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**Alternative media and African democracy: The Daily News
and opposition politics in Zimbabwe, 1997-2010.**

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Alternative Media and African Democracy:
The Daily News and Opposition Politics in Zimbabwe – 1997-2010

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of
Westminster for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century were marked by enormous social, economic and political challenges in Africa and in other developing contexts. This was partly due to the effects of a global economic recession and arguably failed national economic structural adjustment programmes, rampant public sector corruption and a rise in authoritarianism, as states tried to keep restive populations under control. Zimbabwe saw intense political struggles between the government and various agents of social change who were pressing for democratic space. This study specifically investigates how the news media in Zimbabwe played a critical role in actively mobilizing for political change and as a site for opposition politics and agitation during moments of turmoil and repression from 1997-2010. Zimbabwe's news media, particularly privately owned newspapers, provided more accessible platforms for robust debate that challenged the status quo in the troubled state. Not only did the private press in Zimbabwe successfully oppose the one-party state after the country attained independence in 1980, they were even more significant at the height of the economic and political governance crisis, also known as the Zimbabwe Crisis, from 2000-2010. My research focuses on the unprecedented ways in which newspaper journalism helped the cause of democratisation in Zimbabwe. The research is designed as a qualitative case study of *The Daily News*, a leading private newspaper whose masthead was aptly worded: "telling it like it is". Apart from content illustration of purposely-selected headlines of newspaper articles, it was based on semi-structured interviews conducted with 51 respondents, who were mainly politicians and journalists living in Zimbabwe. I also draw upon my experience and observations of having worked for the *Daily News* during this eventful period. The research methods gave me access to primary data on the institutional and personal experiences of a private newspaper and its journalists, who reflected and affected the political crisis in Zimbabwe. The main aim was to investigate why and how news journalists working for a prominent private medium came to oppose an undemocratic state under conditions of repression. The analytical lens of alternative media facilitates a construction of how *The Daily News* and its journalists experienced, reported,

confronted and navigated state authoritarianism in a historical moment of political turmoil. The study discusses the complex relationships between the independent and privately-owned press, the main opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and civil society organizations. Such groups include the labour movement and the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), the main constitutional reform movement. This dissertation argues that in the struggles for political change that ensued between the opposition forces and the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party, *The Daily News* provided form and solidity to oppositional and civic voices that were previously shut out by the dominant public media. The significance of this study is that existing scholarship on media and communication studies in Zimbabwe do not adequately capture these experiences. The agency of such media institutions and journalists has rarely been investigated. Further, the research provides an original analysis of the operations of *The Daily News* and its journalists in the context of highly undemocratic political moment, inclusive of the trials and tribulations, such as assaults, arrests, detentions, and office bombings, civil and criminal trials. Arguably, this study fills an important lacuna in scholarship on the role of the news media in democratising states during moments of political instability. The study thus contributes to knowledge on the experiences of alternative, opposition, activist and often radical journalists in Zimbabwe, where they championed ordinary citizens' stories instead of focussing entirely on expert views of the crisis. By embracing alternative media theory as the analytic lens of the study, there is arguably a normative contribution to knowledge through the use of the framework in a democratising context to broaden the understanding of the role of the news media in societies going through turbulent political transitions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	1
Abstract	2
Introduction	9
Chapter 1: Alternative media and democratisation	33
1.0 Introduction	33
1.1 Alternative media: from west to Africa	34
1.2 Alternative media and opposition politics	34
1.3 The purpose of alternative media	37
1.4 The significance of alternative media theory	38
1.5 Media and democracy: discourses	43
1.6 Key roles of media in democracy	43
1.7 Alternative media and democracy in Africa	48
1.8 The limitations of western media theorisation	51
1.9 General definitions of democracy	53
1.10 Forms/practices of democracy	55
1.11 African perspectives on democracy	58
1.12 Oromo democracy: an African view	60
1.13 Alternative and non-western discourses on democracy	61
1.14 The problems with western democracy	63
1.15 Key elements in rethinking democracy in Africa	66
1.16 Conclusion	71
Chapter 2: Trajectory of anti-colonial media in Africa	71
2.0 Introduction	71
2.1 Opposition Media and Democracy: A worldview	72
2.2 Nicaragua's <i>LaPrensa</i> newspaper and opposition politics	73
2.3 Media opposition to authoritarianism in Africa	74
2.4 Anti-colonial media as mouthpiece of African nationalists	77
2.5 Media as opposition: Niger's <i>Haske</i> newspaper	80
2.6 The anti-apartheid media in South Africa	80

2.7 The impact of alternative media under apartheid (1980-1994)	82
2.8 Anti-colonial media and political struggles in Zimbabwe	85
2.9 <i>Voice of Zimbabwe</i> : how <i>chimurenga</i> resisted Rhodesian propaganda	87
2.10 History repeating itself: state-media relations	90
2.11 Discussion on state-media relations in Africa	90
2.12 The legacies of colonial media regulation in Africa	93
2.13 Conclusion	98
Chapter 3: Experiences from the field work	101
3.0 Introduction	101
3.1 Qualitative design	101
3.2 Why qualitative research methodology	103
3.3 Interviews	106
3.4 Advantages of in-depth interviews	108
3.5 Disadvantages of in-depth interviews	109
3.6 Semi-structured interviews	110
3.7 Unstructured interviews	110
3.8 Desktop/archival research	111
3.9 Personal fieldwork reflections	113
3.10 Access and interviews process	113
3.11 Problems with influential people and state bureaucrats	115
3.12 Personal experiences	116
3.13 Ethical considerations	117
3.14 Ethical issues after project	119
3.15 Conclusion	120
Chapter 4: Alternative media and opposition politics in Zimbabwe	121
4.0 Introduction	121
4.1 Colonial legacy and post-independence Zimbabwe's response	122
4.2 Government media policy response	123
4.3 Justifying focus from state media relations in Zimbabwe	125
4.4 Media as Tool to consolidate political authority, 1980-1990	125
4.5 Media as premise of development	127
4.6 Media response to one party-state agenda, 1983-1990	128
4.7 Media and the national security agenda, 1997-2010	129
4.8 Enter <i>The Daily News</i>	130
4.9 <i>The Daily News</i> : capturing historical moments	132
4.10 <i>Daily News</i> growth and opposition politics in Zimbabwe	136
4.11 Government policy response to opposition media	143
4.12 Access to information and protection of privacy act (AIPPA)	147
4.13 Broadcasting services act (BSA)	149
4.14 Public order and security act (POSA)	152
4.15 The impact of media repression	154

4.16 The agency of alternative media journalists	157
4.17 Conclusion	158
Chapter 5: <i>The Daily News</i> and opposition politics in Zimbabwe	160
5.0 Introduction	160
5.1 <i>The Daily News</i> : organising the opposition front	161
5.2 <i>Telling it like it is</i> : experiences of <i>Daily News</i> journalists	174
5.3 <i>Daily News</i> journalists join MDC party and civic groups	188
5.4 <i>The Daily News</i> : A platform for social change forces	195
5.5 Differences within an alternative newspaper	205
5.6 <i>Daily News</i> , agency and defiance under repression	210
5.7 Conclusion	215
Chapter 6: Alternative media and alternative groups	217
6.0 Introduction	217
6.1 <i>The Daily News</i> and elections in Zimbabwe	217
6.2 How <i>the Daily News</i> influenced opposition politics	228
6.3 <i>Daily News</i> ' democratic role: debates and contestations	234
6.4 Contestations of the <i>Daily News</i> in crisis Zimbabwe	240
6.5 Conclusion	244
Chapter 7: Concluding reflections	246
7.1 Alternative media and democracy in Africa	246
7.2 Strengths and further research	252
7.3 The Significance of the Study	254
7.4 Contribution to alternative media studies	256
Bibliography	257
Appendices	265
Appendix A: Schedule of respondents (interviewees)	265
Appendix B: Semi-structured questions for qualitative interviews	270
Appendix C: Sample of interview transcripts	277
Appendix D: The structure of the media in Zimbabwe	286

Introduction

Emerging democracies need vibrant news media because the media not only act as an important link between the ruled and the rulers but also mobilise those challenging power. This thesis focuses on the role played by an independent newspaper in opposition politics in Zimbabwe, at the height of the ‘Zimbabwe crisis’ from 1997-2010. It was a time when, among other things, the Zimbabwe government tightened its grip on the media in order to influence and maintain its dominant position in defining and articulating the crisis “both at home and in the Diaspora, as well as its critics abroad,” (Chiumbu & Moyo, 2009: 180). As put forward by Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003: 3) and Raftopoulos, (2003: 217), there are contentious debates and disagreements on what constituted and caused the crisis. However, it is generally agreed that the crisis had local and global dimensions that were located in a failing economy, resulting in massive shortages of basic commodities such as food and fuel, social and political unrest, the disputed and often violent land acquisition programme, authoritarian politics and the imposition of sanctions by the European Union (EU), the United States’ government and Australia over disputed and violent presidential elections in March 2002. Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003: 3) persuasively submit that, despite different and numerous scholarly interrogations, this was a multifaceted crisis:

It is a crisis generated by and generating particular ensembles of politics and practice related to at least three intertwining analytical themes and empirical areas: *the politics of land and resource distribution; reconstructions of nation and citizenship; and the remaking of state and modes of rule.*

The issue of resources is undeniably a major point. The fragile state centralised political power to influence the redistributive politics, particularly on land. The ruling party monopolised power to push ahead with its redistributive politics and practices. Opposition politics appeared to be completely dominated by state power during the Zimbabwe Crisis. However, not much recognition has been given to the formal and informal coalition of forces that arose to effectively challenge the erosion of democratic freedoms by the ruling forces since Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980. In this regard Willems (2010:1) has, for example, usefully argued that the absence of physical protests in the streets of Zimbabwe should not be equated with the absence of resistance. This approach replaces the narrow focus on the forms of resistance associated with dramatic revolutions and grand rebellions, often used by journalists and scholars, with a profound assessment of everyday forms of resistance, such as popular

culture used by Zimbabweans to challenge the increasingly undemocratic state (Willems, 2010:1). It is, therefore, persuasive and significant to also interrogate the role of the informal and formal forces that teamed up to challenge undemocratic state practices. As is stated by Chabal (2014: xiii):

The salience of civil society in Africa thus arose from the idea that it embodied the productive resistance of ordinary people against the authoritarian state, which monopolised power and exploited the populace.

However, civil society in Africa is not fully defined and formed and analysing its role in democratisation is not straightforward. This study considers how the emerging Zimbabwean democracy responded to a scathing newspaper and its journalists that mobilised various forms of opposition politics against what they perceived to be authoritarianism. While it is not unusual for some sections of national media to oppose the state, this study examines the experiences of the privately-owned ‘independent’ newspaper and its journalists, who were outspoken and critical of undemocratic tendencies at a time of heightened political and economic crisis. The case study of Zimbabwe, a Southern African country, is similar to that in other democratising countries. The role and experiences of news media and journalists in Zimbabwe during the period of crisis arguably demonstrates the effectiveness of the mass media in challenging political hegemony. The study discusses how alternative news media work and, more importantly, how such media negotiated state repression. It also investigates journalists’ agency and their crucial role in Zimbabwe’s contested democratic processes.

The focus and rationale of the study

The news media can be regarded as the “eyes of democracy”, especially given their crucial watchdog role in emerging democracies, where they arguably hold a mirror to society (Esipisu&Khaguli 2009: vi). While it is not unusual for the mass media to be controlled by undemocratic governments, the same mass media can also act as a site of opposition politics in oppressive regimes. Unger (1990: 371) argues that in an oppressive political system, at particular moments, the mass media, especially a free press, can be an effective platform for public debate that can help challenge the status quo in emerging democracies which have weak political opposition parties. This study interrogates how the privately owned newspapers in Zimbabwe helped to mould opposition politics, including opposing the one-party state project after Independence in 1980. This role was even more pronounced during the political crisis from 1997-2010, when Zimbabwe’s emerging democracy faced a plethora of political and economic crises that threatened the political hegemony of the ruling party (Hammar&Raftopoulos, 2003). This

research, therefore, focuses on an alternative news medium and the experiences of activist journalists in the context of democratisation in Zimbabwe. The study of a leading privately owned newspaper, *The Daily News*, is significant in helping to explore the manner in which activist journalists and the privately owned news media have confronted an undemocratic regime. The study contributes new knowledge and evidence to important work on alternative, oppositional, activist and radical journalism within the broader context of transition in emerging democracies. Broadly, the study aims to critically determine:

1. The interplay between news media and emerging democracy at the height of the Zimbabwe crisis, 1997-2010
2. To assess the role of news media regulation and evaluate the responses and experience of alternative media and activist journalists at a critical moment
3. To critically investigate the resulting alliances between news media, opposition political parties and civic society in the emerging democratization and political transition in Zimbabwe.
4. To critically evaluate the complexities, contexts and cases of alternative, oppositional, activist and often radical politics and journalism and their role in the emerging democracy.
5. To discuss the implications of interventionist alternative news media in transitions within emerging democracies.

The study addresses a gap in existing academic work in media and communications, which have underplayed the role of alternative newspapers and journalists in opposing the policies of an increasingly undemocratic political regime, particularly at the time of the ‘Zimbabwe crisis’. At stake is the agency of such media institutions and journalists. Patrick Chabal (2014) illuminates the discourse on the agency of Africans against state repression that suits this study. Chabal, (2014: xv-xvi) posits that:

Agency is understood as directed, meaningful, intentional and self-reflection social or political action. In other words, it is not just the reflex opposition, a mere ‘reaction’ to the actions of the agents of the state. It involves a deliberate act that seeks to oppose or undermine the constraining pressure, which restricts the ability of ordinary people to live, function work or play as they see fit.

This study examines the agency of alternative media and journalists in defying oppressive state tendencies. The role played by *The Daily News* and its journalists in mobilising and resisting undemocratic state behaviour, such as assaults, arrests, detentions, and bombings, civil and criminal trials, has so far been given little attention in media and communication studies. As explored in Chapters Four, Five and Six, democracy was upheld by determined alternative, activist and often radical

journalists. My study adds new insights from empirical and verifiable data and the original personal experiences and insights of the journalists, using their own voices and the reasons why they confronted a repressive government. Opposition parties gained unprecedented support in the period analysed. A coalition government was formed and a new constitution created by an alliance of forces in that period. Other studies have explored the role of alternative media, such as the internet, in the processes of the organisation and mobilisation of the ‘movement for globalisation’ (Kavada, 2005: 72). More recently scholarly works have shown how new modes of communication in the Arab world, “especially online citizen journalism through blogging, tweeting, Facebook posting and You Tube video uploading, changed the function of the Arab media from being just ‘safety valves’ to become effective ‘mobilising tools’, which aided the transition to democratization and political change as evidenced in both the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions of 2011”, (Khamis& Vaughn, 2014: 156). My research offers a fresh perspective on the surmountable role played by an alternative news medium as the voice of opposition politics and agents of social change in Zimbabwe’s troubled democratisation contestations and the political struggles for power against an often violent incumbent regime. This thesis acknowledges the various scholarly works and contributions on alternative media and journalism by Chris Atton (2004 &2007) in contributing to social change through such platforms as internet, radio, blogs and the network of independent media centres known as Indymedia network where journalists actively report news from their active involvement in social causes such as protests. However, this study focuses on an alternative newspaper and its journalists to enrich and build on this analytic framework in a context often marked by state violence against journalists and other agitators of social change where the newspaper had informal relations and alliances with opposition forces while maintaining its autonomy. It further builds on the significant contributions of recent scholarly work of Terje Skjerdal (2012) on normative African journalism models where he suggested three alternative journalism models; journalism for social change, communalism journalism and journalism based on oral discourse. Of relevance to this investigation and supporting Atton (2002) and Downing’s (2001) major contributions on alternative media which underpins this investigation is Skjerdal’s (2012: 640) articulation of journalism for social change which entails advocacy, activist, liberation and revolutionary journalism among other variables. Skerdal (2012: 641) argues that journalism for social change champions that “the journalist should be a change agent.” As articulated in Chapter two, this type of journalism started with newspapers associated with African nationalists like Kwame Nkurumah of Ghana’s *Accra Evening News* where journalism was a vehicle for national unity and a tool for resisting colonial rule. Similarly, in post-independence

Zimbabwe, an alternative newspaper and its journalists find themselves confronting an authoritarian regime seeking broader governance changes.

The researcher is a former university student leader and activist involved in various social change causes such as protests against corruption, constitutional reforms, and human rights abuses by the government and the deteriorating economic and political conditions while at the University of Zimbabwe in the late 1990s. Having worked as a news editor of *The Daily News* between 2000 and 2004, I have a personal interest in my undertaking this study. There is a motivation to tell the story and make a contribution from my personal experiences. This supplements existing studies on the role of the media and of journalists in opposition politics in Zimbabwe, which has been documented through secondary sources. My contribution adds the first hand personal and psychological impacts of working and navigating undemocratic practices against the media. However, my role as an interested party does not in any way blind me in addressing ethical issues around such research. Ethical issues, such as bias and informed consent, are discussed in the methodology section of the dissertation. My involvement brings with it a rich, wide and in-depth access to sources, networks in politics, civil society and government officials that assist in deepening the investigation. The empirical data and findings, as shown by the diversity of the informants interviewed and the information obtained, adds fresh insights to important work on news media and democratisation. The informants had trust and confidence in my research and they helped to provide a critically balanced account of the experiences of opposition and activists journalists in a hostile environment. The account is enriched by direct insights from civic, opposition politicians and state officials who felt comfortable to express their views on how an opposition newspaper and its journalists operated under conditions of repression. The study draws useful implications on the role of news media in Zimbabwe, an emerging democracy.

The study is further motivated by the need to help solve the research question about the role of *The Daily News* and the reasons for its closure. The relicensing of *The Daily News* also raises a question about why it was closed in the first place. There is therefore a topicality justification in carrying out an investigation into how the media play an oppositional role in undemocratic environments, such as Zimbabwe at the time of the crisis. There were real achievements, as far as the forces opposed to the long rule of Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front, (ZANU PF) party were concerned. The consummation of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in September, 2008, between President Mugabe’s ZANU PF party and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations (including the

one led by Tsvangirai) that resulted in the formation of a unity government in February, 2009. Parties to the GPA agreed and recognised the right to freedom of expression and the role of the media in a multi-party democracy, as well as the need for the new government to ensure the immediate processing of all applications for re-registration and registration of media institutions. This was in response to the closure of newspapers, such as *The Daily News*, and the failure of the authorities, since 1980, to liberalise the airwaves. The topicality rationale is significant for this dissertation as it was in this period that the *Daily News*, as examined in Chapter Four, was revived after being granted an operating license in June, 2010, following its September, 2003, closure. There is a comparative aspect to the study which justifies the research. There was renewal in terms of work on a new constitution and preparations for the 2013 elections. The research was conducted at an opportune moment for everyone as they looked back and strategised for the future. The opening up of the democratic space and political environment to enable fieldwork research where state bureaucrats could open up and tell their side of the story about why they put in place an arsenal of laws that stifled media freedoms, was also valuable, as is captured in Chapters Four, Five and Six, where a government minister and a presidential spokesperson defended the government's media policies and accused *The Daily News* of being an 'opposition political party' who were plotting the demise of the ruling ZANU PF party. As will be seen below, both renewal and contestations are part of my narrative on the profound role of independent news media in Zimbabwe's emerging democracy.

The background and context of the study

Zimbabwe became a majoritarian democracy in 1980 at the end of a bitter war of independence triggered by the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by Ian Smith's Rhodesia Front (RF) in 1965. From 1980, in all of the independence elections, in 1985, 1990, 1995 and 1996, the ruling ZANU PF enjoyed huge mandates from the electorate, arguably on the basis of its liberation credentials. Such political legitimacy through elections also meant that the newly established Zimbabwean government had huge responsibilities and the expectations that it would democratize state institutions, including the news media, to reflect the new political dispensation. However, at the turn of the century, Zimbabwe was grappling with deep political and economic crises which were, amongst other things, a result of the failed structural adjustment programmes implemented in 1990, corruption, attempts to impose a one party-state, involvement in regional war in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1998, democratic deficits and rising poverty among the working class, student and workers' strikes and civil society

organisations calling for constitutional reforms (Saunders, 2000; Hammar & Raftopoulos, 2003). Raftopoulos & Sachikonye (2001: xxiii) posit that there were workers strikes as early as the 1990s as a response to the state's attempts to weaken the organised and restive unions through deregulation, and to the deteriorating impoverishing effects of economic liberalisation programmes. Faced with such challenges, President Robert Mugabe's party and government responded with some undemocratic measures that targeted labour unions, opposition political parties and the opposition press in order to maintain his political grip on power. Through a raft of legal and extra-legal measures, the state sought to suppress dissent. These autocratic measures surprised many as they were inconsistent with the ethos and values of the former liberators, and they galvanised others to democratically challenge the independence heroes.

Mustapha and Whitefield, (2009: 216) observed that in Zimbabwe the ruling (ZANU-PF) party initially had the legitimacy of being a liberation movement and the rightful ruler who represented the liberated black majority of the population. At independence in 1980, ZANU PF arguably inherited an effective state apparatus and professional civil service and retained its legitimacy through the effective delivery of social services, such as a democratised and accessible education and health delivery systems. However, Mustapha and Whitefield (2009: 216) submitted that by the late 1990s and then more rapidly after 2000:

... ..the logic of the Zimbabwean state was rapidly transformed. With a worsening economic crisis and the strictures of structural adjustment, the state became partisan as it strove to maintain control. Support for the party increasingly trumped merit as the basis of civil service recruitment.

Alexander, (2009: 189) seems to agree with this explanation, suggesting that the ZANU PF's strategies of the mid 1990s left it politically vulnerable.

Structural adjustment, a stalled land reform programme, declining state capacity and accountability, and elite corruption combined to undermine the political capital derived from the delivery of development and the nationalist mantle,

Alexander, (ibid.) highlighted some of the factors that facilitated the decline of the state and the ruling party's political power under President Mugabe's stewardship. Such scholarly insights are shared by Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003: 4), who posit that: "Zimbabwe's deepening economic and political crisis was well under way long before the dramatic events triggered by the constitutional referendum in February 2000."

Alexander, (2009:185) submits that the combination of a new and vibrant political opposition, the violent farm invasions of the largely white-owned farms, and the holding of deeply flawed and disputed elections, changed the political situation in Zimbabwe in 2000. She argued that the upheavals were rooted in both complex legacies of the nationalist struggle and the socio-economic pressures of the 1990s, but suggests that two specific events reshaped the possibilities for Zimbabwe politics in 1997.

The first of these was the ZANU PF government's decision to accede to the demands of material compensation made by the war veterans of the 1970s liberation war. The second was the designation of over 1 400 mostly white-owned commercial farms for compulsory acquisition by the state, (ibid.),

precipitating what critical voices have termed the 'crisis' of 2000, and what the government has termed the '*third chimurenga*' or uprising, of descendants of those previously disadvantaged by colonialism after 1890.

The period between 1997 and 1999 was, therefore, a crucial historic era in opposition politics and Zimbabwean democratization struggles. Firstly, civic society groups, such as students, labour, academics and the church, came together in 1997 to form the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA). Raftopoulos (2013: 972) points out that different voice of opposition politics in postcolonial Zimbabwe have also constituted their presence through the discourse of constitutionalism. Raftopoulos suggests that the emergence of the NCA in 1997 represented a convergence of a critique of the state led by ZANU (PF) around the issues of political democratisation and economic change, constructed through the organisational frameworks of the churches, the emerging human rights organisations, and the labour movement, persuasively pointing out that:

As the constitutional movement gained momentum between the late 1990s and into the 2000s, the dominance of the human rights messaging took precedence over economic issues, a shift that contributed to the rupture between rights and redistributive issues that has continued to mark the political discourse in the country. This emphasis on the part of the constitutional movement was the result of the mobilisation of a coalition of classes and organisations, largely in the urban areas, around the lack of accountability of the postcolonial state, in the context of the post-1989 changes in global politics and the dominant paradigm of human rights, democratisation and economic neo-liberalism that framed western interventions in the South from this period. This convergence of factors led to ZANU(PF)'s construction of the constitutional movement as a western intervention, completely ignoring both the national conditions that gave rise to its existence and the longer history of activism around human rights and constitutional issues that marked anti-colonial struggles in the country, (Raftopoulos, 2013: 972-3).

