led by the trade unionist Morgan Tsvangirai. As a result, people lost the power to engage freely in deliberating over issues pertaining to governance.

Interview evidence gathered in this research (see Chapters Five and Six) points to this as a factor that finally forced some media practitioners to leave Zimbabwe and operate from outside, breaking stories that could not be broken from inside. Despite having minimum control over resources there is evidence that citizens can still establish means of communication which are capable of offering alternative information to that supplied by the

government which controls broadcasting, newspapers, the judiciary, the police, the economy, the schools and all institutions of power. This ability of the citizens to propagate alternative information in a restricted sphere has a potential to create democratic change in the country and sits at the core of this research.

3.7. The development of pre- and post-independence Zimbabwean diasporic media

The diasporic community is a socio-political formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration, whose members regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries (Sheffer, 2003: 9). Zimbabwean communities have experienced displacement as a result of the political environment before independence and a repeat of the past after independence. Those that have been displaced and dislocated, maintain a cultural, social and political link with their communities by creating ideological spaces that give the communities hope of solving the problems of their land. One activity is the establishment of diasporic media which enable a dialogical engagement between the people in the diaspora and those at home.

As Roza Tshagarousianou (2002) suggests, such spaces of negotiation and exchange are increasingly becoming sites where conflicting claims of belonging as well as common frameworks of identity and solidarity coexist and become articulated. Such an activity facilitates the creation of what Arjun Appadurai (1993) describes as among other things, mediascapes (the way that visual imagery impacts the world) and ideascapes (political messages about ideas). These activities challenge the mediascape and ideaspape of the status quo in order to give the populace a space for ideation. According to Safran (1991: 83-84) they embark on this activity hoping that one day they or their descendants will return to the

homeland should the conditions prove favourable. Meantime they continue maintaining support for their homeland through among other things, diasporic media activity.

As Soley and Nichols (1987) observe, message restriction generates an environment in which underground communication strategies are nurtured. A society's lack of openness is according to Soley the surest predictor that clandestine media will appear, whether the non-democratic government is a military junta, communist or capitalist. Alternative publications according to Atton (2002: 12) deal with the opinions of small minorities, expresses ideas hostile to widely held beliefs and espouses views or deals with subjects not given regular coverage by publications generally available at news agents. It can also be argued that these alternative media can be a response to the disenfranchisement of the powerless by the powerful sectors of the community, be they the majority or the minority. People respond by creating their own communicative spaces that free them from ideological domination of one group of people by another.

The emergence of diasporic media spaces in both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe was a direct response to a move to create communication and facilitate a dialogical space in a restrictive information environment that was created by both regimes. This communication is designed to help its participants to make sense of their situation, and to come up with ways to solve the challenges imposed by the restrictive environment. As Wachanga (2007) argues, when the communication environment becomes restrictive, information and message propagating mechanics are accordingly adjusted with the aim of achieving effective communication. The response to restrictive communication space helps the community embark on an ideological war which has a potential to win the hearts and minds of the people more effectively than any military warfare.

3.8. Background of clandestine (diasporic) radio broadcasts in Zimbabwe

Broadcasting from the diaspora is not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe. As Mosia *et al* (1994) and Windrich (1981) outline, the disenfranchised black community used to clandestinely listen to radio stations operated by freedom fighters who politicised the natives to resist domination by the colonial regime during the war of liberation. These radio stations, namely The Voice of The Revolution (VOR) and Voice of Zimbabwe (VOZ) gave the natives an alternative political voice to that of the colonial powers, thereby affording the masses an opportunity to engage intellectually in the fight against white domination. As a direct response to media control there is evidence that even as early as the late 1958, blacks in Rhodesia established diasporic media to produce and share political information they could not share using state controlled media. These diasporic media institutions were established by people who are now in government. During their fight for independence they operated outside the sanctioning government. These media which were domiciled outside the then Rhodesia formed an integral part of the information warfare arsenal used by Robert Mugabe's ZANU party and Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU to win the hearts and the minds of the people in the war that led to the democratic elections of 1980 which brought Robert Mugabe to power and a change from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe (see Chapter 5). Information was at the centre of the fight for majority rule. The liberation fighters depended more on message propagation to win the war as they had fewer sophisticated weapons than the Smith regime. They depended on clandestine media to propagate information that countered state propaganda to boost the masses' support for the war. These media were operating in restricted environments using poorly resourced facilities, yet they managed to reach the masses and solicit their support for the war of liberation.

After attaining independence, ironically the liberators immediately created the same restrictive environment they were fighting against. Ian Smith's laws were not amended, but expressly adopted by Mugabe's government to suppress dissenting voices. Rønning and Kupe (2000) express concern about the fact that Zimbabwe's communicative space has been severely restricted since the beginning of the political and economic crises in 2000. They argue that the government of Zimbabwe made efforts to control access to information in order to control the minds of the electorate and to influence public opinion abroad. They allude to how the government has maintained a tight control on the airwaves while the print media sector is largely dominated by ZimPapers a dominant state-controlled entity comprising at the time of writing between 2010-2013, two national dailies The Herald and The Chronicle, two national weeklies, The Sunday Mail and The Sunday News and some provincial newspapers like The Manica Post. The restrictive legal environment has ensured that no new private media are allowed entry into both sectors, especially after harsh lessons from the banned Daily News and the short lived private broadcasting experiments with Munhumutapa African Broadcasting Corporation (MABC), Joy TV and LDM1 (Moyo, D. 2008). After ascending to power and gaining dominance, Mugabe immediately became unsympathetic to freedom of expression. He became viewed by many media practitioners as a tyrant who has become insensitive to the voices of the people he is supposed to have liberated. This has led to the establishment of Zimbabwean media outside the country where Mugabe's powers are limited. The suppression of oppositional voices in the country has led to the emergence of media outlets that are unlicensed, and that are critical of Mugabe's government (see Moyo, D. 2005). As was indicated in Chapter Two, they provide an alternative and often critical voice to the Mugabe regime which continues to criminalise opposing views labelling them as voices of the former colonial master who wants to turn Zimbabwe into a colony again.

For Wasburn (1992), the chief purpose of clandestine radio stations is to oppose a government, which is portrayed, either explicitly or implicitly, as oppressive, or to alter radically the status quo using information warfare. This information empowers the voter to make informed decisions without any coercive force applied to them. As Habermas (2011: 212) puts it, the voter who is provided with a certain degree of knowledge and critical capacity might take an interested part in public discussions so that he might help discover what can serve as the standard for the right and just political action in a rational form. The general knowledge and critical capacity are facilitated by a vibrant media that operate in a free environment. In the absence of such public spaces on which the population can express their views without fear people tend to create oppositional media from diasporic environments where they can freely counter the dominant ideologies that are imposed on the masses by the status quo.

This serves to confirm that people have a natural desire to be free from any oppressive mechanisms applied by those in power (see Chapter One) hence their desire to exchange information that can have an impact on the way their issues are handled by those in power. With a vibrant communication network, it becomes possible for people to achieve their goals of influencing governance and participating in political activities without duress. In the absence of information outlets that empower citizens, people will create alternative public spheres from diasporic contexts where they can freely articulate their views. The availability of advanced communication technology makes it possible for people to have an active participation in political affairs with minimum resources at their disposal.

3.9. The role of the internet and citizen journalism in the democratisation process

The implementation of democracy has been problematic in both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe with the governments maintaining control over the communication space in order to be able to use it for hegemonic purposes. Having shown how there has always been some form of resistance to state domination with the help of alternative communication platforms, Kuhlmann (2010) and Moyo, L (2012) observe that in the internet era, there has been a surge in the use of electronic communication technologies used by citizens, which have an ability to create and exchange information, thereby delivering an environment where the government is put in a position where it is not the sole producer of discourse. Due to lack of an active participation of independent print media in Zimbabwe during this research, online publications according to Kuhlmann (2010) serve as a critical source of information. The emergence of online digital technologies is enabling them to expand such communication activities on a global scale thereby enabling individuals in diasporic environments to sustain intercontinental networks. The aggregate impact of cross-border contact among individuals using means such as email, telegraph, telephone, facsimile, and digital technologies, has been substantial among members of diasporic communities spread over several continents (Karim,1998). On-line media allow easier access and are non-linear, largely non-hierarchical, and relatively cheap (Karim, Smeltzer & Loucheur, 1998).

Talking about digital online media technologies that have given power to citizens to share information, Chester (2007) sees the world as being on the eve of the emergence of the most powerful media and communication system ever developed. He sees a flood of compelling video images propelled by the interactivity of the internet as being developed through digital TVs, PCs, cell phones, digital video recorders, iPods, and countless mobile devices. These technologies have now surrounded us and as Chester puts it, immerse us, wherever we are, be

it at home, work or play. We will have access, if we can afford it, to an ever expanding array of news, entertainment and communication from around the world.

Without the internet and mobile phone technologies the citizens would not have been able to effectively engage in media activities to counter state hegemony through diasporic media. Such media are according to Atton (2004: 26) radical in the sense that they are opposed to hierarchical, elite centred notions of journalism. He sees online journalism projects as an attempt to place the power into the hands of those who are more intimately involved in those stories. As Blaug & Schwarzmantel (2000) observe, users of the internet technology communicate on a many –to –many reciprocal basis. Their communication transcends nation-state boundaries. People enjoy free speech in an environment where they can express their opinion with limited state censorship. They may join virtual communities of common interests. They may produce and share information which is not subject to official review or sanction. They are able to use the internet to challenge official and professional perspectives. The emancipatory potential of the internet helps users to adopt both local and global identities with a chance for an equal engagement in domestic and world affairs using online communication.

According to Karim *et al*, (1998) diasporic groups are making extensive use of on-line services. These world-wide networks are allowing for relatively easy connections for members of communities residing in various continents. As opposed to the broadcast model of communication which, apart from offering little access to minority groups, is linear, hierarchical, and capital intensive, according to Karim *et al* (1998) on-line media allow

easier access and are non-linear, largely non-hierarchical, and relatively cheap. They enable the activities of alternative media projects which are a resistance to the hierarchical structures of mainstream news organisations. Hamilton (2000) considers these to be non-professional, non-profit making and non-institutionalized, something which make it possible for citizens to use online services to contribute to content that matters to them instead of relying on professional journalists who report to the editors who are themselves accountable to their media corporations' editorial policies. News according to Chalaby (2000: 34) in Atton (2004: 26) is no longer the preserve of journalistic organisations arguing that internet technology allows news sources to communicate directly with the audiences. Technology has become an enabler for innovative human processes which are consciously created to facilitate an exchange of ideas among citizens.

According to Harcup (2003: 236) the non-professional nature of alternative media is its defining principle and should be regarded as a strength rather than a weakness. He argues idealistically, perhaps that collectively, people who may be both consumers and producers of news can subvert dominant discourses in the mainstream media. Whilst this view may be somewhat optimistic, according to Lievrouw (2011), there is merit in his claim that the real value of alternative journalism is in its ability to contest ideological spaces in the media where ideas circulate and opinions are formed. This can be viewed as another strategy for challenging the hegemony by demonstrating that there are alternative ways of seeing the world and other stories to be told, (p372).

Enzensberger (1976) believes in a politically emancipatory use of media characterised by interactivity between audiences and creators, collective production and a connection with everyday life and the ordinary needs of people (Atton, 2002: 8). This is achievable through

the use of what Hamilton (2000) refers to as technologies of freedom. Most of these technologies are internet based and widely available in the communities.

Digital technologies increasingly link producers and audiences across national boundaries, and as these audiences start new conversations between those who move and those who stay, we find a growing number of diasporic public spheres (Appadurai, 1996: 22). As some Zimbabweans got displaced and others remained, there has been a range of media activity which facilitates the instantaneous exchange of messages between Zimbabweans around the globe. This has created new publishing spaces that potentially allow anyone to become a producer of news that gives them power to represent themselves in a way that offers challenges to the Zimbabwean government.

Chester (2007) predicted that when the internet facilitated communication technologies became fully operational much media programming will be personalised, selected by us with the help of increasingly sophisticated, but largely invisible, technologies that will sense or know our interests, dislikes and habits. Evidence shows that information about our travel in cyberspace and real space is being collected and stored, most often without our awareness, (see www.bannersbroker.com). Such data are the basis of computerised profiles that generate using Flash, commercial pitches honed to precisely fit our psychology and behaviour. Whilst this could be considered as overstated, it is interesting to note that during this research geo targeting and contextual targeting in information dissemination is being facilitated by the profiling that takes place whenever one is logged on cyberspace technology source (see bannersbroker.com). Two people in a room can log on the same site on their laptops at the same time, but see different adverts flashing. Their interests have been profiled and they are

therefore targeted by different advertisers. This ensures that information goes to the right recipient who will most likely find it useful to them.

Digital democracy in theory can give power to the people by arming them with liberating ICT technology. In this highly idealised view, the internet becomes an electronic forum comprising a vast network of liberated and equal citizens of the world capable of debating all facets of their existence without fear of control from the national sovereign authorities (Barlow, 1996 quoted in Blaug and Schwarzmantel (2000: 554). According to Downing in Atton (2004: 27) the deployment of new communication technologies offers new social movements pre-figurative methods of organising in particular through radicalisation of production to a degree not seen in previous manifestations of social movement ideas. These are the media which are described by Atton (2004: 28) as ‘the voice of the voiceless’.

Digital technology is a facilitator of democracy which can only thrive if information is made available to citizens (Chari, 2009). As noted by Belsey & Chadwick (1992: 3) the dissemination of information requires the media to act as a catalyst for social action. The sort of alternative democratic participation and involvement that is required in social action is impossible without information and access to information is limited without innovative media technology. The internet has fundamentally transformed the practice of journalism in Africa including restrictive countries like Zimbabwe, thereby bringing enormous opportunities for the media practitioners (Chari, (2009). The internet technology has facilitated the creation of diasporic websites which have the ability to establish an interactive environment between the citizens within and those abroad. These websites create an activity that helps the populace

interact with and respond to mainstream media by creating a dialogical environment in which a more dynamic and participatory approach to information gathering and dissemination is made possible. This diasporic media activity acts in a way that shapes the coverage of issues the political environment in Zimbabwe does not allow media to address from inside the country. Operating off shore using the internet enabled technologies is offering a viable alternative that facilitates the just in time (JIT) engagement with the populace who are enabled to deliberate instantaneously on issues that affect them. These alternative media employ methods of production and distribution, allied to an activist philosophy of creating information for action, timeously and rapidly. As such, they can deal with social issues as they emerge (Atton, 2002: 12). They are able to publish stories before the authorities muzzle them or manipulate them to achieve their political ambitions. The use of this technology seems to be empowering the citizens and deepening the democratic culture of a nation by making information dissemination not the sole preserve of the status quo.

Mano & Willems (2008) add that apart from the role of the internet in linking up members of diasporic communities, it should also be considered as a space in which different diasporic identities are articulated, imagined and contested. Mandaville (2001: 169, quoted in Mano & Willems 2008) argues that diasporic media can and should be understood as much more than simply a means by which information of interest to a given community can be exchanged, or a means for communicating images of that community to the wider society. He says that there is a need to understand these media as spaces of communication in which the identity, meaning and boundaries of diasporic community are continually constructed, debated and re-imagined.

Developments in information and communication technologies have a potential to facilitate quantum leaps in the field of democratic politics (Becker, 1998: 343). Blaug & Schwarzmantel (2000) refer to this as digital democracy, tele-democracy, electronic democracy and cyber-democracy. The term digital democracy according to Blaug and Schwarzmantel is the most preferred one since it implies the bringing together of existing electronic technologies through developments in digital data transfer that unleashes the potential of ICTs in promoting participatory democracy. As Castells (1997: 29) notes, we are living through a period characterised by the transformation of our material culture by the works of a new technological paradigm organised around information technologies.

Technological determinism holds that technical change is the prime cause of social change (Heap *et al*, 1995: 14; Blaug and Schwarzmantel, 2000). Human and social factors mediate and can control the timing of developments that are essentially inevitable. Technological developments have an impact on the organisational structure of the communication industry, the allocation of resources and the responses of the market. The relationship between technology and society is an interaction, a recursive process, of causes and effects. Heap *et al*, (1994) argue that technological change impacts on geographical, environmental and resource factors. It impacts on scientific advances and existing technologies and influences market processes, industrial relations state institutions and democracy. The current rapid social, economic and political change which may signal an emergent information age provides opportunities hitherto unavailable to rethink and if necessary, radically overhaul or replace those institutions, actors and practices (Blaug and Schwarzmantel, 2000: 552).

Democracy can only thrive if information is made available to citizens (Chari, 2009). As noted by Belsey & Chadwick (1992: 3) the dissemination of information requires the media to act as a catalyst for social action. The sort of alternative democratic participation and involvement that is required in social action is impossible without information. The role of journalism which is facilitated by digital technologies becomes crucial in order to empower the citizens and deepen the democratic culture of a nation.

The internet has fundamentally transformed the practice of journalism in Africa including Zimbabwe. According to Chari (2009) the internet has brought enormous opportunities for the media. It has changed not only the way news is gathered, but also the way it is disseminated. It has reduced reliance on traditional means of distributing information. It is now easy to gather news from one corner of the world and send the story at a click of a button instantaneously to any newsroom or to anyone in the globe. Where it used to take months to disseminate news, this can now be achieved in minutes, if not seconds. Media organisations from Zimbabwe have been developed including those that collect information from Zimbabwe, process it abroad and disseminate it globally and back into Zimbabwe. Their online presence makes it possible to break stories as they happen. This gives newspapers a wider coverage, thus bringing value to their content. As Wasserman (2005: 165) observes, ICTs only serves to enlarge and accelerate processes already in place in societies and organisations rather than create entirely new forces that radically break from old ways. Notwithstanding the attraction new technologies hold for African journalists, traditional modes of communication remain in force (Atton & Mabweazara, 2011: 669). Scholars see the deployment of new technologies in Africa as being far from supplanting the traditional forms of communication. Rather, the new technologies are seen as complementing traditional forms

of communication the interactions between the two beings, according to Atton and Mabweazara, structured by the broader social structures in which they are deployed.

Analysing the role of the internet in facilitating communication in Zimbabwe, Mabweazara (2011) examines the appropriation of digital technologies and their implications for the reception of the so-called 'pirate' radio in Zimbabwe. He specifically explores how the use of the internet (and its associated digital technologies) including the mobile phone in the hands of Short Wave (SW)Radio Africa and Voice of America's Studio 7 - which are beaming into Zimbabwe from the UK and the US respectively - have impacted on the reception of their content. Mabweazara highlights the ambiguities and complexities associated with the reception of pirate radio in the era of convergence in Africa. He argues that while both SW Radio Africa and Studio 7's multiple digital transmission strategies have broadened the range of options available for the reception of their content, traditional forms of reception remain in force. This is largely because of the enduring questions of access to digital technologies, especially the internet, and the lasting connections between traditional live radio and the oral traditions of local culture. According to him, these contextual factors sustain reception practices that differ markedly from the scenario in the economically developed world of the North where digital technologies have radically redefined radio reception practices. Similarly, the mobile phone has, according to Mabweazara expanded options for the generation and reception of news content from the radio stations, thus pointing to the fact that in Africa convergence can indeed assume unique forms, shaped by an intricate combination of local socioeconomic and cultural factors.

Mano & Willems (2008) also see the internet as playing a particularly important role in the lives of many diasporic communities, including those of Zimbabweans who have recently migrated to Britain. Much has been written about the role of the internet in creating virtual communities (Jones 1994, 1997, 1998; Rheingold 1993; Smith & Kollock, 1998; Wood & Smith, 2001) and networking societies (Castells, 1996). However, apart from the role of the internet in linking up members of diasporic communities, Mano & Willems consider the internet as a space in which different diasporic identities are articulated, imagined and contested. Diasporic media can and should be understood as much more than simply a means by which information of interest to a given community can be exchanged, or a means for communicating images of that community to the wider society. They emphasise the need to understand these media as spaces of communication in which the identity, meaning and boundaries of diasporic community are continually constructed, debated and re-imagined.

According to Chari the internet has created pluralism and diversity in the media helping the consumer make informed choices by contrasting information from a range of sources to exercise their democratic right. Africans in the diaspora have been active in contributing to the supply of news and views to help in the democratisation process of their countries, (Hyden *et al*, 2001: 7). Zimbabweans are no exception. They have excelled in this field by expressing their ideas using alternative media in the diaspora. They have raised issues that could not be reported from within Zimbabwe, thereby making diasporic media a major part of the media menu in Zimbabwe.

Atton (2004) sees the use of the internet as a set of information and communication technologies (ICTs) produced by a range of individuals and networks that work against, or seek to develop different forms of domination, expected and broadly accepted ways of

‘doing’ media. These projects according to Atton may be explicitly political in intent such as the media activism of radical ‘amateur’ journalists who make up the network of Independent Media Centres (IMC).

3.10. Citizen journalism

Recent years have seen the mushrooming of citizen journalists all over the world including Zimbabwe. Atton (2003: 263) defines citizen journalism as a philosophy of journalism and a set of practices that are embedded within the everyday lives of citizens, and media content that is both driven and produced by those people and whose practices emphasise first person eyewitness accounts by participants. His definition of citizen journalism as Moyo, D (2009: 5) observes, emphasises both the agency and autonomy of individual citizens in their desire to capture and share personal experiences of things they perceive to be in the public interest with fellow citizens without necessarily following prescribed rules or putting a price to their activities. His definition ties well with that of Hamilton (2000) who describes an environment where the process of news gathering and dissemination is neither carried out by professionals working in capital-intensive media institutions nor predetermined by a set of values and institutional expectations. News gathering under citizen journalism is, according to Hamilton, driven by a desire to share information which is enabled by the new technologies. According to Atton (2004: 25) a key feature of citizen journalism is the egalitarian mode of address where intellectuals share media platform with activists and where it is hoped that elitism is eroded.

Atton argues for a philosophy of journalism and a set of practices that are embedded within the everyday lives of citizens and the media content that is produced by those citizens (2004: 26). Citizen journalists can publish material that does not appear in mainstream media which

eventually forces mainstream media and authorities to respond, such as the killing of Mozambican taxi driver Mido Macia by South African Police in March 2013, an incident which was captured on mobile phones by citizens and distributed to media all over the world.¹¹ In a restricted information environment, new communication technologies such as mobile phones and the internet have become powerful tools for political mobilisation, advocacy, and citizen participation in the national political discourse. The availability of mobile phones, emails, internet, and blogs has helped break news stories that originate from citizens who would be close to the event being reported about. As Atton (2004: 26) observes, this type of journalism emphasises first hand eyewitness accounts by participants, to recover a radical popular style of reporting and collective and anti-hierarchical forms of organisation which eschew demarcation and specialisation – and which importantly suggest an inclusive radical form of civic journalism. The ability of citizens to be where events are taking place, which is not always possible for professional journalists, means that citizen journalism makes a tremendous contribution to bringing to light critical issues and events that may otherwise go unreported or remain covered up by the status quo. What motivates individuals to engage in citizen journalism is their desire to capture and share personal experiences of things they perceive to be in the public interest with fellow citizens without necessarily following prescribed rules or charging for their services. They are taking full advantage of social media to stay connected. Social media facilitated by internet technologies have made it difficult for the government to totally control access to alternative media content, raising a need to understand the impact that media convergence has exerted on the ability of the state to regulate key constituents of the media in Zimbabwe. Even though the internet penetration is low in Zimbabwe when we compare it to countries like Nigeria and South Africa (see Chapter Five), the availability of internet enabled mobile technologies and the mushrooming

¹¹ see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CO_Hej_Vw2g

of internet cafes has made it possible for a sizable number of people to access digital media information in the country. This enables some users to engage with the world on social media like Facebook, Email WhatsApp, Viber and Twitter sharing information about issues taking place anywhere in the world. They no longer rely on state media to break news to them or to have their stories published. They have an activity in which they are engaging with each other and the world through the deployment of information and communication technologies to present alternative ideas, news reports, video and webcam feeds, Internet radio, archives, discussion lists, chat rooms, bulletin boards and sound files. According to Atton (2002: 133) the deployment of ICT appears to be developmental and progressive, an additive set of processes that supplement and exponentially increase opportunities for society, community, mobilisation, knowledge construction and direct political action. These technologies in the hands of citizens are raising an interest in understanding how they impact on the democratisation process of the country whose citizens are consciously or unconsciously becoming more engaged in journalism.

Looking at the importance of the mobile phone in sharing information, Nyamnjoh (2004) describes the 'single-owner_ multi-user' phenomenon in West Africa, where mobile phone owners become points of presence in their communities, sharing their treasured gadgets with the rest of the community who seek to make calls or send messages to friends and relatives both inside and outside the country. These are the gadgets that are used to disseminate news from one part of the continent to the other instantaneously. Thus, the appropriation of technology in Africa is entwined in the sociocultural fabric of Africans. The innovative use of new technologies among Africans hinges on local cultural values of solidarity, interconnectedness and interdependence. These values make it possible for people to access the technology and its opportunities without necessarily being directly connected. In many

situations, it suffices for an individual to be connected in order for whole groups and communities to benefit (Nyamnjoh, 2005) in Atton and Mabweazara (2011). The person who owns this technology becomes an influential leader in society. Citizen journalism is also made possible by the oral nature of African societies where the word of mouth plays a major role in amplifying and extending messages exchanged through these technologies.

According to Moyo, D. (2008) Zimbabwe is witnessing a rise in citizen engagement in the production, dissemination and/or exchange of information. Recent years have seen an increase in the number of Zimbabwean citizens using SMS and blogs to exchange information, especially during periods of political uncertainty (see Chapters Five and Six). Citizen journalism has become powerful enough to force the government authorities to respond to information circulating in these networks. It has also become an advantage to the opposition and civil organisations whose access to mainstream media is severely constrained. In a situation where information flow is restricted and the mainstream media are unable to fulfil the citizens' informational needs, the parallel market of information becomes the dominant oppositional source of a mix of information. This parallel information according to Chuma (2007) makes a major contribution in terms of filling the existing information gap and allowing citizens to engage in different scenario building and conjecture.

Golding & Murdoch (2001), McChesney (2000) and Mosco (1996) argue that traditional journalism is market-driven, leading to a parochial focus on a set of news values which include reference to elite persons and elite nations, obsession with negativity and unexpectedness. They see the need for alternative forms of journalism that can break down these filters as well as the inflexible value systems that have become acceptable definers of news worldwide. The rise of citizen journalism supported by communications technologies of

various forms, has therefore been widely seen as heralding a new era where the power to define what is news has been removed from commercial and government control. Citizens are using new technological forms to inform the population about critical issues or events of concern in their lives. Undoubtedly, the most potent tool for alternative communication in the developing world today is text messaging through mobile phones. When originally developed as an additional service for GSM mobile handsets back in 1985 with the capacity to send up to 160 characters to and from GSM handsets not many imagined that the SMS would soon become such an important tool in what some scholars have termed the emerging new media ecology (Deuze, 2008; Kahn & Kellner, 2008). Mainstream media in most of the developed world, both print and electronic, have learnt to appropriate SMS as a tool for interacting directly with readers, viewers and listeners, and the developing countries are following suit. The Zimbabwe Standard weekly newspaper, for example, now carries a section where SMS messages from readers are printed. Similarly, the most prominent radio station beaming into Zimbabwe from UK, SW Radio Africa, uses SMS to get news tips as well as send news headlines to subscribers.

The Weblog (blog, in short) has become one of the key tools for alternative communication in the emerging media field. The growing success of the blog is partly because it has become increasingly easy to create and maintain, even for users who are not technologically gifted, (Kahn & Kellner, 2008). In Africa, despite limited access to the internet, there is a new boom in blogging, as citizens seek spaces for alternative discourses particularly in countries under repressive regimes. With an internet penetration rate of 5.3 per cent (see Chapter Five) where the world average stands at 21.9 per cent, Africa remains the continent with the lowest internet access. However, this low rate of penetration has meant that the continent is experiencing the highest growth in terms of the internet use, with Zimbabwe, having 1.35

million users which is a growth rate of 2602 per cent (from 50,000 to 1.35 million) by the year 2012 (www.internetworldstarts.com). With a sizeable part of the population now residing in the diaspora, Zimbabwean bloggers are widely dispersed, creating a situation where those who have remained at home post compelling eye-witness accounts, while those who are in the diaspora both amplify and comment on what they read from home-based bloggers. What is also interesting to note is that the blogosphere has also become a meeting place for the local and global as well as the traditional (professional) journalist and the citizen journalist. Undoubtedly, blogs have become a major influence on both traditional journalism and public debate, as they often break stories that mainstream media either choose to ignore or downplay. For example, when the story of the Zimbabwe army running amok supposedly over non-payment made international headlines, it was a prominent Harare blogger, Denford Magora, who cautioned against premature celebration that this was the beginning of an end game to the Mugabe's regime, pointing out that the 'clash' between the army and the police had been deliberately staged as a pretext for imposing a state of emergency.¹² Technorati (<http://www.technorati.com>), a specialist blog tracking search engine, indicated a huge volume of blogs posted by Zimbabweans both at home and abroad in the week following the 29 March 2008 election peaking at almost 500 posts per day. Most of the personal blogs during the period under study relayed personal reactions or experiences of the bloggers, and they defined the various roles that these 'citizen journalists' or 'instant reporters' played. These blogs captured the mood of the country as the events unfolded (see Chapter Five & Six).

The Zimbabwean blogosphere is a world filled with as much paranoia, rumour, frustration, stoicism, humour, rage and wild hope as the country itself, (Kahn & Kellner, 2008). Apart

¹² See <http://denfordmagora.blogspot.co.uk/2008/12/zimbabwe-open-warfare-police-vs-army-on.html>

from emphasising the personal experiences, opinions and emotions of their authors, these blogs illustrate that the citizen journalist is also playing a monitorial role where s/he is always watchful, even while s/he is doing something else (Schudson, 1998).

However, it must be noted that citizen journalism comes with its own set of challenges. The non-professional journalists are not accountable to anyone but themselves, and their journalism is not guided or constrained by any ethical norms or principles but rather by gut feeling and common sense. Mabweazara notes that in a crisis situation such as the one obtaining in Zimbabwe after the 2008 election, citizen journalism could worsen things by spreading untruths and half truths which could lead to panic and disorder. While professional journalists are happy to tap into this emerging resource for the raw material of their news product, they remain wary of these pitfalls. Mabweazara sees forms of citizen journalism as providing a practical critique of institutionalised and utilized forms of journalism and suggesting radical ways of doing journalism. The ability of citizens in Zimbabwe to share information packaged in innovative ways via SMS and blogs, and the fact that mainstream media increasingly take cues from these non-professional forums points to the growing importance of the citizen as information producers and disseminators. As Mabweazara observes, in moments of high tension and uncertainty, when the mainstream media take long to verify and send out information to the public, a parallel market of information in the form of citizen journalism is proving to be effective in keeping the information flowing even if it means a mix of truths, half truths, and untruths. Citizen journalism thus points towards a reconfiguration of spaces of political discourse to allow horizontal and non-hierarchical communication that might not otherwise be possible. This has implications for participation in an age of citizen producer/consumers where the new media are giving meaning to the concept of participatory democracy. Much writing about the phenomenal rise of citizen

journalism has been characterised by a high sense of triumphalism. However, it is important to make some cautionary remarks on the possibilities offered by these new communication forms. Gillmor (2006) and Castells (2007) for example, warn that the new space of unfettered communication is fast getting invaded by the same old culprits, the corporate and political interests, thereby reviving the age-old struggles for free expression. Castells gives examples of NewsCorp's acquisition of MySpace in 2006, and Google's acquisition of YouTube as clear indications that the corporate media are redirecting their strategies towards the internet (2008: 252).

The assumption about new free spaces of communication will need to be constantly revisited and revised. These emergent media ecologies, as Kahn and Kellner (2008: 33) point out, are contested terrains produced by the tools used by the Left, Right, and Centre of both dominant cultures and subcultures in order to promote their own agendas and interests. The danger, particularly in the developing world, is that this new space will not end up an arena for the exercise of true citizen journalism but rather one for a staged form of citizen journalism. Citizen journalism presupposes free agency where rights-bearing citizens act spontaneously to capture and share information. Going back to Atton's (2003) definition of citizen journalism, it is clear that the increasing intervention by foreign nongovernmental organisations to nurture and aid citizen journalism can only take away the agency and autonomy of the said citizen and create disempowered citizen journalists who act primarily to please the donors. Moyo, D (2008) argues that citizen journalism is not necessarily emerging as a distinct form of unmediated space of communication, but rather as a hybrid form, as mainstream media increasingly tap into that space as a way of creating a certain impression about their close links to the citizenry as a testimony of citizen engagement. While professional journalists would miss the opportunity for fruitful collaboration with non-

professional newcomers by treating them as a threat to the profession, Moyo points out that it is important to acknowledge that the ever-present danger of opening up journalism to everybody is the potential to erode some of the vital values of the profession, such as truth-telling, fairness and balance. How citizen journalism will respond to these concerns will be crucial for its future development and consolidation.

Citizen journalists support the constructivist philosophy that the world is changeable and the past, present and future are constructed through our practices and interactions with others (Lott, 2004: 53). They try to prove that the social world is a product of thoughts and ideas of the people as they establish social, political and economic relations with one another (Pompa, 1982: 26). They acknowledge that we live in a world literally defined by our own perceptions and expectations derived from the society and culture in which we live. Their aim is to create meaning and change. This research will establish if the persuasive and the dialogical nature of citizen journalism coupled with diasporic media is capable of effecting political change in Zimbabwe.

3.11. The analytical framework drawn from the literature review

The literature that has been reviewed above has led to the drawing of the analytical framework that will help understand the research questions which are embedded in the aim and objectives of this thesis.

| | |
|---|---|
| Media History in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. | Media controls in both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe reflect an entrenched culture of limiting oppositional voices from some sectors of the population and using the media as a tool to consolidate the influence of the status quo on the populace. The state controlled media emerge as propaganda agents and independent media as the voice of the |
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| | |
|---|---|
| | disempowered .This has an effect on the democratisation process in the country |
| Legislative controls | There is use of legislation, most of which was inherited from the former colonial power, Rhodesia, to propagate the ruling party ideologies and inhibit the participation of all citizens in communication. More stringent media laws have been introduced after Zimbabwe's independence leading to the banning of independent media and the establishment of alternative media outside the borders of Zimbabwe. |
| Internet and the shift from mass to new media | <p>There is evidence of the internet playing a role in the democratization process and transforming journalism in the country.</p> <p>The convergence of different communication platforms has transformed media message production, processing and distribution.</p> |
| Citizen journalism in Zimbabwe | <p>Attention is drawn to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The participation of citizens in the exchange of information with the aid of new technologies. ▪ The engagement of citizens in a de-professionalized, de-institutionalized and less capital intensive environments. ▪ The difficulties faced by governments in controlling citizen journalism. ▪ The engagement of citizen journalists with diasporic media and the international community. ▪ The use of citizen journalists by mainstream media. ▪ The impact of citizen journalism in the democratization process in Zimbabwe. |

The literature on the history of media in Zimbabwe is essential in facilitating the understanding of the current situation in Zimbabwe and how it has evolved over the years from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe. The analysis of the legislative apparatus in Zimbabwe, in a similar way, provides us with a key way of understanding the political-legal context within

which diasporic media activity is developed. The literature on the internet and the shift in new media helps us understand a significant new vehicle for the creation, transmission and reception of diasporic media content. It also helps illuminate an understanding on the impact of these technologies in generating active participation by the citizens who have become an integral part of the information generation, processing and distribution.

3.12. Conclusion

Through its review of relevant literature, this chapter has explored the history of media in both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, examining how both governments used the media to propagate the ideologies of the status quo to the masses. The chapter has established how both governments employed restrictive legislation to control information access as they felt that uncontrolled information access would cause despondence and make the country ungovernable. This, it has been established, led to the establishment of diasporic media which created an alternative dialogical space oppositional to those of the status quo. In the case of Zimbabwe, these media use new technologies in the hands of the citizens to establish a public sphere in which citizens can influence governance by facilitating the flow of information. This chapter has shown how freedom of expression, access to information and freedom of association are crucial to the establishment of an ideal democratic environment in a country. The next chapter will focus on the research methodology that is used in this thesis in the service of establishing if these diasporic media established by displaced citizens and others, are able to influence democratic change in the country.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter examined literature on how the political environment in both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe contributed to the thinning of media democratic spaces in the country. It established that the restrictions put on channels of communication eventually led to the establishment of oppositional information channels during both governments. The chapter showed that in Zimbabwe the citizens are actively involved in creating these communication spaces using new technologies the autocratic regime has no control over. The chapter also examined the attitude of the government towards divergent voices and the effort it puts to try to prevent them from functioning. This chapter will analyse Constructivism as the explanatory paradigms for the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe. It will also explain and justify the research design and methodology that is to be used in this project during which quantitative methods, qualitative methods and a mixed methodological approach are evaluated in order to ascertain their contribution to realizing the aim and objectives of this research.

4.2. Constructivism as the explanatory paradigms for the role of diasporic media facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe

Constructivism provides a broad explanatory paradigm within which research on the role media, in particular those located in diasporic contexts, can play in political developments. In order to appreciate how the diasporic media came about, it is important to understand that Zimbabwe is characterized by extreme power differentials where controls of the major institutions of power and infrastructure are in the hands of the political elite constituted in the ruling party ZANU-PF (see Chapters Two & Three). The ruling party controls the army, the

communication infrastructure, the police, the economy, the judiciary and the legislature. In pursuit of what Lott (2004) describes as national interests and security, dictatorial governments try to control institutions of the state such as media to use them to maximize their influence on the populace. Moyo, D (2008: 551) argues that control of the aforementioned institutions gives the government power to influence the masses towards a particular ideological perspective which is pro-status quo. The ideologisation of the masses comes about at the expense of democracy as it closes a dialogical environment in which the people can deliberate on what alternatives they have to improve their lives. Moyo argues that mainstream media which are supported by the legal and political framework have played a significant role in supporting and maintaining the status quo in Zimbabwe. Mainstream media like the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, The Herald newspaper and The Chronicle are used as instruments to help the government to hold on to power by determining the information that gets to the populace in a unidirectional way which has no participation from the populace. The populace is communicated to and not communicated with. The major player in this is radio broadcasting which is a political tool in the hands of the government and is used effectively to limit democratic space by controlling access to information and tailoring information to propagate specific ideologies that help to undermine oppositional views and legitimize views of the ruling party which are made to be accepted as the views of the nation which must never be challenged. The ruling party is seen as using broadcasting as a tool for political control and mass manipulation. It also uses broadcasting to undermine divergent voices and to legitimize domination by the ruling party. Access to the national airwaves is not extended to opposition voices according to Moyo, D. (2007) and Chari (2006). Legislation that controls media has made it difficult for independent media practitioners to operate freely. This situation is not helping in the democratization process which demands that every citizen's voice should be heard.

On the contrary, according to Pompa (1982) Constructivists argue that control of material resources is not the definitive factor in determining power in structuring relations. Dialogue, argumentation, persuasion and the acceptance of what is appropriate can help all those involved to create the ideal environment that is capable of effecting change. Despite the Zimbabwean government's control of the major institutions and resources, there is evidence that there is an important activity being carried out by a small number of poorly resourced and displaced citizens who have started diasporic media outside Zimbabwe. They are consciously exercising a degree of power to change the circumstances of the Zimbabwean population by broadcasting or sending alternative messages into the restricted democratic environment. These messages are provided by the citizens on the ground and the media organizations are providing an enabling environment for these messages to be propagated in the hope that they will effect change. This activity can be explained by a Constructivist approach in order to illuminate how the civilians respond to disenfranchisement using a relatively few media resources. The Constructivist paradigm helps to explain the impact of the poorly resourced diasporic media as compared to the well resourced media in the hands of the elite. Constructivism shows how people can take action that might ultimately influence government and governance in a political jurisdiction where freedom of expression is limited.

The point of departure for Constructivism is that the world is changeable and the past, present and future are constructed through our practices and interactions with others (Lott, 2004: 53). According to the Constructivist philosophy, the social world is a product of thoughts and ideas of the people as they establish social, political and economic relations with one another (Pompa, 1982: 26). Berger and Luckmann (1966) as quoted in Priest (2010) argue that we live in a world literally defined by our own perceptions and expectations derived from the society and culture in which we live. Our perceptions determine how we behave in order to

create meaning and change. It is this meaning and the ability to create change that motivates human beings to consciously intervene into their circumstances. Constructivists argue that control of material resources and institutions of power is not a defining factor in creating change. Their focus is on human awareness or consciousness and its place in world affairs. As they become conscious of the world around them people become aware of how they can negotiate changes to improve their situation.