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), led by its Secretary General, Morgan Tsvangirai, was at the centre of mobilising and organising the formation of the NCA, using its national structures and resources. The NCA's role was to push for democratic constitutional reforms. In March, 1997, the ZCTU organised an effective mass stay-away from work by both public and private sector workers to protest against food and fuel price rises (Saunders, 2000). The ZANU PF government was taken by surprise at such an audacious challenge to its power. President Mugabe's government immediately sought action to ensure that stay-aways would be avoided. To make the Government's displeasure clear, mysterious assailants burst into Tsvangirai's office in December, 1997, and beat him up, in turn deepening the governance crisis.

In January, 1998, after two days of riots over a steep rise in food and fuel prices in the country, mainly in the capital Harare, President Mugabe's government met in an emergency session and decided to establish a programme of limited price control. However, at this stage the situation could not be contained, as the economy continued to free fall, (Raftopoulos&Sachikonye, 2001). What it is significant to note is that the political and economic crises that engulfed the state in the late 1990s were not represented by any opposition political party because opposition politics were weak and in disarray. As Alexander, (2009:188) notes; in the mid 1990s:

... ..workers and civil servants struck repeatedly. Others were also unhappy with the shifts of the late 1980s and 1990s; the independent press was blossoming and grew increasingly outspoken and critical, students protested over time and again not least over corruption, intellectuals vocally expressed their disenchantment, and civic groups were formed to demand political rights, state accountability and constitutional rights.

However, with growing national outcry and wide consensus there was a push to politically confront the political hegemony of the regime of President Robert Mugabe and his ruling Zimbabwe African National Union –Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), who had been in power since independence from Britain in 1980, over its failed policies. Some leaders of the NCA, mainly from labour, left the civic body and formed the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in September, 1999. Like the NCA, the MDC was formed under the stewardship of ZCTU. The new opposition party, the MDC, was made up of many disparate groups with contradictory interests e.g., workers, employers, white commercial farmers,

peasants, students and non-governmental organisations under the umbrella of the NCA, (Hammar&Raftopoulos, 2003).

What brought these contradictory forces together was the desire to remove ZANU-PF and Mugabe from power and, in the long run, to (re)democratise state politics. As discussed below, the newly formed opposition party attempted to offer an inclusive ideological framework with which to confront, and compete with, the existing socialist political edifice of ZANU- PF. The country's ruling party's political ideology was premised on the struggles for independence against successive racist white supremacist regimes in Rhodesia. ZANU PF also championed populist redistributive policies, which MDC and other opposition parties found difficult to challenge.

However, through successive mass demonstrations and protests by public servants, industrial workers, students, civil society and opposition political parties between 1997 and 1999, President Mugabe's government succumbed to pressure, mainly from NCA and ZCTU, calling for democratic reforms and concomitant cost of living adjustments that were accepted to meet demands for political reforms, (Saunders, 2000). President Mugabe conceded to the widespread outcries and demands that were expressed through demonstrations in Zimbabwe, together with other demands that the 1979 Lancaster House Constitution was too heavily influenced by the country's colonial past. On 21 May, 1999, President Mugabe announced the convening of a Constitutional Convention to draft a new constitution to address the demands of the protestors while recognising the political trajectory of the country's independence struggles. Mugabe constituted the Constitutional Commission, which was made up of the country's Members of Parliament and selected civic society individuals, to draft the new national law. After a year of gathering people's views, in February, 2000, a Constitutional Referendum was held. The NCA, the MDC, ZCTU and white farmers whose land was being threatened with seizures by the government mounted an organized campaign against the Draft Constitution, denouncing it for not taking into account the views of the people and for entrenching executive powers that would allow future governments to be unaccountable to citizens. The Draft Constitution was rejected in a Referendum on 12 and 13 February, 2000. For Alexander, the constitutional referendum was a transformative moment in Zimbabwe's emerging democracy:

The referendum marked a watershed. The campaign itself occasioned widespread popular mobilisation around an agenda that focussed not just on anger over economic hardships but on civil rights, state accountability and specifically the

curtailment of the autonomy of an executive that had gathered power over the preceding decade, not least through legal and constitutional amendments, (Alexander, 2009:192).

Hammar and Raftopoulos believe that the referendum victory by the opposition challenged the hegemonic and increasingly authoritarian rule of President Mugabe and the ruling party. They observed:

Despite a prior trend of opposition, this marked a particular watershed in Zimbabwe's post-independence political history, precipitating dramatic shifts in the country's political, economic, social, cultural and spatial landscapes; shifts whose ongoing dynamics and extensive effects have generically – though not without fierce contestation – come to be termed 'the Zimbabwe crisis, (Hammar&Raftopoulos, 2003: 1).

However, Alexander, (2009: 192) observed that many of groups that were mobilized against the state and President Mugabe during the crisis were disparate groups with disparate interests, including white farmers, black smallholders, business people, professionals, workers and students, who came to form the MDC in September, 1999. These groups, therefore, lacked a coherent framework for their opposition politics, apart from their dislike of Mugabe's authoritarian practices and the need to protect their individual and corporate interests. For instance, the workers found themselves working hand in glove with their employers (capitalists), who were partly responsible for their economic miseries. However, Alexander, insightfully argues, that what was crucial about the unity of these disparate voices was that:

The work of civics, churches, unions, alongside the MDC meant that debates over Zimbabwe's political future took place all over the country – in the remotest rural areas, on white farms and in the corners of every township. The result was the defeat for the ZANU PF government in February 2000. This was the first national defeat ZANU PF had suffered, and it stunned the party's leaders, (2009: 192).

Raftopoulos (2013:972) and Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003: 1) share Alexander's view, saying that ZANU PF's referendum defeat by a coalition of opposition and civic forces challenged its state power and galvanized the dissenting groups to demand further governance reforms in a period of political and economic instability.

My research contends that these disparate voices were helpfully brought together by *The Daily News* to confront the state on the deteriorating socio-economic and political situation in the country. My argument is that, while *The Daily News* did not manufacture the social discontent, it influenced, reflected and affected how the Zimbabwe crisis was reported in its news coverage. As detailed and

examined in Chapter Four, and as argued in Chapters Five and Six, the *Daily News* was a private, oppositional newspaper formed by private business people and former journalists with a history of confrontation with President Mugabe's government. The owners and senior journalists of the paper, due to their history had scores to settle with the government. Through its alternative journalism, in the sense of giving oppressed voices and ordinary people as news sources, a platform from which to articulate their issues and challenge abuse of power, especially ordinary victims, civic and opposition political activists who were not necessarily experts and intellectuals. *The Daily News* positioned itself as the alternative thought leader, organiser and mobiliser against state forces, with the intention of rejuvenating the emerging democracy. It should be pointed out that *The Daily News* is not the only privately-owned and 'independent' newspaper in Zimbabwe. What was unprecedented is its sustained alternative journalism approach in relying not only on experts as sources in its news coverage, but in systematically and deliberately focussing on, and telling the stories of, the ordinary victims of political repression, in their own lived circumstances and voices. *The Daily News* was also the only private and daily run newspaper in a country where the government had a firm grip on the public media, with two major daily sycophantic newspapers; *The Herald* and *The Chronicle*, published in Harare and Bulawayo, the country's first and second largest cities, respectively. As profoundly asserted by Atton & Hamilton, (2008) in their overview of the complex nature of alternative journalism, equally so, *The Daily News* was not merely an opposite of the mainstream and government controlled news media but it sought to challenge and change the balance of power in the country.

As examined and extensively discussed in Chapter Four, in the ensuing democratic struggles, *The Daily News* was launched on 1st April, 1999. The newspaper quickly became the medium of choice for pro-democracy forces to spread their messages of reform to the Zimbabwean population. *The Daily News* became a mouthpiece for the opposition and for civic actors opposed to Mugabe's dictatorship. Quantitative data about the circulation and readership, presented in Chapter Four, show that *The Daily News*, after only a short period of existence, successfully overtook and broke the monopoly of state-controlled newspapers in the dissemination of news, and it became the leading alternative to government newspapers. The arrival of *The Daily News* captured the issues of the moment in that context of an enormous governance crisis marked by authoritarian tendencies against opponents of the government. *The Daily News* set the agenda during the three main elections during its life, the referendum of February, 2000, the June, 2000, elections and the 2002 presidential elections. It also sided with political

oppositions during the by-elections, as well as in the local government polls that took place between 2000 and 2003, before it was banned. Twice in March and January, 2000 and 2001, *The Daily News* had its offices and printing machines bombed by assailants who were never prosecuted (Nyarota, 2006; Hammar&Raftopoulos, 2003). Given the paper's historic work and rise in a short period of its existence, this researched is persuaded to examine its alternative journalism role in the face of oppression in the context of a crisis.

There were insightful linkages between the founder of *The Daily News* and its editor-in-chief, Geoffrey Nyarota, and the leader of the main opposition, MDC's Morgan Tsvangirai. As Geoffrey Nyarota said:

In 1999, our former colleague, Morgan Tsvangirai, became the first president of the Movement for Democratic Change, a new opposition party that posed the most critical political challenge ever encountered by ZANU PF, (2006: 234).

While Nyarota (2006:234) sought to dismiss any political connections between himself, *The Daily News* and Tsvangirai by noting that:

While Tsvangirai and I had collaborated at Publishing Ventures, the emergence of the MDC soon after *The Daily News* was launched was an act of sheer coincidence and not the political strategy alleged by ZANU PF. However, both events were undeniably inspired by popular disenchantment with deteriorating social, economic, and political conditions, and it is entirely likely that civil society organisations, including the ZCTU, took advantage of a new voice in the media to hasten the advent of what would be the first viable political opposition since the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU)'s demise in 1987.

This study reveals in Chapter Five that Nyarota contested the 31st July, 2013, elections on the MDC ticket. As discussed in Chapter Five, there were profound cross-membership links between the opposition MDC and some *Daily News* journalists, to the extent that the two were inseparable.

The Zimbabwe government responded by putting together a range of measures that were underpinned by laws targeting the media in order to exclude critical perspectives on the governance and legitimacy crises. Silencing political dissent was the cornerstone of these measures and journalists were among the main targets, (Chuma& Moyo, 2010; Willems, 2010). The laws also served to promote the political ends of the governing ZANU PF party. Chiumbu and Moyo (2009: 180) posit that:

As the crisis intensified, the state continued to tighten its grip on the media in order to maintain its dominant position in defining the crisis to its citizens both at home and in the Diaspora as well as its critics abroad.

They argued that:

... ..from 2000 the government embarked on a deliberate policy to transform the media into a handy tool to advance both its domestic and foreign policy projects in the face of decreasing popularity at home and increasing criticism abroad, (Chiumbu & Moyo, 2009: 180).

By then the country was facing political and economic sanctions, mainly from the European Union, Australia and the United States.

An interesting dimension in Zimbabwe during this period is in how the independent black government of President Mugabe inherited colonial laws, and then came up with even more oppressive ones in an apparent case of history repeating itself. This is one aspect that the research examines that despite the rhetoric against imperialism, Mugabe's government continued with some of the oppressive media policies that had been used by the oppressors of yesteryear. Ironically, Mugabe conveniently blamed them for all the country's problems.

Bourgault, (1995: 178) posits that suppressing journalists can take the form of legal and bureaucratic procedures to control the media, commercial mechanisms, such as heavy taxes on newsprint, state licensing and requirements to post expensive bonds with the government before initiating publications, as well as unlawful detentions and harassment by state agents. The findings of this dissertation bear testimony to this observation through the experiences of *The Daily News* and its journalists while they were opposing state policies in an oppressive environment. I discuss this in more detail in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

The battery of new laws that undermined the performance of news media included the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2002, which among other things, compelled journalists and media institutions practicing in Zimbabwe to register with a government-appointed commission. The Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) of 2001 entrenched monopoly of the sole state broadcaster, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, to the extent that no private television or radio

stations operated in the country, while the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) of 2002, infringed on the exercise of fundamental civil and political liberties by making it unlawful to assemble, protest or demonstrate without police authority, as well as making it a criminal offense to criticize the President and the government.

Willems, (2010: 5) argues that the new measures and the imposition of a local content (75%) quota on the state-run Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, (ZBC) in 2000 resulted in the ‘banning’ of news bulletins from Cable News Network, (CNN) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), foreign soap operas and foreign pop music. This further stifled dissenting, alternative views and debates by groups opposed to the Mugabe regime. The new media laws and regulations banning foreign broadcasting stations resulted in citizens, civic society and opposition political parties having limited access to information beyond that controlled by the government. It also saw those who attempted to criticise the government criminalised and the oppositional and activist role of *The Daily News* journalists heightened. Existing studies on Zimbabwe during the crisis period do not fully engage with attempts by opposition political parties, labour, students and journalists who organized a common front to protest and rebel against authoritarian rule. How *The Daily News* and its journalists navigated repression, and what informed the agency of the journalists as well as the state’s response through oppressive laws, become new dimensions in trying to interrogate how an independent newspaper and its journalists operated under a repressive regime in order to champion democratic reforms in an authoritarian state.

The experiences of *The Daily News* and its journalists took place in a broader struggle for opposition politics in an emerging democracy, where disputed elections were held in 2000, 2002 and 2005. Clark and Dear (1984: 154) postulate that all citizens, regardless of socioeconomic identity or status, must have the right to vote for those who would best express their opinions. Secondly, such votes must be equally weighted, and, thirdly, they must represent the true opinion of the voter formed in a completely free environment. However, as critically analysed in Chapters One, Six and Seven, there are different perceptions and understandings of democracy in different societies that have to be taken into consideration when discussing the meanings, forms, practices and origins of democracy. What is important at this juncture is to point out that elections, as signifiers of democracy, are a component of this study, although the major focus is on the independent newspaper; *The Daily News*, and its journalists, and how they experienced and navigated repression in Zimbabwe. Field data reveal that, in Zimbabwe, some journalists argue that liberal democratic proponents, such as *The Daily News* and its

journalists did not adequately articulate the socioeconomic structure of Zimbabwe during the crisis, a view that is equally and fiercely disputed by procedural democratic informants.

My thesis is structured and organised in seven chapters, thematically presented as follows:

Alternative media and democracy; discourses and perspectives

As pointed out elsewhere in this dissertation, this study is about an independent/alternative newspaper operating under conditions of repression in Zimbabwe. The aim is to investigate the experiences, especially of journalists, and to contribute to a broader understanding of the role of media in contributing to democratic governance in Zimbabwe within a globalized African context. Chapter One therefore evaluates the role of alternative media in undemocratic contexts. In doing so, the chapter interrogates some of the tenets of alternative media, its purpose and its relevance to this study. It is argued that since alternative media and activist journalists advance the causes of social justice in oppressive societies where social groups and the opposition seek political change, it is therefore important to critique democratic theory and to evaluate the significance of democracy as a form of government. As such, the chapter critiques some types of democracy and their relevance to the Zimbabwean situation in relation to other countries. It interrogates Western, non-Western and African perspectives on the study of democracy and analyses how a new democracy faces unique challenges when it comes to transitions of power. Both normative theories of the media and democracy largely show a Western epistemology. They lack profound contributions from other societies on the subjects, such as those from African, Arab and Asian perspectives, which have contributed significantly to these discourses. Linked to these debates are concepts and theories about alternative media (Atton, 2002; Downing, 2001, Tomaselli & Louw, 1991) which capture and illuminate the essence of this investigation. This is particularly valuable in this study because the agency of media activism in the face of blockages of public expression is important in societies where there is official media repression (Downing, 2001). The relationship of this theoretical approach dovetails well with the field observations and findings of the study. I argue that the more resolute and direct representation of community social groups in *The Daily News* gave a more authentic voice to the specific interests and programmes of political entities, such as the opposition, labour and the civic movement outside the ruling party. The analytical framework of alternative media facilitates a construction of how *The Daily News* and its journalists became the vanguard of oppressed and suppressed groups in the context of the crisis.

The trajectory of anti-colonial media in Africa

The contributions of the anti-colonial and opposition media to the democratization process in Africa require sufficient examination of previous investigations by other scholars. Chapter Two of this study, therefore, traces and analyses the history and typology of opposition media from colonial to post-colonial times in selected African countries, with a major focus on the role of the opposition press in Zimbabwe and South Africa. It explores the role of the media as opposition in struggles for democracy in post-independent Africa and debates around their role in the case study of Zimbabwe, where a newspaper and its journalists took the extraordinary role of actively confronting an authoritarian regime during a period of political and economic crisis. The chapter also draw inspiration from the roles of opposition newspapers and journalists in Niger and Nicaragua to illuminate the study. The roles of colonial and postcolonial opposition media and their journalists' against the overarching powers of the state are interrogated. It answers the question: *What is the relationship between alternative media and new democracy, and what are the experiences from Africa?*

It has been argued that the principal democratic role of the media is to act as a check on the state, that is the watchdog role of the media, especially in societies where the political opposition is weak, (Curran, 2002: 217). In this regard, the media is supposed to monitor the full range of the activities of those in authority and other centres of concentrated power and to fiercely expose abuse of official authority. Curran (ibid.) postulates that the watchdog role of the media is said in liberal theory to override in importance all of the other functions of the media. In emerging democracies the news media are a vital link between the ruled and the rulers.

Methodology

This section is covered by Chapter Three of the study. My research design was informed by relevant approaches. The research design provides the framework for the collection and analysis of data according to the objectives and research questions to be investigated.

Qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, archival and policy analysis (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005) were employed to investigate and analyse the case study of how *The Daily News* and its journalists operated, navigated and confronted a repressive political environment. The qualitative research was used to preserve and analyse situated form, content, and experiences of social action, rather than to subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations. A total of 51 in-depth interviews were carried out with current and former journalists and the management of *The Daily News*; former and current senior government officials, among them three cabinet ministers; civic society organization officials and opposition political party representatives.

However, as explored in Chapter Three, the qualitative method has its shortfalls and there are ethical issues to be considered in carrying out interviews, such as bias and obtaining informed consent from the interviewees. Firstly, when sensitive information about participants is collected, it is ethical to ensure that the respondent's anonymity is secured. It is pointed out that anonymity exists when no one, including the researcher, can relate the participant's identity to any information associated with the research. When data are collected anonymously, no one knows which data come from a particular respondent. In this research, all 51 of the participants did not ask for anonymity, but some of the respondents will not be identified in order to protect their security and professional careers.

Finch, (1986:5) points out that the distinctive features of qualitative research concern matters of both research techniques and epistemology, that is, the philosophical basis which underpins the research process, especially the question of how valid knowledge about the social world is gathered. Hennik, Hutter and Bailely, (2011) argue that one of the most outstanding features of qualitative research is that it allows the researcher to identify issues from the perspective of the participants and to understand the meanings and interpretations that the informants attach to behaviour and events in the context of their experiences.

The data for this dissertation was collected in Zimbabwe through face-face interviews with journalists at *The Daily News*, *The Herald*, the *Independent*, and *News Day*, mostly at their workplaces. The same method was used to interview the government and former government officials responsible for policy

formulation. I also conducted observation and content illustration of a small sample from *The Daily News* using judgemental sampling.

Alternative media and opposition politics in Zimbabwe

Chapter Four of this study addresses the alternative roles of *The Daily News* and its journalists; how the paper was formed, its editorial policy, the laws that regulate the media, the paper's news coverage, which sets it apart from other publications in terms of its diverse sources, among other things. In an interview in Harare on 7th December, 2012, senior journalist Barnabas Thondhlana, the founding news editor of *The Daily News* who had worked for other privately-controlled weekly business newspapers, such as *The Financial Gazette* and *The Zimbabwe Independent*, stated that he joined *The Daily News* in order to contribute to political change in the country:

The fact that the paper appeared to be the most serious and well-funded independent daily paper in Zimbabwe attracted me to that team. I wanted to take further our investigative journalism at *The Financial Gazette* and the *Zimbabwe Independent* and the push for change in the country, the force behind my joining *The Daily News*. We were the opposition voice, really, taking sides with any forces which were anti-government. In Zimbabwe since independence, the state media were the most dominant press, and independent and opposition voices did not have a platform to air their political positions and aspirations. We started to challenge the ruling party and government policies at *The Zimbabwe Independent* but it was only on a weekly basis. We did not cover ordinary voices against repression, as it is more of a business paper. So the realisation of a daily paper which is independent coming on the market and also taking that same critical editorial position excited me. (Interview with Barnabas Thondhlana, Harare, 12th December, 2102).

Thondhlana's view shows that the journalists who worked at *The Daily News* had a political goal. They wanted to refresh the political system and consequently to achieve social justice. Chapter Four also outlines the history of the opposition media in Zimbabwe, ownership patterns, the policies that govern the regulation of the media. It examines and critiques the major debates that informed the formulation of media policies and the political environment that influenced those policies. The chapter further interrogates the context and the background which gave *The Daily News* and political dissidents the zeal with which to actively engage and confront the state's authoritarian practices and the critical issues of that historical era that gave rise to resistance journalism.

A focus on the founding of the privately-owned newspaper, *The Daily News* and the work of its journalists is examined in order to appreciate the newspaper's contribution to alternative, activist, and

often radical journalism, in the democratization processes in Zimbabwe in the context of a political and economic crisis.

Most importantly, the chapter gives some empirical insights through interviews on why the government enacted the laws and why *The Daily News* and its journalists were primary targets and victims. The evidence obtained through interviews with government officials suggests that the paper and its journalists were geared towards upsetting the political status quo by working with opposition political parties and civil society organisations, as well as with Western governments that opposed the incumbent government. In the process, the chapter addresses the question; *how has the Zimbabwe government controlled private media, such as The Daily News?*

George Charamba, the presidential spokesperson and a senior bureaucrat in the Ministry of Information and Publicity, in an interview said of *The Daily News*:

The Daily News gave form and solidity to what has been disparate dissent. It crystallized it, but it also popularised the politics of the opposition. What I also want to say is that this recognition saw more serious adjustments in Zimpapers [state-controlled public newspapers] than in *The Daily News*. Zimpapers was beginning to lose readership. Zimpapers' carriage of events was being challenged routinely by *The Daily News* and I can assure you people soul searched at Zimpapers, because they saw the risk. You then saw an adjustment of the editorial policy from an extreme position of being reflexively ZANU PF to an attempted balance, so as to undercut *The Daily News*, (Interview with George Charamba in Harare, 13th September, 2012).

Given the above, it seems that from the government's position the arrival of *The Daily News* clearly challenged the dominance of the state-controlled public media. More evidence from interviews with *The Daily News*'s founding editor, Geoffrey Nyarota, shows that the paper, through its provision of space and voices to oppositional movements, rapidly outgrew the state daily newspapers. Nyarota noted that the state had to use both legal and extra-legal means, such as bombing the paper's printing machines and starving it of state advertisements, as ways of attempting to silence and close it.

Legal experts interviewed are of the view that that the laws passed to regulate the media, such the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), were not only unconstitutional but also undemocratic, with the primary aim of silencing private newspapers and closing the platform to democratic forces, especially to opposition political parties that were offering a sustained challenge to the ruling party's political hegemony. Adduced evidence, therefore, suggests that the laws and policies were deliberately put in place to silence democratic and opposition voices in order to protect the ruling ZANU PF party's hegemony.

An alternative newspaper under an undemocratic state

Chapter Five is both a data presentation and the analysis section of the thesis; it examines the relationship between the undemocratic state and alternative news in a thematic way, based on the data obtained from the field and the theories relevant to the study. It provides substantial evidence in support of the study's arguments. It analyses the data from the respondents. It links information obtained from the interviews to the earlier theoretical postulations on the role of alternative and activist journalism, and the relationships between media and democracy as examined in Chapter One. It explores the experiences of alternative and activist news media workers and their relationships with the political and advocacy and dissident political networks in Zimbabwe. This is significant because it has been observed that the news media are integral to new democracies. As Saunders suggests (2000: 7):

The growth of real democracy is only possible when people are free to use their own voices to express their interests, and ensure that government is held accountable to them. In many countries including Zimbabwe, this has proved a long difficult and sometimes dangerous journey... Yet it is one which must be undertaken if people are to obtain meaningful participation in the key decision-making that affects their lives. This kind of democracy is not delivered or provided voluntarily by a government, ruling party or liberation movement. Rather, it is more secure and far-reaching when it is demanded, shaped and enforced by those who benefit most directly from it; namely by the diversity of social interests in a country.

Observing and thoroughly examining the agency of alternative news media and journalists is therefore perhaps sublime in trying to understand different ways in which citizens responded to undemocratic state practices, especially during periods of political and economic disturbances, as was the case in Zimbabwe.

This chapter addresses two important questions; *what was the relationship between the independent/alternative news media and, more especially, The Daily News, with oppositional political forces such as the MDC and civic groups, and why and how did individual Zimbabwean journalists choose to fight in conditions of repression during the Zimbabwean crisis? What are the linkages between emerging democracies and alternative news media?*

Through data obtained from the interviews, the findings of alternative, activist and oppositional journalism are delineated. This is an important aspect of the research that immensely contributes to new

knowledge on media and communication in Zimbabwe. The journalists interviewed, including senior managers, point out that they had a social contract with the citizens to tell the truth by exposing human rights violations against the government's opponents during the disputed elections in 2000 and 2002, the attacks against white farmers during farm invasions in 2000, and offering space to opposition parties and activists from which they could reach out to the public with their messages of political change.

In cases of cross membership between *The Daily News*, the opposition MDC and anti-government civic groups, investigation discovered that some journalists later joined the political opposition while others joined online papers and civic groups after closure of the paper to pursue their calls for democratic change. In fact, senior editors and managers of *The Daily News*, in a case of cross membership, joined the rank and file of the opposition MDC, becoming senior officers, elected members of parliament and cabinet ministers when the party got into government in 2009. Government officials interviewed then argued that the paper and its journalists were political activists who wanted to facilitate a change of government.

In discussing the relationships between *The Daily News* and opposition MDC (Interview with Chamisa, Harare, 8th December, 2012), the party's former spokesperson during the crisis period, former Minister of Information, Communication and Technology, and organizing secretary of the party Nelson Chamisa pointed out that there was a mutual relationship for the simple reason that they were both confronting an authoritarian regime with the aim of democratising state politics. This unity of purpose guaranteed stories and a unique readership for *The Daily News*. Downing, (2001: 9) submits that alternative media serve to express opposition views, vertically from subordinate or oppressed groups to the power structure and its behaviour. At the same time, it builds support, solidarity and networking, literally against the policies and survival of the power structure. In my view, alternative media work best with social and political movements to challenge the political power structure by providing them with a platform from which to mobilise dissent.

In this case, *The Daily News* and its journalists provided information to citizens so they could make informed choices on electoral issues. Their approach benefited the opposition forces. The paper called for dialogue among citizens and opponents of the government, publicised attacks against civic and political activists and, in a major way, mobilized civic society and opposition party members to take part

in street protests, as shown by the headlines in the appendices. When the media play such a role, Schudson, (2008) submits that they serve a clear democratic purpose. In my fieldwork interviews, the leadership of opposition political parties and advocacy networks as well as government authorities also concurred on the important contributions of a *Daily News* journalists in broadening and opening up the political system.

Analysis and discussion

Chapter Six offers more in depth data and analysis on how social change organisations and journalists worked hand in glove to confront state authoritarianism in circumstances where lives were at risk. The following themes are insightfully examined: media and democracy; discourses and perspectives; relevant media theories and the media in oppressive regimes; alternative press and independence struggles in Africa; the trajectory of news media-led politics in Zimbabwe, as well as *The Daily News* and the political opposition in Zimbabwe. The section links the theoretical debates discussed in Chapter One and the empirical data from the field to critically examine the relevance of these theoretical frameworks in the context of democratic struggles in Zimbabwe. The liberal watchdog role and agenda setting function of the media are validated in the ways in which the alternative news media, and *The Daily News* and its journalists in particular, critiqued and criticised powerful politicians. The newspaper and its journalists sought to hold them to account in various cases of corruption and human rights abuses.

Concluding reflections

Chapter Seven concludes the study. It sums up the major findings of the investigation but also challenges the views of other scholars that *The Daily News brought its own downfall*. The section debates, contests and largely disputes some scholarly suggestions that the paper was a neo-liberal project. It also analyses the paper's sustained role in globalising the Zimbabwe crisis through its reports and the ways in which the international community, such as the European Union, framed its policies on Zimbabwe in tandem with such coverage.

Conclusion

The section has introduced the topic, provided an overview of the relevant literature, theories and critiques. It offered a justification of why *The Daily News*' role at a particular moment in the emerging democracy in Zimbabwe yields a productive focus on the role of alternative, oppositional, activist and often radical journalism to democratic transitions. While the study may not be the first of its kind, it adds new and significant insights into the role of the media as a site of opposition, political organiser and mobilising centre for an alliance of opposition forces that were demanding democratic reforms. The study is important in the context of debates which suggest that Africans are passive recipients of undemocratic practices. It shows that, in Zimbabwe, during moments of crises under oppressive conditions, there was resistance via an alternative newspaper. The paper reports and affects options in very meaningful ways that add to the literature on alternative media and democratization processes, using the experiences of journalists and the ways in which they experienced and navigated repression. In this regard, the role of news media and journalists as agents of change and active participants in a society where political opposition was weak is worth noting. In this study, this is revealed through the work of brave, committed journalists who, unlike in some Western societies where the majority of news media tend to agree with their governments when they wage foreign wars, in Zimbabwe the private press, *The Daily News* and its journalists, in particular, went against the grain and fought against undemocratic tendencies. A culture of investigative journalism was central to the exposure of human rights abuses and to providing voices for silenced groups.

CHAPTER ONE

Alternative media and democratization

1.0 Introduction

This chapter explores and discusses the role of alternative media in nurturing a democratic society under conditions of repression, putting forward a significant proposition on the successful and analytical use of alternative media theory in a non-western context such as Zimbabwe. It is concerned with how alternative media can extend the democratic space. The section is especially interested in alternative ‘independent’ newspapers and their journalists who operate under undemocratic conditions in emerging democracies, as in Zimbabwe which is this thesis’ essential subject of investigation.

The section is concerned with the explanatory framework that links the role of opposition politics with alternative news media. It deals with concepts and theories about alternative media (Atton, 2002; Downing, 2001). This is particularly important in this study because the agency of media activism in the face of blockages in public expression is valuable in societies where there is official media repression (Downing, 2001). Downing’s and Atton’s alternative media framework assist in articulating the oppositional role of news media and journalists, given a situation where the institutional analysis of the operations of media institutions and journalists in a repressive political environment in Zimbabwe does not adequately capture their experiences. The approach in this chapter, therefore, contributes a framework for analysing the emerging and evolving relationships between civil society, politics and alternative media in moments of crisis, and in the context of democratisation. The chapter also discusses theories of democracy and evaluates the significance of ‘democracy’ as a form of government. It critiques the types of democracy and their relevance to newly established nations and how alternative media assist opposition and advocacy groups to achieve social change in undemocratic societies.

1.1 Alternative media: From the West to Africa

The alternative media framework illuminates interesting and contestable debates on the interplay between media and democracy, as well as on the relationships between the state, the media and journalists. Despite its origins in Western literature, the theoretical framework assists in bringing to the fore oppositional and activist journalism underpinning this study by evaluating the role played by *The Daily News* and its journalists, especially in confronting the power and authoritarian political edifice in Zimbabwe. Banda (2008: 79) posits that native resistance to colonialism and subsequent formations of statehood formed critical and dynamic sites for African mediation, and that current democratisation discourses and projects in Africa underpin the role the media can play. It is therefore argued that discussions of African media should be linked to their role in nurturing democratic rule in both the colonial and postcolonial periods. This study also builds on scholarly works by scholars like Patrick Chabal (2014: xiv), who posits that among other things academic studies on agency in Africa,

despite a superficial view that Africans are helpless in the face of the twin evils of state oppression and globalisation, their obvious ingenuity and resilience point to myriad informal instances of successful resistance.

This research provides evidence on how, on an everyday basis, alternative media journalists navigated state repression to advance a better form of governance in Zimbabwe. The study shows that, in the face of oppression, Zimbabweans were not passive recipients of that oppression, and beyond the absence of mass demonstrations, there were informal ways of confronting repression through alternative news media.

1.2 Alternative media and opposition politics

Alternative media theory is arguably a persuasive explanatory concept for the struggles for hegemony between the Zimbabwean state and opposition political forces. It is plausible to argue that the roles of alternative media and journalists could suit the surmountable role of the independent press under undemocratic conditions at a specific moment, as *The Daily News* and its journalists did in Zimbabwe from 1997-2010.

In this regard, the media became vital in the political hegemonic struggles. However, as articulated in Chapters Four, Five and Six, the private media and journalists actively opposed, resisted and

participated in confronting an authoritarian political set up with dire consequences, involving press bombing and numerous arrests and beatings that were the results of the exposure of official excesses. It can also be argued that radical and alternative media provide organizations that seek change with platforms from which to challenge unaccountable ruling elites and to bring positive change in society. In Africa, through colonization, decolonization and on to post independence, the media have been used as sites for alternative views against authoritarianism, as is articulated in Chapter Two.

Atton (2002: 3) sees alternative media as increasingly being about providing the means of democratic communication to people who are normally excluded from media production. In this regard, this type of media should be seen as being there to allow public participation, Atton argues. It is observed that alternative media are not part of the dominant theoretical traditions of media research, although Marxist analysis of the media contains such space. Atton, (2002: 11-12) postulates that:

In a media culture that appears less and less interested in in-depth investigative reporting, alternative media provide information about and interpretation of information of the world which we might not otherwise see and information about the world that we simply will not find anywhere else. Alternative publications are at bottom more interested in the free flow of ideas than in profit.

Atton (2002: 12) points out that in 1997 The Royal Commission on the Press proposed a definition of alternative media as:

... ..an alternative publication that deals with the opinions of small minorities; it expresses attitudes ‘hostile to widely-held belief’, it espouses views or deals with subjects not given regular coverage by publications generally available at newsagents.

Downing (2001: vi) observes that radical media are seen from different angles, depending on the position of the observer. Others can take them to mean progression, while yet others can see them as taking society onto a downward spiral. However, he also points out that radical and alternative media have one thing in common; “it is that they bundle somebody’s rules, although rarely all of them in every respect” (Ibid.). O’Sullivan et al, in Masilela, (2008: 107) define alternative media as:

those forms of mass communication that avowedly reject or challenge established and institutionalized politics, in the sense that they advocate change in society or at least a critical reassessment of traditional values.

From the tenets outlined above, it is persuasive to posit that alternative media challenge existing hegemonic forces, whether in clearly political forums or through the use of indirect challenges that are associated with counter-hegemonic social groups that struggle to liberate themselves from dominant cultures. This proposition could arguably be suitable in explaining the role of the opposition press and journalists who work under conditions of repression where the dominant press is not accessible to political dissidents, opposition groups and other social change agents.

There are other aspects that distinguish alternative media from mainstream media, such as ownership, partisanship and independence in terms of their relationships with the audience, but for the purpose of this study the opposition and activist currents are more important. This distinction is important because alternative media can mean different things. For instance, Shaun Johnson (1991) in an overview of the role of the black press during the apartheid period observes that alternative media in that situation meant four different things. Johnson suggests that four basic considerations could define a publication as 'alternative'. These include that it is not set primarily for commercial motives; that its justification for existence was to fulfil the resistance role in South Africa; that it is aimed to serve an audience which a significant proportion is black and that it saw the commercial press in South Africa as failing to fulfil or reflect the aspirations of the majority of South African, (Johnson, 1991: 24). It is perhaps significant to stress as well that alternative media are mostly useful during periods of political struggles such as was the case during the apartheid in South Africa. In this regard, it is suggested that:

Ultimately, it seems that the alternative press was a 1980s phenomenon. This media was born in the popular (United Democratic Front, UDF) phase of the struggle against apartheid. It served the struggle well, but ironically the success of this struggle brought about a reformed South Africa that no longer appeared to have a place for the alternative press. Its effective life-span ran from the birth of *Grassroots* in 1980 until De Klerk's February 1990 speech. Once a real reform of apartheid was set in motion the *raison d'être* of the alternative press was effectively ended, (Louw and Tomaselli, 1991: 225-6).

Equally so, as intimated earlier, this study investigates the exceptional role of an alternative newspaper and its journalists under conditions of repression in Zimbabwe during a historic crisis period where social forces teamed up to confront state authoritarianism.

1.3 The purpose of alternative media

As outlined above, at the heart of alternative media is social change. There is a clear role for media activism in the face of blockages in public oppression. The counter hegemonic platforms are created for individuals and forces that are denied public expression by the mainstream media. Downing (2001: ix) contends that radical alternative media serve to express oppositional views vertically from subordinate groups directly at the power structure and against the power's oppressive behaviour. Alternative media aim to build support, solidarity and networking laterally against policies and elite power structures. My study is interested in this typology of media during the Zimbabwean crisis due to alternative media's tendency to appear more democratic than mainstream media, since they appear to effectively question the use and abuse of power. This view is supported by O'Sullivan, who observes that alternative media agitate for social change, seek to involve ordinary citizens, not the powerful elites, in the organization of news, and are also interested in innovation in the appearance of their publications and the nature of their news (O'Sullivan in Atton, 2002: 15-16).

It is further suggested that alternative media have different news values to the mainstream media. The main subjects of news for these publications is to search for the voices and concerns of alternative social players, such as the poor, marginalized and oppressed groups, such as women manual labourers, youths and children, together with other marginalised and underprivileged - subaltern groups. The purpose is to profile the agents of these groups and their struggles to change their situation and their contribution to changing society.

Downing (2001) suggests that radical media can also assist in generating new social moments with a liberating focus for oppressed groups in society:

Radical media in those scenarios have a mission not only to provide facts to a public denied them but to explore fresh ways of developing a questioning perspective on the hegemonic process and increasing the public's sense of confidence in its power to engineer constructive change (2001: 16).

Similarly, this study investigates and evaluates the opposition, activist and radical media confrontation of any authoritarian regime through their work under conditions of repression, where they are arrested, beaten and newspaper offices and printing machines bombed, as evaluated in Chapters Four, Five and Six. In these chapters, as observed by Pantelis Vatikiotis (2004:4), "radical media offer space for

alternative discourses in public debate as well as a locus of oppositional power to the agency of domination.” He further contends that:

Moreover, not only do radical media constitute counter-information institutions, which try to ‘disrupt silence’, to ‘counter the lies’, to ‘provide the truth’, they also constitute conveyors of social change, (Vatikiotis, 2004: 4-5).

1.4 The significance of alternative media theory to this study

What is crucial about the insights into alternative media of this study, as Downing (2001) suggests and articulates, is that radical media activists have very often experienced State repression, execution, jailing, torture, fascist assaults, the bombing of radical radio stations, threats, police surveillance and intimidation. These descriptions and insights, barring the execution of journalists, dovetail well with my investigation into the case of the relationship between the opposition media and the State, particularly the repression vented against *The Daily News* and its journalists in Zimbabwe. What, then, informs the agency of the journalists and their contribution to the development of radical and alternative media becomes an interesting aspect of this inquiry.

In the case of Africa, there are quite a number of examples of intellectuals who have been arrested, while others have left their countries and gone into exile, for contributing to the democratization cause using such media. Examples that come to mind are the late Chinua Achebe, a celebrated Nigerian writer and the biting critic of successive Nigerian military governments, who lived in exile in the United States for writing on corruption, human rights abuses and for caricaturing the leadership of his country. His fellow countryman Wole Soyinka was once put on death row by the late military ruler Sani Abacha, while another writer, Ken Saro Wiwa was hung in 1994. This study argues that at specific moments in crisis-ridden societies where there is repression, alternative journalism arises as a response and a way of navigating through the repression. The use of alternative media, including social media such as Facebook, can be an effective means of organising and overcoming legalized repression, because it is difficult and expensive to control the internet.

However, my thesis focuses on a privately-owned alternative newspaper and its journalists, who confronted an authoritarian political system at a time when the political opposition was both weak and disorganised. The study also fits the alternative media framework advanced by Kate Coyer, Tony Dowmunt and Alan Fountain (2007: 5) in *The Alternative Media Handbook*, when they noted that:

“Alternative media for us, in this book, are the media produced by the socially, culturally and politically excluded.” This type of media allows activists such as those profiled in this study, to be actively involved in social change and political activist programmes. The stories published reflect and affect the trials and tribulations of the voices of the downtrodden that are normally excluded from the mainstream media. Coyer et al (2007:10) propose that they were convinced that there is nothing secondary about alternative media.

Indeed, in that they provide resistance, opposition and counter examples to tired and reactionary mainstream uses of media, they are of primary social, cultural and political importance, (2007: 7).

Their view is

that the question of power, its distribution and exclusions are key, and that all alternative media work exists and flourishes in various spaces of relative ‘independence’ from, and negotiations with, institutional power. In other words, like all cultural practices, it is embedded in the real social relations that surround it, (Coyer et al, 2007: 10).

The observation by Coyer et al (2007: 10) that alternative media practices, more obviously than most other media, come from the specific political and cultural circumstances that they face. They posit that there is a close relationship and interdependence between alternative media and social and political movements. This postulation essentially fits the framework of this dissertation where, as advanced in Chapters Four, Five and Six, the relationships between the *Daily News* and its journalists, with opposition political parties, labour movements and civil society organisations in mounting opposition to the ruling government often confused the paper to appear as though it were owned by opposition forces when, in fact, it was a privately-owned paper. Coyer et al (2007: 11) point out that: “Each instance of alternative media is embedded in a particular social and political context, so that what may be alternative in one context is main stream in another. Also, each theory, or definition of alternative media is at the same time a theory of political change. Each definition contains an analysis of what is wrong or unjust about the distribution of media power, and, at least by implication makes propositions how to make progressive change”.

However, Deane (2007: 206-7) cautions us about the differences between alternative media in developing and developed societies, arguing that alternative media in developing countries tend to have very different origins and dynamics to alternative media in industrialised societies:

In most industrialised countries alternative media are normally taken to mean media that are rooted in, controlled by or in some way are accountable to non-corporate, often community, interests, and are explicitly focussed on providing perspectives that are distinct from – often discordant with – the mainstream media. They are especially defined by being independent of and often explicitly established as an alternative to corporate oligopolies that control large sections of the mainstream mass market media. That rootedness together with their determination to avoid income sources that could compromise their independence, often means that they are small in scale and both limited and restricted in profit-making” Deane (2007: 207).

Apart from the above, Deane (2007: 207) further points out that alternative media in industrialised countries grew out of the global civil society, mass social movements of the 1990s, particularly in response to globalisation and the falling economic costs of media production. For most of the Soviet bloc, much of Africa and large parts of Asia, including China, the mainstream media were controlled by governments. In much of Latin America, most media were in the hands of large private companies that were closely tied to government interests and ruling elites so that content was similarly open to accusations of state control. In these countries, Deane (2007: 207) argues that the growth of the independent press was a response less to corporate control than to government control.

While these differences are worth noting, the overriding purpose of alternative media is to address the social and political problems of communities in an oppositional manner to powerful governments and ruling elites, and to champion change in an activist way, is something that is pervasive in the role of alternative media across all societies, (Downing 1984; 2001 & Atton 2002). It is, therefore, plausible to argue that the overriding thing about alternative and activist media across most societies is their response and their effect on the social situation they operate under, including economic challenges as well as covert and overt repression. It is also important that in both industrialised and developing societies, as is the case in Zimbabwe, alternative media provide a counter narrative to that put forward by mainstream media. That alternative narrative is, in this dissertation, expressed in the way that an alternative newspaper and its journalists operate under conditions of repression. The experience and how the opposition newspaper navigated repression arguably suit this theoretical postulation and as examined in the empirical chapters, Four, Five and Six, of this study.

There is a challenge of ownership and control over alternative media in Africa. It challenges state power by providing a platform for stifled forces among the political and civic opposition groups, including ordinary victims of state repression. The ownership dimension raises questions about the extent to which it meets the fundamental ingredients of an alternative media. Nyamnjoh (2005: 29) gives quite a convincing analysis when he says that, in the context of a stifled society, real life points to a situation where people are not necessarily silenced and sacrifice their interests when faced with repression. This is crucial because in some African societies, both in colonial and postcolonial times, the relationship between the private media and the state is one of struggle, where the press is fighting to assert its democratic rights while the state, through the ruling elite, want to entrench its hegemonic power in society without media scrutiny.

In trying to examine the contributions of alternative media and activist journalism in an emerging democratising Zimbabwe, this study also draws insights from Paulo Freire's works. In the aptly titled, *Pedagogy of Freedom, Ethics, Democracy and Civic Courage*, Freire (2001: 73) contends that:

No one can be in the world, with the world, and with others and maintain a posture of neutrality. I cannot be in the world de-contextualized, simply observing life. Yes I can take up positions so as to become aware of my insertions into a context of decisions, choice and interventions...

Although Freire (1996) evaluated the oppressive and non-dialogical system of education in Brazil which oppressed students, what is valuable here is that he observes the need for agency on the part of those who are oppressed in order that they can change their situations. This is precisely part of what this study is about; to robustly examine the role of an oppositional newspaper and its journalists in contributing to the democratization process in Zimbabwe, through activist and radical journalism, their linkages with opposition political parties and civil society organisations and with white, commercial farmers whose land was confiscated by the state without the due process of the law and compensation. *In Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1996: 37) argues that it is only when the oppressed identify the oppressor and become organized and involved in order to liberate themselves that people begin to believe in their capacity to change their situation. The involvement is beyond intellectual analysis of the oppression, but incorporates action which includes reflections and bringing people together in everyday struggles. Such discourses are significant to this study because, at some point, journalists had to make huge personal

sacrifices, as this study shows in their biographies through their experiences, in order to contribute to the democratic struggles of the time while operating under the hostile conditions of repression.

In political set ups where self-censorship, the occasional banning of newspapers and the harassment of journalists, as is the case in Zimbabwe, Downing (2001) argues that radical media in such a situation has a mission not only to provide facts but also to explore new ways of coming up with a questioning agenda on the hegemonic set up and increasing public confidence in its power to drive positive change in society.

The role of this brand of media becomes critical given the relationship where, in most cases, radical and alternative media work hand in glove with opposition and social forces, such as labour, that bring together subaltern groups that work to challenge the political hegemonic apparatus to chart a democratic political order. Such was the relationship between *The Daily News* and its journalists in Zimbabwe with the political opposition, workers' unions, student bodies and civic groups as they mounted concerted efforts to democratize the politics of Zimbabwe. Through the cross-member relationships between the opposition *Daily News* and its journalists and the political and civil society, as well as with the white farmers and their workers, is examined in Chapters Four, Five and Six. Through the editorials of the newspaper analysed in the same chapters, there is a compelling case that the paper and its journalists worked hand in hand with political and social forces to confront the ruling party. The responses of the ruling party, through both legal and extra-legal measures outlined in the same chapters, could possibly be explained by this concerted onslaught from the opposition media and its partners.