Lott (2004: 53) argues that the material world does not convey meaning, but that people construct the meaning of things around them. This Constructivist argument states that the social world is not a given, but a product of human consciousness, as humans in their social, political and economic interactions project their thoughts, beliefs, ideas and concepts that underpin their relationships. Constructivists argue that what counts as a socially meaningful object or event is always the result of an interpretive construction of the world. According to Constructivists, a focus on the thoughts and ideas leads to a better theory about establishing a power balance as prescribed by the norms and values of society. According to Lott, no political or social structure is permanent as everything is open to reconsideration, renegotiation and reflection. This leads people to manage to intervene into their circumstances, regardless of what power they have and what resources they control. This Constructivist argument indicates that people have got the ability to consciously bring about political change through persuasion, dialogue and negotiation and not through the deployment of resources and the control of institutions. They can challenge a dominant power structure, and through their actions, bring about a democratic structure they need.

A Constructivist approach allows the creation of an explanatory framework as Pompa argues, which will help to explain how the diasporic media create ideas and discussion forums and

give the masses a platform on which to actively engage with one another in order to develop an awareness or consciousness that will help them in the construction of reality from activities in their local environment. A Constructivist explanatory paradigm provides a context for the creation of a specific analytical framework which shows that people have the ability to oppose dominant ideologies propagated by the powerful institutions of the state in order to engage in activities that facilitate development (Hyden *et al*, 2007: 2). Constructivists emphasize how an independent state can enjoy phenomenal growth if it has a dynamic modern communication structure that keeps the population informed and (my emphasis) *involved educated, interacting and sharing ideas*. They consider the media to be an integral part of democratic and political development. Stevenson (1988: 22) argues that development plans are made possible by the information imparted to the citizenry of the state which is seen as a cohesive tool and a unifying factor. According to Stevenson, dictatorial governments concentrate on ideologies that support domination of one group of people by another. As this thesis will show, domination of this kind is being opposed through the conscious activity of some sectors of the populace using diasporic media whose aim is to create a dialogical democratic space that gives the populace alternative information on which to make decisions about how Zimbabwe is to be governed.

In support of the Constructivist view, Keane (1991) sees media as being central to modern democracy. He argues in support of the view that democracy requires an informed citizenry that is capable of participating effectively in public debate and in the overall political process where they have to make wise decisions. The exchange of and free flow of information and the ability of citizens to have equal access to sources of information as well as equal opportunities to participate in political debates are key elements in the democratization process (Keane, 1991; Lichtenberg, 1995). Media control limits the participation of citizens

in decision making on issues affecting their lives. If people do not get access to alternative information they will continue to receive information generated and disseminated by the dominant members of society who wield power. Information dissemination and power cannot be separated. Jackson (2006) argues that Constructivism unmasks that core relationship between truth and power to show that those in power are not necessarily bearers of truth as the information they disseminate to the masses could be deceitful. Constructivism is influenced by human consciousness and the desire for change followed by intervening actions with the aid of minimum resources at the people's disposal. If government controls the airwaves and has made it impossible for any competitors to have access to the airwaves, it will enjoy an unfair advantage over other players in disseminating information. It is technically in charge of the information dissemination infrastructure which gives it sole control of what people see and hear and subsequently what they think about and do. For example, in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation became an appendage of the ruling party immediately after independence in 1980 and has as since been used as a propaganda tool to legitimize the ruling party and to ensure that the opposition is viewed negatively by the masses.

Constructivism is an intellectual approach which provides an opportunity to reveal how citizens engage dialogically and intellectually with each other and the authorities to persuasively bring about policies that give them the democratic space they need. Constructivism provides an enabling context for explaining how the Zimbabwean community sources news from Zimbabwe, processes it abroad and disseminate it back into the country and other parts of the world. They manage to offer oppositional discourse to that churned by the state media.

Constructivism provides the intellectual scope to consider and explain the precise ways in which people with little or no material control use the power of their ideas to bring a change in a country whose media have the characteristic features of Zimbabwe. Though powerful as the authorities that control media and other institutions may be, a Constructivist approach allows an evaluation of the extent to which citizens can be engaged with and enabled in political choices by parties whose media resources may be comparatively sparse compared to the dominant interests in a given political jurisdiction. Constructivism provides a perspective much more amenable to an exploration of human engagement with media in the broadest sense, in creating political change. It also provides a suitable philosophical context in which to determine which other more specific intellectual tools to use and what research methods to adapt to understand fully the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe. Kuhlmann (2010) notes that due to lack of democratic space in Zimbabwe diasporic publications serve as a source of valuable information for Zimbabweans. She argues that these media play an important role in sourcing, processing and disseminating information, thereby providing media space which offers an alternative view to the state controlled media in Zimbabwe. This, she argues, gives people alternative information from which to make educated decisions about social, economic and political issues affecting their country. They start to think critically, a situation that encourages behaviour of resistance and noncompliance which, in her view, is a step towards democratization. According to Priest (2010) such behaviour has a potential to influence action in the form of voting decisions and political activities as will be seen in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

In support of this Constructivist argument Weber points out that Constructivism concerns a new version of the discourse which explores whether the world out there really is there or is only constructed by us. He considers Constructivism to be a theory of knowledge (epistemology) which argues that humans generate knowledge and meaning from their experiences. It is about how people learn by experiencing events around them, giving them interpretations and acting on them. Our interactions according to Lott (2004) are based on the shared system of codes and symbols of language and social practices. This language and practices are reflected in the means of communication. Lott argues that Constructivism as a general epistemological approach demonstrates how language defines the world in which we live. Media are major vehicles for transmitting language. It is the media, according to Weber (2001) that construct reality. It is the media messages that people interpret and make conscious decisions about the use of the content being provided. People do not consume media messages passively according to Weber. Constructivists ask questions like, 'Is reality a discovery or an invention? Do the media reflect reality (exactly or distortedly) or do they construct it in the first place? Is the world a projection or a design? Do we represent something or are we (and always have been) constructs? Do we depict reality or build it up?' Constructivism therefore encourages people to ask questions and give meaning to the knowledge they gain in the process. They ask whether the social and political world, is a physical entity or material object that is outside human consciousness or a human construct. They argue that, as humans are exposed to a wide variety of information, they have to filter this information to be able to decide which information is going to influence their activities in order to change their circumstances.

Lott argues that according to the Constructivist philosophy, the social world can be constructed in different ways. It is not something out there that exists independent of the

thoughts and ideas of the people involved in it. It is not an external reality whose laws can be discovered by scientific research and explained by scientific theory as Positivists and Behaviouralists may argue, hence the need to apply qualitative research methods. Constructivists hold the view that meaning is negotiated as a product of history and of social structure (Sapsford *et al*, 2006: 2). In support of this argument, Kant contends that we can obtain knowledge about the world, but it will always be filtered through human consciousness (Hacking, 1999: 41). Weber argues that the social world which is the world of human interaction is fundamentally different from the natural world of physical phenomena as human beings rely on 'understanding' of each other's actions and assigning 'meaning' to them. Human action cannot be described the same way as physical phenomena are described. We need a different kind of interpretive understanding which puts human consciousness into consideration. The media are an enormously important source of these perceptions and expectations.

It can be argued, therefore that control leads to conflicts and resistance resulting in greater instability as the state's opponents respond to their resulting reductions in power and security. Without control of the institutions of power like the media, the judiciary and the military, citizens can aggressively use their intellectual and negotiating power to generate support for their cause, leading to counter mass activity by the populace. In this way, diasporic media can be seen as having an impact in communication that exposes the populace to alternative views from which to make decisions about what intervention actions to take to influence change.

Garfinkel (1994) acknowledges how individuals actively make sense of their everyday lives by trying to interpret everyday events around them. He does not see people as being passively manipulated by the information they receive, but rather, actively and dialogically getting

engaged with it. Information coming from the media keeps people informed about what goes on in their social world. This encourages people to engage with and make meaning of what they see and hear and what actions to take as a result. As already mentioned, in the case of Zimbabwe, the government responds by trying to influence what people hear and see in order to control what they think and do.

It is the interest of this research to understand how media are used to give people experiences that shape their behaviour. It focuses on how diasporic media have been used to give the citizenry perspectives from which to form opinions, a situation that leads to specific conscious actions. Diasporic media in this instance play a role in helping the populace to make decisions that affect their lives by giving the people alternative information on which to base their actions. It has been argued by Moyo, D. (2005: 110) that media are central to modern democracy as primary sources of information. This is because democracy requires an informed citizenry which is capable of participating effectively in public debate and in the overall political process where the citizens have to make relevant decisions about how they want their government to operate. Consequently, the exchange and free flow of information and the ability of citizens to have equal access to sources of information as well as equal opportunities to participate in political debates are key elements of democracy (Keane, 1991; Lichtenberg, 1995). According to Karim (1998) the aggregate impact of cross-border contact among individuals using means such as mail, telegraph, telephone, facsimile, and digital technologies, has been substantial as it helps establish communication links among members of diasporic communities spread over several continents. It can also be added that these technologies help the diasporic communities maintain links with their home countries.

4.3. Theoretical approach to explaining the role of diasporic media in influencing citizen Journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe

The philosophical approach underpins all facets of the study from assessing the general philosophical ideas behind the enquiry to the detailed data collection and analysis procedures (Creswell, 2003: 3). This helps the researcher to choose an appropriate research methodology for the empirical investigation that will help the research achieve the set aim and objectives. A chosen theory is justifiable after a comparison between available theorems and is chosen for its strength and relevance to the environment in which it is to be employed. As Tailor *et al* (1996: 14) point out, sociological theories explain social behaviours in a systematic way that can be verified using established research tools. This argument is also supported by Priest (2010: 59) who states that theory provides the researcher with guidance on what tools to use in order to achieve his/her objectives. It provides a basis for explaining the issues under investigation in a methodological way that facilitates the generation of new knowledge and the justification of advanced arguments. The research has to have a philosophical underpinning that enables the understanding of the research methodology employed and the kind of data generated from it. A good theoretical grounding is undoubtedly a vital element that links all other elements of the research seamlessly to come up with an authoritative academically plausible data that enables an academic engagement that has the potential to advance new knowledge.

Constructivism addresses issues of power, relationships and change. It looks at how the social world is constructed and how the actors in the social, political and economic world relate to each other in terms of power differentials, this power being influenced by access to material resources. Constructivism explores the relationship between material power and other powers that can be created through means other than the use and deployment of

material and institutional resources. Access to material resources and control of institutions is not a defining factor in power relations as social players can engage with each other dialogically and persuasively through negotiation and argumentation to advance a cause that has influence on their circumstances. They can determine what happens in the social world, how the social world is constructed and how it functions. This helps them to address issues of logical appropriateness as defined by the normative values of society.

This research utilises the core perspectives and arguments of the paradigm Constructivism as the context within which the concepts of the thesis's explanatory framework are developed. Constructivism is the paradigmatic theoretical context within which this research illuminates the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe in line with its stated aim and objectives.

4.4. Quantitative approaches and their significance in research

A quantitative research is a process where the investigator, primarily uses positivistic claims for developing knowledge, (i.e. Causes and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypothesis and questions, use of measurement and observations and the test of theories). It employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collects information on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data (Creswell, 2003: 18). Quantitative research methods support a positivist claim which is a scientific method of doing research, a positivist method which reflects a deterministic philosophy in which causes determine effects and outcome (Creswell, 2003). Thus, the problems studied by positivists reflect a need to

examine causes that influence outcome. This method employs tools such as closed questionnaires whose results are subject to statistical analysis.

Since the knowledge claim in this thesis is Constructivism, quantitative research methods on their own will not enable the researcher to determine how diasporic media users interpret the media content and what effect this content has on them. A closed questionnaire may yield general information pertaining to the consumption of diasporic media. However, there still remains a need to understand the detailed personal experiences of individuals and how they interpret diasporic media. On its own, a quantitative approach is a problematic way to understanding human behaviour, as human behaviour cannot be predetermined because humans embark on some negotiations before deciding on what reactions to give to some social or political stimuli in their environment. Human behaviour is hard to assess using positivist approaches as each person's experience differs from the other, especially their consumption and understanding of media products which happen to impact on each individual differently. Complementing quantitative approaches with qualitative approaches tends to give better results when the researcher wants to have an understanding of human behaviour, a behaviour which cannot be reduced to a mathematical equation or numerical counting.

4.5. Qualitative approaches and their significance in research

A qualitative approach in this research will be used to help come up with claims based primarily on a Constructivist perspective. The approach employed in this research will be informed by Cresswell, (2003: 18) who says that qualitative approaches bring about the multiple meaning of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy /participatory perspectives.

Qualitative research uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies or case studies. As Denzil & Lincoln (2000: 24) point out, in qualitative research, the researcher focuses on elements in their natural settings, thereby attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. In collaboration with the participants, the researcher uses open ended questions with the aim of developing themes from the data. These themes develop into patterns that facilitate the interpretation of the results from which credible conclusions can be drawn. The qualitative approach uses interviews, observations, audio visual data, and text and image analysis. This approach is suitable for a Constructivist knowledge claim which holds that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work, and as a result, develop subjective meanings of their experiences (see Lincoln and Guba, 1998; Schwandt, 2000; Neuman, 2000 and Crotty, 1998). This is compatible with this research which seeks to understand the experiences the populace get from engaging with diasporic media, with the aim of comprehending if this engagement has a potential to inspire an activity that can bring about democratic change.

As Beard, 1989; Sechrest & Sidana 1995 point out, the advantage of using qualitative research methods is that the results are based on a strong and flexible research design which tends to yield valid and reliable findings. Reliability of the findings is aided by the use of open-ended questions and verification through observation. This gives the researcher a valuable opportunity to listen attentively to the sentiments of the people in their natural social environment. Considering that the chosen sample of this research are contacted in their environment, even though by phone and not in person, they are more comfortable to discuss their experiences, especially when they are confident that by talking to the researcher they will not get into any trouble from the government agents. Letting the subjects respond to the

questionnaires with minimum interference from the researcher frees the data from the researcher's subjectivism and reduces the margin of error in the results.

Qualitative methods are apposite for this research since they can be used to unearth primary and secondary source data about the often contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals. This is a vital ingredient in this research, commensurate with the adoption of a Constructivist paradigm. Crotty (1988) argues that meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting, hence the need for researchers to use qualitative research methods with open ended questions so that participants can express their views.

According to Beard (1989: 38) qualitative research is a research focused on real life phenomena and consisting of various data collection strategies like in-depth, open-ended interviews, direct observation, written documents, open-ended written items on questionnaires or question guidelines, personal diaries, and programme records. Data from an open-ended interview comprises direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. In their own words, they are able to explain what differences if any, diasporic media have made in their lives.

Crotty sees qualitative researchers as seeking to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting the context and gathering information personally before coming up with interpretations of how humans engage with their world. As Creswell (2002: 8) argues, the goal of the research relies as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied, in our case, the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe. The research will use telephone

administered questionnaires, semi structured interviews and in-depth interviews. Open ended questions will give the participants the opportunity to express their understanding of the questions being asked in their own words. Qualitative researchers understand that human responses are bound to differ when given open ended questions. Their responses will need different means of interpretation to come up with a valid analysis and conclusion (Priest, 2010: 72).

Creswell suggests that the questions should be broad and general, so that the participants can express their construction of the meaning of a situation as they engage in discussions or interactions with other persons. More open ended questions are best as they give the researcher a deeper insight into the way the subjects engage with the phenomenon under investigation to construct their understanding of their world. According to Creswell (2003) these subjective meanings are a product of negotiations within a social and historical setting. They are not imprinted on individuals, but are formed through interaction with others in a Constructivistic way. Constructivist researchers therefore often address the process of interaction among the individuals to get an understanding of how they affect their situation in different social, economic, historical and political settings. Crotty (1988) states that the generation of meaning has been always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community. The process of this qualitative research that is going to be used in this thesis is inductive, as it will allow the researcher to generate meaning from the data collected before drawing conclusions from it.

The qualitative techniques help identify elements such as common themes or descriptive variables among the participants in the sample (Priest, 2010: 6). They help the researcher to

assess issues that cannot be easily analysed numerically. With qualitative research methods, the relationship between the researcher and the participant is often less formal than in quantitative research (Priest, 2010). Qualitative methods are typically more flexible. They allow greater spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the study participant. They ask mostly open-ended questions that are not necessarily worded in exactly the same way with each participant. With open-ended questions, participants are free to respond in their own words, and these responses tend to be more complex than simply 'yes' or 'no.' Participants have the opportunity to respond more elaborately and in greater detail than is typically the case with quantitative methods. In turn, researchers have the opportunity to respond immediately to what participants say by tailoring subsequent questions to information the participant has provided. Qualitative researchers look at subtle aspects of human social life that are best described in words which do not necessarily come up with a consensus. This implies that there is no consensus in the way consumers of diasporic media respond to the media content. The results are variable and subject to multiple interpretations which cannot be easily analysed statistically or numerically, but can only be analysed thematically. Common themes will come out of qualitative research. The themes will be put into different categories. These categories will be assigned a numerical value. These values will then be quantified to assess the prevalence of each theme. This assessment will then help in drawing conclusions about the matter under investigation. As Martin Bauer, George Gaskell and Nicholas Allum (2002: 12) suggest, qualitative research is often seen as a way of empowering or giving voice to people rather than treating them as objects whose behaviour is to be quantified and statistically modelled.

Deacon *et al* (1999: 249) are of the view that the qualitative approach exposes the researcher to the natural setting in which people live, something which reveals the social reality the

researcher gets to experience as well. Qualitative research offers access to the lives of the subjects, and allows the researcher to venture into the world of the researched (see Long, 1992; Chambers, 1983). This improves the validity of the findings. By allowing the researcher to look into the life-worlds of the researched, qualitative authentic findings are guaranteed.

4.6. The Mixed Method Approach

A mixed methods approach is one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds, e.g. consequence oriented, problem centred, and pluralistic). It involves strategies of inquiry that require collecting data, either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand the research problems under consideration (Creswell, 2003: 16). This strategy involves gathering both numeric information as well as text information acquired through interviews. The final data produced is both quantitative and qualitative. The research analyses both qualitative and quantitative forms of data using Campbell and Fiske's 1959 mixed methods called a multi-method matrix which is also called a multi-method, integrated, convergence or combined approach (Creswell, 2003: 15).

Recognizing that all methods have limitations, the researchers drew the conclusion that biases inherent in any single method could neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods. They created the concept of triangulation which is a means of seeking convergence across qualitative and quantitative methods (Jick, 1979). Results from one method can develop and inform the other. Whilst Constructivism is the paradigm for this research and uses mainly qualitative research methods, quantitative research techniques will help eliminate or reduce bias, hence the importance of choosing a mixed method approach. This thesis will adopt a

concurrent procedure in which the researcher will converge qualitative and quantitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role that diasporic media play in facilitating citizen journalism activity in Zimbabwe.

Themes will develop when investigating the impact of diasporic media. These themes will be arranged in a way that will be quantitatively analysed and interpreted. In order to address the fulfilment of its aim and objectives this research will therefore use a complementary set of qualitative and quantitative research methods, qualitative being the main method that is compatible with the Constructivist approach.

4.7. Areas that have been addressed by the literature review

A critical evaluation of the literature on the role of media activism and regulation in promoting and delivering democracy has been conducted in Chapter Three. The literature review has catalogued the history of political change in Zimbabwe since the 1970s and before. It has illuminated how the media have evolved from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe and how reoccurring media legislation and control on media have impacted on the delivery of democracy in the country. It has revealed that media control has remained a predominant feature throughout the years in question, a situation that has led to media practitioners leaving the country to work offshore where they have created dialogical spaces enabled by modern communication technologies embedded in diasporic media. The literature has established that media have a role in facilitating a democratic process that is able to effect change in the country. In the absence of a viable democratic environment in the country, the literature has shown that the citizens have the ability to create oppositional media from the diaspora. They see the rise of citizen journalism which is supported by user friendly and affordable

communication technologies as an important factor in the democratization process. Hamilton (2000) refers to citizen journalism as a de-professionalized, de-capitalized and de-institutionalized environment where the process of news gathering and dissemination is neither carried out by professionals working in capital-intensive media institutions nor predetermined by a set of values and institutional expectations, but is rather driven by a desire to share information which is enabled by the new technologies.

Having catalogued the history of political change in Zimbabwe, evaluated the core features of media ownership and regulation in the country and analysed the role of media activism and regulation in promoting and delivering democracy, this research will go on to:

- Determine the impact that media convergence has exerted on the ability to regulate and control key constituents of the media in Zimbabwe.
- Determine the extent and pattern of consumption of diasporic media output in Zimbabwe and the implications of this.
- Provide an enriched conceptual explanation of the political and socioeconomic consequences of diasporic media activities.

4.8. Case studies

This research will be facilitated by the use of case studies. Looking at a case study and observing how the subjects within it behave without the researcher's interference illuminates exactly what goes on in real life, something that gives credence to the data gathered. According to Miles and Huberman (1994: 6) the case study helps the researcher gain a 'holistic' overview of the context under study, its logic, its arrangements, and its explicit and implicit rules.

Yin (2008) describes case research as a strategy which facilitates an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Thomas (2011) also defines a case study as an analysis of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. He describes it as an intensive analysis of an individual unit, stressing developmental factors in relation to context. In a case study, the researcher explores in depth a program, event, an activity, a process or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2003: 15). According to Thomas it is an inquiry which involves the collection of data about the social setting under study such as demographics of members and workers in an organization within which the study is conducted and in which the case illuminates and explicates.

As Yin explains, it can include quantitative evidence, relies on multiple sources of evidence, and benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions. In a case study, the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The cases are bound by time and activity, and the researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995). Stake describes this as a systematic way of looking at events, collecting data, analysing information, and reporting the results. In the process the researcher gains a sharpened understanding of why the instance happened as it did, and what might become important to look at more extensively in future research.

However, it should be explained that this research partially adopted Stake's approach. The approach used in this thesis articulates the ecology created by the case studies in collaboration with media users who are engaging with these case studies from various parts of the world. When Stake wrote in 1995, the modern digital technologies that create different media ecologies had not been invented. The approach adopted here, therefore complements Stake's findings. It also adds a new dimension to the case study approach, the participatory element which creates a dialogue between case studies, journalists and the audience who are also active content producers.

As Turvey (2001) points out, a case study relies on inductive logic that constructs or evaluates propositions that are abstractions of observations of the subject of investigation. It draws inferences from observations in order to make generalizations. This links well with the Constructivist argument which views the social world as not given, but a product of human consciousness where meaning is constructed through dialogue, observation, interaction and negotiation. Inductive reasoning aims to collect facts, without bias. It classifies the facts, identifying patterns of regularity, inferring generalizations about the relations between the facts and tests the inferences through further observations. It is a form of reasoning that makes generalizations based on individual instances.

In this research, the case study method will be used to provide an enriched conceptual understanding of the political and socioeconomic significance of diasporic media activities. It will determine the extent and pattern of consumption of diasporic media output in Zimbabwe and the implications of this. It will bring about new knowledge to extend the reader's

experience about the phenomenon under study (diasporic media). The research will give the reader an in-depth understanding of the effect of foreign-based Zimbabwean radio stations, newspapers and news websites.

The case studies of this research will be a radio station SW Radio Africa (SWRA) a newspaper The Zimbabwean and a website NewZimbabwe.com. The case studies will help to illuminate the factors that led to the establishment of diasporic media in an independent Zimbabwe. They will assist in the provision of an understanding of how the chosen media interact with the Zimbabwean population in an attempt to create a public sphere in which the people can freely deliberate on issues that affect governance in the country. The research hopes to establish the extent to which the diasporic media manage to promote the democratisation process in Zimbabwe with the aid of modern technologies that can be used by citizens to effect political change. These diasporic media will be expected to justify their relevance by demonstrating what media messages they communicate to and get from Zimbabwe which the local media in Zimbabwe are unable to articulate, and how these media messages have affected the populace. The case studies will reveal how much penetration they have in Zimbabwe and how they evaluate their influences in the democratisation process, considering the limited resources at their disposal and the limited range they can penetrate into the country. In-depth interviews will be made with the media practitioners in the chosen case studies. Themes will be identified and translated together with the responses from the populace and the literature review.

4.9. Factors that influenced the choice of the selected case studies

4.9.1. Short Wave Radio Africa (SWRA)

In this research diasporic radio stations are considered to be radio stations, formed by citizens of a country and broadcasting from outside the country back into the country of their origin. In times of war these radio stations aim to effect a change of government. In an independent state they operate with the intention of providing a dialogical environment that can effect good governance. There are a number of radio stations operated by Zimbabweans from outside Zimbabwe and broadcasting into the country. These include Short Wave Radio Africa (SWRA) which operates from UK, Studio 7 which operates from Washington DC and Voice of the People (VoP) which operates from The Netherlands. There are others which are solely internet based which include *Nehanda* Radio, *Mthwakazi* Radio, *Shaya* FM and Visions FM. Whilst the two major stations which are Studio 7 and VoP broadcast on Short Wave like SWRA they lack some of the characteristics of SWRA. For instance Studio 7 and VoP are extensions of The Voice of America and Radio Netherlands respectively. Voice of America and Radio Netherlands enable these stations to function by giving them facilities and financing their operations, whereas SWRA claims to be solely financed by donor funding and advertising. It is operating from the UK, but is not in any way attached to the BBC or any UK broadcaster. Admittedly, all these stations are operated by Zimbabweans. However, it is important to draw a line between them in that SWRA is more autonomous than the other two operating from their own building far away from any other broadcaster with no influence from any external editorial policies. However, it can be argued that donors also fund a project if it is in line with their philosophy and they will continue to provide funding for as long as the project fulfils specific criteria. One would, however note that, overall SWRA enjoys more autonomy than the others and can therefore be considered to meet the criteria for which it was chosen as a case study. What makes SWRA the most interesting station to study is that it is

the first diasporic radio station to be formed by former Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation employees and has been operating since 2001. It is the first station to challenge the restricted media democratic sphere in Zimbabwe by offering oppositional rhetoric which got Zimbabweans interested and participating in the dialogue that addresses the political climate in the country. The station has evolved so much that it now operates on multiple channels including online and it facilitates interactivity in a way that has served as an inspiration to other diasporic radio stations and the state broadcaster. It is for these reasons that SWRA was chosen as the radio case study.

4.9.2. NewZimbabwe.com

Shortly after the forced closure of the independent newspaper the Daily News in 2003, a former employee of the Daily News decided to operate from the diaspora offering a platform for the former Daily News reporters to continue with articulating issues that affected the country. Their participation in what was supposed to be only a blogosphere evolved into an online newspaper which linked the diaspora with the populace in the country. There are a number of online publications that have come up ever since Mathuthu launched NewZimbabwe.com. These include, among others, ZimDiaspora.com, ZimNews and NewsDzeZimbabwe. However, NewZimbabwe.com seems to have developed significant enough to warrant the interest of this thesis to find out the extent to which it is contributing to debate on democratic change in Zimbabwe. During the start of this research in 2010 NewZimbabwe.com was the only website which had developed significantly to arouse the interest of any research on Zimbabwean online diasporic media. The research is also made to understand that the website is solely funded by advertising revenue, although this needs to be verified.

4.9.3. The Zimbabwean Newspaper

At the beginning of this study there was only one newspaper, The Zimbabwean, which, in addition to being online was also published as hard copies from the UK and South Africa and ferrying them into Zimbabwe. Other independent papers operated from within the country and eventually collapsed as a result of viability problems and legislation which criminalised the publication of views which the government considered radical. Many years down the line The Zimbabwean is still operating from the diaspora and offering a dialogical space for the people in and outside Zimbabwe. Like the other case studies chosen The Zimbabwean maintains that it is funded by advertising and gets occasional support from donors. No evidence suggests that it is affiliated to any other production company anywhere in the world. It therefore became the right choice of the newspaper for this thesis case study.

To understand the history and operations of the diasporic media case studies their executives had to be interviewed. These included SWRA director, Gerry Jackson, the editor of NewZimbabwe.com, Mduduzi Mathuthu and the editor of The Zimbabwean Newspaper, Wilf Mbanga. To complement the information gathered from the case study executives, other diasporic media executives had to be interviewed as well. These include the director of Voice of the People Radio (VoP) John Masuku, editor of ChangeZimbabwe.com, Mukusha Mugabe and director of Mthwakazi Radio, Gerald Ngulube. The researcher had a chance to also interview journalists, among them the then Callback presenter at SWRA, Ezra Sibanda, Freelance Journalist Thabo Kunene, Freelance Journalist, Lenox Mhlanga, Radio Announcer Siphon Dube and a number of other journalists who requested anonymity.

4.10. Semi-structured interviews

After getting information from the case studies the research sought to chronicle and evaluate the significance of the growth of the Zimbabwean diasporic media since 2000 and to determine the extent and the pattern of consumption of diasporic media output in Zimbabwe and the implication of this pattern of consumption to the democratization process. The capture of this qualitative data was facilitated by the use of semi structured interviews with a sample of respondents in Zimbabwe.

Getting into Zimbabwe to conduct such a research was not feasible under the political climate prevailing during this research (2010-2013). Posting the questionnaire to people in Zimbabwe was not possible as getting physical addresses of respondents was difficult. The postal services are also not reliable as mail from overseas is believed to be subject to search, a situation that can put the respondents at risk of prosecution and persecution. The interview questionnaire was administered mainly over the phone and by email and Skype. It was administered in English, Shona and Ndebele, the three main languages spoken in Zimbabwe. The researcher can speak the three languages fluently. Each interviewing process would take about 30-45 minutes. The responses were then transcribed into English before being analysed.

4.11. Data sampling and collection techniques

A carefully chosen sample helps to facilitate the acquisition of data that is representative of the whole population under study. As Priest (2010: 77) points out, the group of people who actually respond to the survey must be as much like the population of interest as possible. In an effort to achieve a representative sample the researcher decided to use a multistage

sampling technique which Priest describes as involving first choosing a representative sample of cities or countries, for example and then choosing a sample of individuals who live in the chosen geographic areas.

The researcher decided to have a total of 200 respondents to the telephone administered questionnaire. Zimbabwe has ten provinces which comprise two major cities with provincial statuses and eight provinces namely Manicaland, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Masvingo, Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South and Midlands.

Fig 1. The map shows the provinces of Zimbabwe



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Zimbabwe_Provinces_numbered_300px.png

Table 1. Provinces of Zimbabwe

| | PROVINCE | CAPITAL |
|-----------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Bulawayo | <i>City</i> |
| 2 | Harare | <i>City</i> |
| 3 | Manicaland | Mutare |
| 4 | Mashonaland Central | Bindura |
| 5 | Mashonaland East | Marondera |
| 6 | Mashonaland West | Chinhoyi |
| 7 | Masvingo Province | Masvingo |
| 8 | Matabeleland North | Lupane |
| 9 | Matabeleland South | Gwanda |
| 10 | Midlands Province | Gweru |

The researcher divided Zimbabwe into provinces and calculated the percentage of population in each province, as shown in table below.

Table 2. Population by province 2010

| | PROVINCE | POPULATION | PERCENTAGE | SAMPLE |
|----|---------------------|-------------------|------------|--------|
| 1 | Bulawayo | 655,675 | 5.5 | 11 |
| 2 | Harare | 2,098,199 | 16.17 | 32 |
| 3 | Manicaland | 1,755,000 | 13.5 | 27 |
| 4 | Mashonaland Central | 1,139,940 | 8.78 | 19 |
| 5 | Mashonaland East | 1,337,059 | 10.3 | 20 |
| 6 | Mashonaland West | 1,449,938 | 11.17 | 22 |
| 7 | Masvingo | 1,486,604 | 11.45 | 23 |
| 8 | Matabeleland North | 743,871 | 5.73 | 11 |
| 9 | Matabeleland South | 685,046 | 5.28 | 10 |
| 10 | Midlands | 1,622,476 | 12.5 | 25 |
| | Total | 12,973,808 | 100 | 200 |

A random sample of the people in each province was captured. An attempt to get a mixture of both men and women and respondents of different ages was made. Although it was difficult to confirm the ages of the respondents an attempt was made to decipher how old those respondents were by asking indicative questions such as where they were in 1980. If someone says they were completing O Levels, then it can be deduced that they were then about 17 years old. The researcher also trusted that the respondents told the truth about their occupations. The random sample had to be as representative as possible. As Cohen and Manion (200: 101) state, random sampling is a useful blend in research, as both randomisation and categorisation enable qualitative research to be undertaken by selecting a

sample group. The researcher embarked on distributing the respondents according to the population percentage as is shown in the above table. The next task was to identify at least one person in each province with the help of relatives and friends who live in the UK and Zimbabwe. Using the snowball approach they were able to refer the researcher to other people in their province, some of whom agreed to participate in the survey.

However, this approach had problems that had to be considered. There was a risk of having responses from a circle of associates something which could render the research results unrepresentative of the population. To go around this problem, the researcher embarked on getting more contacts who did not know each other and limited referrals to a maximum of three per person. Although not entirely possible as a result of the sampling technique used, an attempt was made to try to capture a sample that was representative of the demographic configuration of the country. This was done by filtering the respondents after getting an idea of their age, sex, occupation and educational status.

Zimbabweans are also very mobile people due to their complex economic activities. A person who the researcher expected to be in Harare could be in Masvingo the following week. A person who is supposed to be living in Bulawayo can migrate to Gweru for better economic prospects. The instability of the population composition has a potential to generate margins of error in the sampling process. Getting telephone numbers from Zimbabwe is a complex undertaking. The production of telephone directories was suspended around 1999. Most people have also abandoned using landlines due to high costs involved. They have taken advantage of the improved mobile network provision in Zimbabwe

Mobile phone operators do not produce directories. Most customers are on a pay as you go in order to manage their expenditure. With no contract phones, it becomes difficult to access a database for mobile phone owners. Finding the location of the owner by just looking at his number is impossible. The only way one can ever get to know where an individual lives is by knowing him or by being referred by a person who knows them. Although not entirely credible, there was no way a verification exercise activity could be taken to confirm that the person who the researcher speaks to is where they say they are. The research relied on trust.

It is also difficult for a person to respond to a survey when they are not confident that they are not talking to secret agents who are likely to get them arrested. The Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) is believed to randomly bug phones to gather intelligence about what people talk about and who they talk to. This results in some people refusing to respond or insisting that they should not be identified. More than 400 hundred telephone calls were made. Most people were not keen to participate in the research. Coming up with 200 respondents was very difficult. To protect the respondents, pseudonyms had to be used throughout.

Having identified the sample the researcher then embarked on administering a questionnaire. Question guidelines, coupled with the use of open-ended questions, were used as part of the interview technique. As Williamson *et al*, (1982) advise, using open-ended-questions is important in that they provide respondents with an opportunity to elaborate, at the same time allowing the researcher to probe them with further questions that will generate valuable information (see appendix 5).

4.12. Conclusion

This chapter explains Constructivism as a suitable paradigm within which this research has to be conducted. The chapter has also explained the research design that has been chosen to generate both qualitative and quantitative data with which to create an understanding of the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe. It has explained and problematised the sampling technique used with the aim of understanding what attempts were made to reduce the margins of error that could have a bearing on the validity of the research results. Case studies that represent radio, newspapers and online publications have been identified and chosen for this research. What needs to be done next is to provide more details about the case studies so as to have a broad understanding about how they situate themselves in the whole research.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE ANALYSIS OF THE CASE STUDIES

“Any people with a certain conscious retention of their inalienable freedoms, including that to determine their own fate, will not sit by idly watching the very future of society go to rot.”
(Sunday Dare 2007)

5.1. Introduction

This chapter explores three case studies which will give us an insight into how the diasporic media emerged, how they operate and how they impact on the democratic environment in Zimbabwe. As has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, the case studies for this thesis are Short Wave Radio Africa (SWRA) a Zimbabwean diasporic radio station domiciled in the UK, New Zimbabwe.com, an online publication also domiciled in Cardiff, UK and The Zimbabwean, a newspaper produced and edited by Wilf Mbanga in UK and printed in both UK and South Africa for distribution in Zimbabwe and other parts of the world. Let it be emphasized that these three case studies represent the diasporic radio stations, the diasporic websites and the diasporic newspapers. This chapter examines the factors that led to the establishment of each medium, how the medium operates and how it reaches the intended audience. Despite the Zimbabwean government's control of the media, in particular radio broadcasting, evidence shows the rise of an oppositional communicative space operated by a small number of poorly resourced social players who are set on giving the masses an alternative communicative space. Civilians are able to respond to disenfranchisement using a few resources as part of democratic ideation in a restrictive environment. They are also taking advantage of the affordable communication technological gadgets like mobile phones and computers to link with the population, providing the people an alternative public sphere on which to articulate their views on the country's political, social and economic situation. The participants, as citizens are able to use affordable communication technologies to produce

their social world through thought processes and ideas as they establish social, political and economic relations with one another to influence their circumstances.

5.2. Positioning diasporic media in a conflictual environment

According to Atton (2004) the availability of relatively cheap broadcasting technologies which are internet-enabled has seen a proliferation of non-professional radio or radio-like projects which are often used as spaces for experimentation in both form and content of programmes. The main motivation for these alternative media is to prioritise the interests of marginalised groups and to bring into the public domain the perspectives of those whose voices are excluded from the mainstream news media (Atton and Hamilton, 2008; Harcup, 2003; Lievrouw, 2011). The positioning of radio in a conflictual situation is therefore, for the perpetuation of an information warfare which is seen by Sun Tzu (1963) as a weapon that has an impact in a restricted democratic environment where information propagation and access is limited. Articulately well-crafted and propagated messages have the ability to help the masses chart a path to a democratic environment in which the voices of all citizens are given equal prominence.

The ability to manage information especially in a restricted environment is according to Sturges (2004) more important and significant than the physical combat in any battle, something which makes information warfare the most powerful instrument in winning the hearts and minds of the people and subsequently the mandate of the people. This places media operating from diasporic contexts due to the unsupportive political environment in their country of origin in a significant position in this warfare that is positioned to counter dominant ideologies and engage with the populace in the construction of oppositional

discourse. As Soley and Nichols (1987) observe, message restriction generates an environment in which underground communication strategies are nurtured. This leads to the formation of what is commonly referred to as clandestine media, which operate from the diasporic contexts facilitating the creation and dissemination of alternative messages to those distributed by the state media. Poorly resourced as they could be, these media are able to give a formidable challenge to the status quo by propagating information that exposes shortfalls in the echelons of the state, a situation that is capable of instigating calls for political change and facilitating a democratic process in the country.

5.3.1. The emergence of clandestine (diasporic) radio stations in pre-independent Zimbabwe

Broadcasting from the diaspora is not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe. As Mosia *et al* (1994) and Windrich (1981) illuminate, the disenfranchised black community used to clandestinely listen to freedom fighters who politicised the natives to resist domination by the colonial regime. These radio stations gave the natives an alternative political voice to that of the colonial government, thereby affording the masses an opportunity to engage intellectually in the fight against white domination.

The Nasser regime in Egypt gave airtime to Zimbabwe nationalists over its external service as early as 1958 (see Mosia *et al*, 1994: 11) and (Windrich, 1981: 1). Radio Tanzania granted airtime to both the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) radio Voice of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) radio Voice of the Revolution from as early as 1963, a year before Ian Douglas Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Rhodesia. The establishment of these radio stations according to Mosia *et al* (1994) was aimed at helping African liberation movements to report their activities and broadcast correct

information to counteract what they considered to be the false and malicious propaganda broadcast by colonial radio stations to the African masses. Kwame Nkrumah also extended use of the new Ghana Broadcasting shortwave transmitter to ZANU until his fall in 1966. By 1967, ZANU and ZAPU were broadcasting from Zambia in the two main Zimbabwean languages namely Shona and Ndebele for a few hours per week. President Kenneth Kaunda ordered the Zimbabwe nationalists broadcasts to be stopped in Zambia following a bloody battle for leadership within ZANU which led to the death of prominent leaders like Hebert Chitepo. The VOZ radio relocated to Mozambique following that country's independence in 1975. They started broadcasting from Maputo in March 1976. With the help of the Frelimo government, Mozambique became the launching pad for ZANU's guerrilla forces ZANLA and Maputo became the main centre of ZANU broadcasts. Radio Mozambique gave VOZ 30 minutes per day between 8.00 and 8.30pm on six shortwave bands and on medium wave. As the war progressed, airtime was increased to one hour. ZAPU also intermittently broadcast over Radio Moscow transmitters beginning in 1968 and from Luanda after 1977. ZANU was granted access to external services in Addis Ababa and Tananarive from 1978. After the formation of the fragile Popular Front (ZANU-ZAPU) in 1978 an attempt was made to consolidate all broadcasts, but this failed, except in Tanzania where the Nyerere government would allow no separate transmissions, but only Patriotic Front (PF) broadcasts. In that year, Willie Masarurwa and Eddison Zvogbo, respective publicity chiefs for ZAPU and ZANU, met at Dar Es Salaam to discuss means of coordinating their external services. It was agreed that two broadcasters from each section of the PF would work from Radio Tanzania. This was done effectively from 1978 until independence in 1980 when all Radio Tanzania transmissions to Zimbabwe ceased.

5.3.2. Broadcasting in independent Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe became independent in 1980. At independence the Zimbabwean government established a communication policy and legislative infrastructure whose main purpose was to complement the construction of the ruling party ZANU-PF's hegemony through media (Chuma, 2010: 91). The new government turned Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation into its propaganda machinery. The government focused on media control in a way that denied the citizenry a free voice, a situation the ruling party was against during the political conflicts that led to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 (Chari, 2006). This leads Windrich (2010: 74) to argue that the legacy of Rhodesia Front's censorship and propaganda has come to define broadcasting control and uses under Mugabe's ruling ZANU- PF party.

According to Mano (2007) and Rønning (2003), at independence the first task of the ruling party ZANU-PF was to transform the former Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation (RBC) by changing its programming in such a way that its service became responsive to the interests of the ruling party. It propagated the ruling party's ideologies at the expense of the electorate who became passive recipients of information they could not question, engage with or challenge. As Moyo, D (2000) observes, the ruling elite used broadcasting, especially radio, as a tool for political control and mass manipulation. The Corporation went to unprecedented lengths to destroy the oppositional voices and install ZANU philosophy as the philosophy of the people.

Rhodesian-style full state control was asserted in 1980 soon after independence (Raftopoulos & Savage, 2005: 123). The newly formed government of Robert Mugabe

staffed Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation predominantly with former ZANU guerrilla fighters who had operated the nationalist diasporic radio station the Voice of Zimbabwe (VOZ) to ensure the successful propagation of the ruling party's ideologies to the masses that were predominantly illiterate and could only understand a spoken word. Right from 1980 ideology has been used to consolidate unequal power relationships and the domination of the masses by the ruling party. Ideology refers to both dogmatic positions especially in the context of the political agenda and two sets of individual and collective beliefs (Adolphs, 2006: 80). It should be emphasised that during the war that led to Zimbabwe's independence, most schools in the rural areas where the majority of the black people lived were closed down and the literacy rate got severely affected by more than fifteen years of fighting. Radio proved to be the dominant means of communication as the broadcasts by both the Rhodesian government and the Zimbabwe nationalists were in vernacular languages that were understood by the masses.

The ruling party ensured that all other political parties did not get access to the airwaves. All songs that made reference to any other political party were banned from the airwaves. At Montrose Studios in the city of Bulawayo, a big archive of revolutionary songs from the revolutionary war compatriots Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) are reported to have been physically destroyed by former ZANU cadres who has been deployed to the station to enforce the ZANU-PF dominance and to eradicate any material that made any reference to ZAPU's contribution to the war of liberation. The station, which was by then predominantly Ndebele and situated in the opposition ZAPU stronghold, was forced to play songs and programmes that praised Robert Mugabe and his ZANU and denigrated Joshua Nkomo and his ZAPU. One former music librarian in the station lamented:

‘I watched helplessly as the ZANU thugs deployed to Montrose studios went through the catalogues pulling down every record and tape that made reference to ZAPU or Joshua Nkomo. They put them on the floor and danced on them to make sure they broke into pieces. They were singing ZANU songs that despised the contribution of the Ndebele people in the liberation struggle. After what seemed a lifetime they left the music library for us to do the cleaning up. My heart sobbed as I started cursing myself for not having predicted that such a barbaric act was going to take place. I would have hidden this material and smuggled it out of the station for safe keeping.’ (Interviewed, 17/06/1992)

At independence the airwaves got saturated with derogatory songs from the likes of Thomas Mapfumo, Harare Mambo Band, Elijah Madzikatire and many other musicians whose songs described the contribution of ZAPU in the war of liberation as insignificant, calling ZAPU a party of dissidents who should accept defeat or face the full wrath of the ruling party. Some well trained broadcasters from ZAPU were forced to leave broadcasting because of the ill-treatment they were getting from the ruling party cadres who were now in charge of ZBC despite some of them having little or no qualifications at all to be where they were put. As one former broadcaster lamented:

‘I was transferred from Bulawayo to Harare where I would sit in the office for days doing nothing. The only time when I was called to the broadcasting booth was when I was forced to read propaganda to the nation about ZAPU. I knew that all I was reading was a lie and a calculated move to humiliate my people through me for our political convictions. I couldn’t stand it. I resigned from broadcasting.’ (Interviewed 19/01/2011)

According to the respondent, that act was a calculated exploitation of the communication infrastructure which was forced to give a one sided view of events at the expense of truth and democracy so as to eradicate the contribution of the rest of the nation in the fight for the country’s liberation, making ZANU seem as the only party that liberated Zimbabwe. ZANU’s grip on power was also facilitated by the proliferation of legislation that impacted on the free flow of information and the engagement of the masses in political debates (see Chapter Three). One such unpopular legislation is Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act AIPPA 2002 which requires journalists to be licensed and accredited by the state-run Media and Information Commission (MIC). Those who violate its provisions, mainly in the

private media or among foreign journalists, face fines and up to 2 years in prison. Many journalists had been charged under AIPPA accused of publishing false information. Most interestingly, none of them are from the state media, something which raises concerns about the selective application of this law.

Zimbabwe has the dubious distinction of enjoying a continuous tradition of developing and, implementing legislation that restrict and seek to close down the democratic space, while the trend elsewhere has been to do the opposite (Lush and Kupe, 2005). A good example is South Africa which saw a proliferation of community radio stations after independence. Unlike in South Africa, the Zimbabwean government has an interest to enjoy sole control of the airwaves, a situation that denies the citizens the right to be actively engaged in debates affecting the national political process. The Zimbabwean government limits access to broadcasting in order to prevent the emergence of divergent voices that might counter state hegemony and usher in the need for action that is able to facilitate the introduction of a democratic process in the country through dialogue and unhindered citizen participation. In Zimbabwe this has led to the repetition of history in which radio stations initiated by the citizens are emerging from outside the country and broadcasting into Zimbabwe to articulate issues that cannot be freely articulated from within. This is one way in which the prevailing information vacuum can be filled by alternative media. Diasporic media as alternative media according to Hyden *et al* (2003) have a role to disseminate information in an environment where officials try to hide facts from the citizenry. Such a situation makes citizens try to address issues in different ways to bridge the gap left by government controlled media institutions. This confirms the observation by Soley and Nichols (1987) that, message restriction generates an environment in which underground communication strategies are

nurtured. This confirms their conclusion that a society's lack of openness is the surest predictor that alternative media will appear.

5.3.3. The emergence of diasporic radio in independent Zimbabwe

The diasporic radio stations have re-emerged in an independent Zimbabwe where they are commonly referred to as clandestine. Diasporic radio as part of the emancipatory project plays an important role in Zimbabwe's social transformation process by seeking to involve citizens as key players in programme production, a situation which empowers the populace in a restrictive environment. They contribute to dialogical engagement in the country to influence the country's democratic landscape. They have become an important tool for disseminating alternative viewpoints in an environment where democratic communicative space is restricted.

The diasporic radio stations beaming into Zimbabwe have made a contribution to public debate on the constantly shifting Zimbabwe crisis. Their ability to propagate uncensored messages clandestinely sourced from Zimbabwe but processed and distributed from outside the controls of the repressive system has enabled these stations to provide counter-discourses to the propaganda churned by the state-controlled media. The Zimbabwe government no longer enjoys a monopoly on the power to define the political and economic crises facing the nation, thanks to the re-emergence of diasporic radio as another form of alternative media. Moyo, D (2010) argues that the emergence of media catering for emerging diasporic communities of Zimbabweans abroad fulfils multiple roles both there and at home. According to Moyo such media provide critical perspectives on the Zimbabwean situation to Zimbabweans at home in the context of the increasing repression of private media and the

monopolisation of public debate by the government. They create interaction between Zimbabweans inside and outside the country as well as linking the country with the international community by giving the world a different view from the Zimbabwean government controlled media on what is happening in the country.

5.3.4. The beginning of oppositional radio

The move to free the airwaves in Zimbabwe was initiated by Capital Radio, a group of independent broadcasters that included Gerry Jackson and James Maridadi formerly Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and a businessman Michael Auret, (Windrich, 2010: 82). During the food crisis of 1997 Jackson took live calls from listeners on the issues of food riots that were going on around the country. The food crisis had been caused by prolonged droughts and the callers were also blaming the eminent farm seizures by war veterans who were scaring productive farmers away. The live callers were talking about several people who had been arrested as police used tear-gas to break up riots at grain depots all over Zimbabwe. Some witnesses who phoned in were saying the rioting had started because supporters of President Mugabe's ZANU-PF party were getting preferential treatment at the grain distribution centres. They said state grain depots were only selling grain to people holding ZANU-PF party membership cards.

Incidentally, according to Jackson (interviewed, 18/01/11) President Mugabe was also listening. This is believed to have infuriated him. Per the president's command Jackson says she was instantly fired from her work and escorted out of the broadcasting centre by security officials from the president's office. She then initiated the establishment of a private broadcasting station, Capital Radio. This venture was met with a lot of challenges due to prevailing media laws, such as the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Services Act, which allowed only

the government to have rights to broadcast. Mugabe reportedly opposed private broadcasting on grounds that ‘You don’t know what propaganda a non-state radio might broadcast’ (quoted in Maja-Pearce, 1995: 123).

Jackson took the government to court over its monopoly of the airwaves. It took a court challenge to bring an end to the state’s legal monopoly of broadcasting, which had been provided for in the inherited Broadcasting Act of 1957. Jackson won her case in the Supreme Court. On the advice of her lawyers, she acted very quickly to start broadcasting. Within days, she had hired two members of staff, imported a transmitter from South Africa and started broadcasting a test signal. Capital Radio broadcasting from the capital city of Zimbabwe was now exploiting the policy vacuum created by the nullification of monopoly broadcasting and went on air on 28 September 2000, six days after the ruling. Before the station was even up and running, it was closed down. The government’s response was swift and decisive. It declared Capital Radio an illegal radio station. It located the station and shut it down on 4 October 2000, confiscating its equipment from its hidden location on the roof of a Harare hotel.

‘The supreme court had ruled that it was safely legal to have an independent broadcaster. I then broadcast for only 6 days before the station was raided and pulled off air’ (Jackson interviewed 18/01/2011.)

Jackson says that she found out about the raid on the station when she took a phone call from her neighbour asking whether she was aware that there were armed men in her garden. Paramilitary Police had also surrounded the studio. Again on the advice of her lawyers she went into hiding. She then fled to the UK where, together with former journalists of the state broadcaster Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), set up a radio station SW Radio Africa (SWRA) in December 2001. According to Jackson Mugabe had illegally used his

presidential powers to overrule the supreme court ruling to shut the station at gunpoint leaving her with no alternative but to set up offshore.

5.3.5. SW Radio Africa emerges as a Zimbabwean oppositional radio station

SW Radio Africa is one of the radio stations that have been broadcasting into Zimbabwe since 2001. The station operates from a studio in North-West London and broadcasts on shortwave and medium wave into Zimbabwe as well as on the internet worldwide as a way of getting independent radio broadcasts into Zimbabwe and abroad.

Fig 2. SWRA website snapshot taken on 21/07/2013



Jackson says that their aim is to provide Zimbabwe with independent and reliable access to information. Among other objectives the station seeks to:

- Provide balanced and in-depth news coverage.
- Provide a platform for discussions and debates.
- Promote democracy and free speech.
- Provide a platform for ordinary Zimbabweans to call for peaceful change.
- Provide a platform for opposition parties denied access to state media.
- Provide voter education.
- Promote human rights and expose violations committed by the Zimbabwean State.
- Expose corruption and mismanagement by the Zimbabwean State.

Jackson argues that to date issues in Zimbabwe are made to sound extremely complex with the government pitting the former combatants against those in opposition who it accuses of being puppets of the former colonial powers. Anybody whose views differ from those held by those who directly participated in the war of liberation under ZANU is described by the government controlled media as the enemy of the state who is advocating for the re-colonisation of Zimbabwe. The ZANU-PF government provides citizens with selected information that is supportive of the government and the ruling party. Getting to know the truth under such an environment becomes problematic and a recipe for the engagement with alternative media.

In an interview Jackson said:

‘As you know there is limited freedom of expression in the country. There are a limited number of independent newspapers with a small circulation thereby providing little access to information. Our main aim is to provide people in rural areas access to debate and discussion and to allow them to contribute to programming,’ (18/01/2011).

SWRA broadcasts live two hours per day between 17.00 and 19.00 hours, covering a wide range of programmes, including news and current affairs. Its programmes are also archived

and available for streaming from the station's website. The website also breaks major stories throughout the day which are regularly cited by international and Zimbabwean news organizations.

As more and more people listen to the radio than read newspapers in the rural areas, listening to the news from radio stations domiciled outside the country becomes a ritual. As ZBC continues to lose reliability due to its function as the mouthpiece of the ruling party, even in the urban areas people are losing interest in ZBC and relying mainly on external broadcasts.

For instance, a report in the Now Daily Website partly read:

ZBC has also been deserted by listeners, viewers and advertisers who accuse CEO Happison Muchechetere of turning it into a drab Zanu PF propaganda platform and a dumping ground for party functionaries. Top managers are accused of enjoying lavish lifestyles at company expense while the rest suffer. Dead air, bumpy CDs, jerky pictures, outdated programmes, poor production, false news reports, inexperienced presenters and blatant pro-Robert Mugabe propaganda are now hallmarks of the broadcaster, analysts say. (3 June 2013)

Source: <http://zimnowmedia.wordpress.com/2013/06/03/zbc-workers-go-without-pay/>

Most homes have mounted satellite dishes to access external TV broadcasts. During the research for this thesis most respondents said they have not watched ZTV for years as the station had deteriorated in quality.

Fig 3. Residents of Mbare, home to one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Zimbabwe, are seen outside their block of flats with satellite dishes positioned outside almost every room in Harare.



Source: <http://uk.omg.yahoo.com/photos/zimbabwe-satellite-dishes-photo-152711075.html>

5.3.6. SWRA's employment of technology to link with the masses

SW Radio Africa employs modern communication technologies and social media in a way that easily circumvents political controls and boundaries. It goes deep into Zimbabwe to get information and to inform the masses about issues affecting the country and about the activities of the government which have an effect on the country's democratic process (see for example, the Marange diamond scandal below). Owing to the hostility of the Zimbabwe government to its operations, SWRA uses a variety of strategies to create a public sphere by cultivating audiences both inside and outside Zimbabwe. The reporters of the station carry out telephone interviews with representatives from civil society organizations and members of the opposition, as well as Zimbabwean academics located both inside and outside the country. They also get interviews from government officials who, according to the station, use SWRA to respond to the sentiments of the people which are expressed through the same radio station. To ensure a wider reach, these interviews and news bulletins are posted on the

station's website (www.swradiofrica.com) and can be streamed live. Full transcriptions, including comments from listeners in Zimbabwe, are also archived on the website, which links to other news websites on Zimbabwe.

The station has stringers in Zimbabwe who gather stories as they happen and send them uncensored to be broadcast on the same day, forcing the government officials to agree to participate in the interviews in order to give their side of the story through a station they consider as being the enemy of the state. The station has an App that allows the uploading of videos on to its website. Citizen participation using a plethora of modern media technologies is evident in SWRA. Citizens and government insiders who are also concerned about what is going on in the country use mobile phones to capture sensitive videos and pictures and send them clandestinely to SWRA. Some of these videos and pictures are archived on the website. The website has a dedicated video archive, audio archive and YouTube facility which allows citizens to capture and upload videos. The station links with the population through Twitter, Email, Facebook and SMS. As Bivens (2008) and Moyo, D (2009) point out, the mobile phone has a role in mediating the efforts by pro-democracy social movements to quash repression and propaganda. The diasporic radio stations have intensified their deployment of the mobile phone to reinforce their links with sources and consumers and for content exchanges with other organisations. This came about after the rapid proliferation of the mobile phone across various social sectors in Zimbabwe following the dismantling of government monopoly in the sector through its company NetOne (the first mobile cellular service provider in Zimbabwe) with the launch of two privately owned mobile telephone companies, Telecel Zimbabwe and Econet Wireless in 1998. The use of the mobile phones suggests a widening exposure of journalists to news and a widening participation of citizens in news making. The pervasiveness of the mobile phone in Zimbabwe has resulted in

innovative and creative appropriations in diverse contexts and settings through increasing the options and possibilities of obtaining information (Bivens, 2008; Pelckmans, 2009). The collapsed landline network and limited access to public phones makes the mobile phone a useful news making tool. According to Batist (2010) and Mabweazara (2011) even communities in very remote areas have access to the technology.

The mobile phone has also assumed a central place in the operations of the radio stations. It is an ideal way to circumvent government censorship in Zimbabwe. SWRA takes advantage of this technology especially in the programme *Callback*. Myers (2008) quoted in Mabweazara (2011) observes that with the aid of mobile phones, audiences are able to give feedback and participate in the programming process of SWRA without even having to identify themselves or pay for a call, by means of “beeping” the station’s Zimbabwean mobile number and being called back.

‘As you know people in Zimbabwe are too poor to be able to phone out. We have a mobile phone in Zimbabwe where people can leave their text or voice messages. We call them back. On a daily basis there is a programme in which Zimbabweans are free to express their opinion on any issue. They have a direct influence on the programme content of the station,’ (Jackson Interviewed, 18/01/ 2011.)

Presented every night during the week by Ezra Sibanda at the time of this research, the programme *Callback* allows Zimbabweans to speak (using pseudonyms) about their experiences of life in Zimbabwe. SWRA allows citizens to give eyewitness accounts of the torture, killings and harassment perpetrated by youth militias and Mugabe’s security agents.

Very often the conventional media and other forms of public forums like traditional media including the pulpits, different kinds of music genres and folklores are normally the ones embraced by the oppressed society (Nyaira, 2008). Protest music that is never played by the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) is played by SWRA. This includes

revolutionary music from America based Thomas Mapfumo who was once a staunch supporter of Robert Mugabe and is now one of his major critics. These musicians have been labelled by the government as terrorists and are on the wanted list back home. According to Kuhlmann (2010: 16) the exiled musicians use music to express their concerns about the state of affairs in Zimbabwe. Their songs can only be heard on exiled radio stations as they have been banned in Zimbabwe. Listening to exiled radio stations gives the Zimbabwean population alternative information which counters the ruling party's ideologies that are promoted by the state media. Protest music forms part of the oppositional dialogical apparatus.

The mobile phone has also increased the opportunities for sourcing and disseminating news and story ideas, mainly through subscription-based SMS alerts. SW Radio Africa introduced a free short message service (SMS) news headline service as a way of circumventing the jamming of its signals. Since 2008 they send SMS messages to Zimbabweans living inside and outside the country. In July 2008 during the presidential elections the station sent 2500 SMS messages daily while a further 1000 people per week asked to be added to the list of receivers (The Independent, 21/0/2008). In an interview on 18 January 2011 Jackson indicated that the station had some 30,000 subscribers to its free SMS service. According to a survey conducted by Adroit Consultants LLP (2010), 16.2 per cent of the surveyed population of 1000 people across the country's ten provinces indicated that they received news headlines from the station by text messages on their mobile phones, while 27 per cent of the same population confirmed that they considered the news headlines sent by text a very important source of information. One of the respondents to the survey referred to above underlined the importance of these texted news headlines thus:

'I no longer receive news headlines text messages I used to receive. My mobile number is 011 362 473. I wish these messages can be resumed as soon as possible. I last received a message on 15/07/2008. I would kindly request to have these resumed,' (Adroit Consultants LLP 2010: 15)

SWRA goes against the traditional grain of operations where the audiences are normally communicated to linearly and not interactively. The audience is empowered to influence media content (Moyo, D. 2010: 561). The SMS technology can be seen as an agent of citizen inclusion and visibility in the media. SMS (short message service, or 'texting'), while not conventionally deemed a 'social medium' is, in the African context, the dominant facilitator of new modes of participatory journalism in Africa, as many researchers have described (Paterson, 2013: 2).

It has engendered a shift from the centralisation of journalism practice to its pluralisation in which the citizens take an active part (Mabweazara, 2011: 703). As was observed in the 2008 elections, the SMS technology proved particularly effective as a news source in times of political crisis when information about the results of the disputed elections was heavily censored by the state. This resonates well with Myers (2008) who observes that, elsewhere in Africa, the convergence of radio and the mobile phone has on many occasions been important in political crises. Myers argues that the SMS technology's affordability and potential to allow for fast, unrestricted dissemination of news was seen as particularly important in the democratisation process. Moyo, D (2009) argues that for repressive regimes everywhere, the SMS obviously poses a threat, and is therefore something to be feared and controlled. Whenever the SMS news headlines carried topical news, they quickly spread through oramedia (the word of mouth.) They are also forwarded to friends and relatives through Email, WhatsApp, SMS, Twitter, Facebook, and Mobile phones. Within a short time the message reaches far and wide. Word of mouth is an effective African traditional way of spreading messages. Linked to new technologies SWRA becomes an effective way of

reaching wider communities in a short space of time. This station is also accessible online and on mobile phones with internet access making it accessible even on the move.

The use of mobile phone by SWRA has redefined the production and reception of news content from diasporic radio stations. The stations can no longer be defined simply in terms of the traditional underground radio beaming radical alternative news content extra terrestrially in a unidirectional format that does not allow listeners to speak back to their content. Rather, the collective strengths of the digital transmission platforms used by the radio stations (including the mobile phone) allow listeners to actively engage with the station's news discourses, both as producers and consumers, in a way that has not been possible in the country before. According to Atton and Mabweazara (2010) the mobile phone might be seen as an extension of traditional oral practices of news gathering and broadcasting. As has been shown above, digital convergence increases the locus of the communicative power of diasporic radio stations as it can be engaged with by using multiple platforms, thereby ensuring that its messages are as widely distributed as possible. These multiple digital production, transmission and reception strategies pose a serious dilemma for the government, which has increasingly found it difficult to suppress and control them. As Thierer points out, technological convergence has put formerly distinct sectors and their regulatory regimes on a collision course (2005: 7). Writing about SW Radio Africa and Studio 7, Mavhunga contends that they provide a good example of the way the internet has brought together print and audio into a diverse bouquet of weapons (tools) giving birth to cyber-guerrilla warfare (2008: 21). Digital technologies have thus broken the boundaries of traditional pirate radio, radically transforming it from a monomodal channel to a multimodal revolutionary communication platform whose transmissions straddle social divides in Zimbabwe.

SWRA also benefits from the efforts made by other clandestine stations and non-governmental organizations to promote short wave radio listenership by providing free radio receivers to rural communities. According to The Director of Voice of The People Radio (VOP) John Masuku, VOP ran competitions in which short wave radio sets were given as prizes (Interviewed, 29/04/ 2011).

Another important strategy employed by SWRA to attract more listeners is to bring back old favourite Zimbabwean DJs who are now residing in the UK. They include Peter Johns, Gerry Jackson, Ezra Tshisa Sibanda, Georgina Godwin, Alex Bell and John Matinde. The idea of recreating the old popular Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) station, Radio Two and Three, through these DJs has attracted nostalgic Zimbabweans both in the diaspora and at home. These are radio personalities who are loved and trusted by the listeners. That link and trust makes the listeners feel free to express their views to them.

Given that the circulation of newspapers in the country remains limited to major urban centres, the only significant source of information for people in rural, semi urban and farming communities where more than 70% of the people live is the radio (Savage, 2005)

5.3.7. The state's response to diasporic radio stations

Radio is a heavily contested medium in the country. It is a powerful ideological apparatus, which is used to propagate the government hegemony in the country. It helps the ruling party consolidate its grip on power. It is not surprising therefore that diasporic radio has received more attacks from the government than any other media as it seems to be a very powerful ideological tool, too powerful to be left in the hands of the oppositional forces. That is

because radio reaches people in their main language wherever they are in or outside the country. It is unlike newspapers, which need someone to be relatively literate to understand their text. It covers a wider area than newspapers. The government of President Mugabe is critically aware of the power of radio in the struggle over the shaping of the minds of its citizens as well as influencing public opinion abroad. That is because Mugabe used radio broadcasts with considerable success during the liberation war. He used radio to mobilise the masses to support the war of liberation. The result was the attainment of independence in 1980. He understands the power of radio. This has evidently led to his relentless attack on post-independence diasporic radio stations, which are considered to have the potential to facilitate regime change.

As has already been indicated above, in 2000 Capital Radio was attacked and closed down at gunpoint, forcing the founders of the station to relocate to the UK to start SWRA. By August 2002 the government had become so uneasy about the external Zimbabwean radio stations. The offices of Voice of The People Radio (VOP) in Harare were raided. Vast amounts of material were looted from the offices. The offices were then destroyed by a bomb that was widely attributed to state security forces, (cf. MISA-Z, 2002; and Windrich, 2010:83). VOP is a diasporic radio station sponsored by Radio Netherlands. The government's slow pace of the investigation led critics to point fingers at security agents who are suspected of seeking to silence the so called clandestine radios. For example, according to Windrich, the dismissive response from the then Information Minister Jonathan Moyo, that 'Something went wrong and they bombed themselves so they could blame the government,' while in the same breath describing the station as pirate radio sponsored by western imperialists to cause disharmony in the country, partly justifies the belief that the government was behind this act of silencing

divergent voices which are impacting on governance. If these media are not contributing to the critical discourse the government would not be so concerned about them as much as it is.

The government controls media space through a range of legal and extra-legal measures (Moyo, D. 2009). They put legislation in place, which criminalise broadcasting by any organisation other than the state controlled Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation. State machinery like the police and the army are put in place to deal with those who challenge the legislation. Ruling party operatives like the youth militia attack people who are seen to be in contact with diasporic media. The media organisations domiciled outside Zimbabwe do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Zimbabwean government. They broadcast into Zimbabwe, breaking stories the government would have preferred to keep hidden from the people or doctored before reaching the people.

A range of restrictive statutes have been introduced to limit access to information (see Chapter Three and Four). Such statutes limit the capacity of journalists and citizens to freely access and share information held by government officials who are running the country on their behalf. This curtails the ability of the media to create a dialogical environment in which citizens question authorities and articulate issues productively without fear.

The relationship between the government of Zimbabwe and diasporic radio stations has never been cordial. When Jonathan Moyo was Information Minister, he went to the extent of accusing western nations of creating clandestine radio stations and described the tone of the stations as inflammatory and fanning tribal divisions and ethnic hatred among Zimbabweans to make the country ungovernable (Moyo, D 2010). He likened the diasporic radio broadcasts to those of the Rwandan station RTML, which are accused of having promoted the tribal hatred

that led to the 1994 genocide. On this basis, the government has criminalized the diasporic radio stations, and their staff have been threatened with punitive action should they return to Zimbabwe.

On 3 November 2005, the government-run Herald newspaper published an article that referred to broadcasters and journalists working for Studio7 in America and SWRA in UK, respectively, as clowns and sellouts who are determined to advance the agenda of Western imperialist propaganda. The Minister of Mines and Mining Development during this research, Obert Mpofu has also publicly acknowledged the government's dislike for diasporic radio. At the official opening of ZBC TV2 in Bulawayo Mpofu expressed concern about what he called "the invasion of the airwaves" by the so-called "hostile broadcasts" (Daily News, 5 July 2012). He argued that as politicians they had noted with concern that their airwaves continued to be invaded by hostile broadcasts that fed the people with what he described as outright lies and half baked truth about the Zimbabwean government. Just as was observed by the Southern Africa Report (2011) which says that the stridently partisan Zimbabwean Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) is rapidly losing its audience, Mpofu acknowledged that more and more people relied on external stations, especially what he described as pirate radio stations. "Our region is now dominated by pirate radio stations ... Since Channel 2 is now here we hope that it is going to reduce the problem of these pirate radio stations," he added (Daily News, 5 July 2012).

Zimbabwe's radio signal distribution network has been steadily degenerating in the past three decades. Much of rural Zimbabwe no longer receives the national broadcaster's signals. About 70% of the Zimbabwean citizens live in rural areas where ZBC's reception is erratic. They rely on external stations. In their search for news, they end up tuning into diasporic radio stations,

which have a cultural, social and political link with them and which, unlike other international stations, address them in their native languages.

The former diasporic radio broadcaster during Zimbabwe's war of liberation, Minister of Information during this research, Webster Shamu said, "They (diasporic radio stations) will never win the war against Zimbabweans. We advise all those employed by them, wherever they are, to come back home in a proper channel than to continue peddling foreign policies, which will never succeed" (SWRA, 14 /08/2012). He also claimed that these stations are operated by enemies of the state who are being used to reverse the gains of the liberation struggle.

As Ranger (2004) pointed out, the state-owned media have placed the blame for the economic malaise facing the country on 'western imperialists', 'illegal (targeted) economic sanctions', the 'pirate' or foreign funded radio stations and an unpatriotic, intransigent, puppet opposition, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which ZANU-PF argues, is doing everything to please its perceived handlers, the British, at the expense of the national interest (see The Herald August 9, 2013). They describe the opposition as sellouts and the puppets of the West. The ZBC's signal is not covering the whole country. This is an advantage to diasporic radio stations that have a wider footprint in the country than the state broadcaster. Because of this wider footprint there is evidence that they are reaching the people better than the government radio station as was acknowledged by the Presidential Spokesman George Charamba when he said 'You will note that radio trades on sound quality, but what we are getting here is a raw deal. Foreign radio stations are performing better than ZBC, and this is not good at all' (The

Herald 10/04/2012). As they reach the people they influence them. This is unsettling for the government which wants to keep the people under control.

Wachanga (2007) observes that in an environment where unsanctioned information systems emerge the government tends to erect communication barriers to counter alternative media influence. The government of Zimbabwe is believed to have sourced equipment from China to jam the signal from SWRA and other diasporic radio stations which include Voice of America's Studio 7 and Voice of the People (VOP). According to Biener in Radio for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights (2008), BBC Monitoring observed what appears to be interference specifically targeted at both 15145 and 12145 kHz frequencies used by SWRA from 2005. According to the report, typical of the results observed by BBCM were those of the 18 April, when the 1630 GMT English transmission from SW Radio Africa was jammed from 1630 until 1644 GMT and then again from 1659 to 1714 GMT on 15145 kHz. On 12145 kHz jamming is reported to have been observed from 1645 until 1659 GMT and also 1715 until 1729. The deliberate interference was again noted on 15145 kHz from 1729 until 1743 GMT and on 12145 kHz from 1744 to 1758 GMT. Also according to Jackson (interviewed 18/01/ 2011) the jamming of Newsreel has been repeated several times since then.

BBC Monitoring confirmed the deliberate interference on the 4880 kHz frequency forcing the SW Radio Africa to use an alternative frequency. Periodic checks have shown the continued use of rotary type wireless signal jammers against transmissions to make them inaudible. In March 2005, Paris-based organization Reporters Sans Frontieres reported, that the Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ), a Harare-based independent watchdog, said the jamming of SW Radio Africa's broadcasts is being carried out from Thornhill airbase located

outside the southwestern town of Gweru, between Harare and Bulawayo where the government has a transmission station. According to the International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB), a US federal government entity, the equipment being used for the jamming comes from China, which has close trade links with Zimbabwe, especially in the telecommunications domain (Biener 2008).

Jackson (Interviewed, 18/01/ 2011) has also confirmed the interference on SWRA's frequencies, which has been linked to jamming from the Zimbabwe government since March 2005. This has forced the station to operate on multiple frequencies to evade what Biener (2008) refers to as 'Bob's Fire Dragon' – the Chinese-sourced jamming technology used by Mugabe. Jamming the radio signals has proved to be a difficult process as the equipment can hardly cover the whole of Zimbabwe. The cost of operating such equipment is also prohibitive for a country which is facing financial problems due to the prevailing economic meltdown. According to Jackson the station had to suspend its short wave signal for a while to operate on medium wave which allowed it to have a strong signal in South Africa (home to an estimated 3 million Zimbabweans) and some southern parts of Zimbabwe. To circumvent this jamming problem SWRA launched a massive use of shortwave frequencies on 18 April 2007 to strain Zimbabwe's jamming resources and also to overshadow the News 24 external SW service which the Mugabe regime was planning to launch (Biener, 2008). According to Jackson (Interviewed, 18/01/ 2011) SWRA only managed to evade the jamming for a few weeks, as the cost became unsustainable. As a way of further countering the 'anti-government rhetoric' from diasporic radio and of influencing international public opinion, News 24 was meant to be a 24-hour external news service whose primary mission was 'to tell our own story', as the then Information Minister Sikhanyiso Ndlovu reportedly put it. The government admitted that it was behind the jamming of clandestine radio frequencies when

the then deputy Information Minister Bright Matongo told Parliament that Zimbabwe was not going to allow foreigners to invade its airwaves without authority, sentiments that have been echoed by the likes of Ministers Patrick Chnamasa, Obert Mpofu and Webster Shamu.

The government has also tried to put pressure on regional governments to condemn the diasporic radio broadcasts. They called upon the Southern African Development Community to take a stand against these broadcasts, which they referred to as offensive. The Botswana government was accused of allowing the erection of transmitters that were relaying the diasporic radio signal into Zimbabwe. The government of Botswana has however consistently denied hosting such transmitters, and has even invited Zimbabwean authorities to come and verify their claim, something which the Zimbabwean government hasn't been able to do (Newzimbabwe.com, 06/09/2011).

The Zimbabwean government has also approached South African authorities to find and close down South African based Zimbabwean community internet radio station Radio *Mthwakazi* FM, run by a group of Johannesburg based Zimbabweans from the country's western region of Matabeleland. The radio station was officially launched in Hillbrow, Johannesburg towards the end of March 2010. The government is accusing the station of fanning tribalism in the country. However Gerald Ngulube, Mthwakazi FM station's Global Director, denies the allegation. In an interview on 11/04/2011 he said that the Mthwakazi People are concerned about the erosion of their history, arts and culture, especially in the region of Matabeleland, and this radio station aims to revive and promote that region which is currently being ignored by the government. He saw what he called the 'Shonalisation' of Matabeleland as an assault on the people's identity which is designed to impose the Shona culture to make the Ndebele people insignificant in the land of their birth.

Different forms of overt and covert threats are also directed at people working for these stations, as well as at their listeners in Zimbabwe. For instance an informant in this research who lives in one of the affluent Harare suburbs claims to have once been detained for a week by the police in 2008 for having been seen in possession of a mobile phone with SMS messages from the SWRA (Interviewed, 19 June 2012). Up to now she does not know how the police got to know that she was subscribing to the SWRA's SMS service. She has since terminated her link with SWRA as she believes that her phone is bugged. SWRA stringers, and civil society and political activists have been reported to be repeatedly harassed by security agents (see www.hrw.org/news/2013/03/19). NGOs have been attacked for supplying radio sets to the people.¹³ Government officials accuse the British and Americans of sponsoring a 'radio for free project' which is seen as a way of encouraging rural people to listen to anti-government messages from diasporic broadcasts.¹⁴ These threats have often been transformed into actions.

Owning a short wave receiver is a crime in Zimbabwe just as it used to be during the reign of Ian Smith. Security agents have been confiscating radio sets distributed by NGOs from teachers and other individuals in rural areas. Writing on Radio Netherlands Worldwide (RNW) Africa Desk Nkosana Dlamini said:

'Even 33 years after Zimbabwean independence, President Mugabe remains a harsh critic of the white colonial government's system. But through the latest radio ban, he is imposing the same oppressive tactics that he himself once fought against to liberate his people.' (2 April 2013).

¹³ See: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21829815

¹⁴ See: <http://www.rnw.nl/africa/article/a-radio-ban-mugabe-sharpens-old-enemys-weapon>

Teachers are generally considered key opinion leaders in rural areas, and they form the core of intelligentsia in such places (see Infoasaid Zimbabwe September 2011). As Baran & Davis (2009: 137) point out, if opinion leaders align themselves with a certain political ideology, they, will influence others who are opinion followers. The government is therefore concerned about the influence teachers who happen to be opinion leaders due to their position of influence in society have. The government has been uneasy about rural teachers and the power they wield in shaping public opinion, and they have been the targets of attacks in elections during the past few years. Their possession of radio sets that receive the so called clandestine broadcasts is considered a threat to national security. The government believes that these teachers have influenced the way the masses have been voting since the year 2000. VOP radio reported on 22 January 2007 that at least 42 radio sets were confiscated by state security agents from these locals (www.evrel.ewf.uni-erlangen.de). These wind up radio sets are an excellent idea to help the cash strapped Zimbabwean villagers access information.¹⁵

On March 1, 2013 Authorities in Zimbabwe stepped up their crackdown on independent news coverage in the country by raiding the production studios of a radio station and confiscating over 180 wind up solar powered radios distributed by Non Governmental Organizations (The Zimbabwe Mail 2/3/2013). Deputy Police Commissioner Innocent Matibhiri told a Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Home Affairs that some of these NGOs pose a serious security threat to the country (SAPA 25/02/2013). “People are just distributing them (radios) but they are not telling where the gadgets came from and how they got into the country. Under such an environment we can only suspect that whoever is doing that has some intentions that are not good for the country and until we get satisfactory answers, we will continue to confiscate those gadgets,” he said. National police spokeswoman Charity

¹⁵See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21829815>

Charamba also added to the voices against diasporic radio claiming that the radio equipment was from Western countries and was to be “used for hate speech” and to discredit the 2013 elections.¹⁶

Reports that the Zimbabwe government has been confiscating radio sets from people believed to belong to clandestine radio listening clubs is according to Moyo, L (2012) a repeat of its predecessors’ handling of ‘perceived offensive’ broadcasts. Such repressive tactics drive the listeners of clandestine radio ‘underground’, rendering any listenership survey impossible. What is interesting, though, is that, by being suppressed by a regime considered illegitimate, clandestine radio becomes highly credible in the eyes of its listeners and the mere fact of suppressing it naturally raises the curiosity and interest of its listeners, who enjoy it like the biblical forbidden fruit (Moyo, L 2012).

Moyo L (2012) argues that the close attention given to radio broadcasting by both parties here is illustrative of the perceived power and importance attached to this medium in the country’s political discourse. He argues that by suppressing clandestine radio through jamming signals and intimidating listeners, the government has inadvertently raised people’s curiosity and made these stations more visible and more popular than they otherwise would have been. He further argues that Zimbabweans are not passive victims of state propaganda. Rather, they continue to devise new communicative spaces outside the dominant state media empire and access alternative viewpoints from an array of emerging platforms.

Article XIX of the agreement signed on 15 September 2008 between President Robert Mugabe’s Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU-PF) and rival Morgan Tsvangirai’s

¹⁶ See: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21829815

Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) on resolving the challenges facing Zimbabwe focused on freedom of expression (www.lcil.cam.ac.uk). It paid particular attention to broadcasting. The article carried the ruling ZANU-PF's demand for the immediate disbandment or demobilization of foreign-based and foreign government funded external radio stations beaming into Zimbabwe since the beginning of the crisis in 2002. The ZANU-PF government promised to ensure the immediate processing of all applications for re-registration and registration (of broadcasters) in terms of both the Broadcasting Services Act as well as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The opposition in turn pledged to call upon the governments that are hosting and/or funding external radio stations broadcasting into Zimbabwe to cease such hosting and funding. It pledged to encourage the Zimbabweans running or working for external radio stations broadcasting into Zimbabwe to return to Zimbabwe, (Moyo, L 2012).

The Zimbabwean Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa made a personal plea to the British government to stop the operations of SWRA and questioned why the British government was allowing the station to operate from their country (SWRA 27 /03/2013).

5.4. The emergence of Zimbabwean diasporic websites

Zimbabwe is experiencing the emergence of online media whose activity is that of using internet based technologies to create a public sphere in which the populace can generate information, process it and share it in a more liberated way than the political environment in the country permits. The research examines how the online based media embrace new communication technologies which enable a two way communication process in which the consumer also becomes the contributor. This is seen as having revolutionised how

information is collected, processed and circulated, a situation that has opened floodgates of information in a restricted communication environment.

5.4.1. Positioning online media technologies

The use of online media gives the populace the ability to generate, spread and receive information in an affordable way which can also circumvent government control. It takes an instant for a story to move from one part of the world to another. The delivery of news has become so fast and efficient as a result of technological innovations. This has led to an increase in online news consumption and publication. According to OECDE (2010) reading news online trebled between 2002 -2008, when it stood at 37 per cent. Accessing news online affords useful benefits to consumers, such as being able to select news from a variety of sources according to interests and preferences, accessing the news through mobile technologies and being able to get the latest updates continually throughout the day even on the move. Media organisations have embraced this innovation by ensuring their presence online. This includes media that collect news from Zimbabwe, process it abroad and send it back to the restricted environment. Their online presence makes it possible to break stories as they happen thereby shifting the regime from an offensive corner to a defensive corner. This gives the online media a wider and instantaneous coverage, something which brings value to their product.