This study, therefore, elaborates on the ways those alternative media institutions, such as *The Daily News*, coalesced to provide solidarity, legal counsel, to mobilize people, providing civil education and exposing human rights abuses to confront a monolithic and authoritarian political regime under conditions of repression in the period under study. It also exposes the reasons why the state labelled *The Daily News* an “opposition mouthpiece” and therefore a target for repression (see Moyo interview, Chapter Six)¹.

¹ In an interview in Harare on 20 September 2012, Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Professor Jonathan Moyo pointed out that the Daily News and the private press were working with opposition parties and foreign governments to effect a change of regime. Moyo pointed out that stringent media laws were meant to curial a change of government

1.5 Media and democracy: Discourses

The importance of the media in the development of any society cannot be disputed. This role is especially significant when it relates to the contributions of the press to the democratization agenda. It is significant to evaluate the operations and significance of the media in the democratization process and also to critique the universalisation of media freedoms outside Western traditions and cultures. However, it is cautioned that too much emphasis should not be placed on the media. Street (2011: 327) noted that: “Democratic media do not, in themselves and of themselves, create democracy. Democratic media need a democratic polity, and vice versa.” This study argues that alternative media theories best articulate the experiences of an alternative newspaper and its journalists who worked with formal and informal coalition of forces to fight for democratic change in Zimbabwe during a period of governance challenges that entail violent state practices.

1.6 The key roles of media in democracy

Media scholars, such as Schudson (2008), have observed that in both developed and developing contexts, the media can play critical roles that serve democracy. It is pointed out that news should provide full and fair information so that citizens can make informed political choices. The media can also investigate the concentrated powers of the elected representatives. It can also interpret events with a view to assisting citizens to understand complex issues in their societies. Journalists can also tell people about the lives of the less privileged in communities so as to create empathy, and to create a forum for citizens’ dialogue from diverse perspectives, as well as acting as advocates for specific political programmes and mobilizing citizens to act in support of those activities (Schudson 2008: 12). These are important and relevant to my study, as will be discussed in the next chapters.

Meanwhile, Esipisulu and Khaguli, (2009) see the media as an institution that holds a mirror to society. Relative to the administration of credible elections in Africa, Esipisulu and Khaguli, (2009: iv) posit that:

A free, lively and responsible media is a pre-requisite for a functioning democracy, as much as at election times as in between. Good elections and good media are not things apart: they are intertwined.

It is, therefore, plausible to posit that the democratic debate as it relates to the equal participation of citizens in political processes and the provision of political choices for the electorate among the competing political contestants operates in a free press environment.

The media provide checks and balances in democracy. As noted by Trappel, (2011), the democratic role of journalism and the media identify, to make public the failings of elected representatives, further advancing the view that: “In other words, the essential role of the press in elitist liberal democracy is that of watchdogs who alert people if something is going wrong” (2011: 16). This argument about citizens’ access to information in the electoral process is crystallized by the international human rights instruments, such as Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the European Commission on Human Rights’ Article 10, and the American Convention on Human Rights Article 13. All these international and human rights treaties’ emphasise the right to access information, freedom of opinion and expression, and give credence to the proposition that the media and democracy are inseparable and that the media are important, especially in states that are in the process of democratization, such as many in Africa. In modern times, especially after the Second World War, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which all nations, including African countries that are members of the United Nations, are signatories. The universalization of human rights is the basis upon which the media build their role in enlightening and sustaining democracy.

The global approach to defining and sustaining human rights is also captured in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 19 of the ICCPR provides that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek and receive and impart information and ideas through any media, regardless of frontiers. Cees Hamelink (2001: 3) argues that the media are significant in defending human rights, which are an important ingredient for a democratic society. It is explained that the media expose human rights violations, allowing citizens to know about rights abuses. Hamelink further argues that knowledge and awareness of human rights are vital because, through such awareness, citizens possess fundamental human rights that encourage the development of self-confidence, leading to people being capable of defending such rights and to seek remedies where violations have taken place. As Hamelink observes (2001: 4), the exposure of the perpetrators of human rights violations requires massive coverage by the media. In trying to expose human rights violations by state parties and powerful private entities, the media and journalists have become the victims of violations against their right to freedom of expression,

especially in emerging democracies in Africa. As will be discussed below, it is this collision between the state and the media in the democratization process in Africa, and in Zimbabwe, through a case study of a privately owned newspaper, *the Daily News* and its journalists that will seek to show how alternative, activist and radical journalism have contributed to nurturing democracy in circumstances where oppositional parties are either weak or non-existent.

However, Marie-Soleil Frere (2007) explores and exposes the double edged role of the media in conflict and in authoritarian regimes in an analytical study of nine countries of the Great Lakes region: Rwanda, Chad, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The point made is that the media not only advance democratic practices and can also be anathema to democratic norm compliance, peace and good governance, but they can steer and foment undemocratic practices, such as ethnic wars. For example, she writes that during the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the civil war in Congo-Brazzaville in 1995, to the civil war that began in 1998 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, as well as in the authoritarian regimes in Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon, the media were used to encourage conflict and subvert democratic principles. Frere (2007) provided a corpus of evidence through which to show that in times of conflict and political turmoil the media can be perpetrators of human rights violations, as was the case with Radio Television Mille Collines (RTMC), a private radio station in Rwanda that incited and instigated the Hutu majority of the population to kill ethnic minority Tutsis through propaganda and hate speech.

By far one of the most important roles of the media is to act as a watchdog in society. James Curran (2002: 217) indicates that the central thesis of liberal media history in democratic process is the development of the mass media, whose principle democratic role, according to traditional liberal theory, is to act as a check on the excesses of the state. The media play a watchdog role and are providers of information and resources for public opinion formation. They circulate information and ideas that are deemed essential in sustaining a vibrant civil society and a functioning democracy. The media should monitor the activities of the state and expose abuses by the official authorities. A press that is muzzled would not service the democratic role:

Regulation of the press, other than through the ordinary law of the land, was vehemently opposed by both the United States and Britain on the grounds that it would stifle free expression and curtail critical scrutiny of power...critical

examination of surveillance of the state is clearly an important aspect of the democratic functioning of the media (Curran, 2002: 218-219).

It is more relevant when Curran (2002: 225) further submits that:

In liberal theory, the media can be viewed in an expansive way, as an agency of information and debate which facilitate the functioning of democracy. In this view, the media briefs the electorate, and assist voters to make an informed choice at election. Independent media also provide a channel of communication between governments and governed. Above all, the media provide a forum of debate in which people can identify problems, propose solutions, reach agreement and guide the public direction of society.

A press that is regulated and licensed could be subjected to censorship when it deals with problems arising from the abuse of political power by the ruling elites, as interrogated in Chapter Four of this dissertation through an examination of media and security laws that were passed by the government of Zimbabwe as it sought to stifle critical news coverage of the crisis in the country from the opposition press. This is a crucial theme in this research, given the abuse of political power by the ruling elites in general and, specifically, by the leadership of the country being investigated.

In this context, McNair (1999:21) views the surveillance of the state by the media as an important function in a democratic society. The truth entails making citizens know what is happening around them. The media should also provide a platform for public political debate, facilitating the formation of public opinion and feeding that information to the public, where it came from and also that the media in a democratic society serve as channels through which to air and advocate divergent political views by political parties and civic actors. Perhaps a vital suggestion by McNair, (1999: 22), which suits the context of this dissertation, is when he postulated that:

The media in democratic societies serve as a channel for the advocacy of political view points. Political parties require an outlet for the articulation of their policies and programmes to a mass audience and thus the media must be open to them.

This ideal symbiotic relationship between the media, especially the opposition press and opposition political movements, which assist in bringing about a democratic society, is what most countries, both in colonial African times and postcolonial emerging democracies, has been at the centre of struggles between authoritarian regimes and the opposition press, such as *The Daily News* in Zimbabwe.

Other scholars have suggested that the press can actually strengthen democracy in weak states:

In any country where political institutions and opposition groups are not yet or no longer – operating freely, a press able to report and reflect popular discontent with the course of national policy or with the government of the moment can serve as important warning light identifying early problems that demand solution if political stability is to be maintained,(Unger,1990:369)

Unger further argues that the rarity of media freedoms in developing countries and former Communist states was, in his view, proof of how difficult it was for a democratic ethos to be socialized and to take root. That press freedom has traditionally been one of the first liberties to be denied by totalitarian governments demonstrates its significances in emerging democracies (Unger, 1990: 372). The problem is that political and economic elites make use of the media in their daily routines of governing, for opinion and image management as well as for trouble shooting in times of crises:

Far from subverting public order in unstable societies, free and robust media can actually promote conciliation by encouraging the discussion of controversial issues before they reach a volatile or explosive stage, (Unger 1990: 369).

McChesney, (2007) argues that, seen in this light, media scholarship has an extremely critical and important role in the service of democracy. Seen from this perspective, one can argue that both the adversaries to and proponents of the media need them for different reasons; among them entrenchment of power and economic interests.

Regardless of how one evaluates the functions and performance of the media, it is advanced that media institutions have become the major platforms and the privileged scenes of political activities (Dahlgren, 2009: 35). Discussions about media and democracy are usually framed by notions of the ‘public sphere’ which emphasize that the media must provide citizens with information, ideas and debates about current affairs to ensure that the public are informed as they participate in democratic political processes (Dahlgren 2009: 34). Jurgen Habermas’ idea of the public sphere, defined as a metaphorical space where access to information affecting the public good is available, where discussion is ideally free from domination, and participation is on equal basis, is part of the critical role that the media play in a democratic society (Curran, 2002). The media facilitate the formation of a public sphere by providing an arena for public debate and by reconstituting private citizens as a public body in the form of public opinion. However, while Habermas’ idea of the public sphere illuminates debate on the significance of the media in democratic discourses, it is not without limitations. Nancy Fraser (2007) avers that the concept of the public sphere was developed not simply to understand communication flows but also to

contribute to a normative political theory of democracy. Hence a public sphere is conceived as an inclusive and fair space for the communicative generation of ideas, where publicity is supposed to discredit views that cannot withstand robust scrutiny and to assure the legitimacy of those views that do. In mobilizing the considered sense of civil society, publicity is supposed to hold public officials accountable and to assure that the actions of the state express the will of the citizenry, (Fraser 2007).

Fraser criticized the concept of the public sphere for failing to acknowledge women and those subaltern groups in society which did not have access to it. More so, the concept of the public sphere fails to recognize that society is stratified and people have unequal access to resources and public forums. She also offers the perspective the state has multinationals, multi-residential citizens and therefore has no-bounded community as in the Westphalian State, as Habermas posited, (Fraser, 2007).

Fraser further argues that:

In general public spheres are increasingly transnational with respect to each of the constitutive elements of public opinion. The ‘who’ of communication, previously theorized as Westphalian-national citizenry, is often now a collection of dispersed interlocutors, who do not constitute a *demos*. The addressee of communication once theorized as a sovereign territorial State, which should be made answerable to public opinion, is now an amorphous mix of public and private transnational powers that is nether easily identifiable nor rendered accountable, Fraser (2007: <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0605/fraser/en>, accessed on 10 May 2012)

The above points are important as they assist us with a broad and inclusive analysis and understanding of the role of the media in comparative terms. It is significant in this study because it articulates the need to examine the role of oppressed and minority groups in communicative spaces.

1.7 Alternative media and democracy in Africa

The search for a more effective role for the media in democracy is both debatable and controversial in the African context. Ansah (1998: 7) affirms that media’s contributions to development and democracy have been complicated by the fact that Africans have been mired in ideological positions ranging from liberalism to authoritarian administration. In Ansah’s view, authoritarian rule tended to be the preferred rule in a number of states, as examined in this study. It is therefore, important that any study of the media in the democratization process should take into account the historical narratives of African states, especially in regard to decades of colonial rule, dictatorships that emerged after decolonization and

attempts to impose Western media models that do not consider these processes. Ansah, (1988: 12) captured the opposition role of the Africa press when he observed that:

The African press played the role of the watchdog (resistance) during the independence struggle and many of the nationalist leaders established newspapers for the purpose of organising to fight against colonialism and injustice... The press fought political oppression economic exploitation, social injustice and the abuse of human rights.

This important role of the opposition press in independence struggles is examined in Chapter Two of this dissertation with an in-depth analysis of the opposition press in South Africa under apartheid, and the case of Zimbabwe in both colonial and postcolonial times.

While it is generally agreed (Ansah, 1988 & Curran 2002) that the media play a valuable watchdog role against those in public and powerful positions in society, this role is especially crucial in new and fragile democracies in Africa unlike in more mature democracies in the West. The watchdog role of the media is particularly vital in emerging democracies where it has been argued that where opposition political parties are weak or non-existent owing to state repression, the private press can occupy that role of opposition.

In their analysis of the dual legacy of democracy and the authoritarian role of the media in Zimbabwe, given its colonial history of contested press freedom, Ronning and Kupe (2000: 175) argue that:

The watchdog role of the press is particularly important in societies where the political parties or organisations have failed to provide an effective opposition to the ruling party such as is the case in Zimbabwe. In such situations it is doubly important that the press examine the conduct of the rulers and question how public resources are managed. An important prerequisite for a developed democracy is that there exist institutions which can defend public interests and question government acts and decisions in a public manner on behalf of a variety of cultural interests and opinions.

Under normal situations, Ronning and Khupe (ibid.) observe that this should be the function of parliament and particularly of parliamentary oppositions:

When parliaments do nothing but toe the party line, and when parliamentarians who try to raise critical voices, are taken to task for not following the party line, then one of the most important safeguards of the freedom of expression is severely weakened. In such a situation the independent press or less automatically will take the place of

the absent parliamentary opposition, and together with other civil society institutions defend the interests of the public (ibid).

This dissertation builds its arguments on this proposition with an investigation of the agency and experiences of journalists working under conditions of repression in Zimbabwe.

Apart from the watchdog role, Nyamnjoh (2005: 2) believes that in order for citizens to participate meaningfully in public affairs, the media give citizens knowledge and education about how to use the information at their disposal. This position is usually taken for granted in developed democracies with high literacy rates and access to a wide variety of media platforms in the age of the information and communication super highway.

However, Nyamnjoh (2005: 2) is quick to caution that while the media have an enormous potential to play such a significant role in providing information, they can also be a vehicle for uncritical assumptions, beliefs, stereotypes, ideologies and orthodoxies that may blunt vital awareness and impinge on participatory democratization.

He argues that only when the media empower individuals and communities and contest decisions that are made in their purported interest by powerful individuals and institutions in society can the media promote democratization, (Nyamnjoh, 2009: 62). This is a plausible proposition as access to the media is not a given in any society, especially in developing democracies. The media are owned by powerful elites and big companies with various interests to promote and protect. As a result, unequal access and the promotion of the political and power interests of an elite, one can argue that certain communities, especially the economically poor, will be disadvantaged. The kind of democracy being promoted will largely be in the interests of the elite and powerful in society, not of the ideal democracy that theorists postulate. Nyamnjoh (2009: 68) significantly observes that any analysis of the media's role in promoting democracy in Africa should be made against an appreciation of a global media typology marked by advances in information and communication technologies, on the one hand, and the inequalities they occasion or re-enforce at the international, regional and national levels. Media ownership and services in the African context should therefore be examined to make sure that they serve the interests of marginalized communities. It is important that they provide entertainment to audiences, community empowerment through participatory democracy, and not promote the interests of the powerful elite who own capital. In the context of this study, Chapter Two interrogates the trajectory of alternative media and cultural resistance, both in the colonial and postcolonial contexts.

1.8 The limitations of Western media theorization

The philosophical underpinnings of free speech while vital to interrogation of the relationship between media and democracy have limitations. Imperfections have arisen from the way media have evolved in Western societies. The limits are a pointer to how other societies should be careful not to simply take these significant ‘Western’ ideas and try to use them in attempting to understand media and democratization in Africa. As Nyamnjoh notes (2005), cautions should be applied because of the differences in cultures and levels of development between Africa and the Western world. Curran and Park (2000: 3) have challenged what they described as the parochialism of ‘western media theory’. They assert that it has become routine for universalistic observations of the media to be advanced in English texts on the basis of evidence found in very few countries. However, the world is changing in ways that make this narrowness unsustainable, positing that globalization, the Cold War, the rise of the Asian economy, the emergence of centres of media that are alternative to places like Hollywood, and the general growth of media studies across the world, require a different analysis.

Media scholars have criticised attempts to universalize the experiences of Britain and the United States of America as if these old democracies and their Protestant histories are representative of the world. Like Sparks (1998), Downing calls for “communication theorizing to develop itself comparatively” (1996: xi). This could, for example, mean that Siebert et al’s (1956) “four theories of the press”, only managed to articulate and display knowledge of the American and Russian media, the American colonial and early English press, but very little about other systems, especially within non-western states. It could possibly be criticized for describing the media typology and cultures from the Russian and Anglo-American worldviews. The world might not necessarily be seen and analysed through Western eyes and experiences.

It is further suggested that the advent of globalization has led to an examination of media theories; to give media studies a broader analytical view of understanding the world. Globalization is extending the basis of communication and cultural exchange because the rise of new communication technology that comprises time and space and transcends national frontiers is bringing into being a community of diverse cultures and peoples (Curran & Park, 2000: 7). Globalization is seen to open up new lines of communication between different groups and to construct new grounds for building symbiotic

relationships, without suggesting that the world and its different cultures are becoming a single harmonious group.

Related to the de-westernization of media studies is the long held debate around universalism and cultural relativism. A critical evaluation of the role of the press in the democratization process across different cultures and different countries can be illuminated in the context of this debate. In the human rights discourse, rights are understood as Western derivatives and largely a result of the Enlightenment period. They are meant to serve and protect individual interests from the excesses of the State (Donnelly, 1984). Culture, on the other hand, is taken to mean homogenous, integrated systems of beliefs and values attached to a relatively small and isolated group of people (ibid.). It is argued that cultural relativism strives to acknowledge the equal validity of diverse patterns of life. It stresses the existence and respect of the dignity inherent in those diverse lives and cultures. Cultural relativists argue that human rights, like press freedom, emerge and have meanings in particular settings, while universalism believes that there are uniform norms and values that should apply in all societies. This has influenced debates about media and democracy, with African scholars arguing against universalism.

Critics of universalism argue that, far from being universal, rights such as freedom of expression reflect a Western bias, suggesting that it is only in Western political thought that the world is seen as an aggregation of individuals. Fagan (2003) says that cultural relativism rebuts this view, contending that universal moral truths do not exist and that moral beliefs and principles are better thought of as socially and historically contingent, valid only for those cultures and societies in which they originate and within which they are widely approved. What is undeniable, though, is that all cultures need recognition and representation and that there are no superior cultures, hence the need to de-westernize media studies and appreciate the roles and contributions of non-western values to the study. One might therefore be tempted to argue that despite different theoretical views on the discourse of human rights; very few cultures disagree on the fundamental principles of the need for people to express themselves freely. It seems also plausible to suggest that there are strong views and arguments that show that the right to freedom of expression is critical in any civilized nation, as it encompasses the growth of a market place of ideas and the possible realization of both individual and group rights championed by Universalists and cultural relativists respectively. Michalowski and Woods (1999) have shown the crucial importance

of freedom of expression in a democratic society since the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany, in its famous *Luth Decision*, observed that:

The right to freedom of expression is the most immediate expression of the human personality in society, and, as such, one of the noblest of human rights (...). It is absolutely fundamental for a liberal democratic constitutional order because it alone makes possible the constant intellectual debate and contest of opinions that is its elixir of life. In a certain way, it is the basis of any freedom, the matrix and the indispensable condition of nearly all other forms of freedom. (Michalowski and Woods, 1999: 199).

Although this is a ruling by a Western court that expresses the dominant cultural values of German society, the acknowledgement by other non-western societies of the indivisibility and interrelatedness of human rights makes it difficult to ignore the significance of the view expressed by the Court.

1.9 General definitions of democracy

While this thesis is about how an alternative news medium operated in undemocratic conditions during a period of political disturbances, it also interrogates the governance deficits that journalists confronted. It is, therefore, prudent to address democratic concepts and theories to illuminate the purpose and cause of alternative media in blocked democracies, such as Zimbabwe. A democracy is defined as a people-form of government which is in contradistinction to monarchies and aristocracies. The mark of a democracy is rule by people, (Held, 1996: 1). While Held points out that Ancient Greek Athens' rule by the people was direct democracy, it was also marked by a commitment to the principle of civic virtue, dedication to the republican city-state and the subordination of private life to the affairs of the public, other scholars have pointed out its limitations. Hyland (1995: 36), for example, argues that political rule could be conceived as democratic to the extent that people who are significantly affected by political decisions have equal rights of participation at all levels of decision-making, with the understanding that this effectiveness is crucially dependent on adequate access to the resources necessary to enable full and meaningful participation. Tilly (2007: 13) supports this view, contending that a regime is democratic to the degree that political relations between the state, or those who hold power, and the citizens feature broad, equal, protected and mutually binding consultations.

However, the foundations and ingredients for democracy were, to some extent, present in early Athens.

Democracy in classical Athens, for example, despite certain features that we could nowadays consider totally undemocratic, such as the exclusion from political life of about 85 per cent of the total population, was both as a system of government and as a set of ideals similar in certain general respects to what I will claim should be our modern concept of democracy, (Hyland 1995: 37).

Tilly, however, has criticised Athenian democracy for keeping slaves in half of the Greek City States. He argued that slaves had no citizenship rights as they were owned by other citizens as chattels. Resident foreigners, their wives and children, did not qualify as citizens either, Tilly points out (2007: 26). The irony, for Tilly (2007), was that slaves played significant roles in the Athenian state as their labour freed slaving-owning citizens to participate in public affairs.

It is, therefore, plausible to argue that a democratic system should not be exclusionary but should seek to embrace different sorts of people and their interests. McChesney, (1999) asserts that when discussing democratising societies, mechanisms that make the rule of many should be put in place, and this entails reducing social inequalities and establishing a media system that serves the entire population of a country which, in turn, promotes democratic rule. This means that democracy is an imperfect system. It has not delivered to all and therefore should be cautiously applied.

Nonetheless, democracy has been vigorously defended by others. For example, Francis Fukuyama (1992: 44) argues that:

Of the different types of regimes that have emerged in the course of human history, from monarchies and aristocracies, to religious theocracies, to the fascist and communist dictatorships, the only form of government that has survived intact to the end of the 20th century has been liberal democracy.

Fukuyama makes an important distinction between liberalism and democracy. He argues that although they are closely related, they are separate concepts. Political liberalism refers to the rule of law that recognizes individual rights and fundamental freedoms from government control, while democracy is a right held universally by all citizens to have a share of political power that is the right of citizens to vote and to participate in politics (Fukuyama, 1992: 43). His argument is strongly refuted by others (Ake, 1991; Mamdani, 1996) because it overlooks problems with liberal democracy, as examined in this dissertation.

1.10 Forms/practices of democracy

There are many models of democracy, but this study, due to its relevance, will limit itself to direct or participatory and liberal or representative democracies. As will be argued, due to colonial history, especially in former British colonies, foreign democratic models have been adapted into existing governance systems. As will be discussed later, they come with challenges and inherent contradictions.