The internet has reduced reliance on traditional means of distributing information. There has been growing use of digital technologies by transnational groups for the dissemination of entertainment and news, and for maintaining links between communities. The new technologies of communication described by Hamilton (2000) as technologies of liberation are therefore seen by many as potentially restoring a critical element of citizenship, which is

the ability to communicate and express oneself without political or formal institutional constraints. Journalism, others would argue, is a term that is no longer confined to describing anyone who is trained and employed as a reporter. In today's world, anyone and everyone is potentially a journalist (Knight, 2008). The availability of affordable and portable internet enabled technologies empowers citizens to establish a public sphere where they can articulate issues effectively with no interference from, or accountability to the authoritarian establishments.

Diasporic communities who come from countries with repressive governments have been using online media to mobilize opposition, not only within the diaspora, but also among other sympathetic individuals around the planet (Karim, 1998). On-line media facilitate easier access to information and are non-linear, largely non-hierarchical, and relatively cheap (Karim, Smeltzer & Loucheur, 1998). The affordability and user friendliness of online media technology has empowered citizens to engage in the production and dissemination of media content with considerable success in restrictive environments. Francis Mdlongwa, Director of the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership at Rhodes University's School of Journalism and Media Studies in South Africa, says new media platforms, specifically the internet, have allowed Zimbabwean journalists to continue to tell the story of the dramatic collapse of their country. "You only have to look at the sprouting of several online newspapers and news agencies which report on Zimbabwe to appreciate this point," says Mdlongwa (Nyaira, 2008).

5.4.2. Background to the development of Zimbabwean diasporic websites

The hostile relationship between the government and the independent media emerged in the late 1990s, when veterans of the 1970s liberation war forced President Robert Mugabe's government to instruct the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to print money and pay them huge

bonuses that sent the Zimbabwe dollar tumbling in value until it became totally worthless and eventually got replaced by the American Dollar. The war veterans also demanded a hefty monthly allowance which eroded the state coffers. Life became increasingly difficult for Zimbabweans as the cost of living rose steeply. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) spoke out against the opulence that characterized the lives of the few rich in the government while the masses suffered. This state of affairs coincided with the formation of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trades Union backed political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which took away 57 seats from the ruling ZANU-PF party at its first participation in elections in the year 2000.

Around the same time the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe Group launched an independent newspaper The Daily News which was critical of Mugabe's administration. It started publishing in March 1999, six months before Morgan Tsvangirai and his labour colleagues in the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) formed the Movement for Democratic Change Party (MDC). In the run up to the 2000 elections, The Daily News Staff travelled the length and breadth of Zimbabwe to cover the massive political violence instigated by the so-called war veterans, the police and the ruling party's youth militia, and saw the killing and torture of opposition activists. Because of their coverage of these atrocities, journalists became prime targets for the government. They were branded terrorists, mercenaries and puppets used by the British and American governments who the ruling party argued, wanted to effect "regime change" in Zimbabwe to stall Mugabe's land grabs. Laws that intimidated independent journalists from doing their work freely were enacted (see Chapters Two & Three). Journalists and media houses had to pay huge sums in licensing fees to operate. Foreign journalists were banned from Zimbabwe as political and economic instability on the ground intensified. The repressive media laws, such as Access to

Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), Public Order and Security Act (POSA), the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) and the Interception of Communications Act, got selectively used to restrict alternative sources of information that should have been freely available in a democratic environment. The selective application of these laws coupled with the extralegal attacks on media freedoms made the situation difficult for the Zimbabwean journalists whose task was to report without fear. This resulted in a massive shrinking of media space in the country with five newspapers, including The Daily News, forced by the government to close down.

By the year 2000, Zimbabwe which was once seen as a thriving democracy was witnessing the suppression of alternative voices and the criminalisation of alternative media activity. As Nyaira (2008) wrote ‘Leaders who were once viewed as liberators had turned against the people and the independent media for “telling it like it is.” They had started bombing printing presses, banning newspapers, arresting journalists and detaining them on trumped up charges, all because they were viewed as “enemies” of the state for daring to tell what the independent newspaper The Daily News called ‘the other side of the story.’ As Nyaira (2008) points out, “Telling it like it is” had been the motto at the Daily News, whose reporters did their best to tell the other side of the story that the government did not want them to tell. Their stories had been making international headlines as the media all over the world got a feed from them. With no alternative media to use at home, Zimbabwean journalists in the diaspora set up several websites to facilitate the liberated production of news about Zimbabwe at a time when independent newspapers were closing down. Most notable of these new media is NewZimbabwe.com.

In 2002 a Daily News reporter Mduduzi Mathuthu enrolled at Cardiff University in the UK where he graduated with an advanced diploma in journalism. By the time he completed his studies, The Daily News he used to work for had been banned and the media landscape had continued to deteriorate with threats, beatings and arrests of journalists over the stories they reported. Mathuthu then started an online publication in 2004 with which to create a dialogue about what was taking place in Zimbabwe. He called it NewZimbabwe.com. As the title of the website suggested, NewZimbabwe.com aimed to establish a new version of Zimbabwe with new possibilities and challenges and to imagine a different country from beyond the physical borders of the nation (Moyo, L., 2012).

Fig 4. NewZimbabwe website snapshot taken on 21/07/2013



Interviewed about his website Mathuthu said:

‘Thankfully part of this course that I was doing involved web designing. I had the most basic understanding of web designing. So I came up with this website, New Zimbabwe.com. It was going to be a blog in which I was going to be inviting my former colleagues from *The Daily News* to write expressing their frustrations because there were a lot of frustrations at the time, particularly people were not happy about the role of information minister at the time, Jonathan Moyo. They were also not happy about the closure of *The Daily News*. So it started off as a way of us just finding space away from the control of the state where we could just shout all manner of abuse and criticisms of the government of the time. As time went on you will notice that people started owning this thing (website) and started demanding more from it because once *The Daily News* was closed there was no independent outlet for information coming out of Zimbabwe. Then when we had a good story people would start demanding more of the same and so forth. That is how it mutated into what it is today,’ (13/08/11).

5.4.3. The focus of NewZimbabwe.com

The website advertises itself through various slogans such as ‘Stop looking. Find it here’ ‘The Zimbabwe news you can trust’, ‘The biggest name in Zimbabwe news’ and ‘Breaking news as it happens’. The paper models itself on the British Tabloid *The Daily Mirror* with bold and provocative headlines in big capital letters.

The website according to Moyo, L (2012) seeks to encourage citizen participation in news making and dissemination, by establishing a platform on which citizens are able to address issues of concern to them without fear of recrimination. It draws from the idea that newspapers should do more to educate the public and facilitate debate on public issues. He notes that community stations and individuals print out stories from this website for friends and family, thereby providing information to those without access to newspapers. Moyo sees the great potential the website offers as the constitution of hegemonic media power and the challenging of mainstream news discourse through the use of social media. They tweet and email these stories to friends, relatives and associates. They even post them on Facebook. According to Moyo the website has also given rise to citizen journalism as people use hand

held gadgets like smart phones to post pictures, audio files and videos about what is happening where ever they are. This media content from the website becomes viral internationally, contributing to a dialogue about the political and economic events that impact on the populace.

According to Mathuthu the objective of NewZimbabwe.com is to stay as the best news source in Zimbabwe. He says he and his team want anyone who can go onto a computer anywhere in the world to first stop on NewZimbabwe.com. Mabweazara (2010) observed that newsroom practitioners in Zimbabwe consult NewZimbabwe.com before they start their day's work to identify leads they can follow up. Mabweazara noted a routine in a newsroom in Zimbabwe during his research and observed how mainstream newsrooms have a connection with NewZimbabwe.com.

'The Assistant News Editor walks in for his late shift at about 10:00 am and from a distance, I notice that the first thing he does upon logging onto his computer is to browse through his email, it is also within close range enough for me to discern (although without capturing nuance) that he immediately responds to a selection of emails. As he does so, he shifts to a social networking site, Facebook, and spends a couple of minutes on the site before returning to his mailbox once again, but only for a few minutes. He then shifts his attention to online newspapers and, in particular, spends quite a while on NewZimbabwe, a news website that mostly focuses on Zimbabwean issues. Eventually he stands up and takes a stroll around the newsroom, chatting with colleagues and clearly catching up on the news' (Mabweazara 2010).

The Zimbabwe Independent, also sought to get leads and insights from their readers to help them cover the Zimbabwean complex political impasse. They have also tried to emulate what NewZimbabwe.com does. As one journalist noted, "At the Standard Newspaper we have started to embrace this type of journalism after discovering that today's reader wants to be involved. He does not only read, he also adds his comment or even more information (Moyo D, 2009).

Newzimbabwe.com is credited with introducing blogs for citizen participation, encouraging an intersection between top-down and bottom-up communication. Even foreign international news websites such as the Guardian Unlimited have developed blogs to allow Zimbabweans both inside and outside the country to report on what they would have witnessed (Moyo D, 2009).

5.4.4. The deployment of new media technologies by New Zimbabwe.com

New media technologies are being used by Zimbabwean journalists and those fighting for change in the country (Nyaira, 2008). The diasporic sites they create become the cultural border between the country of origin and the country of residence (Bhabha, 1994). While media space continues to shrink in Zimbabwe, NewZimbabwe.com has managed to bypass or evade stringent government controls because of its position on the internet, beyond the reach of the Zimbabwean government. Rather than directly challenge dominant media networks, media like NewZimbabwe.com have sought to apply available market mechanisms to create and to sustain their community links (Karim, 1998). New Zimbabwe.com has become an autonomous diasporic medium which can speak for, and to, the Zimbabwean community by generating a dialogue between citizens inside and outside the country.

New media technology has rendered the attempt by the government to hinder information flow futile. As Nyaira (2008) observes, stories can now be filed via mobile phones to websites like NewZimbabwe.com. Videos are being smuggled out of the most unlikely places like prisons via these gadgets to be uploaded onto the internet and sent back to the country in a way that leaves the government fumbling for ways to address the issues at stake. This empowers NewZimbabwe.com to break a story about what is happening in Zimbabwe before any Zimbabwean newspaper or radio station reports on the matter. Eventually mainstream

media are forced to take a lead from NewZimbabwe.com and the authorities are also forced to respond to the stories.

NewZimbabwe.com features news items written by staff writers. It also uses material from other sources, including Zimbabweans in the country and overseas, Zimbabwean papers, TV and Radio stations. The website has stringers in Zimbabwe. It also gets contributions from freelance journalists and citizens who break stories that are of interest to the Zimbabwean community and also appeal to the global community.








Visitors to the website are also encouraged to join various debates on the discussion forum sections of the website in which Zimbabweans based all over the world participate. Mathuthu believes that having a wide source of information helps the website come up with balanced stories. About the government paper, The Herald, Mathuthu said:

‘What we see is The Herald taking a government position. We have to balance their story by finding out what the other side of things is and what the other parties are saying and then try to give the readers and the international audience a better understanding of the issues under consideration. Right now in the media in Zimbabwe you can get half a story in the News Day and get the other half in The Herald about the same event and it’s better to amalgamate them. That is how you can achieve parity and fairness in your coverage’ (Interviewed, 13/08/2011).

The discussion forums on NewZimbabwe.com particularly address what can be called the ‘interpretative community of in-group members’ (Mitra, 1997) given that active participation in the chat rooms requires some knowledge of local Zimbabwean languages in addition to English. They articulately engage in debates about political events taking place in the country. Some of these debates would have been difficult to engage with from within the country as such a conducive environment to do so does not exist according to Moyo, L (2012). Although Moyo believes this requires further research, it appears likely that the number of participants in the New Zimbabwe discussion forums are mainly Zimbabweans

based in the UK and other parts of the world, something which was confirmed by Alexa .com.

Table 3. Penetration of New Zimbabwe.com

| Country | Percent of Visitors | Rank in Country |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------|
|  <u>South Africa</u> | 30.7% | 693 |
|  <u>United Kingdom</u> | 18.9% | 5,678 |
|  <u>Uganda</u> | 13.1% | 170 |
|  <u>Zimbabwe</u> | 11.3% | 12 |
|  <u>United States</u> | 7.3% | 100,010 |
|  <u>India</u> | 3.3% | 95,974 |
|  <u>Kenya</u> | 2.6% | 1,477 |

<http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/newzimbabwe.com>: (visited 26/08/2013)

This could be because internet access in Zimbabwe during this research is still limited. It is also estimated that there are about three million Zimbabweans living in South Africa, something which explains the big percentage of people who have an interest at accessing NewZimbabwe.com from there (see <http://allafrica.com/stories/201311051234.html>).

The second biggest population of Zimbabweans living in Exile are in the UK where internet connectivity is significantly better than in Africa. This explains the extent to which the population is engaging with NewZimbabwe.com.

However, it should be noted that the availability of phone applications like WhatsApp, Viber and SMS has made it possible for any story read by any person online to be sent to various people in Zimbabwe who in turn distribute it through other forms of media including the traditional oramedia. It is also important to note that most mobile phones in use now in Zimbabwe are internet enabled, making it possible for citizens to interact with a range of media and with relatives and friends outside the country. Whilst it could be true that most people who engage with NewZimbabwe.com are based in the UK where the biggest Zimbabwean diasporic community live, one would note that they would be articulating the

sentiments of their relatives back home who are experiencing the brunt of the oppressive environment that is limiting their liberties.

Both the home page of NewZimbabwe.com and the forum section often carry lively debates on a range of issues, and particularly on the Zimbabwe crisis. While the home page mainly gives space to opinion pieces from Zimbabwean academics, intellectuals and politicians, the forum section is accessible to what Moyo refers to as ‘ordinary Zimbabweans’, i.e. all members who had registered with the website. The website also provides a facility to post comments on any story that has been published. This creates a dialogue among Zimbabweans and is aimed at empowering Zimbabweans to not only consume the news, but to also participate in the news production process. As Mathuthu emphasised above, the people have taken ownership of the website to use as their public sphere. Mathuthu acknowledged that at times he gets some interesting calls from people who try to find out what sources they used for their stories. This is because New Zimbabwe.com would have reported on a story that is sensitive and unsettling for the government, forcing the officials to want to take action on those who would have leaked sensitive material to NewZimbabwe.com.

5.4.5. The reaction of the government towards diasporic websites

According to Nyaira the Zimbabwean government has responded to the proliferation of online media like NewZimbabwe.com by sponsoring some of its journalists to start their own online publications supporting the Mugabe regime. Reporting on Zimbabwe on December 14, 2008, the UK Observer is reported by Nyaira to have alleged that one such website was being run from London by ZANU-PF members who have clandestinely claimed asylum. Within the Zimbabwe government some officials continue to threaten online media practitioners for publishing independent news about Zimbabwe.

Most of the correspondents freelancing for online papers and other news organizations scattered around the globe live with the threat that their houses might be searched or that they might lose their equipment and property as the government continues to try to muzzle independent reporting. Online journalists who spoke on condition of anonymity have expressed how dangerous the environment they work in is. On their day to day activities, especially in the cities of Zimbabwe, they risk being picked up by plain clothed police and locked away where they may never be discovered again. Most of the time these freelance journalists prefer to move in groups as this will minimise their chances of being apprehended by state agents. As they pursue their work they try to avoid dangerous places where state operatives operate with impunity. As Nyaira (2008) points out, there journalists also stay in touch with others through important numbers on speed dial so that in case something happens, lawyers can find out if there has been an abduction and can act before something worse happens. For instance on 14 June 2013, unidentified men are reported to have abducted Paul Pindani, a freelance journalist (see <http://www.ifj.org/en/articles/ifj-raises-serious-concerns-over-the-security-of-journalists-ahead-of-july-polls-in-zimbabwe>). ZUJ said that the freelance journalist's attackers were wearing masks when they were committing the assault.

The new technologies however, do not keep the journalists safe in an environment such as Zimbabwe. The use of internet cafés for writing and posting materials holds risk of surveillance by state agents. For instance, as Nyaira (2008) wrote, one former Daily News journalist now relying on freelancing for online publications says Mugabe's secret police are everywhere and watching. For example, one day she covered a very important press conference by a top government minister at a local hotel. Such places are usually covered by

plain clothes security agents. When the conference was over the reporter proceeded to go to an internet café in order to file her story. She noticed that she was being followed. She was left with no alternative but to abandon filing the story.

While it is the wish of online publications to keep their correspondents anonymous, in reality Nyaira argues that this is not always possible. The security of the correspondents in an environment like Zimbabwe cannot be guaranteed. On a regular basis correspondents are obliged to seek the comment of government officials, some of them hostile. When this happens, they obviously blow their cover. There is also a fear that the correspondents' phones are tapped and that their emails are intercepted. There is also a suspicion that some security agents work in the internet cafés where the correspondents file their stories, making it easy for them to monitor their activities and hack into their correspondence. One way of minimising email hacking is to avoid filing stories at a public place but using laptops on the go if possible. This is not a guarantee that hacking will not take place. According to Nyaira this is just one of the ways correspondents use to reduce the risk.

The use of new media technologies in news gathering for online publications is not without risks. Being in Zimbabwe and reporting what is going on there means that a correspondent is at great risk of being arrested, beaten or worse. Safety of correspondents writing from Zimbabwe has been a major issue for the Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), which publishes an online Zimbabwe bulletin regularly. Along with most online publications, IWPR prefers to use pseudonyms to protect reporters, but this raises issues of credibility. A few poorly researched stories have been published by online publications, largely due to the fact that the standards of journalism have gone down in Zimbabwe with the political and economic crisis. One of the stories reads:

Zimbabwean dictator Robert Mugabe was said to be close to death tonight. The 88-year-old, who is believed to be suffering from prostate cancer, flew to Singapore by private jet on Saturday for treatment. His wife, Grace, and close family members are reported to be at his bedside. Mugabe has already agreed to hand over power to Defence Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa.¹⁷

It later turned out that Mugabe was actually on his annual holiday in Asia. Because of poverty a few journalists disregard ethics and make up stories to make them appealing, as Maureen Kademaunga said at the 2007 MSI Zimbabwe seminar. The standards of journalism have also declined due to fear, lack of training, restrictive media laws and lack of equipment. For example, MISA notes that taxation on computers, telecom equipment and mobile phone handsets is an impediment to ICT usage and affects the media. The organization advocates the lifting of such taxes and calling for policy improvements not only in Zimbabwe but the whole region. This will help correspondents using online media to capture and file stories with ease from where ever they are in Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwe government, which is far behind in embracing new media technologies, unlike its neighbours in South Africa, has, as a result of the flourishing of online publications, started monitoring web based Zimbabwe newspapers. The government has issued a stern warning to state journalists working with the online newspapers and international media. On December 12, 2008 in his weekly column in the state controlled daily newspaper, The Herald, Nathaniel Manheru, believed to be Mugabe's spokesman George Charamba, threatened former Daily News staffers, saying they were running "ghost sites" to spread lies about the situation in the country. He threatened state journalists working with online publication alleging that money was being used to lure these journalists to pass on

¹⁷ See: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2127394/Robert-Mugabe-dead-rumours-Zimbabwe-dictator-close-death-fighting-life-Singapore-hospital.html#ixzz2iAzbbN5N>).

information. “There is huge, dirty money involved, part of it flowing into public newsrooms,” Manheru alleged. “The line between these journalistic misdeeds and espionage grows thinner and thinner by the day. I happen to know that the authorities are about to place a price on those concerned, and let no one cry.”

Two days after Manheru’s article, a freelance photojournalist was abducted after receiving a call from someone to meet with him. His house was later ransacked by state security agents who took his laptop, cameras and other work related items. The photojournalist had sent pictures perceived to be against the Mugabe government to news organizations outside the country. Many journalists in the country are already on the run as Manheru’s threats start to come true. One former state cameraman who was believed to be working with international news organizations by passing on video tapes to them was abducted in March 2008 and later found dead. This has an effect on the morale of *NewZimbabwe.com* correspondents who are always on the lookout for state operatives.

In August 2007, the Zimbabwe government blacklisted 41 online publications, including websites for CNN and the United States Embassy in Harare. The government claimed the embassy had launched a cyber war to promote a regime change agenda against Mugabe’s government. The list of websites was tabled at a Politburo meeting during a heated debate in the media, according to a report in the private weekly, the *Zimbabwe Independent*. Downloaded printouts from the websites were distributed at the meeting. This development came against the backdrop of Mugabe’s remarks at the Langkawi International Dialogue summit in Malaysia, aimed at fostering closer ties between Asia and Africa and between

governments and business.¹⁸ He alleged that journalists lacked objectivity and were writing “subjective views” in their reports. He questioned if the press and journalists, are driven by the sense of honesty and objectivity all the times. He was of the view that they swayed from objectivity and truth by certain notions arising from their own subjective views. Mugabe’s government has been struggling over the years to counter what it terms “negative publicity” by among other media, online newspapers, and it keeps threatening journalists contributing to the sites.¹⁹ Startled by the 29 March 2008 election results that saw the opposition MDC winning more parliamentary seats than his party, Mugabe’s government arbitrarily detained journalists and media workers that year (see Chapter Three). The government intimidated sources, obstructed the delivery of independent news and tightened its grasp on state media.

Moyo, D (2009: 7) observes how repressive regimes consider the SMS a threat, and therefore something to be feared and controlled. For instance, when Zimbabwean private mobile operator Econet introduced its “news on demand” service in 2000 to send news headlines to its subscribers, Moyo D says the government was quick to insist that operators would need a special broadcasting licence to provide such a service. In the period of uncertainty that followed the 29/03/2008 election in Zimbabwe, the mobile phone network was clogged, as people jostled to exchange information via text messages and voice calls. As Daniel Mathuthu quoted by Moyo, D wrote on his blog, ‘Relatives in the diaspora are calling to give those back at home breaking news from international channels, or calling to inquire about the peace and possible outcome of the election results, particularly the presidential results’ (cited by MobileActive.org). According to Moyo D, mainstream media benefited

¹⁸ See: www.herald.co.zw/president-praises-langkawi-dialogue/

¹⁹ See <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/10/14/bad-publicity-promoted-zimbabwe-moyo/>.

from tapping on to information circulated by citizens through SMS, email and other alternative forms of communication. As one Zimbabwean reporter attested:

‘The SMS messages sent by readers to the editors and reporters gave helpful detail when we covered stories that in normal situations reporters would drop for lack of facts. When I look at how people in hot spots during the bloody election of 2008 in Zimbabwe updated us with mobile phones and even e-mails, I become even more convinced that we actually had more citizen journalists helping us from areas we feared reaching or for lack of resources we could not cover.’ (Mokwetsi, personal communication, 15 January 2009) quoted by Moyo, D (2009: 7)

A distinct feature of the March 2008 election Moyo D discusses was the newly introduced rule forcing polling officers at every polling station to post results outside the building immediately after the counting was over. This enabled election monitors, citizens, and members of civil society to take pictures of these results using digital cameras and mobile phones and share them as widely as possible even before the official results were announced. Knowing that the state media would not participate in the publication of these results most people relied on sending them to diasporic media like SWRA, NewZimbabwe.com and The Zimbabwean Newspaper. The diasporic media had an advantage in that they were able to publish the results instantly, whereas mainstream media had to go through the rigorous vetting procedures before they were able to do so. This made state media fall behind diasporic media in the covering of news about Zimbabwe.

The activities of online media are causing concern for the establishment. According to Nyaira (2008) ZANU-PF’s secretary for science and technology, Olivia Muchena, presented a report on the role and importance of information and communication technologies (ICTs) According to Nyaira (2008: 19) she argued that Mugabe and his party had no choice but to embrace the new technologies to remain “politically relevant.” “Comrades, we are all aware that ZANU-PF is at war from within and outside our borders,” Muchena said in her report.

“Contrary to the gun battles we are accustomed to, we now have cyber warfares fought from one’s comfort zone, be it the bedroom, office, swimming pool, etc. but with deadly effects.”

Muchena warned her colleagues to pause and think about who was behind the creation of these diasporic websites, the target market of the websites, the influence and impact they have on Zimbabweans and what the image of ZANU-PF and its leadership looks like to the outside world as a result of the way diasporic websites portray it. She said the internet and mobile phones had become weapons used daily to fight Mugabe, and she added that ICTs were now rogue platforms for high-tech espionage hardware, software and infrastructure that peddle virulent propaganda to delegitimize what she described as a just struggle against Anglo Saxons.

Whilst the government is not supportive of online media like NewZimbabwe.com, it is left with no alternative but to use the same media to try and counter or respond to stories that are published on NewZimbabwe.com. The presidential spokesperson George Charamba is a regular contributor to NewZimbabwe.com using a pseudonym Manheru. Former Minister of Information Jonathan Moyo also writes a lot for the website giving the government’s side of the story pertaining to issues that are raised by the website. Other government officials give the website interviews on a regular basis to give a counter account of the stories circulating about the government’s inefficiencies in addressing issues that affect the citizens. There is evidence on the ground that news reporters and politicians want to know what the world is saying about Zimbabwe which cannot be found in local media coverage. Mathuthu notes that everyone in the Zimbabwean government has an interest in what NewZimbabwe.com does because even ministers read NewZimbabwe.com. According to Mathuthu they are hypersensitive about the foreign perceptions of what they are doing and they would certainly

like to have some authoritative kind of voice giving their side of things but they do not know how to do it. Echoing Muchema's sentiments Mathuthu said:

'They have been so much buried in stone age ways of doing things and this new technology, websites, twitters etc. are a bit more confusing to them. They are struggling to catch on and to understand how they can maximise and get their messages out there because most of the websites that are based abroad are from exiles, people who are angry with the treatment they have received from the same government. This is something they are constantly working on to try to understand how they can influence these things.' (Interviewed, 13/08/2011).

It is not surprising therefore that the government of Robert Mugabe is expressing concerns about the online activity conducted by some sectors of the Zimbabwean populace as this activity seems to be creating an oppositional environment that has a potential to alter the status quo.

5.5. The emergence of Zimbabwean diasporic newspapers

At the time of this research (2011-2013), The Zimbabwean is the only newspaper clandestinely produced by exiles from outside Zimbabwe and distributed in Zimbabwe and some parts of the world as a hard copy.

Fig 5. The Zimbabwean website snapshot taken on 04/07/12



Fairy-tale victory for Zim Cricket

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Red Cross water project

News/ Page 13

Clear arrears: IMF tells Zim P3

IZanu ifuna yonke imigodi P6

Zim fast becoming a Chinese colony? P18

The Zimbabwean

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Politburo plans to grab all diamond mines

Tony Saxon Mutare

Zanu (PF) wants to control all diamond mining in Zimbabwe, according to a senior official. A member of the Politburo, who cannot be named for security reasons, told *The Zimbabwean* last week that at a recent meeting the party's policy makers resolved to take control of all diamond mines.

"I do not know how they are going to do it, but this is what the party is planning," said the source.

The Diamond Act, still being debated by the cabinet committee on legislation, proposes giving management contracts to the private companies currently mining diamonds.

"The politburo is saying there are some companies who have imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe who are dominating the diamond sub-sector and all these mines must be taken over," he added.

He revealed that Zanu (PF) was specifically targeting Murowa and River Ranch, both owned by De Beers, emphasizing that the South African mining giant faced total expropriation.

"We have resolved that the party will continue to push for the exploitation of all the resources in the country and we are saying empowerment cannot be limited to diamonds, let alone specific deposit areas like Chiadzwa," explained the politburo member.

He said Zanu (PF) had resolved that 2012 should be a turning point in the overall indigenization and empowerment drive. The Chiadzwa diamond fields have already been nationalized and highly militarized. The companies allowed to operate there have all been appointed by Zanu (PF). They include Mbada Diamonds, which has very close links to top party officials and is run by the military, and the Chinese-run Anjin Investments.

Human rights abuses in Chiadzwa, documented by Human Rights Watch and other international organisations, continue unabated amid tight security.

Anglicans pray for good government

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Rio +20 an 'epic failure'

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Boyz Retonaz make waves

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THE MORE THINGS CHANGE IN ZIMBABWE...



During the pre-independence days of Rhodesia, the beating of black Africans was mandatory.....



In post-independent Zimbabwe, the beating of black Africans is a sign of sovereignty, apparently.

5.5.1. Putting The Zimbabwean into perspective

In year 2000 the former editor of the Zimbabwe Inter Africa News Agency (ZIANA) Wilf Mbanga, who had for many years revered Robert Mugabe (See appendix 9) was declared by the President the enemy of the state for being the founder and first Chief Executive of Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe, the publishers of The Daily News which was critical

of Mugabe's administration. That is the time when Mugabe had become publicly unsympathetic to publications that were critical of human rights abuses that were attributed to the ruling party and the government. The launch of the Daily News coincided with the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a new political party backed by a coalition of civil society organisations and the workers unions. Up to that time there was no formidable party to challenge ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe. The workers had inspired the formation of a party that proved to be a formidable challenge to the ruling party. According to Moyo, D (2008) The Daily News which Mbanga had assisted to create became a strategic conduit for venting popular discontent. Its approach served as an oppositional force to the state hegemonic onslaught on the people. The Daily News, in particular, had presented a major challenge to the ruling party through its exposure of corruption, human rights violations and general abuses of power. The paper became a platform for forces opposed to the ruling elite, and at the same time a target for numerous attacks, including bombings by the Zimbabwean government agents.

Fig 6. Staff look at the remains of the bombed Daily News printing press



Source: <http://nehandaradio.com/2011/12/29/zanu-pf-offices-in-gweru-bombed> accessed: 27/07/13

Mbanga was arrested in 2001 charged with fraud for having not indicated all the activities the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe was going to embark on in their articles of association. The case collapsed after many months of trial and humiliation. During the lengthy trial Mbanga was given bail but was kept under surveillance even when visiting relatives out of town. He complained about receiving strange visits from people jumping into his garden, opening his garage and letting themselves through his windows. He couldn't sleep and had security guards outside his house. It became apparent to him that his life was in danger. In 2003 he decided to leave the country when a Dutch Non Governmental Organization (NGO) invited him to stay in The Netherlands for a year. It was after the fatwa against Salman Rushdie and they wanted to help writers in danger.

When he was in The Netherlands the government of Zimbabwe is alleged by Mbanga to have sent him a letter telling him that he was an enemy of the country because of his writings when he was in The Netherlands. The letter, which the researcher did not get hold of is said to have stated that he would face trouble on his return. That is when Mbanga says he decided to fly to the UK instead of going back to Zimbabwe. With the closing down of the popular private newspaper The Daily News in September 2003 and with only a handful of private weekly newspapers available in the country then, Mbanga thought of supplementing Zimbabwe's media landscape with a critical voice and to offer news relevant to Zimbabweans both at home and abroad. In 2005 he founded The Zimbabwean, the newspaper for the Zimbabwean diaspora and for the Zimbabwean opposition which did not have a platform to articulate its ideologies to the masses. At the beginning The Zimbabwean was only meant to connect the Zimbabweans living abroad with events at home, but after a while Mbanga started flying copies to Zimbabwe to fill the information gap that had been left by the closure of The Daily News. According to him that was a very expensive

undertaking. To minimize the expenses he eventually decided to also print the paper in South Africa and send it into Zimbabwe by truck. That was the beginning of the newspaper which is circulating in Zimbabwe, South Africa and UK up to this day. Some institutions in some parts of the world also order hard copies for their libraries.

5.5.2. Aspirations of The Zimbabwean

A press release to introduce the newspaper in 2005 read:

More than a million Zimbabweans live in exile in the UK and more than two million live outside Zimbabwe in Southern Africa. The newspaper will for the first time give a voice to these Zimbabweans who constitute some 25% of the total population. It will build links and encourage readers to tell their own stories and those of their families, as well as articulating their fears and frustrations about the issues concerning them. (Press release by Wilf and Trish Mbanga, 30 January 2005).

When he launched the paper Mbanga promised that The Zimbabwean would be an authoritative and accurate newspaper of record and a reliable source of information for all those individuals, agencies and governments with an interest in Zimbabwe. He said the news blackout was dangerous for any society. The Zimbabwean was therefore going to ensure that its coverage was accurate, fair and balanced. The paper promised to be accountable to its readers by endeavouring to give all viewpoints, and a right for everyone to reply to issues raised. ‘ In short, we will do everything the government newspapers in Zimbabwe are not allowed to do!’ he said.

The Zimbabwean advertises itself as ‘The Voice of The Voiceless.’ In its ‘About us’ page it describes itself as being run by a group of committed and professional Zimbabwean journalists and friends from around the world who have come together to start the first

newspaper for Zimbabweans in exile. According to Mbanga the paper seeks to harness the energies and synergies of exiles, many of whom find themselves isolated, marginalised and voiceless, yet who constitute Zimbabwe's professional, skilled and intellectual cream. Mbanga sees these people as being hungry for news about home and effectively cut off from their families and each other.

In an interview he said:

‘Many, particularly those in Southern Africa, do not have access to the internet at work or at home and are dependent upon costly internet cafes and e-mail. A copy of The Zimbabwean produced by the Zimbabweans for Zimbabweans is what they need.’ (13/08/12).

According to its mission statement the Zimbabwean aims to produce and distribute a newspaper dedicated to freedom of expression and access to information for all the peoples of Zimbabwe, founded on the sacred principles of journalism, fairness and honesty. It aims to play a role in opposing everything offensive to basic human decency and hostile to peace, in order that Zimbabwe may return to the path of wisdom and sanity, and become once again an honourable nation, governed by honourable people with due respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

‘We believe in the basic right of all people to receive and impart information, i.e. to communicate. We believe in the free flow of diverse, accurate and relevant information through mass media. We believe in mass media that is accessible and answerable to the people it seeks to serve. We believe the establishment of vibrant, non-governmental mass media is vital to democracy. We believe those in positions of authority and power should be held accountable to those they are supposed to serve, and that a free media is fundamental to ensuring such accountability.’ (Mbanga, 2005).

The emergence of new media like The Zimbabwean catering for emerging diasporic communities of Zimbabweans abroad fulfilled multiple roles both there and at home. According to Mano and Willems (2009) they provide critical perspectives on the ‘Zimbabwe

crisis' to Zimbabweans 'at home' in the context of the increasing repression of private media and the monopolisation of public debate by the government. Secondly, they cover issues of relevance to Zimbabweans in the diaspora, e.g. legal issues to do with asylum applications and carry political activism aimed at exposing the injustices perpetrated by the Zimbabwe government. Media like The Zimbabwean provide news, information, entertainment and advertisements, and offer discussion forums on current affairs and challenges that form part of living in a foreign country. Mano and Willems regard these media as connecting 'the homeland' and 'the diaspora' in multiple and imaginative ways.

5.5.3. The paper's distribution and circulation

According to Mbanga as many as 60 000 copies of The Zimbabwean on Sunday are transported into Zimbabwe every week from Johannesburg in South Africa while another 60 000 are trucked into Zimbabwe every Thursday. They are distributed through numerous outlets all over the country. Instead of recycling the unsold papers they are given to NGOs to give them to the rural people for free.

In an interview Mbanga explained how much the people appreciate the paper:

'They tell me that when they go to the rural areas to deliver food the first thing people ask is "Did you bring us the Zimbabwean?" They want to know what is going on. They are thirsty for information. This gladdens my heart to know that we are connected with our readers.' (Mbanga interviewed on 13/08/ 2012).

The sentiments expressed in this quote are further corroborated by the results of the empirical activity, (see Chapter 6). The respondents to the research consider this paper to have an emancipatory effect on them. The newspaper is also distributed through various outlets in Britain. Mbanga says it is also available in major libraries worldwide, including The

Congress Library in USA. In addition to the hard copies the paper has an online version www.thezimbabwean.co.uk which is updated hourly and has interactive forums in which readers engage in a range of topics addressed by the paper. This participatory approach to news making empowers the masses and is seen as giving the masses a voice with which to express their concerns and interests.

5.5.4. The news focuses on the Zimbabwean

The paper covers arts and culture, business, sports, gender and health, social issues and news analysis. Because of the circumstances prevailing in Zimbabwe, the content has a heavy emphasis on politics and human rights. The paper has stringers based in Zimbabwe who keep the paper informed of the issues taking place on the ground. Mbanga is also well connected in Zimbabwe having been a journalist there all his life. He is also able to follow important leads himself to come up with major stories. The paper gives the population a wide choice of news written by Zimbabweans for Zimbabweans. It explicitly seeks to address Zimbabweans at home and abroad. The paper also includes citizens in the production of its content. It encourages people to send their stories, news, letters, ideas, photographs and comments.

As is stated in one of the press releases Mbanga says:

‘We believe the paper can play a role in drawing attention to so much that is offensive to basic human decency and hostile to peace in our beloved Zimbabwe. Such exposure may help the country to return to the path of wisdom, democracy and the rule of law. We believe those in positions of authority and power should be held accountable to those they are supposed to serve and that a free media is fundamental to ensuring such accountability.’ (Press release by Wilf and Trish Mbanga, 30 January 2005).

Mbanga says The Zimbabwean tries to be the mirror of the society by engaging with the readers. He says the paper encourages the people to tell the world what they think unlike

when journalists write to just report what is happening in the country. In an interview Mbanga said:

‘We want our readers to be our journalists to tell us their news, what is happening to them. We are now going into this election mode (in 2012). We don’t have journalists in the rural areas. Those civilians are important. Their stories are important. We want to hear them directly from the civilians.’ (interviewed on 13/08/2012)

5.5.5. The Zimbabwean’s use of new media technologies

According to Mbanga modern technology has been a helpful partner in enabling The Zimbabwean to publish news about Zimbabwe from afar. He appreciates how digital technologies allow citizens within the country to report news and send it to The Zimbabwean for publication. The citizens reach the editor through telephones, mobile phones, emails, Twitter and WhatsApp. They send text messages, pictures and audio files which are transcribed into text. Reports received from non journalists form the main source of the information contained in most of the newspaper columns. Citizens are able to report in their own words on issues that affect them directly. Instead of someone speaking for them, they are able to use modern technologies to speak for themselves and express their sentiments as they so wish. Some of these civilians have become regular columnists and bloggers who use pseudonyms for their protection. They fearlessly engage in topics that raise a lot of debate and comments from readers. The newspaper which has stringers in Zimbabwe and other countries of the world also gets contributions from freelance journalists who break stories that cannot be written by a publication in Zimbabwe. The analysis column has blogs that address a range of political and social issues the bloggers would like to contribute to the readers. The newspaper has a facility to send free news bulletins directly to the readers’ desktops or mobile phones.

5.5.6. The impact of The Zimbabwean in information generation and distribution

The stories published in The Zimbabwean are stories contributed by the people in Zimbabwe. They want their stories heard. However, they cannot get them published within the country. They rely on Zimbabwean media domiciled outside and The Zimbabwean Newspaper is the alternative. Readers of the newspaper share the stories with friends and relatives through word of mouth, Twitter, Facebook, Email, SMS, and telephone. What is printed in 60 000 copies ends up being known by more than 60 000 people who would have bought the papers. Those who cannot get the hard copy of the paper access it on line. The online presence of the paper is an added bonus in that anyone who has access to the internet can read it. The website has also got a facility for readers to post comments on stories. This is very important in that it creates participation from readers who are given a chance to debate on issues affecting their lives. Such interactivity has also encouraged bloggers to participate in the paper. Bloggers address a range of issues that are of interest to their communities. These blogs draw the people's consciousness to political, social and economic debates. They help them adopt positions they would like to support to facilitate the propagation of their ideologies and the countering of dominant ideologies that are promoted by those in control of major information outlets in the country.

To prove how influential The Zimbabwean is Mbanga said:

'I know for a fact that a number of governments subscribe to The Zimbabwean. We know that a number of governments read our stuff on the website. A lot of universities also subscribe to the Zimbabwean. Even American universities want a physical copy. The library of The Congress in USA subscribes to the paper. Newspapers, radio stations and TVs here in Europe all quote The Zimbabwean. From time to time I go on the BBC and other media commenting on what is going on in Zimbabwe. We do have an influence. Our voice is getting out there,' (interviewed, 13/08/2012)

The Zimbabwean is published in English and two major vernacular languages which are Shona and Ndebele. This, according to Mbanga is to ensure a wider representation of the

views of the population who find it easier to articulate their views in their mother tongue. Each story is firstly written in English. It is then translated into Shona and Ndebele on the same paper and website for those who read it online. This entices people from all regions of the country to easily relate to the paper and embrace its distribution, (see Chapter 2 for linguistic distribution in the country). Mbanga says his paper carries more news about the people and not about leaders. According to him, other newspapers concentrate on the elite and exclude the masses.

5.5.7. The government's response to diasporic newspapers

Independent newspapers have also been targeted by the government. According to the editor of The Zimbabwean Newspaper Wilf Mbanga, there are reports of copies of The Zimbabwean being confiscated and burnt in Harare and different parts of the country where the ruling party resents alternative media circulating and influencing opinion among the masses. According to Mbanga (interviewed, 13/08/2012) the paper's reporters also operate under fear. They publish stories that challenge the government only with their pseudonyms. They are at times intimidated and beaten up once discovered. They are vulnerable and they risk a lot to have their stories published. Mbanga considers Mugabe as being bent on silencing the democratic voices that are advocating for access to information and freedom of speech. Mbanga says the government of Mugabe tries to employ intimidating tactics in the hope of silencing dissent that is instigated by publications like The Zimbabwean Newspaper.

The head of the Zimbabwean government's Media and Information Commission (MIC), Tafataona Mahoso, referred to The Zimbabwean Newspaper as 'A gigantic media fraud' and accused Mbanga of 'media dumping', suggesting that:

The newspaper is funded by foreign donors, offered at a price that is highly subsidised and therefore threatened to 'undermine national, duly registered and truly sovereign publishers who are making an honest and transparent living by informing their audiences,' (Press release by Tafataona Mahoso, Media and Information Commission, *The Zimbabwean* is a gigantic media fraud, (The Zimbabwean 17 February 2005.)

Zanu PF did not perform well in the 2008 presidential elections. This unexpected poor performance was according to Mbanga attributed to the activities of Zimbabwean media organisations operating from outside Zimbabwe. Mbanga highlighted the concerns the government has about these media thus:

'After 2008 Mnangagwa, who was Mugabe's agent said Mugabe had lost the elections because of *The Zimbabwean* and SWRA. He said those two media organisations had poisoned the minds of the people. That is why they voted against Mugabe. He promised to respond,' (Mbanga interviewed 2012)

Within a week Mbanga says his truck carrying 60 000 papers was hijacked by eight men carrying AK 47s after crossing the border from South Africa into Zimbabwe. They took the driver into their 4x4 truck. They turned into a dirt road and went way behind the mountains where they set the truck and its cargo on fire, beat up the driver and robbed him of cash and food."

'...so it could be a way of wanting to silence us before the planned elections for next year. It could be, I don't know, I'm just guessing.' (Mbanga talking to Guma of SWRA, 09/11/10)

According to Mbanga The Zimbabwean Newspaper has been a constant thorn in the side of the Zimbabwean authorities. Following the hijacking of his truck, the Mugabe regime imposed a tariff barrier on The Zimbabwean newspaper. This barrier reduced the newspaper's print run.

A warrant of arrest has also been issued for Mbanga who is accused of publishing a story after the 2008 elections which undermined President Robert Mugabe. The story involves the suspicious circumstances under which the late Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Director for Polling, Ignatius Mushangwe was murdered. After the banning of *The Daily News*, *The Zimbabwean* was, according to Mbanga, the only paper that carried all these important stories. They were breaking the stories the government did not want to be published. In an interview Mbanga said:

‘I was denounced personally. There is a warrant now for my arrest. It is alleged I published a story about a meeting Mugabe had with his generals in which they were plotting a murder. Of course we never carried the story. That story appears nowhere in our papers. But despite all the proof our lawyers have provided the warrant still stands. They are cross with *The Zimbabwean* for not only costing Mugabe the last elections, but also for unearthing a number of stories which they did not want published,’ (Interviewed 13/08/ 2012).

Criminal charges of “publishing falsehoods” have also been brought against the directors of Adquest, the company that distributes *The Zimbabwean Newspaper* inside Zimbabwe. According to Mbanga the workers and the directors of the company have been subjected to harassments and detentions, accused of spreading falsehood about Mugabe. These measures show that some sectors of the Zimbabwean government still tend to react in a paranoid fashion and are clearly not ready to tolerate free expression (Reporters Without Borders, 2010).

The Government authorities are however constantly forced to respond to some of the stories published by *The Zimbabwean*. It can be argued that their responses are an indication that the newspaper cannot be ignored as it has a contribution to political debate and influence on the people, something that can affect the operations of the government organs and subsequently the ruling party’s hold on power. The reaction of the government to the newspaper indicates

that the newspaper has an effect of filling in the media space which the local newspapers cannot fill. Investigative stories that are published in the newspaper expose a lot of issues pertaining to bad governance, corruption, economic mismanagement and undemocratic practices of the government.

Alternative media activity like The Zimbabwean are viewed by the Zimbabwean government as a form of activism which is aimed at undermining the gains of the liberation war, especially when media draws people's attention to social injustices (Nyaira, 2008). Nyaira sees the status quo as overlooking the importance of the approach and philosophy which is based on inclusion, optimism and the belief that all have a role to play in using communication as a way to achieve total liberation. According to Nyaira the starting point is not only speaking out about injustice, but also the willingness to receive information about the injustice so that the nation doesn't turn away from it. The government seems to be against the establishment of dialogical institutions that get the populace discussing issues that affect their lives. This limits the extent people can participate in democratic media activities as such activities are criminalised in Zimbabwe. Such a situation puts the contributors to the alternative media at risk.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the emergence of diasporic media in Zimbabwe with the help of three case studies, a radio station Short Wave Radio Africa (SWRA), a website Newzimbabwe.com and a newspaper The Zimbabwean. The chapter discusses the factors that led to the creation of these media. It has examined how these media interact with the populace in a restricted media environment like Zimbabwe to be able to get stories from the

country, process them outside the country, and send them back into the country for the consumption of the population, much to the discomfort of the Zimbabwean government which has labelled them enemies of the state. The chapter has shown that these media use modern communication technologies, especially those that are internet enabled to facilitate a dialogical engagement that has a potential to influence democratic change. It has been shown that citizens are taking advantage of the diasporic media to articulate issues they are not able to articulate through media domiciled within the country. As Dare (2007) argues, any people with a certain conscious retention of their inalienable freedoms, including that to determine their own fate, will not sit by idly watching the very future of society go to rot. In Zimbabwe they have taken action by establishing alternative media from the diaspora through which they challenge the status quo.

The impact of this conscious activity by citizens to get their voice heard through diasporic media can already be seen by the reaction of the government towards these media. The hostility of the government towards the diasporic media serves to acknowledge the impact these media have in effecting political change. These measures are, in many ways, reminiscent of the handling of nationalist broadcasts by the Smith regime in Rhodesia in the 1960s and 1970s. Ironically, the government reaction to these media has inadvertently given them much-needed publicity and therefore created curiosity among people who perhaps never tuned in to the stations or visited the websites and read the newspapers in the first place. This antagonistic relationship between the government and the diasporic media further illuminates the importance of understanding the effect of these media in the political landscape. It justifies the research and raises interest in understanding the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in the country. The hostile response to the activities of oppositional voices in Zimbabwe helps to endorse Sun Tzu's

argument that the positioning of such media in a conflictual situation is for the perpetuation of an information warfare which is a weapon that has an indisputable impact in a restricted environment where information propagation and access is curtailed. It further affirms that well crafted and propagated messages have the ability to conscientise the masses into charting a path to a democratic environment in which the voices of all citizens are given due prominence. A dictatorial state then becomes concerned about these media whose opposition it cannot ignore. The government is aware of the fact that such opposition has a potential to lead to an activity that can alter the democratic environment and shift the power of the status quo. This concern is an indication that the diasporic media are capable of offering a formidable opposition to the state media which are currently used as an ideological tool by the ruling party. The concern about these diasporic media and the amount of energy and resources put by the government to silence them is testimony to the influence these media are capable of having in the country.

Having seen how these media have influenced political opinion and activity in the past, it goes without saying that these media have a role in Zimbabwe. The diasporic media hope to mobilise social consent which can lead the government to construct and maintain a legitimate dialogue with the people and civil society by channelling and responding to societal expectations and aspirations and by satisfying the people's material interests (Hay, 1996: 25). It is the interest of this thesis to establish how the citizens, using limited resources at their disposal can take advantage of the public sphere created by diasporic media to effect political change in the country. The link the populace have with these diasporic media will be further evaluated through the analysis of the findings of the empirical research carried out in this investigation which is detailed in the next chapter. The results of the empirical activity and

their analysis will facilitate our understanding the role diasporic media have in effecting political change in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER SIX: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF DIASPORIC MEDIA IN EFFECTING CHANGE IN ZIMBABWE

6.1.1. Introduction

As part of this research, a detailed empirical work has been conducted to generate data that will be employed in an attempt to facilitate an understanding of the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe. This chapter provides the findings generated by the bulk of the empirical research. The chapter examines the way the populace engages with the case studies of the previous chapter in order to understand the extent of the connection between these media and the populace. Some of the data collected from the empirical activity is quantitative and expressed statistically with graphs generated using Microsoft Excel. This quantitative data is followed by qualitative data that has been generated by the open ended telephone interview based questions. As Priest (2010: 75) explains, these questions are used when the researcher does not want to prejudge the respondents' possible answers. Open ended questions enable respondents to elaborate on the reasons for their answers or comment on the survey as a whole. During this empirical stage of the thesis the respondents in the sample had a chance to define and interpret issues constructively in their own words as they explained the significance of their engagement with diasporic media in a restricted communication environment. The responses have been thematised and this thematisation will be vital in drawing conclusions about the significance of Zimbabwean diasporic media in effecting democratic change. Drawing conclusions from them is like investigative journalism, but as Priest (2010: 164) observes, it is more systematic, often relying on a broader range of data and identifying key elements behind a sequence of occurrences. According to Priest, many qualitative studies base their conclusions at least in part on the systematic identification of reoccurring themes within a body of visual,

verbal or textual material such as interviews, focus group transcripts, media texts, or notes from a participant observation.

The qualitative and quantitative data from this research present evidence of the engagement of the populace with diasporic media and the factors that encourage the reliance of the people on Zimbabwean media domiciled outside the country. Various issues have emerged from the case studies from the entire research, that illuminate on why there is this diasporic media activity in the country more than three decades after independence, during the time when diasporic media should have folded up to come home to operate in a democratic environment where they can have a contribution to the development of the country. The chapter interprets the findings of the research through the relevant elements of the analytical framework deployed within a Constructivist perspective. This points up the intentional intervention of the people through their media activities with the purpose of creating a change in their circumstances.

6.1.2. The empirical process used in this research

It can be noticed from the mission statements of the case studies that they seek to facilitate the democratisation process in Zimbabwe by helping citizens to access information and express themselves without fear of being persecuted for their views (see Chapter Five). As was shown in Chapter One and Two, these are the core elements of the political change Zimbabwe needs for it to meet the fundamental principles of democracy which is according to Abraham Lincoln, in Young (1996), a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, an ideal form of governance of a modern state in which power, according to Linz and Stepan (1996) is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system.

The ability of these case studies to effect the envisaged democratic change depends on how well they engage with the population on the ground and how well the authorities respond. The acquisition of that knowledge has been facilitated in this research by approaching more than 400 people to take part in a short telephone administered interview. From this exercise, 200 people agreed to participate. The interview sought to establish what percentage of the sample engaged with each medium, how long they have been using the medium, how regularly they did so and what they benefitted from this engagement with the case studies. This helped to establish if at all these media were reaching the people. Without that being ascertained it would have been a futile undertaking to even talk about their effect on political change.

To cut the cost of telephoning Zimbabwe from UK, the researcher used software called Localphone which allows the generation of a UK number and linking it to an international number. The researcher was then able to call international numbers as if he was calling UK numbers. There are people who have got Skype on their mobile phones and computers in Zimbabwe. The researcher was able to talk to those people for free. Towards the end of this research a new App called Viber came up. This gave the researcher the ability to talk to people who have an internet connection on their phones for free provided they had also downloaded Viber.

Ensuring the validity of the people's responses when they were talking to someone they have never met raised ceilings. Whenever a researcher interacts with participants, the latter will

assess how they ought to respond. Stubbs (1984: 21) observes that speakers constantly take account of their audience by designing their talk for their hearers. He observes that the speaker finds out what the audience would like to know in order to present the information he thinks they would like to hear.

This therefore makes it unrealistic to take the information given by respondents at face value as they have a tendency of first deciding what suits the researcher to ensure that they indeed give him what he is expecting. Any research of this nature, therefore, has a margin of error which needs to be compensated by other sources of data in order to come up with conclusions that can be relied upon. The primary data findings of this chapter will therefore call for a critical examination in Chapter Seven where they will be analysed in conjunction with data gathered from secondary sources.

The percentage of households owning a radio in Zimbabwe, according to the Adroit Consultants Report LLP (2010) has increased from 80.9% in 2006 to 87.6% in 2010. Assuming that the people who own Short Wave receivers are likely to engage with SWRA and other radio stations operating from the diaspora, one may expect that some Zimbabweans do engage with these stations at different times with some listening to these stations more regularly than others as will be shown in the graphs of the research findings below and the interpretation of the research results in Chapter Seven.

The average household in Zimbabwe has 4.76 persons,²⁰ with some extended families having an average of about 10 persons. Listening to the radio is a family event that takes place daily,

²⁰ See <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Zimbabwe.html>

especially in the rural areas where there are few television sets. According to the presidential spokesman George Charamba, those who are lucky to have TV sets rely on external station using satellite dishes. ZBC's signal cannot reach them because of the poor equipment the station uses.(see <http://allafrica.com/stories/201204101041.html>).One would therefore assume that the respondents to the telephone interviews represented more people than themselves making it possible that more people are listening to the radio at a time. After listening to the radio they talk among themselves and also engage dialogically with other members of the community in the true African tradition. Even those who did not listen to the broadcasts end up knowing what they were about. The cross pollination of ideas has an impact on the formation of opinions among citizens, especially considering that owning a radio is a status symbol which automatically makes the owner of the radio influential in the community.

However, listening to the radio station on its own is not an indicator of how influential the station is in formulating ideas and opinion. The research therefore went further and employed open ended questions in order to seek the opinions of the respondents in their own words which were later subjected to critical discourse analysis. Language is the key vehicle for the expression of ideology. The analysis of corpus data lends itself to this area of research (Adolphs, 2006: 80). According to Adolphs when it comes to the study of ideology, the choice of words is probably the most important factor in the research design process, its main aim being to discover the stance taken by an individual or a group of individuals towards other members or issues in a society (p81). This study explored how ideological orientations of the respondents were expressed by the way they used language in their responses. The research went on to analyse the manifestation of ideology in the spoken discourse, ideology which has been imparted to the respondents by the media they are exposed to. It should also be pointed

out that different people may give a different meaning to the same text depending on their understanding of the social, political and economic situation under consideration. However, as Beaugrande (1999) cited in Adolphs (2006) argues, a more neutral interpretation of the term ideology as a set of beliefs allows for a more inclusive study of different types of discourses in order to get around the problem of subjectivity. In this research a great deal of care has been taken to try to interpret the discourse as objectively as is possible under the circumstances.

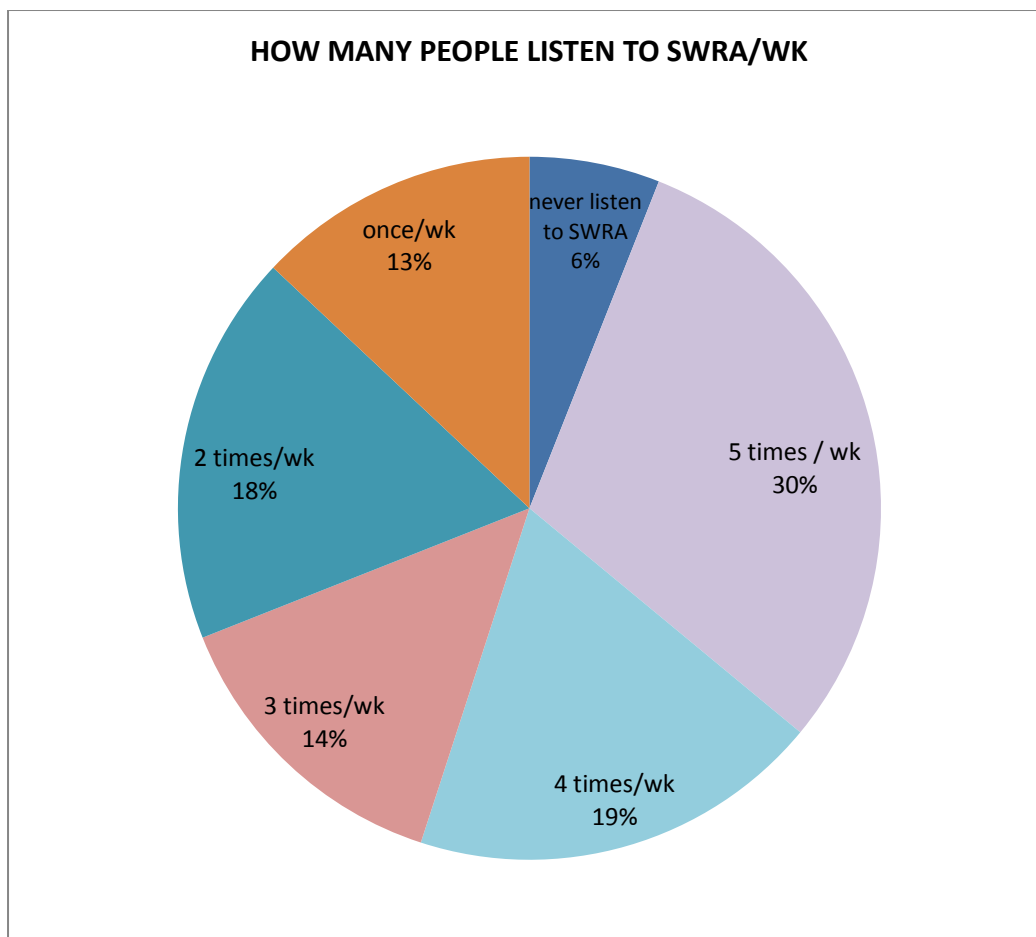
6.1.3. The process of conducting the interviews

The researcher phoned the participant, introduced himself and invited the participant in line with the invitation letter (Appendix 1) to participate in the interview with an assurance that s/he would not be identified by name if s/he did not want to be identified. The participant was then given information about what the research was all about (see participant information sheet Appendix 2). The consent form (Appendix 3) was then read to the participant to ensure s/he understood that at any time during the interview s/he was at liberty to pull out. After getting the participant's consent, then the interview resumed either in English, Ndebele or Shona. Responses to closed questions were entered into the response sheet while the open ended questions were transcribed after the interview. The interviews were either recorded with the Pamela call recorder or on DM20 voice recorder. The whole process of phoning the respondents, reading relevant forms to them, interviewing them and transcribing individual responses took between 30 minutes to 45minutes. There are some who were sent the documents via email. A significant amount of time was spent on follow ups and persuasion to encourage them to respond to the questionnaire. At the end not all of them responded to the emailed questionnaire. There are also some potential participants who were called on the phone, but who refused to take part. Rejection is something the researcher had to endure until he got his target sample.

6.2.1. Understanding the people's link with SWRA

The research results showed that there is an engagement between the people and SWRA whenever the station is on air. There are those who ritualistically listen to the station for the five days per week it is on air, whereas there are some who choose to listen to it once per week when there is a particular programme they like or when they have access to the radio receiver. There is evidence that some people never listen to the station at all (see fig. 8 below).

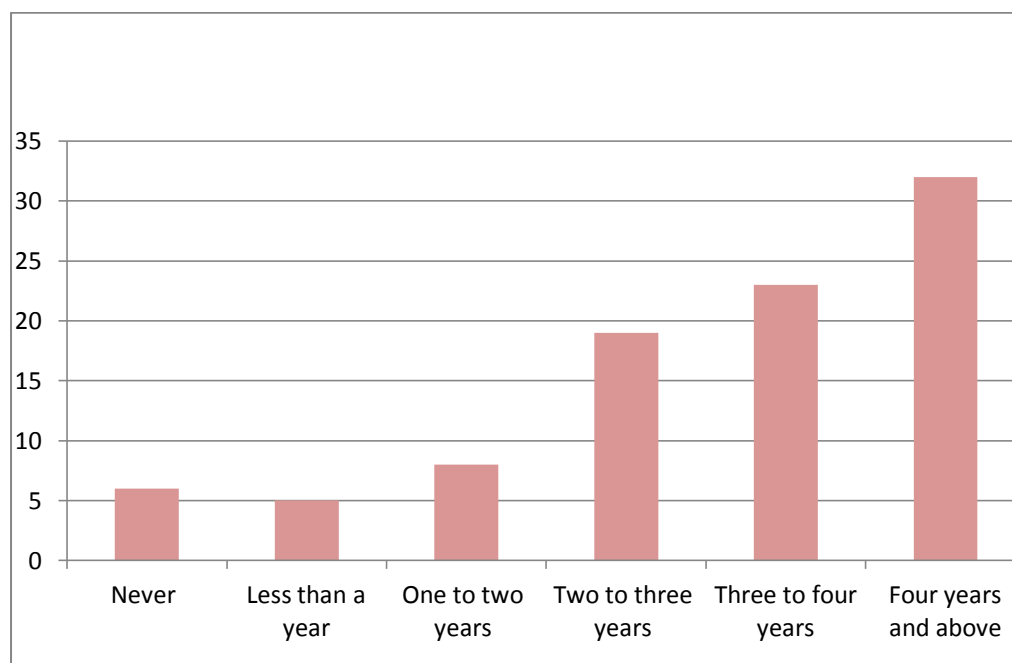
Fig 7. How often do you listen to Short Wave Radio Africa?



The respondents indicated that some of them did not listen to the station every day of the week. They gave a number of reasons to account for the variation in the number of days they listened to SWRA. For instance, some indicated that on Fridays they would be on buses

heading to their rural homes during the times of the broadcasts. Others would be doing some late shopping. There is also transport congestion to residential areas on Fridays, something which makes other people get home late and find the broadcasts over. This congestion is caused by the fact that most people go to and from work on foot during the week. They use public transport when they get paid on Friday. Others consider Fridays as the only time they can go out clubbing as they would not be going to work on Saturdays. Urban and peri-urban areas suffer from power cuts which are attributed to load shedding. Power is cut for several hours without notice most evenings. High density suburbs are the ones which get more power cuts as compared to low density suburbs where politicians and other influential people reside. People in the rural areas whose daily routines are basically the same indicated that they listened to the radio station from Monday to Friday.

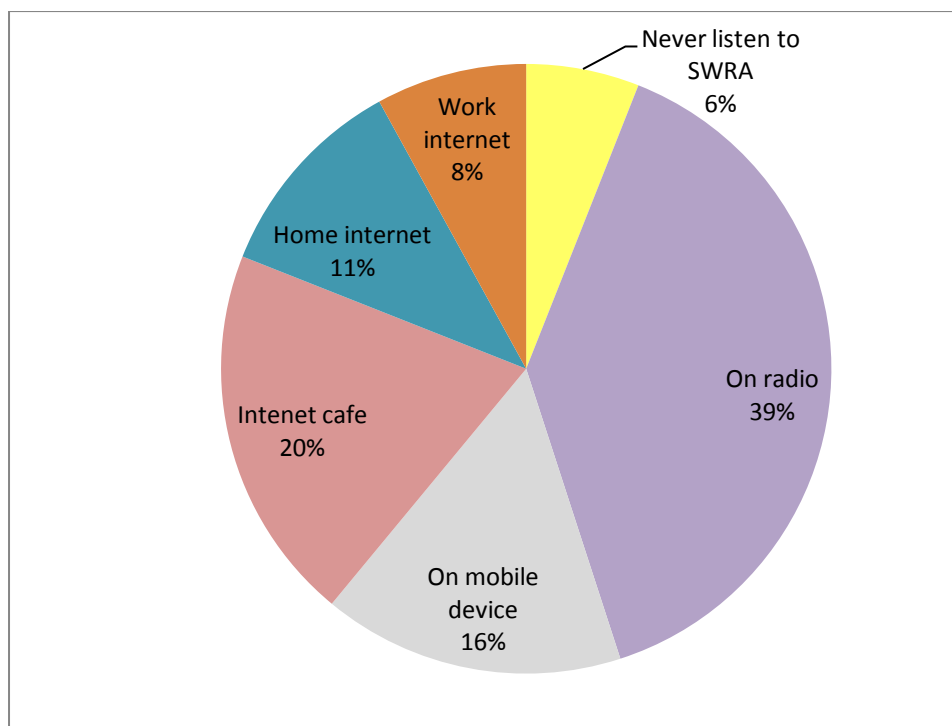
Fig 8. How long have you been listening to SWRA?



The findings show a significant engagement with SWRA which broadcasts on Short Wave and Medium Wave. As Chapter Seven will show, diasporic radio stations seem to have a better penetration than the national broadcaster ZBC. Much of ZBC studio and transmission

equipment is old and obsolete. The Zimbabwe Parliamentary Committee on the media and information technology says ZBC radio broadcasts covers less than 45% of the country (See Zimbabwe Media and telecoms landscape guide, September 2011:18). The SW and Medium wave transmissions have a wider coverage as their signals do not move in a straight line. As a result, they are not affected by the terrain like Frequency Modulation (FM) whose signals move in a straight line for a limited distance before they are boosted again. As a result, the majority of the respondents in the sample say they access SWRA on radio better than ZBC who use FM transmitters (See pie chart below)

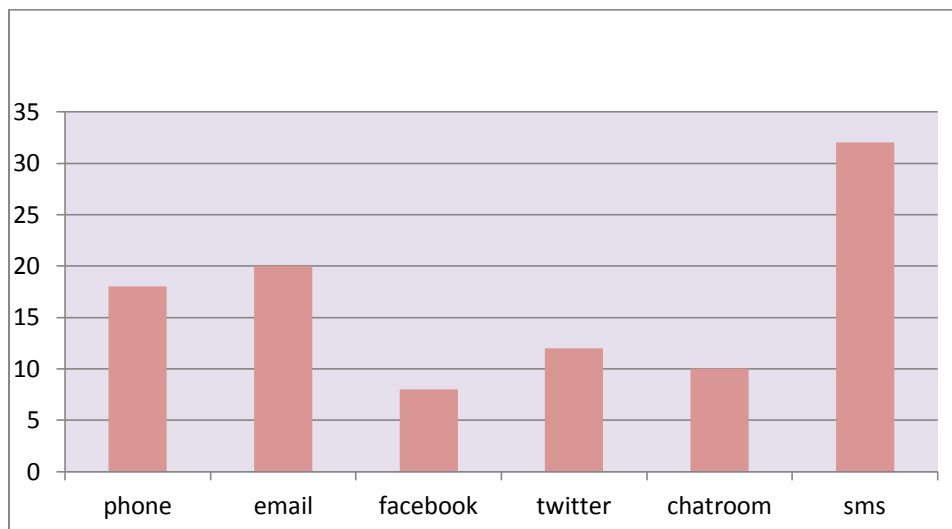
Fig 9. What facilities do you use to listen to SWRA?



SWRA is an interactive radio station which has an established two way communication with the listeners as opposed to ZBC's monomodal and traditional approach which predominantly talks to the people and not with the people. SWRA has established an interactive platform which allows people to contribute to programming through phone-ins, Emails, Facebook, Twitter, Chartroom and SMS. On the SWRA website, there is a slot for bloggers' and

readers' comments. When asked how they usually interact with SWRA the sample gave responses shown in the graph below.

Fig 10. How do you interact with SWRA?



6.2.2. Qualitative data about SWRA derived from the empirical process.

Having established how long they have been listening to SWRA, how often they listen to SWRA, and how they interact with the station the research went on to utilise open ended questions which generated qualitative data on what the respondents benefited from their engagement with diasporic radio stations like SWRA. The reason for using open ended questions was to give the respondents an opportunity to express in their own words what they felt about the impact of the case studies in their lives. Their responses were then arranged into themes to facilitate easy interpretation.

6.2.3. What motivates you to listen to SWRA?

The respondents who said they listened to SWRA were asked what motivated them to listen to the station. Most of them indicated that they tuned to the station to get truth as they considered ZBC to be churning out government propaganda that did not give them accurate facts about what was going on in the country. The respondents seemed to believe that ZBC had lost credibility by being the mouthpiece of the ruling party instead of being the public service broadcaster whose mandate is to inform and educate the nation. They described SWRA as a station which tells them the truth, and which affords them freedom of expression and a platform to discuss political events without censorship. One respondent elaborated by saying :

‘I am motivated to listen to SWRA because its content is not muzzled by those in power and they give a relatively true picture of what is going on in our country. To a greater extent they have shaped the politics of our country since even government officials are forced to respond to issues which government controlled media like ZBC and The Herald always swept under the carpet.’

Another notable response was from a villager who said:

‘We are tired of listening to the lies on ZBC. We want truth. SWRA tells us what ZBC cannot tell us as ZBC is controlled by the government and has to say what the government wants people to know and not the truth. On SWRA we hear something new which is not broadcast by ZBC. SWRA is the true voice of the people and not the voice of the government.’

A lady who preferred not to be named said:

‘ZBC is all about Mugabe, ZANU-PF, Ministers and government officials. They do not care about ordinary people. Listen to the news and you will understand what I am talking about. They will even tell you what Mugabe had for lunch than address the problems facing the people. Thank God there is SWRA. Now we can hear news from the people themselves.’

The respondents seemed to believe that without the services of stations like SWRA which have a direct cultural, political and social connection with the country, issues about corruption in the highest echelons of the state would be kept hidden from the masses and the

voice of the people would never be heard as they perceived the country to be devoid of freedom of expression. They feel that the exposure of issues the government would have preferred to keep hidden from the populace has forced the world to speak out and the Zimbabwean leaders to do some introspection on their conduct. One such issue the respondents cited is the blood diamond scandal of Marange which has been extensively covered by diasporic radio stations. This has resulted in the international community talking about the human rights abuses in the mining area and asking the government to take action to address the situation. During this research the Kimberly Processing Authority had banned any trade in Zimbabwean diamonds and the leaders had been given targeted sanctions.

An office worker in Harare responded to the telephone administered questionnaire by saying:

‘When ZBC had been doing all in its power to cover up about events at the Marange mines, SWRA exposed murders, rapes and a host of other human rights abuses being carried out by the politicians and the military in the mining fields. If broadcasters like SWRA had not picked up these stories, the world would be thinking that all was well in Zimbabwe.’

An elderly lady from Mashonaland said:

‘Only a person with no children of his own can perpetrate such brutality on other people’s children. What I heard on SWRA broke my heart. The ancestors have cursed this land. A wise king does not kill his subjects like Mugabe does. Otherwise he will remain with no one to rule’

6.2.4. How trustworthy do you consider SWRA to be?

When asked to evaluate the trustworthiness of SWRA the respondents concurred that the station had the ability to go to the ground and speak to the people as opposed to ZBC which concentrated on the voice of the elite.

One of the Zimbabwean respondents working in South Africa whose views were echoed by many respondents in the country said:

‘I trust SWRA because most of their reports are verifiable, especially when you are back at home. I for one used to be a policeman and could verify most of the sensitive reported issues from most of their sources. I trust SWRA because it engages with the people on the ground and the people in powerful offices to give people a balanced view unlike ZBC whose stories are about politicians and never about the people. SWRA talks to common people on the ground, forcing those in positions of power to address the concerns of the people.’

Kadende said:

‘These media always interview people in Zimbabwe. What they are broadcasting are voices from Zimbabwe. It gives people an enabling platform to have their say. What the station says is what the people are saying. (Interviewed 20/04/2012).

The station director Jerry Jackson confirmed that the SWRA encourages people to contact the station using pseudonyms to talk about what is going on where they are. She confirmed that the intention of SWRA was to make the listeners active programme makers on the station.

A nurse from Bulawayo said:

‘I never waste time listening to ZBC. They think they are ZANU-PF. All they ever do is sing Mugabe’s praises. That is not what a public broadcaster should do. What they are doing is criminal as we pay radio licences for the service we do not get. Short Wave Radio Africa is a trusted source of information about things happening in Zimbabwe. I prefer to listen to them...’

There are however some respondents who expressed that they did not trust SWRA just as they did not trust ZBC. They preferred to listen to all stations they can access to get more information out of which to draw their own independent conclusions.

One respondent who is a teacher in Mashonaland East said about SWRA reporters:

‘These are the same people who were parroting ZANU-PF hegemony when they were working for ZBC. Now that they have fallen out with Mugabe, they start speaking against him. Why did they not do so when they were still working for him? Had they not fallen out with him would they not be singing his praises like Reuben Barwe (a ZBC pro-Mugabe reporter)? I listen to them of course, but at the end of the day I make up my own mind as I feel these are angry dogs barking at their former master for denying them the bones from his dinner table.’

An academic at one of the institutions of higher education said he did not trust SWRA. He said:

‘This radio station seems to have signed a pact with the opposition. You can tell their slant in their reporting all the time. They make no attempt to find anything good about ZANU-PF. I do understand the frustrations they face as a result of the political situation in Zimbabwe. However, they need to at least try to be balanced than risk being as guilty as ZBC.’

6.2.5. To what extent does SWRA influence voting in the country?

Asked how diasporic radio stations like SWRA influenced voting in the country the common theme emerging was that SWRA contributed to the people’s understanding of the activities of the political parties and their leaders, thereby giving the electorate information on which to base their voting decisions. They felt that the station tries to clarify complex political issues for every citizen to understand. The majority seemed to believe that SWRA was however not alone in helping people make voting decisions as the people were exposed to a lot of information from extra terrestrial TV and radio stations and independent newspapers as well as the internet. SWRA was viewed as complementing other media by having its share of informing and educating the masses. However, it became apparent that the station encouraged debate and a dialogical engagement that has the ability to swing people’s political loyalty as it gave people more information about what was available in the political arena than other stations who have no cultural, social and political connection with the land would.

One respondent for example said:

‘SWRA informs me what political parties have to offer. I now know what each party stands for and I can make my choice. I then make my own decision who to vote for. I have information about all political parties and can now decide who should rule the country. SWRA tends to give a balanced view from which to make these decisions. I also read a lot of papers. I do not base my decisions on SWRA alone.’

Another respondent said:

‘ZBC will never cover the activities of the opposition MDC. Whenever MDC is given any coverage, it would be something damaging to the party. If people would listen to only ZBC they would never get to know what the opposition has to offer. The external radio stations are doing a great job to keep us informed about what the opposition is all about.’

Joe, (not his real name) expressed the importance of having pro-opposition media in Zimbabwe. He said:

‘SWRA is pro-opposition just as ZBC is pro-ZANU-PF. If no alternative media take a stand to give support to the opposition unreservedly, we would all be subjected to the ZANU-PF propaganda which is coming to us through ZBC. SWRA is doing an excellent job. Through them we can now make informed choices.’

6.2.6. How does SWRA influence understanding and reaction to political issues in the country?

Probed about how SWRA has influenced the people’s understanding of political issues in Zimbabwe the respondents acknowledged that SWRA opened a dialogue that encouraged people to democratically share ideas that had an influence in decision making. They all seemed to agree that there is not a single medium in the country which offers freedom of expression and interaction like media domiciled outside the country.

One notable response about how SWRA influenced understanding and reaction to political issues in the country read:

‘SWRA opens dialogue. Dialogue promotes democracy. Democracy leads to informed decision making. It (SWRA) tells me the truth about what each political party stands for. As a result, I am able to vote wisely. SWRA tends to give a balanced view from which to make decisions. SWRA has to a very large extent forced the media houses to think twice about protecting someone who is untouchable and is able to report some of the stories that may jeopardize their operations. Unlike media here at home, SWRA is able to report on matters that involve members of the military, police and the CIO, (Central Intelligence Organisation). It is not easy for local papers to take a no holds barred approach, which SWRA can do with no cold feet at all.’

The respondents expressed concern about the muzzling of information by the state media something which encourages people to seek alternative information from outside the country. They see the media run by people who have a connection with the country as being more credible as they are able to penetrate deep into the country to get stories no international media have the ability to get. From the questionnaire responses it emerged that SWRA has been pivotal in exposing corruption and violence in the country using the people’s voices in the people’s own languages.

One respondent said:

‘I now understand that the government is not as good as it would like me to believe it is. I am now able to challenge its information as I now have access to more information than the government would have preferred. I have learnt that all this suffering we are going through is caused by the government and we have to vote them out to survive these problems we find ourselves in. We are tired of living on empty promises and being beaten into submission by these thugs.’

Another one from Mashonaland West praised SWRA for letting him know the truth which he said he passes on to others to influence their opinion. He said:

‘While ZBC inundates the airwaves with propaganda, SWRA tells me the truth. I get to know the difference between truth and propaganda which is churned by the government. As a result I am able to explain these complex issues to other people to influence the way they vote. That way I feel the station is able to create change in Zimbabwe. Mark my word, ZANU-PF won’t survive the next elections even if they employ all intimidating tactics they have been using for years. The SWRA has destroyed them beyond redemption.’

A response from a person in Matabeleland North said:

‘SWRA covers a lot of things done by the opposition. It also exposes a lot of scandals within the ruling party. SWRA does not act like ZBC which glorifies ZANU-PF no matter what the party has done. SWRA helps people make informed choices about which party to vote for.’

6.2.7. How does SWRA influence voting in the country?

On how the people’s voting has been influenced by SWRA it emerged that some people feel that SWRA is not the only one giving them information on which to base their voting behaviour. They feel that as citizens they have the intellectual capacity to receive information, analyse it and draw conclusions that influence their voting patterns. They argue that they are on the ground where things are happening. They can feel the impact of events in their lives. This does not need the intervention of a station domiciled in London for people to demand change in Zimbabwe. They are however, some who say because of the news they have heard on SWRA their attitude towards some politicians has changed. For instance Dube (not his real name) from Matabeleland South is one of the people who feel that indeed SWRA has had an impact on his voting as he says:

‘SWRA has revealed that a lot of people are dying at the hands of the government officials over diamonds and farms. Diamond revenue is hidden outside the country by army generals, leaving the nation starving. As a result, we the people need to change this government to bring peace prosperity and justice to Zimbabwe. As I listen to SWRA I get motivated to take action by casting my vote in a way that will liberate me politically and economically. I am no longer afraid to vote for whoever I want, because I know ZANU PF’s days are numbered.’

There was widespread concern about the broken promises made by the government to the people. Respondents say these broken promises made people angry and want to replace these politicians with those that are going to respect the promises they make to the masses. They believe that SWRA has exposed vote rigging and shown that the ruling party is not as popular as they make themselves look. They observed that, had the ruling party not been using coercion and vote rigging for the past many years, they would be out of power by now. They

are grateful to SWRA for its work in exposing the ruling party's undemocratic and manipulative vices.

However the common sentiments expressed by the people remain that they are living in an age where there is so much information around them from which to make their own decisions and no one organisation can claim credit for the change. These sentiments echo what Gerry Jackson said when the same question was posed to her. She argued that she cannot credit SWRA with facilitating change. She said:

‘We are only helping people create a dialogue about what is going on in the country. This dialogue is exposing people to the available choices. It is entirely up to the people to decide what action to take as a result of this dialogue. All the station is doing is creating a dialogue that exposes people to the available choices.’

6.2.8. What is the impact SWRA on the population of Zimbabwe?

On what SWRA has taught the people the respondents cited among other things, freedom of expression, the right to reply and the right to make choices about how they want to be governed by using their vote decisively without fear. They are of the feeling that the government keeps important issues hidden from the public, and only media like SWRA can adequately inform and educate the masses, thereby influencing their voting decisions. In the final analysis, it becomes the prerogative of the citizens to make their choices.

6.2.9. What stories are covered by SWRA which are not covered by local media?

The respondents observe that local media do not engage critically with issues of corruption, violence, economic mismanagement, and scandals in higher offices. Joseph (not his real name) summed up by saying:

‘We have heard of people dying at Marange, opposition people being killed by ZANU-PF thugs and farms being invaded causing starvation to the nation. We have heard about ministers stealing from the government with impunity while ZBC blames UK for the economic meltdown. ZBC is full of praise for ZANU-PF while the nation is suffering. SWRA mentions the source of the suffering. As a result people no longer listen to ZBC. SWRA covers stories on constitutional matters that are too sensitive for local media to report on, lest they suffer the wrath of the ruling party.’

According to the respondents, SWRA facilitates political engagement in the country. It helps citizens to cross check the reports by other media houses so as to make decisions that have an impact on the democratisation process. Without SWRA, the respondents feel there would be a one sided understanding of the news of what is happening in the country, the government’s version.

A related survey conducted by Adroit Consultants (table 5 below) indicates an increase in the number of households which listen to SWRA every year. When the Adroit Consultants surveyors conducted the research, they went to places where they had been cleared by the government to visit. Most of these places were where ZANU-PF supporters had been settled on farms that had been taken from white farmers. The results are from responses of the people, some of whom could not express their true feelings for fear of recrimination.