This is another important dual distinction between models of democracy (Held 1996). The first is direct or participatory democracy, which refers to a more open and inclusive system of decision making on public affairs in which citizens is directly involved. This is different from liberal or representative democracy, which is defined as a system of rules embracing elected ‘officers, who undertake to ‘represent’ the interests of citizens within the framework of the rule of law,’ (Held, 1996: 6). At a national level, representative democracy is the more popular version, with elected officials representing their constituencies in parliament and other government structures. In Africa, most countries appear to follow a mixture of participatory and representative democratic models in terms of the structures of the state and the system of governance of various governments. Advocates of representative or procedural democracy, however, caution that if elections remain a non-competitive sham and an occasion on which to smash opponents of the incumbent government, some procedural analysts reject elections as a criterion for democracy. Nonetheless, if elections contribute significant governance changes, it is also suggested that they maybe a sign of the presence of democratic practices (Tilly, 2007: 8). Joseph Schumpeter (in Hyland, 1995: 44) affirms that a state is governed democratically if governmental office is allocated on the basis of competitive popular elections. Schumpeter postulates that the idea of administering credible polls that offer citizens varied choices in an environment where civil liberties are not obstructed are characteristics that all democracies have in common and that non-democratic forms of government lack and aspire to have (ibid). Schumpeter is also cognisant of the different understandings of democracy by other scholars, but he claims that those conceptions were either ultimately incoherent or else wholly unrealistic in that,

...the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s voter, (Schumpeter in Hyland, 1995:44).

These views clearly show that democracy is a contested concept and that the practice of democracy also comes with specific problems.

In discussing procedural democracy, Huntington (1997) argues that elections can be perceived as a barometer for defining democracy. In his view, democracy might be understood as a means of constituting authority and of making it responsible. A modern state, observes Huntington (1997: 2-3), could be perceived as having a democratic political system if its most powerful political officers are chosen through fair, honest, periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes in a system that allow universal suffrage:

According to this definition elections are the essence of democracy. From this follow other characteristics of democratic systems. Free, fair and competitive elections are only possible if there are some measure of freedom of speech, assembly, and press, and if opposition candidates and parties are able to criticize incumbents without fear of retaliation, (Huntington 1997: 3).

What is posited above is important, but elections alone cannot adequately define the elusive concept of democracy. In trying to answer this riddle, Larry Diamond has elaborated a key distinction between liberal democracy and electoral democracy (in Huntington, 1997: 3). Liberal democracies do not only have elections. Diamond argues that all liberal democracies have restrictions on the power of the executive, independent judiciaries to uphold the rule of law; protect individual rights and freedoms of expression, association, belief and participation, consideration of minority rights, limits on the ability of the ruling party to bias the electoral process, effective guarantees against arbitrary arrest, and minimum state control of the media. Most electoral democracies lack these safeguards and hence the practice of democracy is almost always imperfect.

There are other more radical interpretations of democracy, as seen in C.B Macpherson (Hyland, 1995:45), who offers a humane perspective on democracy. For Macpherson, the maximization of democracy consists in the egalitarian maximization of human power, where power is appreciated in the broadest sense of human potentialities to engage in meaningful activities. Macpherson further points out that democracy,

is only achieved when all members of a community have, in an egalitarian manner, achieved maximum development of their potentialities, intellectual, aesthetic, moral, productive and emotional, (in Hyland, 1995: 45).

In this regard, democracy remains largely a continuous search for the ideal form of governance that is difficult to achieve, even in liberal Western states.

As will be seen below, this study contends that in some African States, such as Zimbabwe, electoral processes are used as part of what Nyamnjoh (2005: 48) describes as “face powder democracy” – a mockery of rule in favour of political elites at the expense of the rights of citizens. Such superficial democratic forms lack a democratic culture and come with no respect for the fundamental civil and political liberties of citizens. This African critique of democracy is based on history and experience, especially in the postcolonial context.

Despite these contested definitions, meanings, types and variants of democracy, as well as its application, this study believes that democracy is a desirable form of government, as scholars like Fukuyama (1992), Held, (1996) and Hyland (1995) argue. However, the gap between democratic theory and practice is a matter of continuous debate. Scholars are also sometimes influenced by their own background and society, as seen from the radical African critique.

In the absence of alternatives to democracy, Held (1996) and Hyland (1995) have both argued that democracy is significant as a form of rule because it celebrates diversity and tolerance. Held (1996) points out that the idea of democracy is important because it does not just represent one value among many, such as liberty, equality or justice, but it is a value that can link and mediate among competing issues in society. It is further pointed out (Held, 1996) that the other significant value of democracy is that it does not pre-suppose agreement on diverse values but, rather, suggests a way of relating values to each other and leaving the resolution of conflicts about different values that are open to participants in a public process. These views are important because they show why democracy is a necessary form, even if it has imperfections.

1.11 African perspectives on democracy

Forms of democracy have existed in many societies at different times and I will consider African views on democracy below. Even prominent writers, such as Held (1996), suggest that democracy has evolved among societies and different cultures. Both the form and practice of democracy are often contested and as aptly submitted by Street (2011: 305) “There are, of course, as many definitions of democracy as there are democratic theorists.” While democracy is generally taken as the ideal form of rule, it is hotly disputed in other cultures. Held,(1996: 7) believed that the most discernible and attractive form of democracy is one in which citizens in principle can extend their participation in decision-making to a wide array of spheres such as political, social and economic. Held does not agree that any one existing model alone provides an adequate explanation of the conditions, features or rational of any one democratic form. African scholars, such as Kwesi (1995), argue that it was reasonable to abandon the tradition of interpreting Africa and its aspirations through other nations. He argues that the African concern was not an individual orientation to Western democracy, but of a democracy in a mass society where people live like one organism with its own nodal control. Kwesi (1995: 63) proposed a theory of one-party democracy with democratic centralism, which he argues harmonizes with, “our old-age African traditions with modern ideas of democratic participation in government.” This theory encompasses a process of political education and communication and of popular action and places power and the exercise of that power in the hands of the people.

Some of the African perspectives consider one party democracy not to be controversial in Africa. They argue that it is, instead, a political expression of “our African history and tradition, both of which are based upon a common allegiance to accepted purposes of society and to the basic principles of democratic centralism”, (Kwesi, 1995: 63). He argues that the theory did not celebrate dictatorship by postulating that in those African societies which had chiefs, traditional organizations reveal no formal or permanent opposition to the Chief of the State, and more than one nominee contested the election of the chief. Unlike in Western democracies, in Africa under Kwesi’s proposition, the personal and private interests of every member of the community became secondary to the progress of the community of the State. The unit of analysis is the community rather than the individual. This theory argues against the branding of the chief as a tyrant. Critics should understand that the chief governed with a council of elders, whose influence curtailed any arbitrary rule by the ruler, it is argued. Any chief who acts against the wishes of the citizens could be dethroned. Kwesi (1995: 63) further points out that, unlike in

Western democracies, no organized opposition group or party was necessary in order to initiate the process of dethroning the chief, because the council of elders acted as the checks and balances in the system. He contends that the existence of the chieftainship system in Africa today was testimony to its democratic foundations and functions. Claude Ake (1991: 5) similarly argues that Africa has its own unique history and traditions and that the introduction of democracy as an alien concept would violate the integrity of African culture. However, this argument is premised on the view that ‘democracy’ is solely a Western creation. It stems from confusion between the principles of democracy and their institutional manifestations.

The principles of democracy, which include widespread participation, the consent of the governed and the public accountability of those in power, are some tenets of the democratic ideal. These principles prevail in different political systems and arrangements, argues Ake (1991). Traditional African societies were infused with democratic values.

They were invariably patrimonial, and consciousness was communal, everything was everybody’s business, engendering a strong emphasis on participation. Standards of accountability were even stricter than in Western societies, (Ake 1991: 5).

It is therefore plausible to argue that a form of participatory democracy existed in traditional African societies. Ake further postulates that elite liberal democracy is contrary to African traditions because it is atomistic and dichotomous in its exercise:

Africans have a communal consciousness; we do not think of ourselves as atomized in competition and potential conflict with others, but as members of an organic whole. African traditional democracy lies in a commitment to the desirability and necessity of participation as a collective enterprise. In the African tradition, participation does not merely enjoy rights but secures tangible benefits. It entails active involvement on deciding on common goals and how to realize them, (Ake, 1991: 49).

Similarly to Kwesi (1995), Ake (1991) argues that African chiefs are answerable not only for their own actions, but for natural disasters such as famine, floods, epidemics and drought. In the event of such calamities, chiefs would be required to go into exile or “asked to die.” It is, therefore, pointed out that Africans had a long history of democratic functionality and governance well before the advent of colonialism. At the time of the conquest of Africa in the last half of the 19th century, loose confederations existed, for instance, among the Akan peoples of West Africa, especially the Ashanti and

the Fanti, Mamdani (1996:47) points out. It could, therefore, be argued that the Akan constituted a possible genuine public sphere similar to the one postulated by Habermas. Given this history, one could possibly dispute that African societies were not democratic and counter by asserting that the emergence of colonialism disrupted these established democratic practices by creating what Mamdani (1996: 37) calls “decentralized despotism” through the use of traditional leaders, such as chiefs, to advance colonial rule in Africa. Below I examine in more detail the aspects of a typical African model of democracy.

1.12 Oromo democracy: An African view

In the discussion on forms of democracy in Africa it is important to provide examples which assist in showing that alternative forms of opposition existed in Africa. In *Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous African Political System*, Asmarom Legesse (2000: 195) points out that democratic practices existed among the Oromo people, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. Legesse claims that Oromo democracy was a remarkable creation of the human mind that evolved into a fully-fledged system of government as a result of evolution and deliberate, rational and legislative transformation, and other institutions that reached maturity in the 16th and 17th centuries, way before the advent of colonialism in Africa. In Oromo democracy, power sharing rested on the division of roles between four different institutions, three of which cross-cut the nation along different associational lines, and the fourth was all encompassing. The *Gumi* was the general assembly that represented the whole Oromo society and the three cross-cutting organs were *moieties* (clans) called *gosa*, the generation based groups called *qadaor luba* and the age-sets called *hariya*. All members of these groups were found in each other’s organ in order to safeguard the abuse of power.

What is significant to note about *Oromo* democracy is that it established eighteen principles of democracy with which to govern itself. These principles are arguably part of the modern principles of democratic governance. Among some the principles were that; the laws of society should stand above all men, the principle of accountability, the subordination of warriors to deliberative assemblies, the supreme authority of the general assembly, the principle of balanced opposition, the separation of powers, limitation of office to a single term and the system of staggered succession (Legesse, 2000).

For example, Legesse writes (2000: 1999) on the supremacy of the law, “it was based on the principle that the fundamental laws of the people are the enduring aspect of life and that all men and women, including the leaders are subject to those laws,” One can draw similarities between this principle and

the liberal and Western concept of the rule of law which, among other tenets, states that all people are equal before the law and that there shall not be selective application of the law (Held, 1996). If, indeed, these principles existed in Ethiopia, an African State that was never subject to colonialism, as argued by Legesse, one could substantiate the case that democracy existed in some parts of Africa and was thus not an alien idea brought about by Western civilizations.

1.13 Alternative and non-Western discourses on democratic practices

It can also be observed that traditional African chiefs ruled by consent, an aspect that is part of modern understanding of democracy that cannot arguably be limited to Western notions of democracy. Koggel (2006) asserts that the broad view of public reasoning allows people to understand that the roots of democracy go beyond the narrowly confined history of some designated practices that are perceived to be democratic. The basic recognition was articulated by de Tocqueville (1835) in *Democracy in America*, when he noted that the “great democratic revolution” then taking place could be seen, from one point of view, as “a new thing”, but could be seen from a broader perspective as part of “the most continuous, ancient and permanent tendency known to history” (Sen, 2006: 210). Democracy has evolved in different cultures and current generations have built on previous versions.

To draw attention to the long existence of a democratic culture in African societies South Africa is also used as an example. In his autobiography, *Long Walk To Freedom*, Nelson Mandela describes how impressed he was as a boy by the democratic nature of the proceedings of local meetings that were held in the Regent’s house in Mqbekezweni:

Everyone who wanted to speak did so. It was democracy in its purest form. There may have been a hierarchy of importance among the speakers, but everyone was head, chief and subject, warrior and medicine man, shopkeeper and farmer, landowner and labourer ... The foundation of self-government was that all men were free to voice their opinions and equal in their value as citizens (cited in Sen, 2006: 210).

It has also been put forward that African democracy should be guided by principles of cultural diversity, social equity and equitable access to resources as Julius Nyerere in *General Perspectives* says:

The machinery through which a government stays close to the people and the people close to their government will differ according to history, the demographic

distribution, the traditional culture (or cultures), and the prevailing international and economic environment which has to operate. For democracy means much more than voting on the basis of adult suffrage every few years; it means (among other things) an attitude of tolerance and willingness to operate with others on terms of equality. An essential ingredient of democracy is that it is based on the equality of all the people within a nation's boundary, and that all the laws of the land apply to all adults without exception. The nation's constitution must provide methods, by which the people can, without recourse to violence, control the government, which emerges in accordance with it and even specify its amendment, (Nyerere, 1999: 3, in Lumumba-Kasongo, 2005).

One might possibly argue that the philosophical underpinnings of African views and perceptions on democracy are communitarian, and whose unit of analysis is the community. The focus is on the wellbeing of the community and its people. The focus on economic and cultural rights by African leaders, such as Nyerere, seems to imply the economic underdevelopment of Africa as a result of colonialism, which any discourses on African democracy should interrogate. In this respect, one can see a difference between such communitarian approaches and a Western emphasis on individual liberties and the protection of private property rights, which are at the core of their democratic theory as opposed to the African view. This is a difference that should be appreciated.

It could be argued that most political scientists writing on democratization employ liberal and procedural definitions of democracy. Democratization is generally understood as an extension of a process of political liberalization. Following Robert Dahl, this is most commonly measured by a relatively minimal procedural definition that focuses on institutions and freedoms, for the sake of parsimony, clarity of analysis and comparability, democracy with adjectives has been discouraged (Zuern, 2009). African academics, such as Ake (1991), have argued that such an understanding of democracy robs democracy of its key content. Given African struggles, including those relating to the ownership of the means of production by previously excluded and marginalized majorities, social and economic rights should be central to democratic debates in the African context. By employing a substantive definition of democracy that includes social and economic criteria alongside electoral procedures and civil and political rights for a country to be deemed a democracy, Zuern asserts that this approach assists in contextualising the lived experiences and struggles of African societies with histories of social and economic exclusion. It also challenges the standard approach to democracy in the literature on democratization (Zuern, 2009). These substantive expectations have profound implications, both for theoretical approaches to questions of democratization as well as the practical development of new

democracies. It is further argued that understanding a substantive approach to democracy raises questions of poverty and material inequality to the centre of democratic debate and African perspectives. Procedural understandings of democracy, mainly Western and liberal approaches, fail to capture the economic justice issues.

Lumumba-Kasongo, (2005: 21) sums up what is generally agreed by some African democratic scholars as the kind of democracy that could be practiced in Africa. He is also critical and clear about democracy and how it ought to be practiced:

Democracy is not a menu prepared from outside of a given culture. It is a political means through which social contradictions, with respect to collective and individual rights should be solved at a given time and in a given society. There cannot be a real democracy if a concerned society does not have any consensus of its own contradictions, does not allow political debate, and does not outline a social practice to provide rules for the society to manage its own interests with equity and justice. Democracy should be a struggle against social inequality, injustices, exploitation and social miseries... Democracy is both a process and a practice that involves equal economic and social opportunities for the citizenry, (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2005: 21).

The above view is interesting as it assists democratic scholars in developing analytical and contextual examinations of democratic theories, forms and practices, and in the process to avoid generalisations in their application.

1.14 The problems with Western democracy

Promoters of democratic ideals often point to ancient European history and American struggles for political and civil rights. Such 'Western' understandings of democracy are discussed as if they are universal but, in reality, they are ignorant of other successful forms of democracy. The example of Oromo democracy in Ethiopia, discussed above, shows that other contexts practice democracy differently. Further, the participatory ideals of ancient Indian republics or African village communities, which, while forming an important basis for South Asian or African discussions of democracy, do not often register in Western debates; it is argued. As a result, democracy is difficult to unpack. It is widely contestable and manifestly polymorphous (Sadiki, 2004: 10), implying that it has many forms and practices. In his work, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*, Giovanni Sartori, scrutinises the various

interrelated strata of complexities, among them the conceptual, historical, empirical and epistemological strata, to the study of democracy.

Sadiki (2004: 10) posits that democratic scholars seem only to agree on the etymology of the word. *Demokratia*, as stated elsewhere in this dissertation, is the Greek composite of *demos*, people and *kratia*, from the verb *kratien*, to rule. Again, as previously discussed and argued, even Athenian democracy was imperfect. It was patriarchal and exclusive - not accessed and practiced by women, children, foreigners and slaves. Despite its imperfections and Western biases, as this section will attempt to demonstrate, democracy as a form of government remains valued as the best system for regulating state society relations across cultures within their contexts and historical circumstances. There are certain values of democracy that apply to all societies and cultures, such as the right to equality before the law and universal adult suffrage.

The assertion that democracy is a Western concept has, therefore, been described as a myth. Sen (in Koggel, 2006) argues that the championing of pluralism, diversity and basic liberties can be found in the history of many societies. He posits that the tradition of encouraging and protecting public debates on political, social and cultural matters, in India, China, Africa, Iran, the Arab World, Turkey and the Middle East, for instance. It demands a more critical and fuller recognition in the history of democratic ideas. This world history of the practice of forms of democratic governance is adequate enough to question the view that democracy is a western idea (Sen in Koggel, 2006: 210).

Meyer Fortes and Edwards Pritchard, for example, argue that:

There might have been some over generalizations in this, as critics argue later, but there can be little doubt of the traditional role and the continuing relevance of accountability and participation in African political heritage. To overlook all this and to regard the fight for democracy in Africa only as an attempt to import the 'western' idea of democracy would be a profound misunderstanding. *Mandela's Long Walk To Freedom* began distinctively at home, (Sen in Koggel, 2006: 210).

Such misrepresentations of the role of other cultures in the history and debates on democracy could result from problems with 'Western' education. Reagan, (2008: 1) submits, for instance, that although there have been calls for the inclusion of women and people of colour in studies of history and philosophy. Where such efforts have taken place, they have often entailed little more than the addition of vignettes that indicate the contributions of members of such groups to the Western tradition. Benhabib (1996: 3) observes that the democratic debate is a process which is subject to continuous changes and

interpretations at various stages in human history. Benhabib criticises Fukuyama's claims in his book *The End of History*, where he proclaimed that the world has reached, "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." This was proven misplaced when history started to unfold with civil wars and ethnic genocide that erupted in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Russian war in Chechnya, the devolution of democracy and the rise of fundamentalism in Algeria, and ethnic genocide in Rwanda, Benhabib, (1996: 3) argued. The Arab revolutions in 2010-2014 are cases in point. These examples show that, as a concept, democracy is a constant.

Feminist scholars have also criticized liberal democracy for abstract individualism that ignores its own gendered content and may have criticised the homogenizing ideals of equality that require women to be or become the same (Benhabib, 1996). Such accusations of gender-blindness, race and ethnicity, have added weight to past complaints that liberalism is blind to class. Liberal democracy is, therefore, accused of attempting to erase the issues of diversity and difference when it comes to gender issues. Despite these postulations on the contributions of different cultures to the democratic discourse, there are still acclaimed scholars who insist that democracy has a western inclination. Huntington (1997) in his article, 'After Twenty Years: The Future of the Third Wave' argues that democracy is a product of western civilization, its roots lie in social pluralism, the class system, the civil society, the belief in the rule of law, experience with representative bodies, the separation of spiritual and temporal authority, and the commitment to individualism that began to emerge in Western Europe more than a hundred years ago.

He contends that the above characteristics of democracy may be individually found in other civilizations but, as a body, they have existed only in the West and, according to Huntington (1997), this explains why democracy is considered as having originated from Western civilization. Europe, as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. argues, is "the source ... the unique source" of the

... ..ideas of individual liberty, political democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and cultural freedom ... These are European ideas, not Asian, not African, not Middle East, except by adoption, (in Huntington, 1997: 2-3).

This position is rejected by African scholars, as argued in this dissertation. Huntington's views, such as privileging the European history of democracy is rebutted by several scholars, like Ake (1991), Sen

(2006), Benhabib (1996) and Kwesi (1995), among others, have argued that democracy has multiple origins in societies outside Europe. As discussed above, Lumumba-Kasongo (2005) for example, refutes Huntington's postulations, arguing that notions such as choice, competition, monetary contributions, campaigns, voting processes and the organization of political parties, as currently used in Africa, are filtered through elements of African cultures that are shaped by the elements of underdevelopment and defined in the practical terms of ethnicity and educational values.

Lumumba-Kasongo criticizes the advocates of liberal democracy for trying to minimize cultural and social differences in their discourses, arguing that African societies struggle to maintain their differences as part of their history:

Particularisms as part of primordial systems is perceived and defined as one of both liberal democracy and the free market economy. These two dogmas claim to teach universal values which are viewed as being progressive and good themselves. Yet particularism, viewed as a positive inspirational source, can contribute to democracy as a collective affirmation of the self, (Lumumba-Kasongo 2005: 17).

In an African setting, Lumumba-Kasongo argues that the theory of liberal democracy has epistemological shortcomings as a tool of analysis, as well as a model of building society. As a tool of analysis, the scholar asserts that its typologies are against history and particularism. He contends that if deeply examined, history and traditions can be used as inspirational objects through which to reconstruct and develop societies. Lumumba-Kassongo (2005) laments that the universalism articulated by liberal democracy, as expanded by the west through the inclusion of human rights discourses, was Eurocentric. This fails to capture history because, in his view, both the evolution and development of European liberal political thought were influenced by other cultures. "Africans and other cultures also defended this system, militarily and culturally as the European nation-states were collapsing during the 1930s and 1940s," (Lumumba-Kasongo 2005: 19). This is a reference to the contributions of Africans and other cultures in the war against Nazism and Fascism.

1.15 Key elements in rethinking democracy in an African context

It is essential that key lessons for African democracy be articulated and discussed. It is also important to interrogate the meanings and implications of liberal democracy from Northern and Southern perspectives, as well as contestations on the forms and practices of democracies in these different

societies and cultures. In this regard, the critical contributions of African communities are important in examining the role of alternative forms of opposition to undemocratic practices. However, my proposition is that the democratic ideals found in international human rights instruments such as the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should apply in most societies. The concept of African democracy mostly preached by authoritarian regimes in countries such as Zimbabwe is largely self-serving meant to entrench undemocratic practices. I therefore, posit that liberal democratic values that promote and protect citizens' civil and political liberties, as well as social and economic rights such as right to water, education and access to resources should apply universally. My argument is that most human beings across the globe require the exercise of fundamental democratic freedoms irrespective of their geographic location.

Benhabib (1996: 3) makes a crucial point when he submits that the global trends towards democratization are a realistic phenomenon but are also the oppositions and antagonisms that are asserting themselves against it. These oppositions include various forms of difference that are ethnic, national, linguistic, religious and cultural. This new resurgent politics of difference should inform the kind of democratic forms and practices in Africa in order that they have meanings and make sense to its various peoples and their practices. Democracy, therefore, should not be imported, but should be informed by the needs of African societies based on their history, while borrowing from outside that which is desirable for progress. This is important because contemporary western liberal democracies are being challenged by groups who insist on the recognition and practice of their cultures and traditions and want to use their experience to demystify the liberal practices of subjugating other experiences, apart from western ones.

Secondly, the issue of democratization should be tied to economic development (Zuern, 2009), but the quest for social and economic rights should not lead to putting civil and political liberties on the periphery (Ansah, 1988). Both set of rights should be promoted and practiced simultaneously. Ake (1991: 6) points out that it would be both a seductive and misguided claim were one to argue that because of lack of development the pursuit of democracy should not be emphasized. He observed that Africa's failed development experience suggests that postponing democracy does not necessarily promote development. Ake further observes that during the past decades of authoritarian rule, standards of living have dropped in Africa and the continent's share of world trade and industrial output has fallen to low levels.

It is therefore worth noting to observe that human rights should be promoted, without exception, to facilitate development. Most African countries are members of the United Nations, which articulates that all human rights are indivisible. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action that was adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June, 1993, reaffirmed the indivisibility of human rights.

Article 8 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 1993 states:

Democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives. In the context of the above, the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels should be universal and conducted without conditions attached. The international community should support the strengthening and promoting of democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the entire world (<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/vienna.aspx>, accessed on 20 January, 2014).

Thirdly, there are various treaties that advance the promotion and realization of democratic governance within the African context that African governments could implement without reference to western type democracies. These include the 2004 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Principles and Guidelines Governing the Conduct of Democratic Elections, which includes the respect of all civil and political rights, the setting up of independent electoral commissions and the need for all contesting parties to have unfettered access to the media.

Again, the African Union (AU) showed its principled position on building a democratic culture when, in May, 2004, it adopted the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. This instrument, among other things, promotes adherence, by each State Party, to the universal values and principles of democracy and respect for human rights; to promote and enhance adherence to the principle of the rule of law that is premised upon the respect for, and the supremacy of, the Constitution and constitutional order in the political arrangements of the State Parties. The charter promotes the holding of regular free and fair elections to institutionalize the legitimate authority of representative government, as well as a democratic change of governments, and prohibiting, rejecting and condemning any unconstitutional change of government in any Member State as a serious threat to stability, peace,

security and development. These issues are valuable aspects that the alternative media in non-democratic African contexts confront.

Democracy is, therefore, a space within which change can take place as Sadiki (2004) argues. As discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, unlike other previous systems, the ethos of democracy has no fixed loci of power and what is most worthy about redefining democracy as an ethos is its capacity to survive in all kinds of societies.

Fourthly, it is imperative to examine and understand how colonialism subjugated the citizens of African societies. The lessons learnt from colonial history are important as part of the debate for a model of democracy that respects citizen participation in democratic processes. Mamdani (1996: 17) argues that Africa has been a bifurcated continent where citizenship would be a privilege of the civilized, while the uncivilized were subject to all round tutelage. These uncivilized citizens, Mamdani observes, have some civil rights but no political rights, which were reserved for those with property. This was a colonial method of colonial administrators and their representatives in Africa controlling the native. So, for a long period, the majority of Africans were denied basic fundamental freedoms.

As a result of these historical imbalances, Mamdani, (1996: 18) contends that, in the African context, democracy should entail the de-racialization of civil power that was put in place during the colonial period and continued after the postcolonial periods, and also the detribalization of customary power as the starting points of the democratization process. This seems a plausible argument, given that race relations still remain flash points of conflict especially in the distribution of resources in most African countries decades after political independence.

Fifthly, a consistent democratization process should dismantle and re-organize local government, the array of native authorities organized around the fusion of power that is fortified by an administratively driven customary justice “and nourished through extra-economic coercion,” Mamdani (1996:2). What this entails is the democratization of local government to remove the colonial system where local chiefs were used as the prefects and informers for central colonial governments. Mamdani argues that, in his view, the most important institutional legacy of colonial rule lies in the inherited impediments to democratization. The institutions that nourish democracy, such as the traditional ones,

should reflect the customs and traditions of African society and not work as remnants of colonial rule that were allergic to tolerance and democracy.

Sadiki (2004: 64) observes that nothing helps the cause of democratic struggles in the non-Western world more than the rethinking of, and the on-going contestations about, its form and practice, where discourses of cultural specificities are being recognized. He argues that democracy short of ethnocentrism could likely be appropriated by people or cultural forces that might have otherwise rejected it on the basis of rigid particularisms. Single plural alternatives or variations of western forms of democracy should be rejected in order to create a democracy that is tolerant of different cultures and traditions without creating an imposition theory.

As discussed above, Mamdani (1996) and Haynes (2001) suggest that in rethinking the building of democratic values and institutions, Africans should be cognizant of the negative impact of personalistic rule prior to democratization. Both indicate that colonial and postcolonial administrations in some parts of Africa have legacies of personal rule that are largely unaccountable. Haynes (2001) adds that this phenomenon makes the democratization build up problematic, as there are few foundations on which to build.

Some African countries have been accused of having weak and fragmented civil societies that have failed for some time to function as a bulwark against state authoritarian tendencies and the failure to democratize (Haynes, 2001: 139). In this regard, it is proposed that a strong and united civil society can play a substantial role in Africa's democratization agenda by checking the excesses of the state and political players, promoting and protecting human rights, including freedom of the media, that are necessary for the nurturing of democratization. This is related to the close relationship between the state and the military, especially the partisan involvement of Africa's military in the political and electoral affairs of the State (Haynes, 2001: 139). Often, the military in Africa have close relations with the political elite and in cases where there are disagreements over the two, the military have staged coups. This, it is argued, should be analyzed with a view to trying to establish state-military relations that respect the basic principles of democracy, such as the rule of law and the subordination of the military to civilian leadership, in constitutional order.

1.16 Conclusion

This chapter sets out the theoretical framework for this study by examining the purpose of alternative media and its relevance as well as significance. It interrogated various normative concepts of democracy but proposes that most aspects of liberal democracy that address fundamental human rights should apply in most society and cautions the wholesome acceptance of the concept of African democracy on the basis that it has been used in the majority of cases for self-serving and preservation of authoritarian tendencies by undemocratic African ruling elites and leaders. In the following chapter, a rigorous examination of the role of the opposition press in the decolonization of selected African States and in Zimbabwe in particular, will be examined to show the significant role played by the anti-colonial press as sites of resistance against colonial and postcolonial undemocratic tendencies. It is a build up to the specific struggles of alternative and activist journalism in Zimbabwe and their contribution to the democratization process in the Southern African country at the turn of the 21st century.

CHAPTER TWO

The trajectory of anti-colonial media in Africa

2.0 Introduction

Media and democracy scholars have observed that the principle role of the media is to act as a check on the state by acting as a watchdog. In this regard, the media is supposed to monitor the full range of the activities of those in authority and in other centres of concentrated power, and to fiercely expose the abuse of official authority. Curran postulates that this watchdog role of the media is said, in liberal theory, to override in importance all other functions of the media:

It dictates the form in which the media system should be organized only by anchoring the media to the free market, in this view, it is possible to ensure the media becomes subject to state regulation, they may lose their bite as watchdogs... A critical examination of surveillance of the State is clearly an important aspect of the democratic functioning of the media," (Curran, 2002: 217 & 219).

The media in democratic societies also serve as channels for the advocacy of political viewpoints. In both colonial and postcolonial times in Africa, political parties, including nationalist movements, require an outlet for the articulation of their policies and programmes to a mass audience. The media should therefore be open to them. McNair (1999: 22) argues that:

Democracy presumes an open state in which people are allowed to participate in decision-making and are given access to the media and other information networks through which advocacy occurs. It also assumes an audience sufficiently educated and knowledgeable to make rational and effective use of the information circulating in the public sphere.

This chapter explores the role of the anti-colonial and the opposition media in the democratic struggles in Africa in general and specifically in countries like South Africa and debates around its role in post-independent Zimbabwe and other worldwide contexts. The opposition and activist role of the private media against the overarching powers of the state and its authoritarian practices during colonial times are discussed. Focus is also given to both the anti-apartheid media and the emergent alternative press in South Africa because of their proximity and influence in Zimbabwe. The example of *La Prensa*, a virulent opposition newspaper in Nicaragua during a period of political disturbances is critiqued in order to demonstrate the inspiring role of activist and opposition media in a wider context. This example is particularly significant in this study because it reinforces the important role that an opposition newspaper can play to advance the cause of democratisation while confronting an undemocratic state, a similar role that *the Daily News* played in Zimbabwe.

2.1 A World perspective on opposition media and democracy

In liberal western societies, the media have been described as the beacon of democratic government and as a powerful instrument for curbing the excesses of the state. Liberty of the press was described as the unwanted offspring of European despotism. Keane, (1991: 25) posits that the defence of ‘public opinion’ through a vibrant media warned citizens of the dangers of the unchecked power of the government. Keane observes that:

In the middle of the 19th century in the United States and Britain, liberty of the press fulfilled the struggles of civil rights and political democracy and familiarized reading publics with such vital subjects as constitutional reform, the need for representative institutions and the subordination of women, slaves and others, (Keane, 1991: 28).

At the centre of the western discourse and scholarship on press freedom which can be borrowed for democratization processes in Africa, is that the government should not be considered the legitimate trustee of information. This observation was crystallized in British media history when Erskine, in Tom Paine's defence, said it all, "Other liberties are held under the government, but the liberty of opinion keeps governments themselves in due subjection to their duties" (Keane, 1991: 127). This illustrates the significance of the freedom of the press in making government accountable to the people and the mandate that it is supposed to execute in a democratic society.

Curran, (2002: 5) believes that, in the United Kingdom, the growth of the press contributed to the expansion of the political community. He points out that as newspapers became more established in several places and increased their circulations and coverage of political issues and discussions, they also expanded the boundaries of the political nation.

However, the liberal and oppositional role of the media in contributing to democratic rule in less developed contexts, such as South America, has not gone without notice. The work and example of *La Prensa*, a privately-run opposition newspaper in Nicaragua, is worth mentioning. The paper's confrontation with a repressive regime assists in showing the role of opposition journalism in confronting authoritarian regimes in a wider context. This example illuminates the case study under investigation.

2.2 *La Prensa* newspaper and the opposition press in Nicaragua

La Prensa is a privately-owned newspaper in Nicaragua. Less than a year after *La Prensa*, a newspaper that once opposed the Somoza regime and later became a biting critic of the Sandinistas, was allowed to re-open in October, 1987, after having been closed for sixteen months, one reporter commented, "Nicaragua's news outlets currently constitute the country's political activity" (Unger, 1990: 373). The paper became a leading vehicle for the expression of dissenting voices against the government, despite the harassment and temporary closure. Its importance in the democratization process and the confrontation of authoritarian tendencies made the wife of the murdered *La Prensa* editor Joaquin Chamorro, Violeta Chamorro, who became the Nicaraguan democratic opposition's presidential candidate, has asserted that "freedom of the press is a basic criterion for determining if there is a democracy" (Unger, 1990: 373).

Given the role that *La Prensa* played in the democratic struggles in Nicaragua, it can therefore be argued that if press freedom is denied, opposition to authoritarian rule may turn to violent forms of expression that are contrary to democratic values. While *La Prensa* was closed, Violet Chamorro said:

By closing down that last reserve of civic opposition in Nicaragua, the Sandinistas reveal they have decided on a military solution, although they preach the opposite. They have closed the doors to dialogue and opened the doors to war". After the paper was re-opened, Sofia Montenegro, a senior editor at the official Sandinistas newspaper, *La Barricada*, concurred when she observed, "The war has changed from the military front to the political and ideological one. And the media are the battleground, (Unger, 1990: 374).

Given the role of this privately-owned newspaper in Nicaragua, one can argue that opposition newspapers can be platforms of dialogue where citizens with grievances and opposition voices, who are denied access in the government-controlled media, can express themselves, especially in societies where the political opposition is weak or disorganised. As has been demonstrated in this section and Chapter One, and will be pursued in Chapters Four, Five and Six, the media are critical forms of opposition in societies where political opposition parties are either weak or absent. It is, therefore, observed that opposition and activist journalism is a phenomenon that is not limited to African democratization processes.

2.3 Media opposition to authoritarianism in Africa

Following scholars such as Willems (2010) and Julie Frederikse (1982), among others, this chapter further indicates why a focus on media under a repressive regime and the experiences of journalists has been absent and understudied in media and communication in Zimbabwe and thus contributing to the offerings of an alternative newspaper while working in conditions of repression. The literature captures the role of the press in the decolonisation and post-independence democratisation struggles, but it does not capture the experiences of the journalists and the newspapers as key participants. It is argued that opposition and resistance politics have always been the hallmark of African life, as articulated by analysis of the role of anti-Apartheid media.

As submitted elsewhere in this dissertation, in societies with weak political institutions and opposition political parties, a free press can act as a counter balance to authoritarianism. It has been suggested that

in Africa the media have been shown to be the cornerstone of resistance against oppressive regimes from the colonial era to the post-independence one (Ansah 1988; Skjerdal, 2012). It is observed that the media provide platforms for debate and resistance to individuals and groups that are oppositional to established political orders, given a situation where democratization in some parts of Africa has failed to produce a clear rupture from the past, as was the case in most of Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989. The role of alternative media in African democratisation processes is therefore noteworthy and requires interrogation. Ansah, (1988:7) argues that in some cases in Africa where there is no recognizable opposition against a sitting government that proposes alternative governance policies, the military has often taken itself to be the legitimate opposition and has intervened in political processes to address what it perceives to be the failures of an incumbent regime. However, Ansah disputes that military intervention in civilian political affairs is hardly the solution.

The watchdog role of the press becomes critical. In this context it is the legitimate role of the press to fulfil the role of the opposition in the sense of presenting another point of view where necessary, that is to say criticizing government decisions which are not in the best interests of the people, denouncing abuses of power and defending human rights. The press in its watchdog role should expose and criticize bureaucratic incompetence, corruption, abuses of power and the violation of human rights, (Ansah, 1988:12).

Ansah pointed out that the African press played the role of a watchdog during the independence struggles and that:

... ..many of the nationalist leaders established newspapers for the purposes of organizing and mobilizing the fight against colonialism and injustices. The press fought against political oppression, economic exploitation, social injustice and the abuse of human rights, (Ansah, 1988:12).

One can therefore put forward the view that the African press interrogated not only procedural democratic rights, such as the advance of civil and political liberties like the right to vote, freedoms of assembly, expression and movement, but also substantive democratic values such as the interrogation of the political economy of the state and the call for the realization of cultural, social and economic rights. This is a plausible proposition given that most independence struggles in African countries, such as Zimbabwe, were addressing civil liberties as well as issues of land dispossession as being the inseparable demands of the de-colonization agenda. Both sets of rights were captured by the African opposition media and were rallying points for African liberation. The role of the media is therefore consistent with the argument that the communications media should aim to empower a plurality of

citizens who are governed neither by the undemocratic state nor by undemocratic market forces, (Keane, 1991: XI).

Rónning, (1998: 18) observed that in Kenya under President Daniel arap Moi, the press and other newspapers were advocating multi-party politics consistently for a long time before the government gave in to demands for political change that led to the first democratic elections in 1992. The situation in both Malawi and Tanzania before multi-party elections were held was characterized by the sudden growth of several independent newspapers, which Rónning (1998) suggested contributed significantly to the pressure to create a transparent and accountable political system.

Rónning (1998: 14) pointed out that in 1980 about 90% of sub-Saharan Africa's 90 newspapers were owned by governments or political parties in power, while radio and television were exclusively controlled by the state. Rónning therefore argues (1998: 14):

Alternative media, often in the form of relatively small magazines such as *Moto* in Zimbabwe, which particularly in the 1980s was one of very few dissident voices, played a very important role in keeping alive, and fostering, alternative political and popular perspectives in often very difficult circumstances.

In Tanzania in 1988, the government allowed the first independent paper to be published since the mid-1960s as part of its controlled liberalization. The privately-owned newspapers, such as *Business Times*, *The Express* and *Majira*, that established themselves as alternative press, often seen by both the government and the public as oppositional. These papers became a forum for criticism of the government and the ruling party. It is under this role of the media that Rónning, (1998: 7) suggests that:

In cases where the political parties or organizations for various reasons failed to provide an effective opposition to the ruling party, whether through fragmentation or inexperience, the opposition originated partly from the media, not least through its watchdog function by exposing abuse of power and corruption.

A case in point may be Zambia, where the official newspapers in the era of former President Kenneth Kaunda brought criticism of the government, and where the establishment of *The Weekly Post* which later became a daily –*The Post*, contributed to demands for multi-party elections. The elections took place in 1990 and President Kaunda lost to the labour-backed Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD). While it cannot be claimed that the media were the lead dissenting voice, it is not disputed that the opposition press played a significant role in the civic movement that contributed to the

democratization moment of the 1990s in Zambia. Just as “liberty of the press was the unwanted child of European despotism” (Keane, 1991: 22), a free and opposition media against authoritarianism was the celebrated baby of African democratization struggles. Keane (1991) argues that from the time of the English Revolution, a free press was considered a critical ingredient of politics, understood as a “precarious balance between the rulers and those who are ruled” (Keane, 1991: 26). Keane further asserts that public discussions must never be made dependant on government sufferance while political freedom ceases to exist when the government can use its various discretionary powers to silence its critics.

2.4 Anti-colonial media as mouthpiece of African nationalists

The role of the media in the first and second waves of democratization in Africa is worth noting, especially its resistance and opposition to colonial oppression and the provision to nationalists with a platform for debate and mobilization of the citizens to resist colonial rule in many African States, (Hyden&Okpibo, 2007). Banda (2008: 79) perceives this in terms of native resistance to colonialism and the subsequent construction of statehood which formed dynamic sites of African media and that the post-colonial tendency for self-determination underpinned the dynamic of media localization in the neo-colonial age of globalization. Banda, (2008: 91) notes that it was impossible to separate discussions of the African media from discussions of Africa’s colonial and de-colonization struggles. To give credence to his postulations, Banda has cited some of the founding African nationalists who were media owners and practitioners. These nationalists used their ownership and access to the media to organize the liberation of their countries. Examples of these nationalists include Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, and Tom Mboya of Kenya.

Given this apparent symbiosis between nationalism and the media, one could argue that the evolution of the press owned by Africans was directly implicated in the development of nationalist political thought, especially in resistance and opposition struggles against colonialism. The opposition press gave it form and organized disparate groups to come together to clamour for independence, as put forward in the case analysis of the role of the opposition press in South Africa’s apartheid regime in this study. As Chapters Four, Five and Six examine, the role of the media as a site for opposition in postcolonial Africa is captured and solidified in the democratisation struggles in Zimbabwe, where the private press and, more

specifically, *The Daily News* and its journalists confronted an authoritarian regime under sometimes violent conditions through activist and often advocacy journalism.

It is argued that native resistance led to the development of its own media to counter the surge of colonial consolidation. As such, this saw the emergence of the African press in countries such as Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria, firstly to give publicity to grievances and to criticize British colonial rule and, secondly, to support the struggle for African nationalism, (Banda, 2008).

This study submits that African-owned newspapers served as a platform for the nationalist ideas of educated Africans. They were partly responsible for the ever-growing number of Nigerians who were predisposed to a number of nationalist ideologies. It has therefore been suggested that nationalist newspapers were the driving force in the debates on racism and the rise of political consciousness during the first wave of democratization in Africa. Azikiwe's *West African Pilot* around 1937, and Nkrumah's *Evening News* in 1948, were some of the newspapers that gave voices to the nationalist movements in their countries, spearheading opposition to colonial rule (Banda, 2008: 92). Azikiwe and Nkrumah interestingly became the founding Presidents of Nigeria and Ghana respectively. Hyden and Okipbo (2007: 33) points out that there were three modes of media associated with the first wave of democratization in the 1950s. The first wave was the indigenous language press that emerged as a result of lack of interest in African causes in metropolitan or settler-controlled media. One such example was the connection that Jomo Kenyatta, the founding President of Kenya, had in colonial Kenya with the journal *Muigwithania (The Reconciler)*, which served as a mouth piece of the *Kikuyu* Central Association, a precursor to the broad nationalist movement that followed in Kenya. Hyden and Okipbo point out that although it was a monthly publication, *Muigwithania* was influential in forming nationalist opinion. Kenyatta's fellow nationalist, Achieng Aniko, served as one of the first editors of *Ramogi*, a Luo language crusader for nationalist causes.

In Uganda, a vibrant press emerged to serve the nationalist cause. Newspapers like *Munno*, *Taifa Empya* and *Kizito* had a circulation of around 100 000 as Uganda approached independence in 1962. It is argued that several nationalist politicians among the Ganda ethnic group had close connections to these publications. These politicians used their access to the media to assist in shaping the nationalist agenda by providing opposition political parties in Uganda with a platform from which to articulate and mobilise citizens to resist colonial rule.

In countries such as Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana, English speaking media were established. Hyden and Okipbo (2007: 34) submitted that although the editorial agenda of these newspapers differed, a number of them were sympathetic to the nationalist cause. The two scholars suggested that nationalist opposition newspapers served as the sites and vanguards of resistance to the imposition of alien rule and helped to provide the intellectual leadership for the nationalist struggle.

The third pattern was the role played by the metropolitan press, which,

not only reported nationalist struggles in the colonies but also editorialised opinions supporting these efforts. Here the French media seem to have played a more significant role, because the French public was very much divided on the issue of the freedom of their own colonies. The African nationalists could speak directly with the editorial staff of more radical newspapers and periodicals, thereby influencing French opinion more effectively than their counterparts could in Anglophone colonies where the nationalist action was effectively confined to the colony, (Hyden&Okipbo, 2007: 34).

From these linkages between the sympathetic alternative media and the nationalists, the nationalist leaders managed to create their own social movements and political parties that constituted communities in which there was active participation in the dialogue about what should be the ends and means to confront oppressive colonial practices. Hyden and Okipbo (2007) argue that the nationalist debates of those times took place via the press:

The media played an important role in promoting this realm by providing nationalist leaders with an outreach and thus the ability to expand its boundaries to individuals who would not have been participants – hegemonic values of the colonialists were challenged by the nationalists. By calling into question the extent to which the colonial administration was genuinely applying liberal democratic values, the media were not only providing the moral conscience of individuals but also helped undermine the very normative foundations on which colonialism rested. The African nationalist during the first wave of democratization accepted the rules of Western liberalism and used them in order to defeat their colonial overlords, (Hyden&Okipbo, 2007: 36).

The return to colonial practices by some African governments therefore requires academic inquiry. This study evaluates the role of an alternative newspaper in the face of political blockages and repression in Zimbabwe, with a focus on the experiences of activist and advocacy journalists during moments of turmoil.

2.5 Media as opposition mouthpiece: The case of Niger's *Haske* newspaper

During the second wave of democratization, which swept across much of Africa in the 1990s, the press played a limited role in resisting and opposing African dictatorship. There are very few illustrations from the second wave of democratization to suggest that the direct influence of the media on democracy was a common phenomenon. However, Hyden and Okipbo, (2007) are of the view that *Haske*, the first independent paper in Niger in West Africa, deserves special mention. It is suggested that *Haske*, brought about and helped to guide a national constitutional conference in Niger in 1991. The political leaders of different persuasions were dependent on its reporting to guide the national discussions on democratic reforms during the constitutional reform process.

In the absence of any competition on the media scene, *Haske* became extremely influential and carried the reform process on its shoulders throughout a very critical period in the political transition, (Hyden&Okipbo, 2007: 48).

It is observed that political leaders from all backgrounds in Niger were dependent on the paper's reporting and stayed on good terms with the editorial staff of the paper in ways that allowed the paper to assume thought leadership during the reform process. Hyden and Okipbo note that no single newspaper, radio or television station has been able to play such a prominent role in the second wave of democratization in Africa. This assertion is made given the possibility that the media do not necessarily contribute to the formation and crystallization of democratic practices in Africa. It is also pointed out that some of the alternative publications, radio or television stations are owned by individual tycoons, some of whom are directly involved in political life. In some of these cases, this kind of alternative media are often the mouthpieces of the agenda of these particular individuals and do not necessarily serve the interests of the general public. For this reason, *Haske* a privately-owned newspaper deserved special mention, because it facilitated the promotion of a significant national democratic constitutional agenda not self-serving private enterprise. It became an agent for change at the disposal of the opposition and civic forces in Niger.