Table 4. Regularity of listening to SWRA. National total by percentage

| Survey date | Listen almost every day | Never listen |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| December 2006 | 35.9% | 25% |
| April 2007 | 25.6% | 26.3% |
| December 2008 | 39.32% | 26.3% |
| August 2010 | 39.0% | 18.4% |

Source: Adroit Consultants Report LLP 2010

There is evidence that SWRA is a viable alternative source of news in Zimbabwe. A sizeable population relies on SWRA as their main source of news because of the erratic reception of ZBC in most parts of the country as a result of the ageing transmission equipment and the unreliable electricity supply. These news stories from SWRA end up being sent to other people through oramedia and social media. That way the SWRA news reaches a wider population than the people who received it initially.

Table 5: The users of SWRA as a main source of news from 2006- 2010

| Province | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2010 |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Manicaland | 13.0 | 16.0 | 16.2 | 16.3 |
| Mashonaland East | 26.9 | 28.0 | 4.0 | 24.2 |
| Mashonaland Central | 17.8 | 18.0 | 13.1 | 22.4 |
| Mashonaland West | 28.3 | 20.2 | 26.6 | 27.7 |
| Masvingo | 9.2 | 15.0 | 17.2 | 20.4 |
| Midlands | 2.0 | 43.7 | 24.3 | 26.0 |
| Matabeleland South | 5.1 | 20.2 | 36.6 | 31.4 |
| Matabeleland North | 12.8 | 14.0 | 35.0 | 30.5 |
| Bulawayo | 9.9 | 19.0 | 25.1 | 21.1 |
| Harare | 25.0 | 31.0 | 21.4 | 24.0 |
| Total National | 15.1 | 19.7 | 22.0 | 24.5 |

Source: Adroit Consultants Report LLP 2010

SWRA is therefore contributing to news dissemination alongside Zimbabwe broadcasting Corporation and other international radio stations and diasporic radio stations that have come up in recent history.

6.3.1. Understanding the people's link to NewZimbabwe.com

NewZimbabwe.com is an internet based medium accessible to only those who have a broadband connection. Those who accessed the website also faced connection problems which are caused by power cuts that occur regularly. The erratic power supply in the country is retrogressive to the operation and sustainability of internet cafes and public libraries where

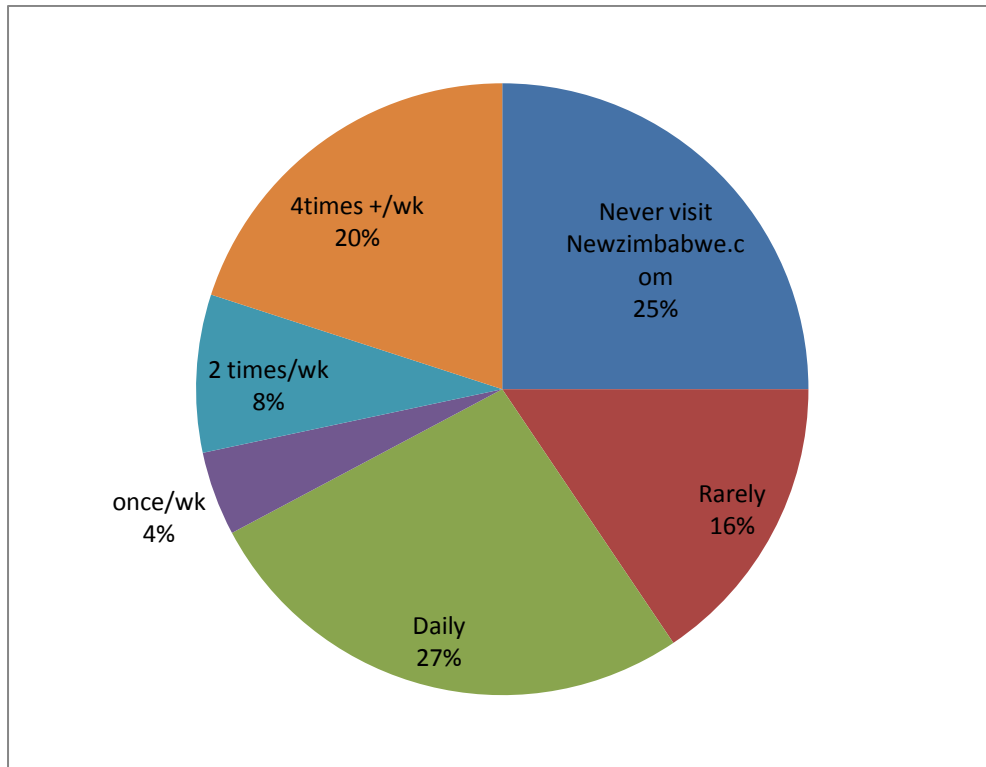
most people prefer to access the internet. There is also a concern that a good fraction of the community can't use a computer. That knowledge is the preserve of those who work in offices or younger people who have been exposed to the technology in institutions of learning that have computers. Such a situation compromises the effectiveness of NewZimbabwe.com which is predominantly an online medium.

6.3.2. How the respondents engage with NewZimbabwe.com

Accessibility also comes at a cost. Considering the fact that internet penetration is still very low in Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe, it is understandable that 25% of the respondents have never accessed the website and 16% said they rarely did so. This makes a total of 41% who can be considered not to be engaged with the website enough for them to be influenced by it. However, when people go online it does not mean that their priority is going to NewZimbabwe.com. According to research conducted by Mabweazara (2008), people's priority is to go on social media before the news. Incidentally, though, it is through these social media that people end up sharing news and signposting each other to their sources, one of which is NewZimbabwe.com. It emerges that some people access the website on mobile devices due to the accessibility of mobile internet thanks to providers like Econet who claimed to have reached 5.5 million subscribers in June 2011 according to Infoasaid (2011).

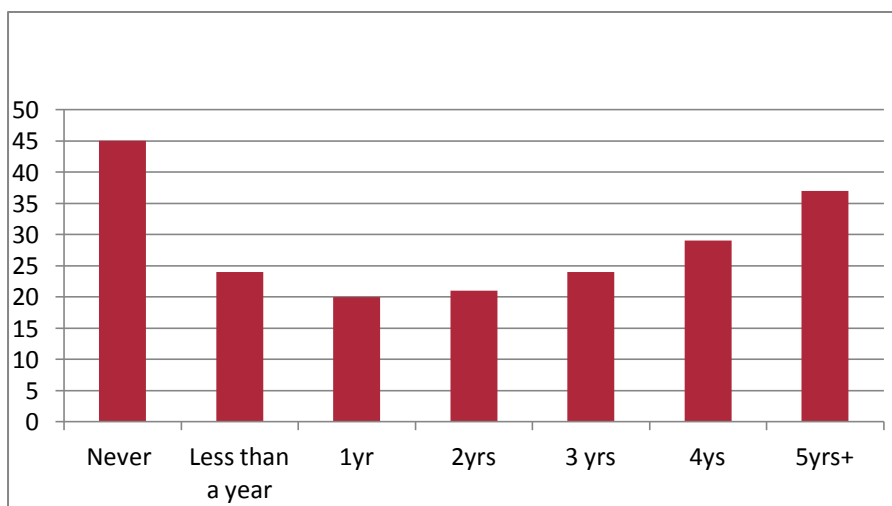
The people relied on alternative media in the form of media domiciled outside the country far away from the influence of the status quo. The mobile phone played a major role in disseminating information to the diasporic media. When the respondents were asked how often they accessed NewZimbabwe.com, they responded as shown below:

Fig 11. How often do you access NewZimbabwe.com



Whilst there are some people who have been following NewZimbabwe.com since its inception there are some who have just started following the website and others who have never seen the website (see fig 13 below.)

Fig 12. How long have you been visiting NewZimbabwe.com?



6.3.3. How the respondents access NewZimbabwe.com

This research coincided with the mushrooming of internet cafes in the country where young people spend time surfing looking for jobs or news about where their future was heading to. This therefore explains why a good fraction of the respondents ended up accessing news they could not access from local media. The majority of those who participated in the research claim that they access NewZimbabwe.com at the internet cafes.

Fig 13. How do you mainly access New Zimbabwe.com?

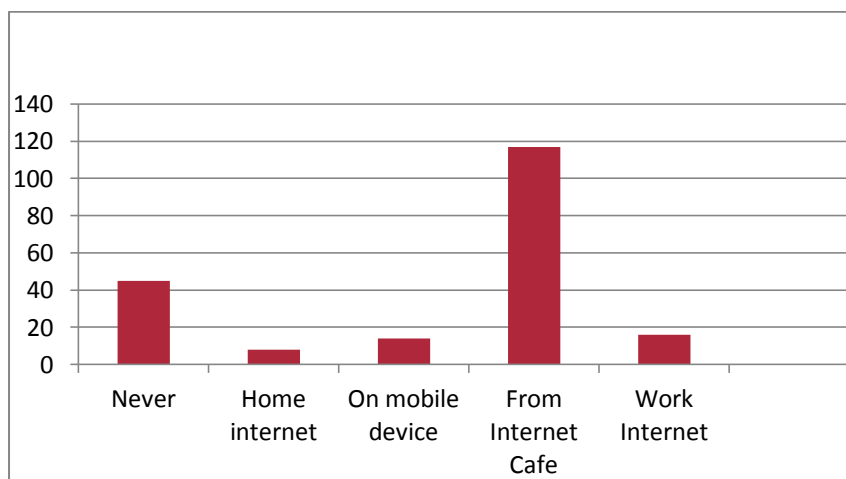
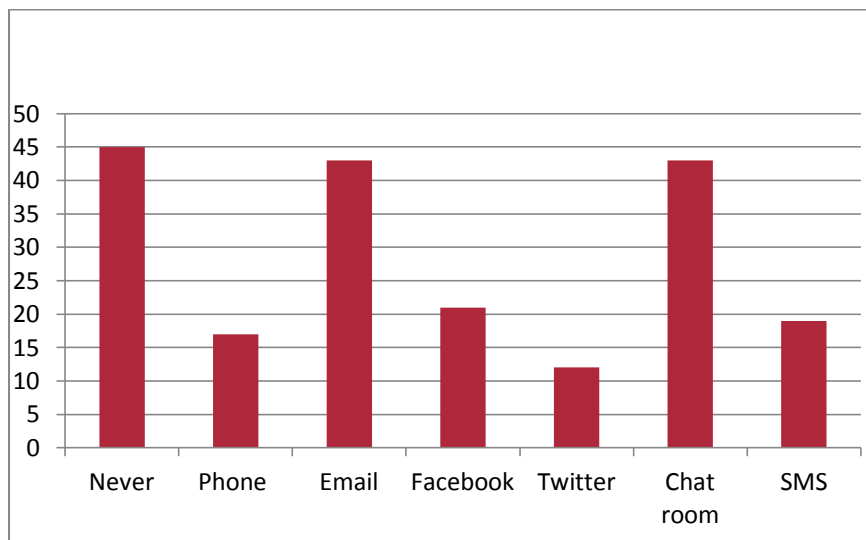


Fig 14. How do you mainly interact with NewZimbabwe.com?



The respondents also seem to have taken advantage of the interactivity offered by NewZimbabwe.com. They admit to taking part in various forums on the website, especially social forums. Others contribute to blogs or write-in responding to a range of articles published by the website. They contribute to the news making process by tweeting, SMS, email and telephone.

6.3.4. Reasons why the respondents visit NewZimbabwe.com

When asked what motivates them to go to NewZimbabwe.com some of the respondents indicated that they considered NewZimbabwe.com to be a viable platform on which they can debate issues affecting Zimbabwe without fear of recrimination. They felt that the website offers the populace a public sphere in which to engage in a healthy debate which will bring out the truth they cannot get from local media which operate in a restricted political environment. They observed that local media, both state controlled and independent, operate with a culture of fear, resulting in them being conservative with the truth. Truth and freedom

of expression seem to be the major motivating factors in engaging with the alternative media like NewZimbabwe.com.

One respondent said:

‘I get hot news that is not readily available in Zimbabwe. The platform is interactive and I enjoy linking up with the wider community. Most of all it doesn’t toe the line set by the government.’

Others praised NewZimbabwe.com for not being a propaganda tool for the ruling party. They saw the medium as giving divergent voices in the country a chance to be heard. The website was seen as making an effort to give a balanced report on issues affecting Zimbabwe by forcing government officials to respond to the people’s sentiments. This, they felt, adequately informed citizens and gave them enough details from which to make informed choices about how they want to be governed.

Another respondent said:

‘NewZimbabwe.com is not accountable to the state and is therefore not afraid of anyone. It charts into territories any other media wouldn’t dare. It keeps the government wondering what will hit them next. Boldness makes NewZimbabwe.com popular.’

The respondents expressed a lot of trust in the website whose source of news is the people and not the officials, thereby giving the people a chance to share experiences and hear the other side of the story.

A former journalist said:

‘The liberated environment in which NewZimbabwe.com operates gives them freedom to go deeper into Zimbabwe and come up with scoops that ruffle the feathers of the ruling party, forcing the government to embark on damage control by giving their response to the stories. I am sure the government is having sleepless nights because of this website.’

There were however a few people who said they went to the internet cafe only when they were bored. They then stumble across the website by chance and read it just for fun. They felt

that it really did not mean anything to them as there was a lot of information on the World Wide Web. They considered the website too insignificant to be influential in Zimbabwe.

One of them said:

‘It costs me a lot of money to go to the internet cafe. My priority when I get there is reading my emails after which I check my mates on Facebook to see what they are up to. Because of the slow connection problems that characterise Zimbabwe, before I even finish chatting with my mates my time would be up. This gives me little time to check on the news. With so much going on in the World Wide Web, stumbling on NewZimbabwe.com would be just by chance.’

6.3.5. To what extent does NewZimbabwe.com facilitate political consciousness in the country?

On what NewZimbabwe.com has taught the people, the respondents claimed that the alternative media like NewZimbabwe.com has taught them never to accept political rhetoric without questioning it. They have learnt the value of a healthy dialogue in facilitating the creation of a democratic environment where the voice of every citizen is important. As one respondent put it:

‘There is a lot happening which the government would prefer to keep secret. Those at the top manipulate the uninformed masses to keep the truth away from them. People get intimidated into following what they would not follow under normal circumstances. NewZimbabwe.com gives people a space to express their discontent anonymously without them risking being arrested or beaten up by the police and the army.’

The respondents acknowledge that the website has taught them to express themselves without fear and to seek information from other sources instead of taking what the government says at face value. The range of people that are interviewed on the website or who contribute to the stories in the website counters the monolithic approach employed by the state media where the voice of the government and ruling party officials is considered to be the voice of the people.

Mthunzi, (not his real name) felt that the website helped him with information out of which to make up viable political decisions. He said:

‘I know what is happening in Zimbabwe because I live here. The website gives me its perspectives of what is happening in Zimbabwe leaving me to make up my own mind on how to deal with the information. The website has a diversity of news but due to poor internet connectivity in Zimbabwe it is hard for them to reach everybody. Whoever they reach, they empower him with critical tools with which to engage in political activities with wisdom, especially when confronted by a draconian regime like ZANU-PF.’

Another villager said she has learnt that no one can run away from the truth and that deceit catches up with the deceiver at the end of the day. She said:

‘ZANU-PF has been living a lie for so many years. They never thought anyone was ever going to rip the blanket off their bodies to expose their nakedness. Someone has done so at last in broad daylight. ZANU-PF is now looking for ways to cover themselves up. It’s too late. We now know who they are and what they are, thanks to NewZimbabwe.com.’

Some respondents credited NewZimbabwe.com with informing them about their human rights and how to apply them in their daily activities which extend to voting. They felt that, as a result of the knowledge they have received, they are able to challenge repressive laws. They are able to stand up against the government and ruling party operatives when they try to impose their will on the masses.

A fan of the website said:

Civic organisations and human rights activists are given coverage by this website. I have seen stories from Human Rights Watch. I have read stories about Women and Men of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA). Prominent lawyers like Mthetwa and Coltart have shared their legal knowledge and experiences with the masses on this website. A lot is happening which cannot be covered in this interview. In a nutshell, we get to know how to stand for our rights and say no to dictatorship.’

6.3.6. What are the differences in story coverage between NewZimbabwe.com and local media?

Like SWRA the respondents noted that stories about corruption, bad governance and economic mismanagement are never covered by the state media. These are the stories which have been exposed by media like NewZimbabwe.com. Most of the respondents credited the website with going deep into the country where people are afraid to talk and coming up with original stories that would remain buried forever had it not been for the initiatives of NewZimbabwe.com reporters who encouraged the citizens to speak out on issues affecting them. They feel that even vote rigging that took place in 2002 and 2008 elections wouldn't have been exposed had it not been for the involvement of the citizens in NewZimbabwe.com where they sent messages they could not send to local media.

Asked about stories that are covered by NewZimbabwe.com a bank clerk in Bulawayo said:

‘They expose the decay that is taking place in the democratic process of this country where inequality reigns as a result of unfair access to resources, economic mismanagement and terror inflicted on the people by the regime. The once breadbasket of Africa is now an international beggar because of poverty inflicted on the people by their government. What a shame. Mugabe has betrayed Zimbabwe.’

A businessman said:

Culprits who are responsible for this economic decay have been exposed. They may be enjoying the protection of the ruling party as of now. One day the tide will change and they will be asked to account for their actions which have affected our businesses so much. The protection they are getting from Mugabe won't last forever.’

There was a general feeling that the website attempts to make the views of every citizen public so that those in power can act upon them in order to improve the lives of the people.

For instance a respondent said:

‘NewZimbabwe.com talks to the ordinary people. The people tell the reporters about the problems they are facing and who they believe is responsible for those problems. For the first time in history, people are able to talk without fear as Mugabe has no control over this website. These are the stories the government has failed to deny.’

6.3.7. How does NewZimbabwe.com impact on the understanding and reaction to political issues in Zimbabwe?

Whilst NewZimbabwe.com is seen as having credible sources on the ground that make their stories trustworthy, there was a general feeling that the plethora of other news sources in this digital age exposes the population to a range of information out of which to make informed decisions especially when it came to voting.

A Harare resident said:

'I read so many papers in the streets of Harare. I listen to so many news stations on Satellite. In the office I open so many websites. In the street I talk to so many people with interesting stories to say. When I come across NewZimbabwe.com I consult the website sometimes to confirm what I already know. So this idea of trying to give too much credit to this website is ridiculous to me.'

Other people felt that the website operated from outside the country and could not be considered to be 100% credible in their stories as they could not come down to verify them. There was a feeling that some people were taking advantage of that and feeding the website with hype that could not be professionally verified. There are those who said that they understand Zimbabwean stories better than NewZimbabwe.com, arguing that they are on the ground where things are happening and they are better positioned to make their own decisions without the intervention of NewZimbabwe.com which was only accessed by the elite with internet connection.

There are those who felt that these days there are a lot of media that cover the same stories. They however acknowledge that NewZimbabwe.com tried to give the angle that gave prominence to the views of the citizens. There is one response though which suggested that

there are times when the website cuts and pastes stories that have been published by other websites, thereby making such stories untrustworthy and uninformative.

Another former journalist said:

‘Most of the stories I read on NewZimbabwe.com happen to be copied from other websites. What’s the use of telling the people a story that has already been told? These reporters need to be original and publish stories that have not been published before so as to justify their existence in the market. They need to operate within an established ethical framework. Messing up with someone’s intellectual property is not acceptable. It also leaves the consumer short changed.’

There was a feeling that NewZimbabwe.com can do better by looking at such stories and giving them a critical analysis instead of just copying and pasting as such an amateurish activity destroys the credibility of the website. There were also expressions that the website was seen as surviving on sensationalism to generate hits at the expense of professionalism.

As one reporter of an independent newspaper said:

‘The standard of journalism leaves a lot to be desired. These guys haven’t improved much since they left The Daily News many years ago. They rush the copies instead of researching them and giving their stories a critical analysis.’

Another reader said:

‘I do understand the logistical problems these guys are facing. They can’t be where events are taking place. They end up scavenging to survive. If the situation on the ground was permissive they would be doing better than this. I can feel they are still as good as they used to be at The Daily news. All they need is a fair playing field.’

On the overall there is a feeling that this website enjoys autonomy unlike media operating from Zimbabwe who have no alternative but work according to the dictates of the government. There is a general feeling that a lot of issues going on in Zimbabwe would remain a secret had there been no media like NewZimbabwe.com who keep the government in check. This having been said, there is still a concern that NewZimbabwe.com, just like state media in Zimbabwe, could be at times misinforming the public due to its entrenched

political position which at times seems to be leaning towards the oppositional voices despite its claim of neutrality.

6.3.8. What is NewZimbabwe.com's influence on voting?

When asked if at all the website influenced their voting decision most of the respondents acknowledged that the website put all the policies of the political parties in a clear perspective. However, it remained up to them to make informed choices. Moreover, this website is not reaching everybody. It becomes problematic to imagine that it is influential in voting.

One respondent acknowledged that NewZimbabwe.com gets people talking:

‘They have created debate which I react to .They are however not the only ones as I tend to read more and listen more before I can make my own decisions. However, their impact on the ground cannot be likened to that of radio as not everybody has access to the internet.’

One journalist said:

‘Since the establishment of this website, journalism has changed altogether as everybody tries to be as representative of the situation on the ground as possible. There is no doubt that we all get our cues from websites like NewZimbabwe.com, otherwise we would be caught unaware by the stories they publish under our noses. Even if a few people have access to the internet, these websites have influenced the media culture in the country. You do not have to be on the internet to feel their impact.’

Other people feel that they are intelligent enough to make their own decisions. One respondent got agitated when the question of how much influence NewZimbabwe.com had on her voting. She said:

‘No media can tell me what to do. Nobody anywhere in the world can claim to be influential in my voting behaviour. I am not a puppet dancing on anybody's string. I am an intellectual who has the capacity to make my own decisions. This belief that somebody who is able to write for a certain publication will make me behave in a particular way is nonsensical to say the least. My voting decisions are influenced by my experiences on the ground... ’

Some people, however viewed the website as important in the generation of debates about alternatives the country has. They believe that such a debate engages the people in an intellectual process with which to select information that is useful in their political choices. They feel that the ability of people to discuss issues generates an understanding of what actions they need to take to change their lives. Admittedly, there are many sources of information the nation is exposed to. However, the research shows that most of these information sources talk to the people and not with the people. A few media like NewZimbabwe.com provide an interactive platform where people are able to debate on issues until a stronger argument gets accepted by the participants. A political process, it has been shown, is achieved when the majority is in agreement to a particular cause. As a result, the role of media like NewZimbabwe.com in generating debate about alternative political avenues cannot be totally ignored. Dialogical engagements, it can be argued, provide a healthy democratic environment in which everybody has an equal chance to be heard.

6.3.9. How trustworthy is NewZimbabwe.com?

Asked what they thought about the trustworthiness of NewZimbabwe.com it emerged that the website was seen as a watchdog that kept the authorities under constant check. They considered the website to be giving a voice to those people who are marginalised by the state controlled media. They felt that without independent media like NewZimbabwe.com, some sectors of the community would not be able to talk about their experiences and what they would like done to improve their lives. As one respondent put it, NewZimbabwe.com goes behind the scenes to expose what could not be exposed by the government media which concentrates on officialdom at the expense of facts. Currently the website is seen as contributing to vital democratic debate that engages people in a dialogue about a range of issues affecting their lives.

There are those who said being domiciled in the UK makes the website untrustworthy as it was totally out of touch with reality and could be churning out the views of the former colonial master at the expense of truth.

One respondent said:

‘These guys are detached from reality and all they rely on is second hand sources which are very difficult to verify. I therefore treat whatever they write with a pinch of salt. Their stories need to be verified by cross checking them with other sources. I don’t trust them a bit. I am not discounting them though. All I am saying is that I am better placed to understand what is going on in my back garden than they are.’

They expressed concern about the quality of the stringers in Zimbabwe who they consider to be civilians and not journalists, thereby weakening their professional judgement of the issues on the ground. One respondent said:

‘These journalists or stringers as they might be called are not trained. They have no ethical guidelines to follow. They are emotional in whatever they do. Most of all they are hungry for money such that they have no time to verify whatever story they write. All, they want is a quick buck. These are people who put professionalism on the line. It becomes embarrassing for the website if their story proves to be a total fabrication. This has happened before and will continue to happen for as long as they continue to print stuff from every Jack and Jill.’

A regular visitor to NewZimbabwe.com said:

‘I think when they don’t get a story they cook it. I know these guys. They are just surviving in this hostile environment. They would rather cook a story than do without. This shows how desperate they are to put food on the table.’

Another journalist said:

‘Editors out there are so desperate to get stories from Zimbabwe such that they end up not even bothering to verify their sources. In the process there is informing and misinforming on an equal basis. That’s the danger of telling Zimbabwean stories from Britain. Some of the editors have never set foot in Zimbabwe for over ten years. One needs to be careful about taking aboard what they publish.’

Others though expressed that this website gives them information which is verifiable. They acknowledge that most of the time a story is published by NewZimbabwe.com before being followed up by local media. This was confirmed by some local journalists who said that

every morning they get their leads from NewZimbabwe.com. They confirmed that these leads have often led them to major scoops. Even though they are based in Britain, there is evidence that they have a connection with the people on the ground, something which makes them trustworthy.

6.3.10. To what extent has NewZimbabwe.com influenced political engagement in the country?

On to what extent they see the website as affecting political engagement in the country the following points emerged:

- It gives people a chance to express themselves.
- It is interactive and gets the people talking instead of the officials propagating their rhetoric.
- It creates debate and engagement in the political issues.

The respondents saw the website as improving the awareness of the people about their rights and changing their attitudes towards the status quo, which they feel can now be challenged using democratic means.

One respondent said:

‘I like NewZimbabwe.com. Through it, I learn a lot about what is happening in the political scene in Zimbabwe. There are a lot of debates about political issues on the website. There are a lot of engaging blogs and columns. There are a lot of letters from the citizens contributing to debate. At the end of the day I am persuaded by a lot of issues discussed to take a particular political stand.’

The participants felt that the website provided them with an opportunity to analyse political arguments that are taking place in the country. They felt that the website gave them a space to share information and engage in political debates. They made references to forums on the website where issues are debated until the topic is exhausted. Most interestingly, they pointed out that the debates on the forums engage people from all political divides. This is a platform

some people felt treated MDC members and ZANU-PF members as equals in an intellectual combat. Of interest was the involvement of the presidential spokesperson George Charamba and the ZANU-PF spin doctor Jonathan Moyo in the forums and Blogs alongside pro-MDC columnists and bloggers. This, it was argued, is the most important political engagement a publication can ever facilitate.

6.3.11. Would people be aware of political developments in Zimbabwe without NewZimbabwe.com?

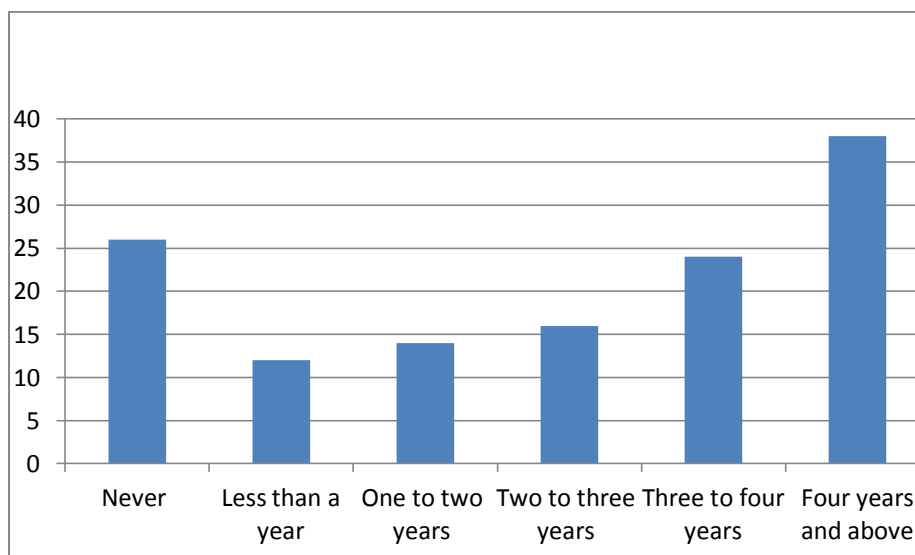
Whilst the respondents see the website as having generated democratic debate in the country they consider the poor internet connectivity in the country as a factor which puts the impact of NewZimbabwe.com into question. Not everyone has access to the internet in Zimbabwe. As a result, any media online has limited accessibility. However, there is evidence that some newspapers and radio station do consult the website for their leads as was shown by Mabweazara (2010) thereby making NewZimbabwe.com relevant as it contributes to the content of other media that are easily accessible to the people such as radio and newspapers. Alongside a plethora of other media available in the country the empirical research shows that NewZimbabwe.com has a share of influence on the political landscape

6.4.1. How long have you been reading The Zimbabwean?

During this research The Zimbabwean was the only newspaper printed by the journalists in the diaspora and distributed in Zimbabwe. As was indicated in Chapter Five, its copies are printed in South Africa and trucked into Zimbabwe every Thursday and Sunday. The paper is available online seven days per week and readers can access it from internet cafes, offices,

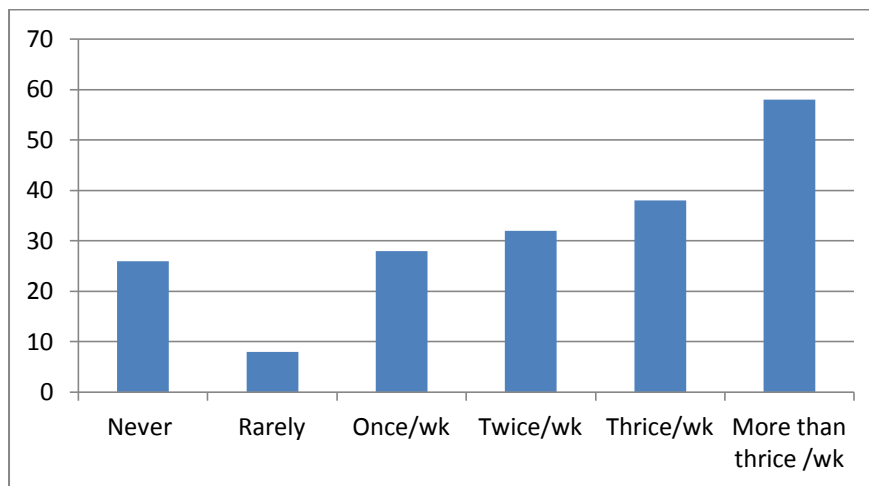
educational institutions, libraries and even on internet enabled mobile devices. The empirical research revealed that some citizens have been relying on The Zimbabwean as an alternative source of news since its launch in 2005. There is also a significant fraction of the population which claims to have never seen the paper, especially those in remote rural areas. When asked how long the respondents have been reading The Zimbabwean the pattern in the graph below emerged.

Fig 15. How long have you been reading The Zimbabwean?



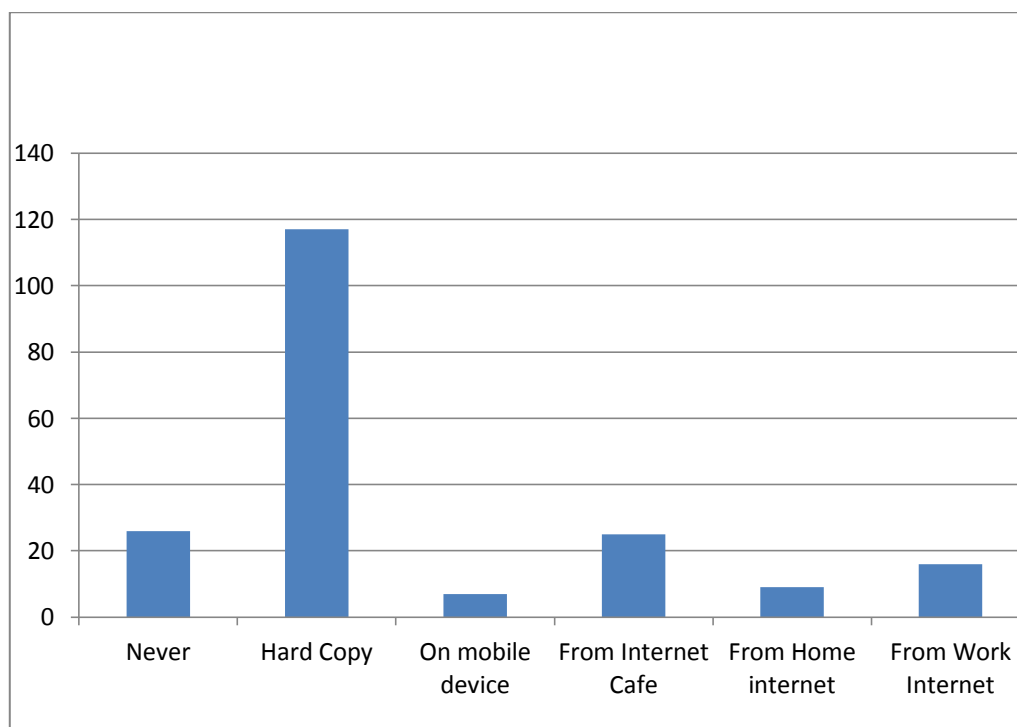
When further asked how many times they read the paper there are those who said they have never read it, while others said they rarely read it as it is not a paper readily available in all newspaper outlets. There are some who made an effort to get the copy or read the paper at least more than three times per week particularly online or from libraries.

Fig 16. How often do you read The Zimbabwean?



As can be seen in the graph below most of the respondents who read The Zimbabwean read the hard copy while the rest of the respondents accessed it online either from home, from work, from internet cafes or from mobile devices like smart phones.

Fig 17. What do you use to access The Zimbabwean?



6.4.2. What motivates you to read The Zimbabwean?

When probed about what motivated them to read The Zimbabwean some of the respondents indicated that they appreciated the fearless approach of this newspaper which gives them stories local newspapers are not able to report on under the prevailing media climate in Zimbabwe. They observed the fact that the newspaper is produced outside the country, making it free from legal statutes that inhibit freedom of expression in Zimbabwe. They consider The Zimbabwean as providing them with an alternative menu which is freely generated by the people on the ground where events are happening. One respondent described the paper as the most powerful alternative discourse ever provided for Zimbabweans because of its extensive and balanced coverage of political issues. The respondents seemed to feel that the paper gave them the truth they cannot find in local papers which risk being shut down should they publish information that challenges the status quo. A reader from Bulawayo said:

‘The truth is mightier than the sword and only The Zimbabwean seems to be telling it as it is. I read well researched and balanced stories from The Zimbabwean which is not a propaganda tool like The Chronicle and The Herald which are traditionally the propaganda machinery of the ruling party.’

Another said:

‘After the closure of The Daily news I have always relied on The Zimbabwean to read well researched and verifiable stories. The quality of journalism in this paper is unmatched anywhere in the country. I am sure this paper gives ZANU-PF sleepless nights as they can never deny its stories.’

A respondent from Rusape said:

‘If you want to be indoctrinated, read The Herald. If you want to be informed and educated, read The Zimbabwean. As the truth becomes scarcer and scarcer from Newspapers in Zimbabwe, only The Zimbabwean Newspaper seems to provide it.’

The respondents credited The Zimbabwean with having exposed issues of corruption, violence and bad governance. They see it as having helped the people express their views and

to challenge the government on issues of economic mismanagement and the amassing of wealth by ZANU-PF cronies at the expense of the suffering masses who put them in power.

The words truth, trust and trustworthy came up several times in the telephone administered interviews. Some respondents said they now know the truth about what is going on in the country as a result of the stories covered by The Zimbabwean. Others considered the government to be having difficulties running away from the truth now that the truth had been exposed by The Zimbabwean. They said that the Zimbabwean used credible sources, and concentrated on the voices of the people, something which made the paper trustworthy.

For instance one respondent said:

‘The Zimbabwean is the only paper I can consider to be trustworthy as its reporting is not influenced by any law or any political party. The reporters are not subject to Mugabe’s controls. They have nothing to fear. They tell things as they are. As a result I trust them.’

The respondents consider The Zimbabwean to be a paper which tells the truth and gives the people a voice in an environment where the dominant voice is that of the status quo which tells the truth conservatively. One respondent said that he got to know about issues happening in the country through The Zimbabwean. He said:

‘I read all the papers I come across and cross check stories for facts. The Zimbabwean seems to be very credible. They have credible sources on the ground which makes their stories trustworthy. I get stories I was not aware of which are happening right in my locality. The Zimbabwean is my major political compass. It has created the much needed dialogue which is a vital vehicle for the democratization process.’

The Zimbabwean is considered to be a paper which gives every citizen a voice regardless of their political affiliations. There are however some who feel that the paper is sometimes too

left wing displaying an obvious agenda of supporting the opposition and discrediting the ruling party, thereby failing to see anything positive from ZANU-PF. Although they couldn't give evidence to support their argument, they viewed the paper as being pro-opposition and lacking balance, forcing the reader to cross check their stories with other publications to get a balanced view.

6.4.3. What do you learn from The Zimbabwean?

The paper is seen as having taught the masses to critically engage in issues taking place in their country instead of just accepting what is churned by those in positions of influence. They see the paper as having taught them to engage in dialogue to bring change to their circumstances by using their voice to help initiate a democratic process that can facilitate peace and economic development.

6.4.4. What stories are covered by The Zimbabwean which are not covered by local media?

The respondents also observed that The Zimbabwean is not afraid to criticise the government and members of the ruling party. The paper gives an in-depth analysis of issues pertaining to corruption, economic meltdown and political activities in the country without fear. It exposes economic mismanagement, vote rigging, intimidation and violence which is perpetrated by the government officials and ruling party members against people who display oppositional views. The paper covers mainly stories from the people and not stories from the government and seems to be giving civic organisations and opposition politicians a platform to explain their policies to the masses, something the state media are not doing because of their pro-government stance. The respondents consider local media as being constrained and forced to

propagate government discourse whereas people want to hear what other citizens think and do.

6.4.5. How has The Zimbabwean influenced the people's understanding and reaction to political issues in Zimbabwe?

A common theme emerged when the respondents assessed how The Zimbabwean has influenced their understanding and reaction to political issues in Zimbabwe. They acknowledge that unlike domestic newspapers, The Zimbabwean gave them information from both sides of the political divide to help the populace make crucial decisions based on adequate information. This includes among other things:

- Knowing which policies work and which ones need to be challenged,
- Knowing who to vote for and what they have got to offer,
- Knowing how to challenge the dominant ideologies without fear,
- Knowing how to exercise their democratic right to express their views.

One respondent said:

‘I read about MDC’s policies and agendas on The Zimbabwean. This is the only Newspaper which is able to give the reader comprehensive information about MDC. The Chronicle and The Herald will always tell us what ZANU-PF thinks about MDC. The Zimbabwean tells us what MDC has got to offer.’

Another respondent said:

‘Government controlled newspapers are propaganda agents of the ruling party. What else can you expect from them? Whatever they say about the opposition is always negative. They are bent on poisoning the minds of the people by bombarding them with lies and praises for the ruling party. I no longer waste my precious time reading them. Instead I read The Zimbabwean.’

A postal worker in Gweru said:

‘We are tired of the 1980 war rhetoric which is still peddled by government newspapers that we should vote for ZANU-PF because they are the ones who fought for the liberation of Zimbabwe as if the rest of us did nothing. These guys are damn crazy to think that because they were in the liberation struggle they should therefore have the prerogative to oppress us. They should wake up from their dreams and accept the fact that this is time for change.’

The respondents considered the Zimbabwean as an influential paper in the sense that it exposes the truth about what each political party has to offer unlike state media which only tell people about what the ruling party has to offer.

However, Mike, like some of the respondents, expressed mixed feeling about the paper when he said:

‘I wouldn’t say I have total trust in any paper including The Zimbabwean. These papers seem to belong to political camps and each camp tends to support a particular political party. As a result, I read and contrast many papers to balance the stories. Only then can I make my own decisions on what to take and what to leave. As more information gets to the people, the people get to know who to vote for and who to trust. Engaging with a range of sources creates a democratic environment and gives me the power to decide how I want the country to be run.’

Nyathi, an academic from Gwanda said, before the emergence of The Zimbabwean, there was no newspaper which gave people a platform to challenge the government without fear. He felt that the newspaper had encouraged people to challenge hegemony and to look at issues from an alternative point of view. He felt that reading the truth about what the leaders are doing makes them accountable to the electorate who are empowered to either give them or deny them their vote.

There still emerged some respondents in the sample who felt that The Zimbabwean cannot be credited with bringing change to Zimbabwe as there is a lot of activity within the country that is affecting change. They cited the activities of civic and human rights organisations which they felt had more impact on the ground than a paper trucked in from outside on a weekly basis, whose editor has not set foot in Zimbabwe for nearly ten years.