2.6 The anti-apartheid media in South Africa

Closer to Zimbabwe, an evaluation of the role of the press as opposition in South Africa under successive, oppressive and discriminatory Apartheid regimes is relevant background for this study. In South Africa, the main revolutionary resistances were to emerge under the leadership of the African

Native National Congress (now the African National Congress, ANC). It was within this context of resistance that the Black Nationalist, John Tengo Jabavu, founded the *Imvo Zabantsundu Ntsundu*, (*Native Opinion*) in 1884, (Switzer, 1991). Sadly, in South Africa, such efforts at revolutionary African journalism were destroyed when white nationalism asserted itself.

Potter (1975: 27) avers that the emergence of a single dominant political party, the failure of the institutional opposition, the diminishing importance of Parliament as a debating chamber in which alternative views might be discussed, and the exclusion of the African from the political system, all helped to define a unique role for the South African press in the political processes. It is submitted that within the ranks of the ruling National Party (NP) government, the Afrikaans press operated as the opposition while the English-language press assumed the function of the external opposition. Potter, (1975: 27) has pointed out that the Afrikaans press

as an opposition within the ranks was concerned primarily about the methods of government and not with any of the principles upon which government was based. The English press on the other hand, though an opposition organised independently of the government became an opposition by default, for in the final analysis the real opposition in the country was the African. It was the total exclusion of the African from constitutional politics in South Africa which cast the English-language press in the role of the opposition.

It is expressed that this scenario can be explained by the fact that almost all white constitutional politics in South Africa were focussed and concerned with the disenfranchised black opposition. Hachten and Gifford (1984: xi) assert that the English press concept, anchored in private ownership and reflecting Anglo-American traditions, called for an informational and critical role and regarded itself as the unofficial opposition:

However, radical critics, including some blacks, argue that the English press is itself a part of the white power and by its token opposition actually legitimises the Apartheid regime. The African press harassed and suppressed by the Apartheid regime identified with the struggles against Apartheid and saw the print word as a tool to bring about basic political change and ending white hegemony, (Hachten& Gifford, 1984: xii).

Similarly, Potter (1975) articulates that the first decade of NP rule after 1948 and before the Nationalists consolidated their power, the opposition and government parties vied with each other to become accepted as the real custodians of white interests:

However, as the United Party (UP) declined as a political force in the country and the government ceased to feel threatened by its opposition, the English press became identified with the African opposition, which challenged not so much the government of the day, as the socio-economic system as a whole. As a white-owned, traditionally English-oriented press, South Africa's English language press had vested interests in maintaining the status-quo, and yet it was without exception opposed to the government and to its Apartheid policy, (Potter, (1975: 27).

He further points out that the English press in South Africa were better opposed to Apartheid than the United Party:

The English press was identified increasingly as the opposition by the government and through a growing and positive vision of itself as the sole institutional representative of the African, the English press, within the limits of the political system itself functioned as an external opposition,(Potter, 1975: 27-28).

It was also observed that the oppositional role of the English press was more inclined to intra-party conflict than to be an extension of the political discourses and debates to include genuinely alternative view points. More so, it is further postulated that:

Since the press had functions other than those of opposition it was not capable of wholly replacing a specialist, institutionalised opposition within the political system. On the other hand, the press had advantages over an institutional opposition for neither was it compelled to win votes (though of course, it had to win readers) nor was it essential for it to propound consistent or thorough-going alternative ideologies or policies, for its aims were not to constitute an alternative government, (Potter, 1975: 28).

However, through the limited role of the white dominated Apartheid press, the important lesson is possibly that the Afrikaans press took advantage of its close ties with the government and of the failure of the institutional opposition to fulfil its role by opposing the government without intending to overhaul the principal framework of Apartheid while the English press, as an institution within the white liberal democratic system, was able to articulate limited African interests and to be a harsh critic of the government.

2.7 The impact of alternative press under apartheid South Africa (1980-1994)

There are different views about the impact of the alternative press in South Africa. For example, Hachten and Gifford (1984: ix) point out that in order to help retain political power of the minority

regime, successive Apartheid regimes crafted wide ranging controls of public communication systems mostly directed at the print media, the principal means of expressing political opposition and dissent. Jouwen(2011) indicates that in the 1980s communication became a weapon in the anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa. The English press juggled press freedom and commercial interests in an urge to keep alive censorship rules (2011, carienjouwen.worldpress.com/essays/resistance-press-in-south-africa/ accessed on 15 January 2014). In 1982, the Apartheid government appointed the Steyn Commission of Inquiry into the media that recommended the compulsory registration of all journalists on a central roll, from which those found guilty could be struck off by a General Council for Journalists, which would control entry to the profession. After worldwide criticism of the system, the government backed off, but it later introduced new press identity cards, accreditation rules and a broadening of police authority to remove journalists from incidents and to detain them as soon as they reported on anything deemed subversive. However, the laws were challenged in court by the journalists. Jouwen (2011) points out that one of the most significant instances was when the *Natal Witness* challenged the definition of subversive at the Natal High Court, which gave journalists an opportunity to free publications until new restrictive laws were promulgated to ban newspapers.

Jouwen has pointed out that black newspapers in the mainstream media collided occasionally with the government in the 1980s (2011, carienjouwen.worldpress.com/essays/resistance-press-in-south-africa/ accessed on 15 January 2014). In 1981, for instance, the government threatened to ban the *Transvaal* and *Sunday Post* newspapers if they tried to re-register, accusing the publications of creating an atmosphere of revolution in the country. The two papers published the entire Freedom Charter that articulated and outlined the trajectory of democratic resistance and a new democratic South Africa, as envisioned by the African National Congress (ANC). However, in defiance, other newspapers such as *The Star* and *The Rand Daily Mail* subsequently reported on the Freedom Charter as well.

In the ongoing struggles and opposition against Apartheid rule and discriminatory policies, Jouwen (2011) argued that frustrated mainstream journalists set up alternative publications and news agencies. In the Eastern Cape, Franz Kruger launched the *East Cape News Agencies*, a network for local newspapers. Former reporters of the *Daily Mail* set up the *Weekly Mail* in 1985.

In the eighties as in the pre-apartheid years, different resistance voices turned in the media landscape. All over the country community publications sprouted as encouraging signs of change, Jouwen (2011,

carienjouwten.worldpress.com/essays/resistance-press-in-south-africa/ accessed on 15 January 2014).

These efforts at media resistance against authoritarian tendencies were further thwarted. Severe censorship laws were enacted by the Apartheid regime after the declaration of a series of States of Emergency from 1985 to 1990. Under restrictive and oppressive circumstances, it is noted that a number of community newspapers played a significant role in voicing the political grievances of ordinary people. The community papers also served as news sources for alternative and mainstream media in covering events that state-controlled news agencies would ignore. Jouwen (2011) cited *Grassroots* as one of the publications in South Africa that managed to keep alive throughout the emergency years. *Grassroots* openly encouraged its readers to contribute to change. It also served as a platform for awareness and consciousness building.

The existence of the alternative press and its operations in the democratic struggles in South Africa are aptly captured in a book edited by Tomaselli and Louw (1991) entitled *The Alternative Press in South Africa*. Tomaselli and Louw (1991: 8-9) posit that this brand of the press, also referred to as ‘people’s media –

were where the expression of community struggles, themselves located in the ‘national democratic struggle’. These media not only challenged conventional journalism practices, but were organisationally connected to, and using the signs and codes arising out of, popular political movements such as UDF (United Democratic Front) and labour movements such as the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU).

As discussed in this dissertation, alternative media offer a platform to silenced community voices, give access to social agents that challenge state power and they constitute part of the popular resistance movement of oppressed groups in society. As in South Africa, such media expressed themselves in Zimbabwe by working with labour, political parties, churches and student organisations during the Zimbabwe crisis to confront the undemocratic practices of the ruling party.

Using emergency powers, for instance, the South African Home Affairs Minister had the power to ban publications for up to three months, to install resident censors in newspaper offices and to require publication approval for articles. The government of the former President P.W. Botha used this power often to stifle any coverage deemed too critical of the government. Two Black weekly newspapers; *The*

New Nation and the country's most popular white-run anti-apartheid newspaper, *The Weekly Mail*, were temporarily suspended in 1988.

The silencing of newspapers sympathetic to the nationalist cause was a response to the recognition that the media was a fundamental vehicle for organizing and spreading liberation messages. One could therefore argue that the media was an indispensable tool of opposition political processes. It was therefore intricately linked to the mediation of the alternative resistance voices of social movements and nationalist opposition political groups.

2.8 Anti-colonial media and political struggles in Zimbabwe

In Rhodesia, media sympathetic to the nationalist cause started with the launch of *The Native Mirror*, later the *Bantu Mirror*, by the Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company, which was based in the country's second largest city, Bulawayo, in 1931. Saunders (1991: 58) points out that the early white-owned African publications, like *The Mirror*, did little to conceal their project of evoking support for the liberal white-led social regime among the Black population, pointing to the small Black elite of entrepreneurs and the educated as leaders of the African community in the partnership experiment. However, Saunders also notes that the papers were Black only to the extent that their readerships were. For instance, *The Mirror's* senior staff, management and its editorial staff positions were controlled by white people, mainly from South Africa (Saunders, 1991: 58).

Saunders (1991: 58) observes that during the colonial period the Black intellectuals fighting for independence employed a sympathetic press to advance nationalist causes. This shift started when, in the African community, a new generation of young intellectuals led the resurgence in resistance against colonial rule and started to employ the growing Black press to propagate messages of freedom and liberation:

This dynamic of politicization was aided by the fact that many leading nationalist intellectuals like Lawrence Vambe, Willie Musarurwa and Nathan Shamuyarira were also senior reporters in the white-owned African press, notably *The African Daily News*, *Parade* and *Foto-Action*. In fact, they came to serve as leading organic intellectuals on behalf of the nationalist movements and later the institution of state and civil society, (Saunders, 1991: 59).

The three African journalists were members of Zimbabwe's main liberation movements; the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) which fought side by side to bring Independence in 1980. In fact, Shamuyarira, who became the first minister of information at independence, edited *The African Daily News* in 1956. Shamuyarira was also the ruling ZANU PF party's Secretary of Information and Publicity of its Soviet-style organ; the political bureau.

In the 1950s, the problem with the nationalists in Zimbabwe was that the success of the new Black press in reaching the masses led the colonial authorities to attack and muzzle the publications. It is significant to note, however, the efforts of nationalist intellectuals working under these white liberal and regulated publications who used the media as a platform from which to mobilize people to resist colonial rule and demand political independence. Publications like *The African Daily News* after providing a platform for nationalists to advance their political grievances for national debate and having found readers, were later subjected to censorship and bans by a radical white supremacy political party, the Rhodesian Front (RF), when it came to power in 1962, (Saunders, 1991). The Rhodesian Front went further, banning *The African Daily News* in 1964 under a draconian colonial law, the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA), whose primary role was to stifle the civil and political rights of nationalists, such as freedoms of expression, assembly and movement. The paper was banned for contributing to the spread of alarm and despondency. Bourgault (1995: 161) described the passing of LOMA in 1962 as being meant to assure an acquiescent press in Southern Rhodesia.

The State of Emergency that was declared in 1965 after the Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith, rebelled against British rule and made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). In the same year, he decimated the few avenues of press freedom that the nationalists were using in the struggles for independence. As Chapter Four discusses, similarly oppressive security and media laws were enacted by the government after independence in order to stifle rising political dissent and to muzzle the media. The laws could have been named differently, as captured in Chapter Four, but their purpose and spirit differ little from Rhodesian oppressive laws. The intention was to maintain the political hegemony of ZANU PF as they did for the Rhodesian Front.

Besides *The African Daily News*, and publications produced by the two main nationalist movements, ZANU and ZAPU's *Zimbabwe News* and *Zimbabwe Review*, respectively, banned journals that included

the liberal monthly *Central African Examiner*, the Catholic Church's *Moto*, and the London-Rhodesia (Lonhro) company publication and African leaning *Zimbabwe Times*.

Parade was formed in 1953 as a tabloid-size magazine that was focused on Black society, and was meant for Africans, although the publication was owned by white liberals. *Moto* was established six years later in 1959 by the liberal Catholic Diocese of Gweru, initially as a monthly paper written and edited by Africans and aimed at providing a platform for the emerging literate Black society. Both publications went through dramatic changes under the Rhodesia Front government's censorship and control laws. For instance, in 1974, after a long period of harassment, *Moto* was banned by the Rhodesia Front government for spreading fear, alarm and despondency through what Saunders (1991: 186) described as its frank reporting of national political events. The ban was lifted prior to the 1980 elections which brought Black majority rule under the nationalist leadership to which the paper was giving an alternative platform to voice its grievances.

Saunders (1991) noted that where the nationalist sympathetic media reached out to the Black population, such as smaller publications like the monthly *Parade* magazine, the content was censored while deportations of journalists from the country were to last into the late 1970s, just before the country attained majority rule. What is significant to note are the efforts made by the nationalists to use the limited access to anti-colonial media in colonial times and to use the oppositional press as a site for resistance against white, discriminatory, colonial rule. This suggests that the media were an indispensable vehicle for decolonization and democratization in Africa.

2.9 Voice of Zimbabwe: Chimurenga propaganda and how it successfully repelled/resisted Rhodesian propaganda

Broadcasting was a potent force in the war against the white minority government in Rhodesia. Julie Frederikse (1982) observes that during Zimbabwe's liberation struggle the military officials who directed Rhodesia's counter insurgency war conceded that the media of the masses; alternative radio stations, the *pungwes* (all night vigils) and *chimurenga* (liberation) songs were succeeding where the colonialists' controlled media had failed to convince the ordinary people to turn against the guerrilla fighters.

Eddison Zvobgo, ZANU's Deputy Secretary for Publicity and Information during the liberation struggle, noted that his party recognized the importance of radio during the independence war and,

... ..we negotiated with the Frontline countries for free radio time. We had every evening an hour at our disposal, beamed on Zimbabwe, and we used those radio broadcasts to politicize the masses here and at home to show them that this was their war. Our media department maintained a very elaborate field unit of correspondents who accompanied the comrades (guerrilla fighters) all over the country, making reports of battles, doing interviews, then all this material was brought to the rear and we would use it on the radio. Our most powerful programme was broadcast on Radio Mozambique, from Maputo, (Zvobgo cited in Frederikse, 1982: 100).

Frederikse also interviewed ordinary Zimbabweans after independence in 1980, and many testified that they listened to *Radio Mozambique*, operated by ZANU, and *Radio Moscow*, under the leadership of ZAPU, in order to know how the liberation fighters were waging war against Rhodesian forces.

For instance, the ZANU President, Robert Mugabe, on 8th August, 1979, had this broadcast on Voice of Zimbabwe beaming into Zimbabwe from the Mozambique capital Maputo:

Revolutionary greetings to our party members and Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (Zanla) forces, the struggling masses of Zimbabwe, and all our ardent supporters. We celebrate today, the historical day when the party, to which the majority of the revolutionary people of Zimbabwe belong, was born. The 8th August shall always live in the annals of the history of Zimbabwe as the day that marked the turning point in the political struggle of the Zimbabwean masses. It was indeed the day that the current revolution was born, for the birth of ZANU was the birth of the political architect of our present revolutionary struggle. We thus owe it to ourselves through the viable organs of our unique organization, tons of congratulations, (Frederikse, 1982: 103).

Zvobgo further noted the significant role played by the media during the nationalist struggle by noting that ZANU also relied on publications and pamphlets depicting the violent nature of the Rhodesian army against ordinary citizens, while depicting major battles won by the fighters:

We used publications and pamphlets to inform people in the north how the war was going on in the south and vice versa. We beat the regime's media campaign largely because their literature could not be effectively circulated throughout the rural areas. They were unable to distribute their propaganda on a personal basis, whereas ours was being served door-to-door, (Frederikse, 1982: 112).

It can therefore be observed that alternative news media have been embraced as part and parcel of the democratic struggles in the history of political and opposition struggles in Zimbabwe. What appear to be lacking in literature on the role of alternative media during periods of crisis in Zimbabwe are the voices and experiences of the journalists. Studies focussed on the media institutions that played this activist role are limited. In some cases there is too much focus on the role of opposition figures, while the voices of alternative journalists are anecdotal.

Frederikse (1982) further notes that both ZANU and ZAPU managed to repel Rhodesia media propaganda and helped to inform the citizens about the objectives of the war through music. For instance, ZAPU's liberation wing, the Zimbabwe People's Liberation Army (ZIPRA) had a choir during the war called *Zezeni*, which composed defiance songs against the colonial authorities and others, praising nationalists and the leadership of the armed struggle. It was also during the liberation struggle that one of Zimbabwe's best known musicians, Thomas Mapfumo, gained his fame by composing what became known as *Chimurenga* (liberation) songs in support of the nationalist struggle having been influenced by the radio broadcasts from The Voice of Zimbabwe and Radio Moscow. Said Mapfumo:

We had Radio Moscow, so we could listen to some of the things which were being said by Comrade Joshua Nkomo, but mostly we were interested in what was coming from Mozambique, because most of the fighting forces were coming from Mozambique. Every kid had Mugabe fever because everyone could see that he was talking sense. Every time he would speak from Mozambique he would say something sensible and people would listen and they would go out to the pubs, telling others ...so his speeches were recruiting people, (cited in Frederikse, 1982: 102).

Indeed, Mapfumo was recruited through these radio broadcasts and began to compose songs in support of the struggle for independence as a way of encouraging the guerrillas to fight the war. One of the songs was *Tumira Vana Kuhondo* (We are Sending the Children to War), where he appealed to parents to send their children to join the liberation war, and *Tichakunda* (We Shall Overcome), where he sang about the poverty in the townships and the failure of parents to send their children to school and he urged citizens to fight and defeat the oppressors. He was arrested and detained for a month by the colonial authorities for supporting armed resistance. Ironically, in a case of history repeating itself, in post independence, Mapfumo continues to sing against corruption and criminal activities in the new post-independence government. As a result of his criticism of the government and the leadership that he

had supported during the war, Mapfumo in 2001 went into self-exile in the United States after alleged threats on his life.

2.10 History repeating itself: state-media relations in post-independence Africa

This section focuses on the relationships between the media and the new democracies that followed colonialism. Many new governments in Africa made maximum use of national broadcasting largely to promote their own causes. Radio broadcasts were, for example, devoted to reporting everything that the top political leaders did. In a sympathetic fashion, radio became an instrument of political propaganda aimed at serving the interests of the incumbent political elite. Print media increasingly suffered the same fate. In some cases, ownership was nationalized so that the political leadership could control editorials. In others, newspapers were closed down. In the few that survived as privately owned, self-censorship became increasingly necessary in order to continue, (Hyden&Okipbo, 2007: 39).

These reviews critically analyze the relations between the media and the state after independence in purposively selected African countries. An examination of the media policies and environment under which the media operated will expose the differences between colonial media attitudes and regulation in some selected independent African states and will try to understand the reasons for the failure to shift from a previously repressive and restrictive colonial set up.

2.11 Discussion on state media relations in Africa

The media's role as an agent for democratization in Africa is limited by authoritarian tendencies to control the media by some African governments using colonial legal relics. It can, therefore, be asserted that although the media in Africa are instrumental in bringing about regime change in a few important cases, very rarely can they change the adversarial, watchdog, agenda-setting setting roles that are associated with the press in the United States and Western Europe, (Ogundimu, 2007). It is postulated that communication and the media, "...are only an important part of the solution to the emerging ethos of democracy and democratization in sub-Saharan Africa" (Ogundimu, 2007: 236).

An examination of how the media has been suppressed in some Africa states shows that relations between the government and the press have generally been characterized by tension and conflict. Ansah (1988) believes that in circumstances where there appears to be no tension, the reason could be that the

press has been intimidated into submission, or it has been assimilated and has become an organ of the ruling party. There has been an organized suppression of formalized and organized opposition “and the elimination of all forms of organized dissent has usually paved the way for the establishment of one-party states or of military regimes” (Ansah, 1988: 7). Rónning and Kupe (2000: 157) posit that the African media carry contradictions which have roots in the colonial period, when newspapers and broadcasting mainly served the needs of the colonial administrators. They observed that such media, together with other colonial social and cultural institutions, constituted a colonial public sphere. In opposition to this, the anti-colonial movements developed their counter public spheres with an alternative media structure, which in many cases operated from exile.

This was particularly the case in countries that waged an armed war of resistance, such as Zimbabwe. Rónning and Kupe (2000) point out that at independence in 1980, in Zimbabwe; the media were either linked to a colonial authoritarian inheritance or to a liberation movement with a political agenda that often implied a contradiction with fundamental democratic values.

On the one hand the movements professed and had fought for liberation and independence and egalitarian and democratic ideals but on the other they had often done this on the basis of at least partly authoritarian Marxist ideologies uncritically inspired by Eastern Europe, China or North Korea, (Ronning&Kupe 2000, 157).

The two scholars add that this contradiction was more apparent in the case of Zimbabwe:

The democratic agenda of the liberation movements was to be found in the demands of majority rule, but the democratic implications of this demand were often contradicted by an authoritarian ideology which often comprised a mixture of Soviet-type Marxist ideology and African one-party statism...In very many instances, the media policies implemented by the new postcolonial states expressed this contradiction, (Rónning&Kupe 2000: 157).

It therefore seems plausible to suggest that the silencing of dissent through suppression of freedom of the press in order to entrench the political hegemony of some African ruling parties was an aberration to the democratic role of the media. This seems so because it has been argued that for the people to be educated on their civil rights and responsibilities, and to endow in them the political consciousness that will allow them to meaningfully and significantly participate in political process such as elections, citizens should access information and have all possible avenues to access information to enable them to

participate in public discussions and debates, (Ansah, 1988: 11-12). This access to uncensored information from multiple sources, it is suggested, would enable citizens to influence decisions.

The cases of media repression by post-colonial African governments that are discussed in this section serve to crystallize the view that freedom and equality in the media require the protection of legitimate and democratic laws. Good laws, Keane argues (1991:128), can assist to promote freedom of expression and access to information among citizens. Keane, (1991:128) also suggests that “where a country has a written constitution, freedom of expression and of the media should be protected”; adding that the principle should be that freedom is the rule and limitation the exception.

Orgeret and Rónning (2009: 16) are of the view that the media and the rise of new communication systems have contributed to democratization in some African states by giving people access to information and alternative view points and also to channels through which they can express their opinions on how they are governed. They argue, for instance, that the rise of new communication technologies, such as mobile phones, as alternative forms of media has been used for election monitoring in countries like Kenya, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

One example is that during the general election in Zimbabwe (2008), the opposition used mobile phones with cameras to record the results as they were being posted in the local constituencies, something that contributed to government rigging and abuse being kept in check,(Orgeret &Rónning,2009: 9).

In the parliamentary and first presidential round in March, 2008, the ruling party and its candidate, President Mugabe, lost; thereby suffering their first electoral defeat since independence in 1980.

The role of media in democracy cannot be silenced and excluded by authoritarian measures, along with this the need for new communication tools make it difficult for authoritarian regimes to suppress the freedom of the press. It is therefore suggested that media and communication development has contributed to the weakening of authoritarianism, the strengthening of democratic processes, the spread of political liberalization and of “a new emphasis on the importance of human rights which includes the right to information,” (Orgeret &Rónning, 2009: 17). One is persuaded to suggest that instead of blocking and suppressing the growth of media through the use of colonial-type laws, African governments could create a development partnership with the media by liberalizing the press, because

the rise of the new communication media makes it difficult and costly for governments to control the media.