A respondent said:

‘We the Zimbabweans in the country are not waiting for somebody from overseas to fight for our cause. We are doing great things on the ground to change our situations. We understand

the political climate better than somebody who relies on second hand news. We engage with the political situation. We are better placed to fight for ourselves than all these people who claim to be fighting in our corner.’

On the contrary, there are others who felt that civic organisations and human rights groups need publicity and they can only get it with the help of papers that are not constrained by the restricted media environment in the country.

An activist in Kwekwe said:

‘We need media which are sympathetic to our cause. These are the media which are able to help us tell our stories to the world. Without them we would be in an enclosure where nobody would know we exist. We are grateful to The Zimbabwean for giving us so much coverage at a time when news from Zimbabwe is difficult to get out.’

The respondents like Nyathi saw The Zimbabwean as playing a vital role in putting the Zimbabwean situation on the global map to help the international community respond to the needs of the nation. Without such a medium they felt that the world would not have been able to know about political violence and economic mismanagement in the country.

One respondent said:

‘Without The Zimbabwean, the secretive nature of the regime would have made the world think all was well in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean has been able to explain to the world what kind of people rule Zimbabwe. The paper has been able to tell the world about the suffering people experience in the country.’

6.4.6. How trustworthy is The Zimbabwean?

There are some respondents who felt that the paper had a cultural, political and social connection with the people of Zimbabwe. The paper’s reporters spoke to the people in their language within their cultural context. Some of the reporters are known to the communities where they operated and the people there trust them. The connection the reporters have with the communities they are reporting from enables them to go deep into the towns and villages to come up with credible stories local media cannot attempt to produce as a result of the

restrictive environment they operate under. The respondents felt that they found the paper to be trustworthy as it gave the perspective of the affected and allowed them to express themselves in their mother tongue, something other papers do not do.

One respondent from Rusape said he considered the editor (Wilf Mbanga) to be a credible man who has been publishing well researched stories since the 1970s. He said that he knew that from his paper he would always get the truth. 'It's the people speaking through the paper not Wilf,' he said.

6.4.7. How has The Zimbabwean influenced political engagement in the country?

There was a general feeling that The Zimbabwean has generated a lot of debate on issues that were taboo before the paper started circulating. The respondents felt that the paper has exposed how corruption manifests itself in the ruling system and how the people got deprived of their wealth which is being fraudulently amassed by the politicians.

One respondent said he read about how a former teacher, now Mashonaland West Governor had turned into a millionaire in a few years, something which looks suspicious in the eyes of the public :

‘ Chombo had only a small plot of land a few years ago in Chinhoyi. Now he has properties all over the country, from Chirundu to Chiredzi; from Victoria Falls to Mutare. He even has a fleet of luxurious vehicles whose registration numbers The Zimbabwean has published. Where and how did he get them? He also runs commercial trucks. How the hell did he acquire this property from his Governor's salary? The Zimbabwean has exposed the fact that the guy owns 10 companies; commercial farms; mines and safari lodges. Such wealth is suspicious and a reflection of how corrupt Mugabe is together with his cronies.’

There was consensus in that the paper generated a political awareness and has made some people speak out and challenge the status quo in a way that was unheard of before the emergence of independent media operating from outside the country. The respondents seemed to feel that the exposure of corruption and bad governance made the people advocate for political change in the country. This empowered the people to be active creators of their political environment through their engagement in debates and discussions.

A respondent said:

‘I got to know the truth about what was going on at Marange diamond fields after reading the article that was published by The Zimbabwean. That is when I learnt that the army generals, The first lady Grace Mugabe and the Vice President Joyce Mujuru had concessions at Marange and had sent the army to kill villagers so that only they could have access to the gems. Whilst other independent papers only talked of massacres, the Zimbabwean put names to the killers.’

Another respondent said The Zimbabwean exposed how the seized farms were being distributed:

‘Most of these farmers were given to Ministers, Army Generals members of the CIO and top government officials. Some of these beneficiaries have more than four farms each. The Zimbabwean named them. Some of these farms are lying derelict because those beneficiaries have no idea what to do with them. The Zimbabwean gave us a list of those farms. While the government blamed the west for the starvation in the country The Zimbabwean pointed fingers at Mugabe’s chaotic land distribution policy.’

One respondent from Harare said The Zimbabwean covered stories about infighting within ZANU-PF. He said:

‘All is not well in ZANU-PF. There is a bitter wrangle about who will succeed Mugabe when he dies or when he gets incapacitated. The succession race has cost some members of the party their lives. The Zimbabwean has written about the true facts surrounding the death of prominent figures in the succession race. Indications are that the deaths are always an inside job.’

The respondents concurred that the coverage of corruption and economic mismanagement issues that have been done by the Zimbabwean had opened their eyes about what was going on in the country. This has made them critical of the ruling party. They say that this makes them feel like participating in political activities that have a potential to bring an end to this endemic corruption that is putting the national wealth in the hands of a few people while the rest of the nation is suffering.

6.4.8. How aware of the political development in the country would you be without The Zimbabwean?

There was a general feeling that The Zimbabwean was doing a lot to make people aware of what the government would rather keep away from the masses. The respondents concurred that without The Zimbabwean the truth would still be orchestrated by the government which decides what the people should know and what they should not know. The monolithic voice of the government would indoctrinate the masses who would never critically question issues happening around them. Presently the government seems to be often forced to respond to the stories that are broken by The Zimbabwean.

For instance, one of the respondents said:

‘The government was left fumbling for words when The Zimbabwean published a story about how Mugabe commandeered the financially struggling Air Zimbabwe plane to the far East for his prostate cancer treatment leaving the Harare London route not serviced for a number of days. The only response that came from the government was not to deny the story but to threaten who ever had published it.’

The respondents felt that even though there are a range of media people engage with, The Zimbabwean has its share as it has proved to be interacting with the community who express their views fearlessly through the paper. The respondents viewed the media operating from within the country as being biased towards the ruling party or unable to challenge the party

for fear of recrimination. Because The Zimbabwean is neutral and operates from outside the country, it has the ability to portray issues as they are. Even though the newspaper does not reach all corners of the country, it was felt that where ever it does, it is very influential in creating political opinion among the masses that link up with the rest of the country.

A villager said:

‘When we meet for a drink in the pub, my friends and I share a lot of political stories we would have read or heard from other people. That is why we drink in groups. This is exactly what everybody seems to be doing these days. You end up hearing a lot of things other people read or heard which you find interesting and illuminating. Heated debates and arguments usually come up as a result.’

Those people who have access to information share it with the rest of the community in the true African oral tradition. This generates discussion and a dialogical engagement that helps the people understand what political alternatives are available in the country. They are able to put to each other strong arguments that have a potential to sway the opinions of the majority in the discussions.

Themba, an internet cafe operator seemed to argue that The Zimbabwean was not the only paper that can be credited with making people aware of political developments in Zimbabwe.

He echoed sentiments expressed by other respondents when he said:

‘These days there are so many newspapers in circulation. Each is contributing to the information people need. It is through the engagement with all the sources of information that people make decisions on what route to follow. The Zimbabwean is doing great, but it is not the only one. How much influence this paper has, is hard to qualify in this age of digital technology which always puts Zimbabwe instantaneously in the spotlight.’

Key words are crucial in understanding the meaning of a text and the ideology embedded in it. As Adolphs (2006) argues, individual items or phrases in a text or corpus are compared with the relative frequency of the same items in a much larger, reference corpus. According

to Adolphs, key words are those words that occur with a significantly higher or significantly lower frequency in the particular corpus and they represent an underlying ideology. Stubbs (1983: 19) argues that the coherence of a conversation depends on several quite different types of mechanisms such as repetition of words and phrases, structural markers, fine synchronization in time and an underlying hierarchic structure relating sequences of discourse acts.

In this research, when respondents were asked why they engage with diasporic media, the word “truth” appeared in 74% of the responses. Most respondents indicated that they were not able to get the truth from state media like Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and The Herald. According to them the truth came from media which operated from outside the country where the government was not able to influence their editorial policy. They argued that diasporic media gave them the truth because it engaged with the citizens. According to the respondents, diasporic media articulated the voices of the citizens and gave them a platform to express their views truthfully without fear.

The respondents considered diasporic media’s journalistic quality to be high. For instance they acknowledged that such media operate under difficult circumstances and, given those circumstances their aims appear to meet the chief principles of journalism which are neatly encapsulated in the BBC’s Editorial Guidelines namely the principles of:

- Truth and accuracy
- Impartiality and diversity of opinion
- Editorial integrity and independence, and
- Serving the public interest

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/guidelines>(visited 21/03/10)

The respondents argue that diasporic media interview citizens, unlike state media which churn out officialdom. It can therefore be argued that as the people adopt a new attitude towards officialdom and embrace what they consider to be truth from the diasporic media, they will embark on actions that will have a bearing on the political climate in the country. It can be observed that since 2000 the ruling party has been experiencing challenges in its hegemonic programme. It is around that time that diasporic media started to engage with Zimbabwe, unapologetically articulating the views of the new opposition party MDC and civic organisations which had no access to state media.

Admittedly, there were other players in shaping the political landscape as Jackson acknowledged, (interviewed 2011). Other independent papers and civic organisations like Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) did contribute to the political debate in the country. Considering that those organisations and independent newspapers suffered a lot of harassment and were not able to express themselves to the fullest in the current climate, diasporic media which operated from outside the country where the Mugabe regime has no control played a significant role in giving the people the truth they wanted out of which they made informed decisions. This argument can be substantiated by the fact that the majority of those interviewed expressed that they were able to get from diasporic media information they could not get from state media. They also saw diasporic media as affording them freedom of expression and a public platform on which to engage in meaningful dialogue about the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe. 60% of the respondents indicated that exposure to alternative discourse helps them make informed choices, something that has had an impact on the way they have been voting since 2000. They acknowledge that government officials are eager to respond to diasporic media by also affording them interviews to give the nation their side of the story. If diasporic media were not having an impact, government

officials like the presidential spokesman George Charamba, and the ZANU-PF spin doctor Jonathan Moyo would not be taking advantage of the platform to put their ideas across. There is anecdotal evidence that government officials are engaging with and feeling the impact of diasporic media. The following email (verbatim) to one of SWRA's presenters from a regular listener and contributor is one such example:

"Hi Tererai

I was in Zim attending a funeral for my sister-in-law who passed on with a disease that could have been identified and treated but because of the shortage of doctors she was left unattended and died. Things are really bad shahwira (friend). Anything you think of is bad. The road are not being resurfaced, prices are hiked every day, petrol is still scarce, that the cops wanted to take my import containers from South Africa and I refused. I told him I was going to pour it to the ground than just leaving it there.

Anywhere one of them recognised my name and mentioned SW Radio Africa – that's very encouraging that they are listening. It was a journey across the country: from B/Bridge, Masvingo, Gweru, Harare and Mutare.

Good news: KwaMereki is back and happening again.

How are you"

(Adroit Consultants Report LLP 2010)

About 35% of the respondents argue that they do not rely only on diasporic media to formulate opinions. According to them, they engage with a range of media in addition to diasporic media to make informed choices. As was expressed by some respondents who said they also consult other external media to come up with an informed decision, residents in

urban, peri-urban and even high density areas have access to other sources of information. Zimbabwe is dominated by ZimPapers and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation which are both controlled by the government. Whilst independent media operating in Zimbabwe can be trusted as not representing the government hegemony, the environment in which they operate limits their ability to articulate issues without self-censorship. Most Zimbabweans have access to extra-terrestrial radio and TV stations they access through satellite. These stations include BBC, CNN, SABC and Aljazeera. Whilst these stations do address issues that are not covered by domestic media, their penetration into the country is hindered by logistical, cultural, and linguistic limitations. Diasporic media, whose practitioners are Zimbabwean, understand the political sociocultural terrain and their reports have a cultural connection and resonance. As Mbanga indicated in an interview (2012) some of the foreign news organisations interview diasporic media practitioners and quote their publications in their reports because they know that these practitioners have a connection they as foreigners do not have. Practitioners of diasporic media and their contributors regularly get interviewed by BBC, Aljazeera, SABC, CNN and a host of other big international media houses. People in Zimbabwe and these media organisations seem to be benefiting equally from Zimbabwean diasporic media. It can therefore be argued that, directly or indirectly, diasporic media inform the political decisions of the Zimbabwean population, as they have a connection with the masses other media organisations do not have. Research conducted by Mabeweazara (2008) indicates that even journalists working for government media get their leads from diasporic media which they consult religiously every day of the week.

5% of the respondents in the survey however argue that they are influenced by events that affect them and not by anybody broadcasting from outside or inside the country. Bongani, one of the respondents said:

‘I am on the ground in Zimbabwe where everything is happening. I can see poverty at my doorstep. I can see the economic mismanagement myself. I experience the suffering right here. I don’t have to be told by any media outside Zimbabwe what to do in response. I make my own decisions.’ (Interviewed, 13/06/12).

Whilst this respondent’s view could be valid, there is still a need for him to get to know what alternatives there are in order to make informed choices. The hegemony churned by the state controlled media is ZANU-PF orientated. As has been explained above state media serves to consolidate the ruling party’s hold on power. The independent media, most of which are unapologetically pro-opposition operate within the confines of what both Chuma (2010) and Moyo, D (2005) refer to as draconian legislation. They cannot adequately expose the shortfalls of the ruling party and give the opposition voices a fair platform. For the respondent to make an informed decision he has to be exposed to a variety of information. The role of the media is to inform and educate. The respondent cannot be everywhere to gather information out of which to make informed decisions. He has to engage with the media, be it oral, written or electronic. He lives among the people. Bongani does not live in a vacuum. He engages with other people’s ideologies which they also get from the media. Media domiciled outside the boundaries of Zimbabwe give a different discourse which cannot be provided by media domiciled in Zimbabwe. It can therefore be argued that, one way or the other, people get influenced by the activities of diasporic media. They may not acknowledge that the media have an impact but they can see the social and political activity around them which directly impacts on their own activity and outlook.

6.5. Conclusion

The empirical research has generated quantitative and qualitative data which reveals that there is a very significant engagement taking place between the people and the Zimbabwean media domiciled outside the country. The degree of the people’s connection is influenced by the platforms on which these media operate. Since radio seems to be reaching more people

than newspapers and the internet based media, the research has established that radio is the most crucial medium people engage with in Zimbabwe. The internet is limited to those in urban and peri-urban areas. It is also limited to those who have mobile devices like Smart phones. The newspaper has limited circulation due to the number of papers Mbanga is able to truck into Zimbabwe on a weekly basis. However, the desire of the people to get alternative uncensored news makes them resort to making an effort to access news from Zimbabwean media domiciled outside the country thereby making diasporic media significant in offering alternative discourse on which to make intelligent decisions. The people's engagement with diasporic media has revealed themes which are worth analysing critically to illuminate what impact they have in influencing the political situation in the country. The following chapter will therefore utilise the Constructivist theory and the analytical framework to engage in a critical analysis of the findings of the research to establish the extent to which the diasporic media are relevant in effecting political change in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS: UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DIASPORIC MEDIA IN FACILITATING CITIZEN JOURNALISM AND POLITICAL AWARENESS IN ZIMBABWE

7.1. Introduction

The aim of the research has been to find out the role of diasporic media in facilitating citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe. The research has utilized Constructivism, as a lens sharpened by the analytical framework constituents to understand the effect of diasporic media in bringing a dialogical activity in a restricted political environment of Zimbabwe. The Constructivist paradigm's point of departure is that the world is changeable and the past, present and future are constructed through our practices and interactions with others (Lott, 2004: 53). This underpinning paradigm supports the philosophy that the social world is not given, but a product of human consciousness, as humans in their social, political and economic interactions project their thoughts, beliefs, ideas and concepts that underpin their relationships. The research has used three case studies which represent the three major forms of Zimbabwean diasporic media, which are radio, websites and newspapers. A bank of qualitative and quantitative data has been generated by the empirical activity of this research which investigated the engagement of the populace with these media and the impact this engagement has on the people's political awareness. The research has established that there are key players in the society who created communicative spaces in the diaspora in response to the limiting communication environment at home. People engage with these diasporic media using affordable technologies that are in everyday use in the country. This engagement with the diasporic media has created a public sphere in which people share ideas about how to deal with the problems they are facing. This is something they have done in an attempt to effect change in the country.

This research has highlighted some interdependence between citizen journalists, affordable modern communication technologies and diasporic media institutions. Using a Constructivist approach alongside academic work and the analytical framework, it has been established that they function together to circumvent the dominant legal and political-economic system that prevails in the country which favours the ruling party and limits the ability of citizens to exchange information in order to influence the way democracy takes hold in the country. This chapter therefore reflects on the broader significance of the research findings and the chosen conceptual approach taken in the research to understanding the place of diasporic media in recent Zimbabwean history. Elements of the analytical framework which are legislation, the role of the internet and digital technology and citizen participation will feature in this chapter so as to illuminate the role of diasporic media in creating dialogical platforms in the country. At this concluding stage the elements of the analytical framework will be commented on in a more integrated way rather than section by section. These elements of the analytical framework will be woven through the whole chapter to give a holistic understanding of their contribution to citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe. This is because these elements are so coordinated such that an attempt to separate them will produce a disintegrated analysis and make it difficult to understand the impact they have had in the democratisation process.

7.2. Research conclusions

Africans in the diaspora have been active in contributing views on how democratisation has taken hold in Africa (Hyden *et al* 2001: 7). Zimbabweans are no exception. The research has shown that they have excelled in this field by expressing their views using alternative media domiciled in the diaspora. They have been able to expose issues that could not be reported from within Zimbabwe. As Curran (2008: 29) points out, they have created a public sphere

(or in more traditional terminology, ‘public forums’) the spaces between government and society in which private individuals exercise formal and informal control over the state: formal control through the election of governments and informal control through the pressure of public opinion. According to Benhabib (1996: 15) this activity has a potential to create a government in which people make common decisions, choose common conduct, and create or express common values in the practical domain of their lives in an ever changing context of conflicts of interests and competition for power. Such an environment creates a democracy which is a government of all the people, by all the people for all the people (Townroe & Yates 1990: 196).

In Zimbabwe, independence was expected to bring about an environment in which every citizen has a right to be heard. However, this does not seem to have been the case. Just like his predecessor the Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Douglas Smith, Robert Mugabe controls media in a way that promotes his ideologies and silences divergent voices in the country, something which has a negative effect on the democratisation process. This has led to the establishment of diasporic media by some sectors of the populace, their focus though, no longer being the liberation from colonial occupation, but a new form of liberation from emerging forms of oppression perpetrated by the former liberators on the people they are supposed to have liberated (Moyo, L. 2012). In Zimbabwe, evidence shows that there is an entrenched use of media as a political tool to consolidate the influence of the status quo on the populace. The research has revealed that the state controlled media project themselves as propaganda agents for the ruling party. In order to exercise their democratic right to be heard, the marginalised sectors of the populace have established media outlets that operate parallel to the state media. These citizens have gone outside the country to establish media that source information from the country, process it outside the country and propagate it back into the

country and all over the world. These media are operating clandestinely outside the country where the government of Robert Mugabe's legal infrastructure cannot control them. This creates a dialogical platform from a liberated environment where citizens are able to embark on activities that make the views of the marginalised sectors of the population heard. This unsanctioned activity by the citizens has a potential to influence the democratisation process in the country.

These diasporic media have emerged because most of the events happening in Zimbabwe are proving to be difficult to report when one is based in Zimbabwe. The legislation in place, some of which were inherited from Rhodesia make it difficult for journalists to report events happening in the country (see Chapter Three). The legislation is used to facilitate the domination of one group of citizens by another in a state that is supposed to be free and democratic. As was illustrated in chapter three, more stringent media laws have been introduced after Zimbabwe's independence, leading to the banning of independent media, something that has led to the establishment of alternative media outside the borders of Zimbabwe. The political climate during this research (2010-2013) does not offer the populace the ideal democratic space they need to exchange information that has a potential to influence democratic governance. They can only exercise their democratic right when they are based outside Zimbabwe, hence the re-emergence of diasporic media in independent Zimbabwe.

The positioning of media in a conflictual situation is for the perpetuation of an information warfare which is a weapon that has demonstrated to have an indisputable impact in a restricted democratic environment where information propagation and access is curtailed

(Sun Tzu, 1963). Evidence shows that Zimbabwean diasporic media have contributed extensively in the gathering and distribution of information in the conflictual environment that exists in the country during this research. Whilst the news gathering and dissemination which feed the diasporic media can be seen as being de-professionalised de-capitalised and de-institutionalised as Hamilton (2000) notes, it is these de-professionalised people's activity as affected citizens, whose work helps to expose issues taking place in a restricted environment like Zimbabwe. Evidence gathered so far has shown that the unedited voices which come directly from the citizens have a potential to effect change. The citizens' dialogical engagement with their circumstances has changed the world's understanding of issues on the ground in a way that has generated reactions and calls for reforms.

The citizen's concerns are filtering out into the international arena through this active citizen participation that is evident in Zimbabwe. For instance, in 2009 the Kimberly Processing Authority (KPA) responded to the breakdown in the rule of law in Zimbabwe that was exposed by media with a cultural, political and social connection to the country; diasporic media. It banned the sale of Zimbabwean diamonds which it labelled as blood diamonds due to the reported death of people in the hands of the government forces in the mining area. As was shown revealed in the research, these killings were exposed by diasporic media like The Zimbabwean Newspaper, SWRA, and NewZimbabwe.com while the state controlled media tried to cover them up. The KPA insisted on the restoration of human rights in the mining area before the lifting of the ban could be considered. It is evidence like this which, when looked at critically shows that the citizens have been able to engage in the process of trying to influence change in Zimbabwe with the power of information and not force in a way explicable through a Constructivist lens. It is evident that the citizens are equipped with

liberating technologies with which they can go around the legal restrictions that exist in the country and expose to the world what is really going on at home.

Citizen journalism has played a significant role in facilitating the exchange of information and the creation of dialogue among citizens. Message creation and propagation in the diasporic media is influenced by the recipients who are both producers and consumers of the media content. Their ability to be both producers and consumers of media content is made possible by the availability of mobile phone technologies and internet enabled technologies that cannot be easily controlled by the government. It is also facilitated by platforms like radio, newspapers and websites created by their fellow citizens in the diaspora. The propagation of their messages takes into consideration the needs and views of the citizens themselves and their need to address the imbalances of power in society. The outcome of the message propagation is to change their lives. The research has proved that the lives of the people can be changed by the ability of the diasporic media to offer oppositional voices a platform to articulate issues in a restricted environment. This research has shown how active the dialogue created by the citizens has become in Zimbabwe. The citizens have embarked on journalistic activities that have clearly impacted on the political climate in the country by opening channels of discussion. For instance, the research has shown that the disclosure of the election results by the citizens through diasporic media in 2008 led the ruling party to admit that it had after all, lost the elections. When it refused to leave office, the Southern African Development Conference (SADC) states brokered a government of national unity (GNU) to avert continued bloodshed. The GNU brought with it a degree of stability in the country. The country's relative economic stability since 2008 is credited to the unity government and came about after nearly a decade of economic mismanagement that includes President Robert Mugabe's land-redistribution programme which led to large tracks of

productive farm land lying idle after the eviction of farmers and the distribution of the land to people who have not been able to utilise it productively.²¹

The research has shown that the citizens have a lot of trust in the dialogical spaces created by diasporic media. They consider diasporic media to be giving them the truth while the state media do all they can to misinform the nation about the true sources of Zimbabwe's problems. The majority of the respondents to the telephone administered questionnaire indicate that they have trust in the diasporic media for the reason that they find them to be more credible than state media which under the Mugabe regime serve as the mouthpiece of the ruling party. They feel that spaces created by diasporic media empower them to negotiate for changes without fear of being persecuted by the regime. As chapter six has shown, they feel that they base their decisions on facts and not propaganda. State media, according to them, seem not concerned about the interests of the electorate. The respondents trust the diasporic media as they consider them to be projecting the voices of the people who have become an integral part of the programme formation team for these media. They use mobile phones and the internet to collect information from the ground and use their journalistic skills as citizens to send their stories to diasporic media for distribution back into the country and around the globe. The respondents therefore see the diasporic media as helping them develop a political consciousness that allows engagement in activities that are liberating and which empower them to influence the political dispensation that can impact positively on their lives. Citizens are seen as using new technologies to get their stories told in a way that has a potential to change their circumstances. As Curran (2000: 29) points out, media distribute the

²¹ See <http://www.bdlive.co.za/africa/africannews/2013/10/02/survey-shows-decline-in-zimbabwe-poverty-levels>

information necessary for citizens to make an informed choice at election time. They facilitate the formation of public opinion by providing an independent forum for debate. They enable the people to shape the conduct of government by articulating their views. These are the views which have got the power to create political change. Through these diasporic media the citizens are able to understand what alternatives the opposition parties can offer. They give coverage to the opposition while the state media promotes the ruling party. When they finally go to the ballot box, they have a potential to usher in a new political dispensation. The Mugabe regime always refers to this possible dispensation as regime change.

At this juncture, it can be concluded that diasporic media have opened alternatives to the nation that could not be opened by state media or independent media operating from within the country which are subject to legislation that control the flow of information. They have formed a human and technological agency that has a bearing on how the people think and respond to the disenfranchisement that characterises a political environment like Zimbabwe where a few dominate the majority. There is evidence that this disenfranchisement is being challenged by the poorly resourced diasporic media which are influencing the political activities in the country as has been evident since the 2002 and 2008 disputed elections. Divergent voices that are offering a formidable challenge to the status quo's hegemonic influence are being enabled by these diasporic media. This research has shown that these media are proving to be an emancipatory force which has empowered the masses to challenge the status quo in full view of the international community. This has reduced the ability of the ruling party to exert its dominance on the populace of Zimbabwe without challenge. These media play what Curran (2010: 38) refers to as the watchdog role that exposes the abuse of power by the government. The government's violation of human rights and liberties is being challenged by these media created by the Zimbabwean nationals who are domiciled in the

diaspora. As Berger and Luckmann (1966) argued, the people's perceptions determine how they behave in order to create meaning and change. It is this meaning and the ability to create change that motivates human beings to intervene into their circumstances.

This thesis has shown that the diasporic media have altered the binary situation in which those who were linked to ZANU during the war of liberation were pitted against those who oppose the oppression by the former liberators. Both those who align themselves with the ruling party and those who do not happen to experience the same difficulties caused by economic mismanagement and political instability in the country. Change is good for all of them. Their cooperation is therefore important if they are to be able to change their circumstances. This cooperation is possible if the people have access to diverse information and communication channels. This diversity has been made possible by the activities of the citizens through diasporic media. The people are no longer dependent on the monolithic approach that promotes the voice of the ruling party. They are now exposed to a wide range of information out of which they contemplate decisions that can change their circumstances and improve their standard of living. The exposure of information is facilitated by what Hamilton (2000) refers to as tools of liberation which empower citizens with no journalistic credentials to propagate and share information that impacts significantly on the political climate of the country.

From the results of this research it can be concluded that the regime of Robert Mugabe adopted an approach where the masses are controlled through the deployment of the resources (media institutions) that propagate the ruling party's philosophies and undermine those of the opposition. This, according to Taylor & Willis (2008: 157) makes the masses vulnerable and ripe for domination of totalitarian dictatorships. This has been the motivating

factor for the establishment of alternative media from the diaspora which have a potential to challenge the status quo in a way that is capable of giving people a political change they need. It is evident that citizens are not passive victims of media onslaught. Their intellectual capacities make it difficult for them to be manipulated indefinitely. They have the capacity to make choices that have a profound effect in political relationships in their country. They have the power to oppose state hegemony and bring about a new political dispensation that can liberate them and change their lives significantly. They get this power through their active participation in the creation, processing and dissemination of information using technologies that are easily available in their social environment. As was seen in chapter six, SMS and mobile phones have become powerful instruments for social change. Mobile phones are gadgets that are in the hands of many people, even those who live in remote parts of the country. Their impact in publishing information from all corners of the country cannot be dismissed or ignored.

In the absence of alternative media that operate from environments that are not easily controlled by the dictatorial regime, the hegemony in Zimbabwe would be that of manipulation and domination, something which the Zimbabwean diasporic media have been challenging since their creation. Now there is alternative discourse coming from the diaspora which is giving the masses an alternative perspective to that propagated by the status quo through state controlled media. The diasporic media have created a liberating environment through which the voices of the disenfranchised sectors of the populace can be heard. The diasporic media have been able to counter ideological indoctrination in which the dominant social group, according to Taylor and Willis (2008: 29) is able to produce its social and economic power by focusing on both the material and intellectual manifestations of this reproductive process. Evidence gathered so far shows that the diasporic media have

weakened the ruling party's power to continue using ideologies it has been employing to maintain control on the Zimbabwean people since 1980. Instead of being exposed only to ZANU-PF ideologies, evidence shows that the populace is now exposed to a range of alternatives out of which to make choices. It is against this analysis that the Zimbabwean diasporic media project themselves as being able to challenge the status quo and to bring about the debate on the ways of implementing political change where freedom of expression, access to information and freedom of association are enshrined. These media have shown that the existing social order where the ideas of the ruling class are dominant stands to be challenged as it is anomalous and retrogressive to the development of a democratic environment where plurality should be embraced.

In an election in which voters choose a candidate, they need to perceive the candidate in comparison to opposing candidates in order to judge who is best. According to Berker (1983) they develop more or less a distinctive picture of each candidate to the extent that they can discriminate among other candidates. In a country like Zimbabwe where information about other candidates is not covered by mainstream media, without alternative media, the masses would continue to be indoctrinated by the hegemony of the ruling party. Alternative media that have been established in the diaspora give the opposing parties a platform where they can be heard by the masses, as these opposition parties also need to reach the people to explain their policies so that people can decide who to vote for. It is evident that activities of the populace through alternative media domiciled outside the country due to the restrictive media space in Zimbabwe are offering the masses vital information from which to make sound political decisions that are able help them achieve a democratic environment.

Oppositional or alternative voices coming from Zimbabwe but relayed through diasporic infrastructure that is beyond the jurisdiction of the government have enabled a dialogical engagement among the marginalised sectors of the community. They are able to question the activities of the government. As they talk among themselves, they are able to explore political alternatives. The government is put in a position where it is not able to silence the people. It is no longer able to prevent the truth from being known. The research indicates that the exposure by diasporic media of violence perpetrated by government forces in the 2002 and 2008 election could have prevented the same tragedy unfolding in 2013, most likely because this time the world was aware of what was going on and was watching with interest. The world was watching because it had seen what the people published through diasporic media alongside, and at times in collaboration with international media like BBC, Al Jazeera and CNN, something which had raised concerns about human rights abuses in the country. As can be seen on the concerns raised by some sectors of the Zimbabwean population and some international election observers, the ruling party is seen as having devised new ways of staying in power rather than full scale violence that characterised the previous elections. Any full scale violence would have tarnished the image of the government further, something Mugabe is not willing to do. It can therefore be concluded that the diasporic media have had some effect in neutralising the tensions that characterised previous elections in Zimbabwe by being able to engage with the population using readily available modern communication technologies and circumventing the legal statutes to expose what is going on in the country. The government has no resources of controlling these technologies. All it can do is to change its way of conducting political activities in the country.

Channels of communication, access to information and freedom of expression have been facilitated by the cooperation of citizens with diasporic media. The diasporic media have

empowered people to exchange information about issues taking place in the country. This empowerment of the people by these diasporic media has created an environment on which to bring forward credible facts with which to challenge unfair elections. On a level playing field where rigging and intimidation is prevented, this information warfare has a potential to give people a vote that is emancipatory in Zimbabwe. Even in the 2013 elections, the research shows that the diasporic media were better positioned to enable the marginalised sectors of the population to witness and expose what can be described as a classic example of vote rigging by exclusions (see www.csmonitor.com) where over 4 million voters are reported by diasporic media to have been deliberately prevented from voting.

It is important to understand that the diasporic media have not been able to stop vote rigging. They have opened channels of communication and the dissemination of alternative discourse in a restricted political environment. This alternative discourse has exposed issues that have been hidden to the world. This alone has created a vital dialogue among citizens and the international community. The exposure of these anomalies has influenced the concerned sectors of the populace and the international community to negotiate for reforms. The dictatorial regime of Robert Mugabe has been encouraged to respect international law or face isolation and punitive sanctions such as the current targeted sanctions which America and other countries say they will only remove entirely when evidence of total reforms is seen in Zimbabwe. The government has therefore been challenged to respond to the concerns of the citizens and the international community. In the absence of any reciprocal response from the government, the world may intervene by imposing further penalties to the government. All this can be attributed to the dialogical engagement initiated by diasporic media who understand the political, social and economic environment in Zimbabwe better than other media who have no direct connection with the country.

The activities of diasporic media have generated an intelligent dialogical engagement that has led to the questioning of the disenfranchisement of other sectors of the populace in a country every citizen is supposed to be independent. This questioning has no doubt led to the people demanding radical reforms that are expected to restore democracy in a land that has endured dictatorship and gross inequalities since independence in 1980. The activities of diasporic media in the country have created an environment where people can analyse the political situation in the land and advocate for changes that can impact positively on the lives of the masses. The voices of the people that emerge through diasporic media have demonstrated that they have a potential to effect a democratic setting which can install the rule of law and universal liberties. The power of the sentiments emerging through diasporic media derives from the fact that they are the sentiments of the affected people within the country, but which are emerging through technological platforms of liberation operated by their kith and kin in the diaspora where the government has no resources to interfere with them. These sentiments come back into the land with an effect that engages the authorities into a dialogue that can lead to action and subsequently change. As already mentioned above, a good example is the establishment of the government of national unity which came as a result of the extensive exposure of what was going on in Zimbabwe during the time when international media could not access most parts of Zimbabwe as well as diasporic media did. Evidence on the ground shows that the dialogical activity created by diasporic media facilitates freedom of speech, access to information and freedom of association in the country. The government is now under pressure to reciprocate and establish an enabling environment for all members of society to enjoy their full liberty. The government is now under pressure to embrace the views of the people in order to bring about good governance. It is under pressure to accept the fact that diasporic media are, as they say, the voice of the people. It can no longer ignore the

potential impact these media have. There is no doubt that it is now in a position where it cannot ignore the changes these diasporic media are advocating for.

The information warfare generated by diasporic media activities through critical information gathering, processing, and dissemination is conducted via avenues that are not sanctioned by the Mugabe regime. The diasporic media are succeeding in going around information barriers to establish a new public sphere that is crucial in dialogically engaging people in an activity that has a bearing in creating a democratic environment in which every citizen has a voice. Evidence suggests that the activities of poorly resourced diasporic media are engaging with the population and creating an emancipatory dialogical platform on which to articulate issues affecting their lives without any restrictions from the political establishment. This, it is acknowledged, has had a crucial influence in the development of the current political climate in which the ruling party has been challenged by the exposure of irregularities that are engrained in the approach the ruling party has been employing to stay in power regardless of what the results of the previous elections have demonstrated. Kuhlmann (2010) argues that diaspora based media, especially those that are engaged in news reporting play an important role in disseminating information, thereby providing media spaces which offer an alternative view to the state controlled media in Zimbabwe. Even if they are domiciled outside the country, there is evidence that these media get their feed from Zimbabweans on the ground through an active citizen participation and the deployment of modern media technologies that transcend political boundaries and statutes, something that gives them power, credibility and authenticity. There is evidence that the voices heard on diasporic media are the voices of the citizens and not the elite. The diasporic media also provide valuable feeds to international media on stories about Zimbabwe (see Chapter Five). Even local media at times tap from diasporic media to get stories that put the government on the defensive line (see Mabweazara

2010). The diasporic media provide forums to engage Zimbabweans in political discussions of issues that are so crucial, something state media cannot do due to the legislative restrictions they operate under. Evidence strongly suggests that diasporic media create an empowering environment to discuss politics without fear of possible recrimination by the state. Diasporic media give people a voice and it is their voice and not the gun or control of major institutions that has a potential to change their circumstances.

As Becker and Schoenbach (1989: 9) argue, people respond to media by integrating the new offering into the existing order. These media have been integrated into the tools people use to challenge the status quo in order to liberate themselves from domination by those who hold power. The diasporic media are integrated into the oppositional forces that challenge the marginalisation of other people by the status quo. They provide a powerful arsenal with which to wage an information warfare against dictatorship. Kuhlmann sees these media as contributing to opinion formation among Zimbabweans both in the country and abroad. This, she argues, offers a big challenge to the government of Zimbabwe who cannot curtail this information exchange. This has a negative effect on the ruling party's ability to perpetually enforce its dominance on the masses. Citizens have taken advantage of media convergence to actively participate in journalism by producing, processing and disseminating information to their communities and the world using multiple platforms. This ability to share information instantaneously across different platforms endorses the argument that can be explained through a Constructivist lens that dominance over resources and institutions of power is not a defining factor in creating change. Rather, human awareness or consciousness has its place in world affairs. As the people become conscious of the world around them, they become aware of how they can negotiate for change. Mobile and broadband enabled technologies have empowered citizens to pursue journalistic roles without the help of capital intensive

institutions and highly trained professionals who tend to serve corporate and political interests instead of serving the citizens.

The voice is undoubtedly a liberating tool. Whilst national media are being used to conjure up government support, the diasporic media have created oppositional voices that advance challenging issues to the government which is now aware that the ruling party cannot impose its will on people through force. Diasporic media seem to have created political consciousness and empowered the people to generate, disseminate, receive and process critical information in a way state media are not permitted to by the regime which sees the role of the state media as that of promoting the government and the ruling party's policies. Admittedly, there are independent papers in Zimbabwe. As the evidence gathered has shown, they are not able to articulate issues as freely as diasporic media because of where they operate from. Whilst independent papers attempt to give oppositional news to the masses, they are not as liberated as diasporic media which can publish any material without fear of suffering any consequences as a result of their activities. These independent media operate under a plethora of repressive media legislation that limit what they can do. They exercise self censorship to avoid punitive action that might follow. As was shown in the previous chapters, journalists in Zimbabwe risk being beaten up, arrested and even killed by government security details should they report on issues the government is not happy about. Even though there are reports of diasporic media journalists being targeted by state operatives, evidence shows that they are more liberated than those working for oppositional media within the country. Their use of pseudonyms and their mobility gives a dilemma to the government which has difficulties preventing them from reaching the people whose voices are a formidable challenge to it. The allegation that these media are after regime change is weakened by the fact that international media follow up these stories and, with the help of

diasporic media fixers, go behind the scenes to establish what these stories are all about. Once they turn out to be true, it becomes difficult for the government and the ruling party to convincingly deny the issues and to continue accusing these media of being agents of the former colonial powers.

Most of the respondents in this research noted that they are able to make informed choices as a result of their engagement with diasporic media. In an environment where information is scarce, people make choices from limited information. In an environment where conglomerates run media institutions, the information becomes commercialised and institutionalised, something which leaves the sentiments of other sectors of the populace not catered for. Diasporic media's historical, cultural, political and social link with the populace has created conditions in which the people are able to speak for themselves in their own voices and in their own languages, within their cultural contexts. They participate in various forums in the diasporic media. They phone in to exchange information through programmes like *Callback*. They send picture and videos to be published on diasporic media platforms. It is this ability to share information publicly that is empowering the people to demand and create change. It is this ability to engage with each other on a platform they trust, which enables them to generate, process and exchange information they identify with. This uncontrolled access to information has helped Zimbabweans make political decisions and public statements that have so far proved to be unsettling for the ruling party. As state media like ZBC peddle officialdom, the diasporic media help the communities to discuss issues taking place where they are as they see them. As they say in their mission statements, these diasporic media become 'the voice of the voiceless.'

As Freire (1972) argues, even if people are inundated by a culture of information and communication victimization, they have the urge to improve the quality of their individual and collective life. This research has established that it is this urge that has forced the Zimbabwean population to take the bold steps to break free from the influence of mainstream media which serve to consolidate and justify domination by the ruling party. Evidence shows that this urge which is nurtured through dialogue and the use of unsanctioned communication tools has put the government under scrutiny. Communities have empowered themselves to generate oppositional forces through the creation of dialogical platforms. Dialogical platforms now exist in a country where information avenues are controlled and stifled. This dialogue stimulates in the participants, a crucial way of recognizing their rights and how they should safeguard them.

Participants in diasporic media have expressed concerns about the interference by the military and other security forces in Zimbabwe's political and electoral affairs in a way that is in support of President Robert Mugabe and his political party ZANU-PF. They have expressed concern about how violence is used against people who hold divergent views to those held by the ruling party. The participants have spoken about the way ZANU-PF members get involved in criminal activities such as arson, murder and rape with impunity. People have expressed their concerns about the lack of implementation of a meaningful security sector, legal & institutional reforms. In various forums, they have spoken strongly against the highly partisan and politicized security forces. They have used diasporic media to publicly challenge the use of the state media for propaganda purposes, calling for drastic media reforms to be implemented where freedom of expression and access to information will be enshrined. The citizens are now able to challenge the government which seems to support the narrow interests of the ruling party at the expense of the nation. There is now a formidable challenge

to hegemonic political structures in Zimbabwe, something which was not evident before the establishment of alternative media by Zimbabweans domiciled outside the country. Diasporic media have been a rich source of counter discourses that challenge the regime's political propaganda and repression. The discourses churned by diasporic media have enlightened the masses on the possibility of creating good governance, which will respect the will of the people. These media have shown that the people have the power to create a free country in which everybody is equal and has equal access to resources.

The voices of the people projected through the diasporic media have become a major part of the media menu in Zimbabwe adding to the discomfort of the ruling party. As the voices become significant and influential among the citizens of Zimbabwe, the ruling party feels a need to silence them. On the other hand the technological developments ensure that information is produced, processed and shared in a way that is too sophisticated for the Zimbabwean government to handle. As Olivia Muchena said in parliament (see Chapter Two) the government has not embraced these technologies. Social media facilitated by easy access to modern technology has made it difficult for the government to totally control access to alternative media content. Kuhlmann (2010: 15) considers online publications as a very important source of information in this time of online revolution. There is evidence that these media have taken advantage of new technologies to play an important role in providing a media space which offers an alternative view to the state controlled media within Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean community provides current news on Zimbabwe and send it abroad for publication back into the country. Technology has helped Zimbabweans to link up with relevant websites and diasporic radio stations to counter the state media propaganda that has helped the status quo establish and maintain its grip on power. The diasporic media give the masses a platform on which to air their views and inform each other about what is happening

in their area which the government would have preferred to keep covered up. Citizens equipped with mobile phones contact diasporic radio stations and online media to inform them about events taking place in Zimbabwe which the mainstream media would not dare talk about (see Moyo, D. 2009: 7). Once these issues become public and the world starts talking about them, the government is challenged by its nationals and the world to revise its actions or face isolation. The government is forced to address the issues raised as a result of this exposure. As Moyo, D. (2009) explains, stories about the suspected vote rigging and political violence in 2008 were exposed by the citizens who linked up with diasporic media to get these stories known to the world. Some members of the international community penalized the Zimbabwean government by imposing targeted sanctions and called for good governance and visible electoral reforms. They promised to relax and eventually remove these sanctions should the government show tangible evidence of reforms. This could have influenced the reduction in pre election violence in 2013 and the relaxation of the targeted sanctions on some members of the ruling party whose travel restrictions have as since been removed.

These diasporic media play a pivotal role in informing, not only Zimbabwe, but also the international community about what is happening in Zimbabwe. This is because all of them communicate in English which is an international language. This is crucial in that the more the world understands about what goes on in Zimbabwe the more they can be in a better position to intervene and influence change in the political system. Diaspora based media organisations seem to contribute to dialogical engagements within the country, something which is crucial in the formation of opinions. By so doing, they are seen as having a potential to generate pressure that can be put on the Zimbabwean government to respect democratic

principles. According to Becker and Schoenbach (1989: 9) audience members could change their views of the world as a result of the introduction of new media content. Putting this argument into perspective, one can see a lot of activity that is a direct response to diasporic media content in Zimbabwe, where people are able to challenge the discourse churned by state media. They seem to agree with the sentiments expressed by their communities through diasporic media. The state media's lack of touch with the citizens' views has given diasporic media authority and authenticity. As Mathuthu points out, the people have taken ownership of this thing (NewZimbabwe.com). They use the website as their public sphere to say what cannot be said through the media domiciled within the country. Diasporic media have captured the centrality of communicative action by conjuring up what Mathuthu calls a sense of ownership in which the populace consider the media their own property with which they are able to say what they want without any interference from the authorities. Diasporic media empower the people and increase oppositional voices which are important in helping establish a democratic environment.

The study has shown that limiting the information flow in the country will always lead to the emergence of the alternative voices extraterrestrially. As Soley and Nichols (1987) observe, message restriction generates an environment in which underground communication strategies are nurtured. A society's lack of openness is according to Soley the surest predictor that clandestine (diasporic) media will appear, whether the nondemocratic government is a military junta, communist or capitalist. Once these voices emerge and start churning out oppositional discourse, the government is put into a defensive position. It is put in a difficult position where it cannot deny that all is not well in Zimbabwe (see Moyo, D (2010) but to

acknowledge the sentiments of the people emerging from Zimbabwe through the diasporic media platforms.

7.3. Summarising the discussion on the role of diasporic media in facilitating journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe.

This research was approached from a Constructivist perspective which asserts that the world is changeable and the past, present and future are constructed through our practices and interactions with others (Lott 2004: 53). The research has looked at the social world as a product of thoughts and ideas of the people as they establish social, political and economic relations with one another. Indeed, with the aid of the analytical framework whose constituents are legislation, media technologies and citizen journalism, the research results show that some Zimbabweans have used ideation to create an environment where they share information and express their views without being subjected to the sanctioning powers of the state. They have taken advantage of new communication technologies in the hands of civilians to create an alternative public sphere on which to share ideas. This sharing of ideas in a liberated communication sphere translates into a collective action that challenges the status quo. As Moyo, D (2008: 551) argues, dictatorial governments try to control institutions of the state to use them to maximize their influence on the populace. The control of institutions gives the government power to influence the masses towards a particular ideological perspective that is pro-status quo. Evidence has shown that the ability by diasporic media to propagate information and establish communicative spaces into a dictatorial state can translate into meaningful change. Information creation and propagation helps the world to understand what is going on in Zimbabwe which could not be discovered without the intentional intervention of the citizens through active information creation and distribution. The extent to which this information can impact on the democratisation process

is also influenced by the action taken by the international community to bring normality to the political environment in the country. As the international community speaks the dictatorial regime is put in a position where it is forced to implement radical reforms in order to avert isolation. The reduction of political violence in Zimbabwe is an indication that reforms are possible, especially if malpractices are brought to the attention of the world. The engagement by the populace with media operating from the environments the government of Zimbabwe has no control over can bring hidden issues to the limelight. It is these media that provide marginalised sectors of society a platform from which to be heard. It is the voices of these marginalised sectors of society that have the ability to bring about an emancipatory environment in the country.

It is evident that the diasporic media have helped give the opposition and civil rights movements a platform to explain their policies to the masses. They are now able to pick out irregularities and demand transparency in the voting process during elections. The efforts of the diasporic media to create dialogue in the country have resulted in visible reductions of pre and post-election violence. It has generated discussions that have a potential to create change. As Pompa (1982) argues, control of material resources is not the definitive factor in determining power in structuring relations, as dialogue, argumentation, persuasion and the acceptance of what is appropriate can help players in the social platform to create the ideal environment that is capable of effecting change. Through an activity that can be explained with the help of Constructivism, the people have shown that, as they become conscious of the world around them, they become aware of how they can negotiate changes to improve their circumstances in Zimbabwe. The Constructivist argument that people have got the ability to consciously bring about political change through persuasion, dialogue and negotiation is illustrated in the dialogical spaces in which information is created, disseminated and shared.

This sharing of information has raised the interests of the world and brought about relative stability in the country. This is a remarkable milestone in the political landscape of Zimbabwe. There is evidence that as the people challenge the dominant power structure through their ideas, they can be able to create a democratic environment that is good for all.

Here there is evidence that through action that can be understood through a Constructivist approach, citizens have been empowered to express how good governance should take hold in the country. There is evidence that the government has no way of controlling the dialogical spheres the citizens use as these fall outside the jurisdiction of the state. There is evidence that the voices of the people are reaching the decision makers and creating a lot of concern. This is evidence that Constructivism is relevant in helping to understand the political situation the citizens want in Zimbabwe, where they can only deploy ideation and not physical combat to change their situation. The availability of user friendly and affordable communication technologies is facilitating communication among citizens in a way that has revolutionarised information access in Zimbabwe. The citizens are exercising their democratic rights of freedom of expression and access to information which eventually helps them to achieve freedom of association. The information they share about political alternatives helps them decide what political views to subscribe to and what political actions to take.

Citizen activities in Zimbabwe have been boosted by the availability of internet enabled communication technologies. There is evidence of the internet playing a role in the democratization process and transforming journalism in the country. The convergence of different communication platforms has transformed media message production, processing and distribution. This helps to get information out of the secretive state of Zimbabwe to be

shared with the international communities. This, it can be argued, has stopped the regime from perpetrating full scale acts of brutality in full view of the world.

The fact that diasporic media have the ability to influence citizen journalism and political awareness in Zimbabwe is evident. There is evidence that they create a dialogical space to facilitate the establishment of a democratic state which observes the fundamental principles of democracy which is according to Abraham Lincoln, in Young (1996), a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, an ideal form of governance of a modern state in which power, according to Linz and Stepan (1996) is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system. These are the principles which were echoed by Mandela in the famous Rivonia trial many years later in 1964 when he said ‘I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for, and to see realised. But my Lord, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.’

7.4. Conclusion

An analytical framework whose core constituents are legislation, citizen journalism and new media technologies has been deployed in this research to help understand the media democratic landscape in Zimbabwe. The analytical framework which has been explained through the constructivist lens has helped to illuminate how disenfranchised members of society are engaging in an activity that has an impact on the democratisation process in the country. The use of modern media technologies by citizens who have turned into journalists has created a liberating environment in which the masses are enabled to share information

through unsanctioned channels that are offering a formidable challenge to the status quo. This has led to the creation of dialogical spaces that enable the sharing of information that is capable of bringing about democratic change.

An analysis of the media democratic environment in Zimbabwe has revealed that the country has a history of media repression dating back to the colonial days where media were used as instruments of domination by the then white regime. As the literature review has revealed, the use of media as a political tool in the hands of the ruling class was inherited by the Zimbabwean government in 1980 and has continued to date. Media repression in Zimbabwe is facilitated by the implementation of restrictive legislation which was inherited from the Rhodesian government. The research has established that, instead of oppressive laws being repealed, they have been augmented by a plethora of new repressive media laws that have created an even more difficult environment for oppositional media to operate. This is the legal environment the diasporic media are circumventing by operating from environments the Zimbabwean government has no control over.

The Zimbabwean crisis has led to the re-emergence of diasporic media which have become critical players in the mediation of the crises facing the country. This thesis has established that the citizens have responded to this repressive environment by establishing oppositional media domiciled outside the boundaries of the state from where they are able to source information from the country, process it and disseminate it back into the country and all over the world, thereby creating a liberated communicative sphere where the citizens can engage with each other and deliberate on issues that have a potential to bring about political change in the country. The ability to control these media is made difficult by their use of technologies which transcend political boundaries.

The empirical research undertaken shows that these diasporic media are creating an enabling environment in which people can access information and exercise their freedom of speech. These media are creating an environment in which people are able to make rational decisions when it comes to political affairs. The diasporic media have created a platform on which the disenfranchised members of society are actively engaging with each other to formulate and share ideas that have a significant impact on the political environment in Zimbabwe. The empirical research has established how the citizens use digital technologies and internet based platforms to exchange information which impacts significantly on the democratic process. These technologies of freedom as Hamilton (2000) describes them, have empowered people to embark on an activity that has impacted on the political environment in Zimbabwe. Channels of communication that have been opened by diasporic media have had a significant impact in sharing with the world information about what is going on in the country. Issues of bad governance have been exposed, leading to a call by the international community for radical reforms in the country.

To ensure that the regime complies with the call for reforms, the international community has used punitive sanctions to persuade Mugabe to accept reforms and to consider revising his policies to embrace human rights and liberties or face isolation from the international community. As a result, the power of the citizens in bringing about political change cannot be disputed. It is evident that the liberating environment created by the communities through diasporic media has given people a dialogical space where they use their speech and ideas to challenge the regime. They are able to exercise their freedom of association and to understand what political alternatives are available. The people's engagement with the diasporic media seems to have a potential to effect political change in Zimbabwe by

consciously promoting a dialogical democratic environment where everyone is exercising their rights to be heard, a right which, in a fair environment, can lead to free and fair elections that can replace the existing repressive government with a democratic government elected by the people for the people, a government that will rule by consensus and not coercion.

Despite all the controls imposed on the operations of diasporic media, the empirical research carried out indicates that the people are engaging with these media in a way that is very unsettling for the government. It is the concern of the government that the consumers of diasporic media will one day vote in a way that will result in regime change. Peaceful regime change, it is hoped, can bring about a democratic environment the country has never experienced since the replacement of the autocratic white government of Ian Smith by the autocratic black government of Robert Mugabe in 1980. It has therefore been proved that the diasporic media have created an environment that has a potential to effect political change in Zimbabwe, change that will bring about a democratic environment where every citizen has a right to be heard, has access to information and has the right to belong to any organisation s/he chooses. In the process the country will have a democratic government described by Abraham Lincoln as a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people," (Young1996).

There are countries in the world whose democratic settings are similar to those in Zimbabwe. The citizens in those countries are embroiled in military warfare to change their circumstances. These countries can benefit from using ideation like Zimbabweans to avert bloodshed. The findings of this thesis indicate that they can also establish channels of communication through which they can exchange ideas and negotiate for change without the deployment of military arsenal. If these channels cannot be opened within the country, then

some countries of the world can help these people open these channels outside their countries where they can use new technologies of communication to wage an information warfare which is a better substitute for military warfare. Such a civilised way of addressing political issues has a potential to bring stability to the world, especially Africa which has experienced some of the longest conflicts which are retrogressive to stability and economic development.

7.5. Recommendations

Media policy reforms in Zimbabwe should be holistic, credible and liberating rather than limiting the public sphere long captured by the narrow interests of ruling elites before and after independence in 1980, (Chuma, 210:90). Citizens must argue in favour of pluralism which favours the establishment of an institutional framework accommodating and securing the existence of a plurality of media organisations by decoupling media organisation from the state and by public intervention in the market when necessary. Political activity must be in the interest of promoting diversity in the country. Pluralism must not be undermined by a concentration of economic and symbolic power. The country must adopt Curran's (2000) architecture which consists of a multi-tiered media environment catering for differentiated audiences while at the same time creating genuine public service media system to which all citizens can have access. Curran (2000: 15) advocates for an environment where alternative movement media with their strong link to the experiences and interpretations of the everyday lives of their members have a growing political capacity to translate their versions of political reality to dominant media. He sees the media as a battleground between contending forces. How they respond to and mediate this conflict affects the balance of social forces and ultimately the distribution of rewards in society. As Curran argues, a basic requirement of a democratic media system should represent all significant interests in society. It should facilitate their participation in the public domain, enable them to contribute to public debate

and have an input in the framing of public policy. The central role of media according to Curran should be defined as assisting the equitable negotiation of arbitration of competing interests through democratic processes.

The support for diasporic media which give a voice to the marginalised in an autocratic state is not a matter of choice but an empowering tool for the disadvantaged members of society. Every state, therefore, has an obligation to create an enabling environment for those members of the global village who are disadvantaged by the political dispensations they happen to be in. Empowering people is a noble act every state must participate in. This will prevent physical combat in a conflict, something which has devastating consequences in the world where selective intervention to global crises is evident. If communities are to be empowered to exercise their vote, they need to base their voting on valid information. Since autocratic states use the media to propagate their own philosophies without making any attempt to adopt an inclusive approach in which every party is given a chance to be heard, it is the duty of these diasporic media to help the nationals understand available political options.

7.6. Further studies

South Africa had Freedom Radio during the war of liberation. The Freedom Radio broadcasters joined the South Africa Broadcasting Corporation after independence and there is no record of them going back to the diaspora to start radio stations again. Instead, they have established community radio stations to help different communities address issues that pertain to their individual ethnicities. A study of how these community radio stations have strengthened community spirit as well as being South African can be a lesson to other nations who still have marginalised members of the community who have chosen to express their

voices from the environments which are not controlled by their elected autocratic governments.

The role of diasporic media is not a new phenomenon as diasporic radio was there before Zimbabwe's independence and has re-emerged after independence, this time not propagating revolutionary messages, but challenging bad governance by those who are supposed to have liberated the people. In case of a change in the power structure whose laws enable the free flow of information it would be interesting to see if these diasporic media will cease to exist. It would be the interest of this study to look at how these media respond to the political environment they helped to establish. If they come back to operate from within the country, it would be the interest of further studies to see what their editorial slant would be and if their funders will continue funding them and influencing their editorial policies. The Smith regime was opposed to divergent voices. It was replaced by the Mugabe regime which is unsympathetic to divergent voices. It remains to be seen how another government in Zimbabwe will respond to divergent voices.

According to Ofcom, there are currently an estimated 150 pirate radio stations in the UK which are regularly raided by the authorities.²² On the other hand the government allows the establishment of pirate radio stations that broadcast to other countries from Britain. It would be interesting to understand the basis on which they prohibit the establishment of pirate radio

²² <http://www.transmissionzero.co.uk/radio/london-pirate-radio/>
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/7919748.stm>

stations that broadcast in Britain, but host pirate radio stations that broadcast to other countries.

This thesis concludes with the poem, 'Voice of reason'.

Before every conflict, there is a voice of reason.

During every conflict, there is a voice of reason.

When the last gun has gone silent and the last bullet has gone cold,

There is a voice of reason.

Why not give the voice of reason a chance. (Unpublished)

TABLE OF APPENDICES

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Participant invitation letter

Participant invitation

Dear

I would like you to participate in the survey about the role of the diasporic media in influencing political change in Zimbabwe. By diasporic media, I mean newspapers, radio stations and websites that are based outside Zimbabwe and which communicate with and to Zimbabweans both inside and outside Zimbabwe.

I would like you to complete a questionnaire and send it back to the University of Salford in the enclosed stamped envelope. Alternatively, I could run the questionnaire with you face to face, over the 'phone or by email.

Your responses will be confidential . They will be anonymised to protect your identity.

I would like to thank you in advance for your assistance.

Everette Ndlovu

PhD Researcher

University of Salford.

Appendix 2. Participant information sheet

Participant information sheet

Purpose of the research

My research aims to establish the mediating role of the diasporic media in the Zimbabwean political situation. By diasporic media, I mean Zimbabwean media based outside Zimbabwe that communicate with Zimbabweans in and outside Zimbabwe. It will establish the extent to which diasporic media influence change in people's political consciousness and the nature of political activism in Zimbabwe. It will explore what information diasporic media give to audiences which government controlled media like Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, The Herald and The Chronicle may not publish. Overall, the research will shed new light on the kinds of influences these media generate in changes identifiable in people's political motivations, preferences and activities.

What is involved in participating

I would like you to answer the questions on the questionnaire without giving your identity. Once completed, please send the questionnaire back either by email, SMS, or through the provided addressed envelope. Should a face to face interview be conducted, it will be captured in an audio or video device, whichever you will feel comfortable with. For confidentiality faces will be blurred and voices distorted where necessary.

All information collected will be kept securely . It will be treated strictly confidential, both in electronic and paper form for a maximum period of five years after the research. Anonymity will be observed in accordance with data protection procedures. Instead of using names an alphanumeric system will be used. The material gathered will be used solely in writing

outputs generated from my research.

If at any stage during the research you feel like withdrawing from the research, you will be free to do so. In that case all material you contributed will be removed and immediately destroyed. If you have any reservations and concerns after having participated in the research, please get in touch with me. Your involvement in this research project is greatly appreciated.

Everette Ndlovu

Email: e.ndlovu@edu.salford.ac.uk

*University of Salford (GTA Office, School of Music, Media and Performance, Adelphi Building ,
Peru Street, Salford M5 4WT*

Appendix 3. Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

22 July 2010

Project Title: The role of the diasporic media in mediating political change in Zimbabwe.

Name and contact address of Researcher: Everette Ndlovu

University of Salford (GTA Office) School of Music, Media and Performance

Adelphi Building, Peru St, Salford M5 4WT

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I agree to take part in the above study.
3. I understand that an audio/video recording of my interview might be made.
4. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason. Should I withdraw, all material I would have contributed will be immediately removed and securely destroyed.

☐☐☐☐

Please tick box

Yes

No

I agree to the interview /consultation being audio/video recorded.

☐☐

I would request the use of anonymised quotes in publications

☐☐

I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored (after it has been anonymised) and used in written outputs generated from this research project.

☐☐

Name of Participant..... Date..... Signature.....

Name of Researcher..... Date..... Signature.....

Appendix 4. Interview Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE EDITOR OF THE ZIMBABWEAN NEWSPAPER

WILF MBANGA

1. What is the relevance of diasporic media in an independent country like Zimbabwe?
2. What factors have motivated the establishment of diasporic media in Zimbabwe?
3. To what extent has diasporic media managed to mediate political change in Zimbabwe?
4. How have diasporic media influenced the intervention of the international community in the Zimbabwean political situation?
5. How has the political landscape changed since the emergence of diasporic media in post independence Zimbabwe?
6. What was your personal motivation behind the establishment of The Zimbabwean newspaper outside Zimbabwe?
7. What has been your objective ?
8. Why has the Zimbabwean government issued a warrant of arrest against you?
9. How come Mugabe feels you have betrayed him?
10. How do you respond to the head of the Zimbabwean government's Media and Information Commission (MIC), Tafataona Mahoso, who says *The Zimbabwean* is a gigantic media fraud and accuses you of 'media dumping', suggesting that this newspaper is funded by foreign donors, offered at a price that was highly subsidised and therefore threatened to 'undermine national, duly registered and truly sovereign publishers who are making an honest and transparent living by informing their audiences'?
11. Since its establishment in 2005 what have been your achievements and what evidence do you have to back up your conclusions?
12. What does The Zimbabwean do which other media do not?
13. Which stories were broken by The Zimbabwean and how did those stories contribute to the people's political awareness of issues happening around them?
14. Had you not broken these stories how different would be the situation in Zimbabwe?

15. Has any survey been conducted to establish the effectiveness of The Zimbabwean on the ground?
16. How do you manage to get your paper to all the provinces of Zimbabwe and to the diasporic community?
17. What is the circulation of the paper so far?
18. What constraints do you have to deal with to reach the people considering that at one time your truck full of papers from South Africa was burnt and the distributors of the paper accused of distributing material that undermines the head of state?
19. Are the outlets for the paper not at any risk?
20. How do you involve the people in the production of the paper?
21. How does your paper engage with new technology such as SMS, Twitter, Facebook, etc.?
22. How has the paper suffered as a result of its activities?
23. How are your reporters and readers coping on the ground as a result of the government repressive activities?
24. Reporters Without Borders observe that retrograde measures by the Zimbabwean government show that some sectors of the Zimbabwean government still tend to react in a paranoid fashion and are clearly not ready to tolerate free expression, (Reporters Without Borders:2010). What's your take on that?
25. What changes do you hope to influence in Zimbabwe in the foreseeable future?
26. In case of democracy ever coming to Zimbabwe, would you consider going back to operate from there?

Appendix 5. Telephone administered questionnaire

How often do you listen to **SWRA**?

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|--|---------|--|----------|--|---------------|--|-----------|--|------------------------|--|
| Daily | | Once/wk | | Twice/wk | | 3 times/wk | | 4times/wk | | More than 4times/wk | |
|-------|--|---------|--|----------|--|---------------|--|-----------|--|------------------------|--|

How long have you been listening to **SWRA**?

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|----------------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| Less than a year | | More than a year | | More than 2 years | | More than 3 years | | More than 4 years | | More than 5 years | |
|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|----------------------|--|----------------------------|--|

How do you access **SWRA**?

| | | | | | |
|-------------|--|-----------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| On radio | | On my mobile | | At the Internet café | |
|-------------|--|-----------------|--|----------------------------|--|

Do you or anybody you know ever interact with SWRA?

| | | | |
|-----|--|----|--|
| Yes | | No | |
|-----|--|----|--|

How do you or people you know interact with SWRA if at all you or they do

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|--|-------|--|----------|--|---------|--|-----------|--|-----|--|
| Phone | | Email | | Facebook | | Twitter | | Chat room | | SMS | |
|-------|--|-------|--|----------|--|---------|--|-----------|--|-----|--|

What motivates you to listen to **SWRA**?

What has **SWRA** taught you?

What stories are covered by **SWRA** which are not covered by local media?

How has **SWRA** influenced your understanding and reaction to political issues in Zimbabwe? Give examples.

How has your voting been influenced by your engagement with **SWRA**?

Why do you trust **SWRA**? If so why. If not why?

To what extent do you think **SWRA** has influenced political engagement in the country? Give examples.

Without **SWRA** would people be aware of the political developments in the country? Explain.

How often do you read **The Zimbabwean**?

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|--|---------|--|----------|--|------------|--|-----------|--|---------------------|--|
| Daily | | Once/wk | | Twice/wk | | 3 times/wk | | 4times/wk | | More than 4times/wk | |
|-------|--|---------|--|----------|--|------------|--|-----------|--|---------------------|--|

How long have you been reading **The Zimbabwean**?

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|--|------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| Less than a year | | More than a year | | More than 2 years | | More than 3 years | | More than 4 years | | More than 5 years | |
|------------------|--|------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|

How do you access **The Zimbabwean**?

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--------------|--|----------------------|--|--|--|--|
| I get a hard copy | | On my mobile | | At the Internet cafe | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--------------|--|----------------------|--|--|--|--|

Do you or anybody you know ever interact with **The Zimbabwean**?

| | | | |
|-----|--|----|--|
| Yes | | no | |
|-----|--|----|--|

How do you or people you know interact with **The Zimbabwean** if at all you or they do

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--|-------|--|-----------|--|---------|--|----------|--|-----|--|
| By phone | | Email | | Face Book | | Twitter | | Chatroom | | SMS | |
|----------|--|-------|--|-----------|--|---------|--|----------|--|-----|--|

What motivates you to read **The Zimbabwean**?

What has **The Zimbabwean** taught you?

What stories are covered by **The Zimbabwean** which are not covered by local media?

How has **The Zimbabwean** influenced your understanding and reaction to political issues in Zimbabwe?

How has your voting been influenced by your engagement with **The Zimbabwean**?

Why do you trust **The Zimbabwean**?

To what extent do you think **The Zimbabwean** has influenced political engagement in the country?

Without **The Zimbabwean** would people be aware of the political developments in the country?
Explain

How often do you visit **www.newzimbabwe.com** ?

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|--|---------|--|----------|--|---------------|--|-----------|--|------------------------|--|
| Daily | | Once/wk | | Twice/wk | | 3 times/wk | | 4times/wk | | More than 4times/wk | |
|-------|--|---------|--|----------|--|---------------|--|-----------|--|------------------------|--|

How long have you been visiting **www.thezimbabwean.com**?

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|----------------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| Less than a year | | More than a year | | More than 2 years | | More than 3 years | | More than 4 years | | More than 5 years | |
|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|----------------------|--|----------------------------|--|

How do you access **www.thezimbabwean.com**?

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------------|--|----------------------------|--|------------|--|
| On the internet at home | | On my mobile | | At the Internet cafe | | At work | |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------------|--|----------------------------|--|------------|--|

Do you or anybody you know ever interact with **www.newzimbabwe.com**?

| | | | |
|-----|--|----|--|
| Yes | | no | |
|-----|--|----|--|

How do you or people you know interact with **www.newzimbabwe.com** if at all you or they do

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|--|-------|--|----------|--|---------|--|----------|--|-----|--|
| phone | | email | | facebook | | twitter | | chatroom | | SMS | |
|-------|--|-------|--|----------|--|---------|--|----------|--|-----|--|

What motivates you to access **www.newzimbabwe.com**?

What has **www.newzimbabwe.com** taught you?

What stories are covered by **www.newzimbabwe.com** which are not covered by local media?

How has **www.newzimbabwe.com** influenced your understanding and reaction to political issues in Zimbabwe?

How has your voting been influenced by your engagement with **www.newzimbabwe.com**

Do you , or any of the people you know ever contribute to **www.newzimbabwe.com**?

Why do you trust **www.newzimbabwe.com**
To what extent do you think **www.newzimbabwe.com** influenced political engagement in the country?

Without **www.newzimbabwe.com** would people be aware of the political developments in the country? Explain.

Appendix 6. An extract from the constitution of Zimbabwe 2012

4.18 Freedom of expression and freedom of the media

- (1) Every person has the right to freedom of expression, which includes—
- (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.
- (2) Every person is entitled to freedom of the press and other media of communication, which freedom includes protection of the confidentiality of journalists' sources of information.
- (3) Broadcasting and other electronic media of communication have freedom of establishment, subject only to licensing procedures that—
- (a) are necessary to regulate the airwaves and other forms of signal distribution; and
 - (b) are independent of control by government or by political or commercial interests.
- (4) All State-owned media of communication must—
- (a) be free to determine independently the editorial content of their broadcasts or other communications;
 - (b) be impartial; and
 - (c) afford fair opportunity for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions.
- (5) Freedom of expression and freedom of the press do not include—
- (a) incitement to violence;
 - (b) advocacy of hatred or hate speech; or
 - (c) malicious injury to a person's reputation.

4.19 Access to information

- (1) Every citizen or resident of Zimbabwe, including the Zimbabwean press and other media of communication, has the right of access to—
- (a) any information held by all the State and institutions and agencies of government at every level, in so far as the information is required for the exercise or protection of a

right or in the interests of public accountability;

(b) information held by any other person, in so far as the information is required for the exercise or protection of a right.

(2) Every person has a right to the correction of information, or the deletion of untrue, erroneous or misleading information, which is held by the State or any institution or agency of the government at any level, and which relates to that person.³⁶

(3) Legislation must be enacted to give effect to this right, but may restrict access to information in the interests of defence, public security or professional confidentiality, to the extent that the restriction is fair, reasonable, necessary and justifiable in an open, just and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom.

Source:

<http://www.swradiofrica.com/Documents/Final%20Consolidated%20Draft%20Constitution%2018%20July%202012.pdf>

Appendix 7. An Extract from the Lancaster House Agreement 1979

IX. Freedom of Expression

1. It will be forbidden, except with the consent of the person concerned, to interfere with anybody's freedom of expression. This freedom will be defined as including freedom to hold opinions without interference, freedom to receive ideas and information without interference, freedom to communicate ideas and information without interference and freedom from interference with one's correspondence.

2. It will be forbidden to prevent any person or group from establishing a school, or to prevent any person from sending a child to the school of his choice.

3. There will, however, be an exception for any law (and for any measures taken under it) which makes reasonable provision in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality or public health, or which makes reasonable provision to protect the reputations, rights and freedoms of others or the private lives of persons concerned in legal proceedings, to prevent breach of confidence, to maintain the authority and independence of the courts or to regulate the administration or technical operation of telephones, telegraphs, posts, wireless broadcasting or television or to prevent the unlawful dispatch with correspondence of other matter; or which imposes restrictions on public officers. Any such law (and the measures taken under it) will be tested against the criterion of what would be reasonably justifiable in a democratic society.

X. Freedom of Assembly and Association

1. It will be forbidden, except with the consent of the person concerned, to interfere with anybody's freedom of assembly and association. This freedom will be defined as the right of

every person to assemble freely and associate with others and in particular to form or belong to political parties or to trade unions or other associations for the protection of his interests.

2. There will, however, be an exception for any law (and for any measures taken under it) which makes reasonable provision in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality or public health; or which makes reasonable provision to protect the rights and freedoms of others; or which imposes restrictions on public officers. Any such law (and the measures taken under it) will be tested against the criterion of what would be reasonably justifiable in a democratic society. (Lancaster House Agreement ,1979:19)

XI. Freedom of Movement

1. It will be forbidden to interfere with anybody's freedom of movement. This freedom will be defined as the right to move freely throughout Zimbabwe, the right to reside in any part of Zimbabwe, the right to enter Zimbabwe, the right to leave Zimbabwe and immunity from expulsion from Zimbabwe.

Appendix 8. Declaration of Windhoek

Declaration of Windhoek

Introduction

The Declaration of Windhoek is a statement of free press principles put together by newspaper journalists in Africa during a UNESCO seminar on "Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press" in Windhoek, Namibia, from 29 April to 3 May 1991. This document calls for free, independent, pluralistic media worldwide, characterizing free press as essential to democracy and as a fundamental human right.

The Windhoek Declaration was a call to arms to protect the fundamental principles of the freedom of expression as enshrined in Article 19 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), which states:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

Text of the Declaration of Windhoek (3 May 1991)

We the participants in the United Nations/ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Seminar on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press, held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 29 April to 3 May 1991,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 59(I) of 14 December 1946 stating that freedom of information is a fundamental human right, and General Assembly resolution 45/76 A of 11 December 1990 on information in the service of humanity,

Recalling resolution 25C/104 of the General Conference of UNESCO of 1989 in which the main focus is the promotion of "the free flow of ideas by word and image at international as well as national levels",

Noting with appreciation the statements made by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Public Information and the Assistant Director-General for Communication, Information and Informatics of UNESCO at the opening of the Seminar,

Expressing our sincere appreciation to the United Nations and UNESCO for organizing the Seminar,

Expressing also our sincere appreciation to all the intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental bodies and organizations, in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which contributed to the United Nations/UNESCO effort to organize the Seminar,

Expressing our gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia for their kind hospitality which facilitated the success of the Seminar,

Declare that:

1. Consistent with article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the establishment, maintenance and fostering of an independent, pluralistic and free press is essential to the development and maintenance of democracy in a nation, and for economic development.
2. By an independent press, we mean a press independent from governmental, political or economic control or from control of materials and infrastructure essential for the production and dissemination of newspapers, magazines and periodicals.

3. By a pluralistic press, we mean the end of monopolies of any kind and the existence of the greatest possible number of newspapers, magazines and periodicals reflecting the widest possible range of opinion within the community.
4. The welcome changes that an increasing number of African States are now undergoing towards multi-party democracies provide the climate in which an independent and pluralistic press can emerge.
5. The world-wide trend towards democracy and freedom of information and expression is a fundamental contribution to the fulfilment of human aspirations.
6. In Africa today, despite the positive developments in some countries, in many countries journalists, editors and publishers are victims of repression-they are murdered, arrested, detained and censored, and are restricted by economic and political pressures such as restrictions on newsprint, licensing systems which restrict the opportunity to publish, visa restrictions which prevent the free movement of journalists, restrictions on the exchange of news and information, and limitations on the circulation of newspapers within countries and across national borders. In some countries, one-party States control the totality of information.
7. Today, at least 17 journalists, editors or publishers are in African prisons, and 48 African journalists were killed in the exercise of their profession between 1969 and 1990.
8. The General Assembly of the United Nations should include in the agenda of its next session an item on the declaration of censorship as a grave violation of human rights falling within the purview of the Commission on Human Rights.
9. African States should be encouraged to provide constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press and freedom of association.
10. To encourage and consolidate the positive changes taking place in Africa, and to counter the negative ones, the international community-specifically, international organizations (governmental as well as non-governmental), development agencies and professional associations-should as a matter of priority direct funding support towards the development and establishment of non-governmental newspapers, magazines and periodicals that reflect the society as a whole and the different points of view within the communities they serve.
11. All funding should aim to encourage pluralism as well as independence. As a consequence, the public media should be funded only where authorities guarantee a constitutional and effective freedom of information and expression and the independence of the press.
12. To assist in the preservation of the freedoms enumerated above, the establishment of truly independent, representative associations, syndicates or trade unions of journalists, and associations of editors and publishers, is a matter of priority in all the countries of Africa where such bodies do not now exist.
13. The national media and labour relations laws of African countries should be drafted in such a way as to ensure that such representative associations can exist and fulfil their important tasks in defence of press freedom.
14. As a sign of good faith, African Governments that have jailed journalists for their professional activities should free them immediately. Journalists who have had to leave their countries should be free to return to resume their professional activities.
15. Cooperation between publishers within Africa, and between publishers of the North and South (for example through the principle of twinning), should be encouraged and supported.
16. As a matter of urgency, the United Nations and UNESCO, and particularly the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), should initiate detailed research, in cooperation with governmental (especially UNDP) and nongovernmental donor agencies, relevant non-governmental organizations and professional associations, into the following specific areas:
 1. identification of economic barriers to the establishment of news media outlets, including restrictive import duties, tariffs and quotas for such things as newsprint, printing equipment, and typesetting and word processing machinery, and taxes on the sale of newspapers, as a prelude to their removal;
 2. training of journalists and managers and the availability of professional training institutions and courses;
 3. legal barriers to the recognition and effective operation of trade unions or associations of journalists, editors and publishers;
 4. a register of available funding from development and other agencies, the conditions attaching to the release of such funds, and the methods of applying for them;
 5. the state of press freedom, country by country, in Africa.

In view of the importance of radio and television in the field of news and information, the United Nations and UNESCO are invited to recommend to the General Assembly and the General Conference the convening of a similar seminar of journalists and managers of radio and television services in Africa to explore the possibility of applying similar concepts of independence and pluralism to those media.

The international community should contribute to the achievement and implementation of the initiatives and projects set out in the annex to this Declaration.

This Declaration should be presented by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the United Nations General Assembly, and by the Director-General of UNESCO to the General Conference of UNESCO

Source: <http://www.un.org/en/events/pressfreedomday/windhoek.shtml>

Appendix 9. Open letter from Mbanga to Mugabe

To the man I once loved:

Happy Birthday Robert Mugabe
By Wilf Mbanga

21 February 2007

Do you remember when we first met, in 1974? I was 27, you were nearing 50. The elder brother. *Mukoma*. We clicked immediately. Something about my youth and eagerness touched you. I hero-worshipped you. As you articulated your vision for freedom from colonial oppression, I honestly believed you were the right person to lead our country out of bondage.

You were eloquent and intelligent, a clear thinker. As a journalist, I admired these qualities. You were prepared to fight for what you believed in, a man of principle. As a man I revered that. You believed in non-racism - skin colour was irrelevant. You believed in justice, dignity, equality. So did I.

You told me - I remember it clearly - that we were not fighting the whites, but the system. An unjust system of privilege.

Do you remember when you visited me in my humble home at Beatrice Cottages? We listened to Jim Reeves and Elvis and Pat Boone and sang along and laughed together.

You revealed your soul to me, your dreams, your hopes - and I wrote your first biography, introducing you to the world through the syndication of the Argus Group. I introduced you to the ITN reporter Mike Nicholson who first captured you on film for the international media. I was so proud of you. I wanted the whole world to know about you, hear you speak.

Later, you became their darling. I was so proud.

Then when you left to go to Mozambique, my heart went with you, my hopes for the future, for freedom, for justice, for dignity.

I was so relieved when I heard you had arrived safely. I knew then that our *chimurenga* - the liberation struggle - was in the right hands.

Do you remember when we met again at Geneva airport, when you arrived for the Rhodesian settlement talks? How we hugged each other and talked about home.

Once again, I was your biggest fan, and a mouthpiece for your cause. You gave me several exclusive interviews. Again, they were circulated internationally.

Do you remember when I interviewed you on the eve of the announcement of the independence election results in March 1980? You told me you intended to form a government of national unity - to include everyone. Once again, we made world headlines. Your vision, my story.

And then on the day of the announcement itself. How we laughed together for joy, and you told me your heart had gone "boom, boom" when the registrar-general had announced your landslide victory. How we rejoiced. Independence at last! The birth of Zimbabwe.

Do you remember when we met in your private lounge at state house a few years later? The late Justin Nyoka was there, then director of information. So too was Emmerson Mnangagwa, then minister for state security.

I was by then editor of our national news agency, Ziana. I had received disturbing reports of killings in Matabeleland. You told me these were South African-inspired and sponsored by terrorists, sent by the apartheid-regime Boers to destabilise our precious new nation and destroy our independence. Because I trusted you completely, I believed you. It made sense. I accepted it. I had utter faith in your judgment.

We travelled together much over the next decade. We were all so proud of you. I have a photograph of you holding my hand with the late Tanzanian president, Julius Nyerere, at a hotel in New Delhi. How we laughed. What good years they were.

Do you remember when I sat in the front row of the press conference you held in 2000 to launch your election campaign? By then you had come to regard me as your enemy, because of my role in launching the *Daily News*, which was critical of your administration. You would not look at me. I remember the feelings of betrayal, disappointment and sadness that almost choked me.

We did not see each other again after that.

Today, 21 February 2007, is your birthday, *Mukoma*. When we met thirty-four years ago, I wished you long life, health and happiness. It should not have turned out like this. Zimbabwe was and is worthy of so much more.

It is not too late, *Mukoma*. You can still do the right thing. The people for whom you were once prepared to suffer so much are still there. They still need freedom. You once loved them enough to give your life to set them free. Can you not find it in your heart one more time to set them free?

Give up your power, *Mukoma*. Set our people free. Let them decide who should govern them. Stop starving and beating them to force them to love you. The only thing that will make us love you again is for you to go, now

About the author

Wilf Mbanga lives in Britain in self-imposed exile, having been declared an enemy of the people of Zimbabwe. He is the founder, editor and publisher of *The Zimbabwean*.

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