Arguably, perhaps in a very poignant manner, in Africa information is part of the development agenda and free access to the media is a fundamental human right of citizens which most African governments like their colonial predecessors, have suppressed. The media should inform citizens on matters of public policy and the development agenda by presenting and debating alternatives. From the above discussion on the role of the media in both colonial and postcolonial Africa, it could be argued that the opposition press in Africa assisted in a very considerable manner while working under hostile legal and political conditions to empower readers, listeners and viewers by making them aware of their civil and political rights and of why and how these rights could be exercised to advance democratic governance. This essential opposition role of the media in the relationships between the state and civil society in Africa was largely ignored and undermined by most African governments, despite their being the beneficiaries of an opposition press during the struggles for independence.

2.12 The Legacies of colonial media laws and regulation in Africa

Media in Africa were largely introduced in the colonial era. Bourgault, (1995: 226) suggested that there are two legacies that were inherited by the African media following the independence of most African states that continued to shape the way political authorities regulate the press. According to Bourgault, firstly, the media are supposed to foster and promote nationalism or national consciousness. This requires tight control of the media and highly centralized media systems. The threat to freedom of the press is posed by the fact that control was aided and remains so by a system of politicized patronage through which rewards for services to the ruling government have been distributed to those with close relations and links to those who control political power, (Bourgault, 1995: 226).

Secondly, the need to promote modernization of the independent states was supposed to be a pre-occupation of the African media. Bourgault argued that since independence, among others, economists were invited to Africa to teach and spread the prosperity of the industrialized world by tutoring courses on 'development.

Development implied industrialization, a process that was seen as the cornerstone of the West's astonishing ascent to pre-eminence in World Affairs and its unparalleled ability to provide its citizens material well-being, (Bourgault, 1995: 226).

In other words, Africa was being required to take steps to mirror western economic developments meaning that they should take steps to adopt economic and social policies that would promote liberal and market forces. In this whole discourse, the role of the media in the democratization process was lost. The media were no longer supposed to play the watchdog role to make governments responsible and accountable to the people, but to be an appendage to the state and to promote the development agenda.

Moyo, (2010: 110), in an analysis of media policies in Zimbabwe and the dearth of public debate, observed that official nationalism continues to influence media policy positions and directions through which media are censored, silenced or co-opted to the vanguard into defending the national interest as understood and articulated by the ruling class elites. For instance, at Independence in 1980, President Mugabe's government (he was then the Prime Minister) renewed the State of Emergency put in place by the last colonial Prime Minister Ian Smith, in 1965 to crush African nationalism and nationalists, including Mugabe. The Mugabe-led government would renew the State of Emergency every six months in order to restrict opposition voices and general criticisms of the state until it was finally repealed in 1990, only to be replaced by strict security and media laws as evaluated in Chapters Four and Five (Moyo, 2010).

As in many other African countries, the focus at Independence was not directly on democratizing the media in Zimbabwe but:

rather on socio-economic development, the assumption being that democracy would only be feasible once society had been modernized. Industrialization, urbanization, modern education, in combination with the spread of the market economy, would provide the conditions that are congenial to the growth of democracy, (Hyden & Leslie, 2007: 2).

It is therefore plausible to suggest that advancing press freedom was on the periphery of the independence national agenda.

From 2000, the government of Zimbabwe embarked on a deliberate policy to transform the media into an available apparatus to advance both its domestic and foreign policy positions in the face of an organized opposition which challenged its political hegemony, and also due to increasing criticism against its human rights record abroad. In the process, independent media, which were a means of opposition against repression, were muzzled through a combination of legal pressure, harassment and

imprisonment to prevent domestic and foreign media from reporting freely. From discussions with senior government officials during interviews for this dissertation, as examined in Chapters Four, Five and Six, I discovered that through the regulatory and institutional restructuring of the media, the government of Zimbabwe sought to ensure control over the flow and dissemination of information in order to curtail the political influence of the opposition press and to maintain the hegemony of the ruling party.

Ogbondah, (2007: 55), in an evaluation and analysis of media laws in African countries going through political transitions, observes that the major obstacles to the endowment of freedom of the media in Africa, are purposeful decisions by leaders to ignore legal and constitutional rules. Ogbondah, (2007:55) notes that experiences from Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia point to a situation where the media were used to propagate the views of the ruling establishment or were muzzled: “This despotic rule was typically justified in legal and constitutional principles adopted to serve the new nation-states in their national development”, (Ogbondah, 2007: 56). This is a plausible argument, given that at independence in some African states, for instance, one party constitutions contained provisions that limited the extent to which citizens could express their views, method for the colonial suppression of African nationalism.

Meanwhile, Nyamnjoh (2005: 39) points out that there are clear continuities in the history of print and broadcast media in Africa, given a colonial past in which freedom of expression and access to the media were not guaranteed. He points out that it is therefore hardly surprising that Africa’s postcolonial media typology mirrors the past. As was the case during the colonial era, the media in the post-colonial era were there to serve the interests of the political elite by keeping the media in check and control. The theory of elite continuity can explain the transfer and ownership of State media from the colonial government to nationalists. Sparks (2009: 195) used the theory to show continuities in the organization and operations of South African state media, especially the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), when the Apartheid regime transferred power to the African National Congress (ANC) led government through negotiations. Elite continuity theory indicates that in most political transitions, there are considerable continuities in both institutions and personalities between the old regime and the new establishment. In the case of the media, the institutions that emerged after the fall of a prior regime are controlled and influenced by the new political elite. There is a high degree of continuity in structures and personnel, political interference into broadcasting and a partisan state-controlled press. In Mobuto

Seseko's Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, the press was nationalised, newspaper titles indigenized, private initiatives discouraged, and journalists streamlined with an arsenal of restrictions on professionalism:

If the colonial press was either at the service of the settler communities or victims of the press laws, the post-colonial press from the 1960s to the 1980s was similarly either the mouthpiece of the government or subjected to draconian laws and censorship, (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 42).

The reason advanced by most independent African governments for the tight control of the media was that the media should partner the state in national development by harnessing its capacity to reach a broader national audience to educate and inform citizens on government policies. Nyamnjoh(2005) noted that in harnessing the media for national development and in the process suppressing media freedoms, African leaders were drawing inspiration from a plethora of oppressive colonial laws that kept the press under control and civil society in check.

In Togo, the majority of the private press that was prevalent in the capital city, Lome, between 1990 and 1991 was hostile and oppositional to the political establishment. It is observed that this tendency, with the existence of a weak political opposition in the country in most African countries, gave repressive African governments the easy option of describing critical media as being oppositional and blaming on the opposition any embarrassing reports by the media, instead of addressing the crucial issues that were raised (Rønning, 1994: 18). Similarly, Kasoma (1997a: 298: 307) argues that the private press, by taking upon itself a highly oppositional role, in some instances allowed itself to be used as pawns in political struggles, destroying their credibility with sensationalism and advocacy writings.

Phiri (2010: 133) notes that an obsession with power and control has been a constant factor in determining Zambia's media policies, from Independent President Kenneth Kaunda through to successive leaders, from Frederick Chiluba (1991-2001) to Levy Mwanawasa's (2001-2008) regimes. The State has always been at the centre of media policy regulation with the cosmetic inclusion of civil society. *The Post*, a privately-controlled newspaper that was sympathetic to the political opposition in Zambia, as a private publication faced over 100 actions for civil libel from government officials between 1991 and 1996, and it was also subjected to legal actions under more unusual legislation, some of it dating from the colonial period. Chuma and Moyo (2010: 6) observe that the Zambian government's refusal to appoint boards for the Independent Broadcasting Authority and the Zambian National

Broadcasting Corporation, as required by laws passed in 2002 that authenticated the view that the ruling party was reluctant to liberalize a conducive operating space for the emergence of vibrant public service broadcasting institutions. Given this attitude from the government, Chuma (2010) asserts that the continuities in media policy from the colonial to the postcolonial have entrenched the state as the dominant actor in shaping both media systems and journalism practice.

This view is supported by Nyamnjoh (2005: 42), who posits that:

If the colonial press was either at the service of settler communities or victim of press laws, the postcolonial press from the 1960s to the 1980s was similarly either a mouthpiece of the government or subjected to draconian laws and administrative censorship.

In Francophone Africa, Nyamnjoh, (2005: 70) observes that the tendency of governments was to create legislation that granted freedom of expression in principle while, in practice, that freedom was curtailed by state bureaucrats.

In Burundi, for example, the November, 1992, press law which was enacted without consultation with *Burundaise des Journalistes* and in spite of the government's promise of dialogue, granting to journalists the right to protect their sources, the law said that journalists might be forced to abandon that right by a competent judge. The same law provided for the establishment of the National Communications Council, but it gives the government the leeway to appoint its own members.

Nyamnjoh (2005: 167) also believes that the tendency of governments to take away with one hand what it gives away with the other in the regulation of the press could best be exposed in Cameroon. Although the use of claw back measures by the State to limit the right to freedom of expression is strongest in Francophone Africa, this limitation is common in most African States. For instance, there has arguably been lip service paid by African governments to the 1991 Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press as a pledge of convenience, describes how Southern African governments, such as Malawi, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia, continue to use anachronistic laws inherited from their one-party and colonial predecessors to criminalize dissent and to suppress the existence of the free press.

In Cameroon, in an interview with Cameroon Television in February, 1987, President Paul Biya said Cameroonians enjoy freedom of the press, but they should not abuse it, then pointing out that he preferred guided media that encourage national unity, integration and development (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 167). So, in the view of President Biya, civil and political rights could not bring unity and development, yet it has been argued that human rights are indivisible and interdependent. After both internal and external pressure for liberalizing the media, in 1990, the Cameroonian government introduced a series of liberty laws (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 168). Among the laws was the Freedom of Mass Communication that was passed by Parliament in 1990. It regulated the media until its modification in 1996. Nyamnjoh (2005) observed that although, on the face of it, the law was different from the previous regulatory framework. However, the law had its weaknesses in exposing the State's calculated efforts to police, sanction and control the press. For instance, in his analysis, Nyamnjoh suggested that the law devoted thirty-five of its ninety articles to repressive sanctions against the press. It is noted that the law's repressive dimensions were compounded by a plethora of restrictions, such as the tacit refusal of public authorities to grant journalists access to administrative documents and the repeated seizures of newspapers that were decided upon without written notification from the administration as well as the self-abrogation of the power to censor and to suppress the media appearances of rival candidates during presidential election campaigns.

There were cases of violations of the journalists' civil liberties. From December, 1990, to July, 1998, at least twenty-one major cases of arrest, detention, and, in some cases, the trials of journalists and newspaper owners, were documented. Nyamnjoh (2005: 173) points out that the most frequent allegation against the journalist in question was that s/he had brought the president into disrepute, or a member of the government or parliament, or an official or institution of the state. Such evidence and examples from Africa are useful for this study. For example, I expose and critique how insult laws were frequently used, mostly to silence the private press in Zimbabwe. These arrests and detentions of journalists created a bitter relationship that was punctuated by mutual mistrust between the media and some African governments.

2.13 Conclusion

Despite the legacy of tensions in state-media relations, both in colonial and postcolonial times, it is generally agreed that African media, especially the opposition and privately-controlled press, are

important for democratization. Ogundimu, (2007: 217) asserts that one contribution to democratization in the 1990s was the institutionalization of a communicative space, which fosters bargaining, choice and compromise in the political arena. The truth of media repression in countries such as Zambia, Cameroon and Zimbabwe can be applied to most other nations in Africa during the second wave of democratization, where journalists have been threatened and abused by the governing authorities. While these cases of repression are recorded, in the majority of cases they are captured through secondary sources and the actual voices of the oppressed journalists are missing. From the discussion above, there is little doubt about the role that the opposition press has played in both colonial and postcolonial Africa. It has been shown specifically in the examples cited from South Africa and Zimbabwe that the opposition press, at a time when the institutional opposition political parties were either weak or non-existent, were the platforms for opposition voices against colonial settlers. In both countries, ranging from mainstream media, especially the English-language newspapers in South Africa, to opposition party newsletters and community publications in most African countries, referred to in this dissertation, the anti-colonial and opposition press were the major resistant voices operating in repressive conditions.

What seems to be lacking in the literature surveyed thus far, are the institutional experiences of newspapers and journalists while working in repressive conditions. The agency, voices, cries, trials and tribulations of the media and the journalists are not captured, and the central players are the politicians. As argued elsewhere in this dissertation, and as discussed in chapters ahead, the role of an opposition newspaper and its journalists, while operating in a fragile, hostile and repressive political environment in Zimbabwe, brings to the fore a profound and possibly virgin dimension in studies of media and communication. It also gives a different analytic lens through which to interrogate and understand various forms of opposition in authoritarian regimes beyond the expected large protests and demonstrations, in trying to understand political developments in Zimbabwe during a period of political upheavals. In interrogating the role of alternative media under conditions of repression, it is cautioned against overplaying the democratic role of the press in the struggles against authoritarian regimes. In the case of South Africa, Jouwen (2011) observes that the legacy of the alternative press in South Africa is not that of a victorious power block pointing out that:

Only two alternative newspapers survived the transition to democracy, *The Weekly Mail* and *The Eastern Cape News*. The influence and position of the press in present day South Africa lies in its professional tradition and the influence of struggling for

change under hard censorship rules. That influence became widespread as after Apartheid the resistance journalists moved into the mainstream press, media organisations and journalist education, (Jouwen, 2011 carienjouwen.wordpress.com/essays/resistance-press-in-south-africa/ accessed on 15 January 2014).

This possibly supports the view that alternative media is mainly meant to address particular social and political problems at particular historic moments. Once those problems appear to be resolved, such media may disappear or change to become mainstream. It seems to be so because, in some cases, alternative media are usually donor driven and when the causes for donor interventions disappear, these media face challenges of survival due to poor funding.

CHAPTER THREE

Experiences from the field work

Research design: methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter assesses and discusses the methods used to gather data for the study. By way of procedure, the chapter discusses the methodology on a mainly qualitative research framework. Semi-structured interviews are employed to gather data. Content illustration of some *The Daily News* headline stories were used to show the kind of stories the paper carried during the period under investigation, during a historic period of a national crisis. The advantages and disadvantages of using these methods are examined. Ethical issues associated with qualitative research are analysed and taken into serious consideration in the data gathering process. This chapter combines the theoretical aspects of qualitative research and the actual experiences of the researcher during fieldwork in order to contextualise it and explain the problems, difficulties and experiences of field research. The chapter addresses the questions of objectivity and the personal interests of the researcher, since the interviews involved talking to informants who are former workmates, as well as pointing out that the 51 informants interviewed were purposely sampled. The major purpose in this section is to demonstrate how data was gathered and the actual experiences of the researcher beyond the normative methods espoused in this section.

3.1 Qualitative design

My research design was informed by relevant approaches. Burnham et al (2004) define the research design as the logical structure of the research inquiry that the researcher is engaged upon. It is a plan, the structure and strategy of the investigation, so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions and the objectives of this study. In this regard, the research design provides the framework for the collection and analysis of data according to the priorities set by the researcher.

Hakin, (2000 in Burnham et al, 2004: 30) propose that: “research design is the point where questions raised in theoretical or policy debates are converted into feasible research projects and research programmes that provide answers to these questions.” He asserts that the aim of the research is to generate new knowledge about a phenomenon and to apply, test and refine theories to explain its occurrences and operation.

In this dissertation, qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, archival and policy analysis (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005) were used to investigate and analyze the case study on how *The Daily News* and its journalists operated, navigated and confronted a repressive political environment to contribute to democratization in Zimbabwe.

The use of qualitative research was to preserve and analyze situated form, content, and experiences of social action, rather than to subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations. It is put forward that actual talk and gesture are some of the raw materials of analysis in qualitative studies, (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). As stated above, a total of 51 in-depth interviews were carried out. The respondents were current and former journalists and the management of *The Daily News*, former and current senior government officials, among them three cabinet ministers, civic society organization officials and opposition and ruling political party representatives. This was done in order to have deep understanding of the experiences of an opposition newspaper and its journalists working in a repressive regime in Zimbabwe. It was also meant to investigate how the government in Zimbabwe controlled and regulated the private media, such as *The Daily News*, to interrogate the relationship between the independent and opposition media, and more especially *The Daily News*, with oppositional political forces, such as the MDC and civic groups, to examine why and how individual Zimbabwean journalists chose to fight conditions of repression during the Zimbabwean crisis, and to evaluate the implications of opposition and activist journalism and discover what lessons can be drawn from this study to build a better understanding of other forms of resistance.

Hensen et al (1998) observe that communication policy analysis seeks to examine the ways in which policies in the field of communication are generated and implemented, as well as their repercussions or implications for the field of communication. In this dissertation, desktop surveys include communication policy analysis of the laws and policy positions of the government. It has been argued that for studies of this nature, for some qualitative investigators, the questions to which they try to find answers grow from

an ideological commitment and pursuit of social justice (Darlington & Scott 2002:18). Some journalists of *The Daily News* suggested that a robust and independent media would serve the democratic aspirations of the people by making the government accountable and allowing citizens to have platforms from which to question their leaders. The research relied heavily on in-depth interviews. However, the qualitative method has its shortfalls and there are ethical issues to be considered in carrying out interviews, such as obtaining the informed consent of the interviewees.

3.2 Why qualitative research method for this study?

Qualitative methods include case studies, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, textual/discourse analysis as well as historical analysis. Finch, (1986:5) points out that the distinctive features of qualitative research concern matters of both research techniques and epistemology, that is, the philosophical basis which underpins the research process, especially the question of how valid knowledge about the social world is gathered. It is then proposed that, at the level of technique,

qualitative research is taken to encompass techniques which are not statistically based, but are especially suited to small-scale analysis, and in which the researcher attempts to get to know the social world being studied at first hand, especially participant observation, and interviewing of an in-depth and unstructured or semi-structured variety supplemented where appropriate by the use of documentary evidence, (Finch, 1986:5).

It is affirmed that techniques have their roots in social anthropology and, as in that discipline, the emphasis is on studying social life in natural settings.

Hennik et al, (2011) propose that one of the most outstanding features of qualitative research is that it allows the researcher to identify issues from the perspective of the participants and to understand the meanings and interpretations that the informants attach to behaviour and events in the context of their experiences. Among other things, qualitative research is conducted to:

understand behaviour, beliefs, opinions and emotions from the perspective of the participants; understand and explain people's behaviour and views; understand policies such as how people make decisions, negotiate a job or manage a business; uncover meaning that people give their experiences; understand social interactions among people and the norms and values they share; identify social, cultural, economic or physical context in which activities take place; give voice to issues of a certain study population, provide depth, detail, nuance and context to the research issues; examine in detail sensitive issues such as sexuality, violence, personal

interpretations and study complex issues such as human trafficking or drug use, which may be too complex or hidden to be easily disentangled by quantitative research, (Hennik et al,2011: 105).

The goal of this qualitative research is not to produce generalizations but, rather, to produce in-depth understandings and knowledge of particular phenomena relating to how an opposition newspaper and its journalists operated in repressive conditions. Generalizing the experiences of *The Daily News* and its journalists, or getting secondary information about how they navigated, are not the goals of this research. In this dissertation, through the biographies and experience of *The Daily News* journalists operating under authoritarian rule, the goal is to examine their activism, agency and opposition to the government in contributing to the democratization struggles in Zimbabwe during a period of political and governance crisis.

The data for this dissertation was collected in Zimbabwe through face-face interviews with journalists at *The Daily News*, *The Herald*, *The Independent*, and *Newsday*, mostly at their workplaces. The same method was used to interview government and former government officials who were responsible for policy formulations that regulated the operations of the media in Zimbabwe. There were also face-to-face interviews with some of the leaders of the civil society organisations that founded privately-run newspapers, such as *The Daily News*, as alternative platforms from which to confront the undemocratic practices of the country's authorities. The interviews were done in the lived environment of the respondents in order to make a connection between their experiences and the nature and behaviour of the state and its machinery that they had confronted.

Using qualitative methods such as interviews to gather data allows more flexibility in the research design than, for instance, a large scale social survey in which hypotheses are tested through quantitative measurement at a single point in time, and continued involvement with the research population hypotheses not just to test them and to change the direction in the course of the research argues Finch, (1986:5).

As Finch points out, other important foci of qualitative research that are relevant to this dissertation are the meanings which people attribute to their actions and the process by which such meanings are constructed, negotiated and shared in the course of human interaction. Qualitative research therefore looks and evaluates not so much the causes of social actions, but the meanings; rejecting the natural

science model and seeing the task of social research as uncovering the meaning of social events and processes based upon understanding the lived experiences of human society from the author's point of view, (Bryman, 1984, in Finch, 1986:7).

This dissertation, by using the qualitative method of in-depth interviews to investigate the experiences of journalists and management of the newspaper in confronting an authoritarian regime in Zimbabwe, sought to interpret the possible meanings of their actions and the motives behind the state's media regulation policies and repressive activities in the context of the democratic struggles. These are critiqued in Chapters Five and Six. Characteristically, as Finch argues, the logical procedures of data interpretation in this study are inductive rather than deductive in that data collected from the respondents, mainly the journalists, are used to develop and not just to test generalizations. "It is at this epistemological level that the operational nature of qualitative research within social science has been most obvious," (Finch, 1986:7).

To further illustrate the difference between quantitative and qualitative research, Finch, (1984; 1986), posits that positivist epistemology implies a search for causes requiring quantitative measurement and statistical analysis, using the technique of the social survey; whilst interpretive epistemology is taken to be concerned with uncovering meanings which require non-statistical, in-depth approaches, based on techniques such as unstructured interviewing, which is the operational method of this study. Jones (in Walker; 1985: 46) points out that a qualitative research method seeks to learn about the social world in ways which do not rigidly structure the direction of inquiry. In Jones' view, interviews where the researcher prepares a list of questions which she is determined to ask, without fail, in a short space of time of, say, twenty minutes, do not constitute in-depth interviews. This study used the in-depth interview method to gather data. In preparing for interviews, the researcher should have some broad questions in mind, and the more interviews they do and the more patterns they see in the data the more they are likely to use their grounded understanding to want to explore more in certain directions rather than others. For instance, it is pointed out that interviews happen at a cross-section in time and just as events have inevitably been reconstructed at the time of the interview, further reconstruction also take place.

In conducting the interviews, the issue of structure arose. This observation is crucial because in preparing to carry out this research and the interviews, there were some broad and, in some cases, specific questions that were posed. As Jones argues (*ibid*), the more interviews that one carries out, as was the case with the 51 respondents, the more patterns in the data collected that came out on the agency

of the journalists and the reasons why the government enacted a plethora of laws to infringe on the practice of journalism.

3.3 Interviews

This study used semi-structured interviews to gather data. However, structured and unstructured interviews are discussed in order to show the differences, advantages and disadvantages of these techniques. Data was recorded using a voice recorder and written notes were taken as backup. Liamputtong, (2009: 42) notes that interviews in social science research are understood as special conversations, while other scholars suggest that “interviewing is a means of collecting empirical data about the social world of individuals by inviting them to talk about lives in great depth”. However, for Kvale, (in Liamputtong, 2009: 43), the research interview is a purposeful conversation “where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee.” An important observation in this research is that the researcher heard about the perspectives of the interviewees in their own words, and they get to know about the respondents social circumstances. The research provides authentic voices and stories of the vivid circumstances of the respondents.

The process of interviewing is one in which researchers continually make choices that are based on the scope of the research, interests and prior theories about which data they intend to extract and explore further with the respondents and the data they don't want to pursue, (Jones, 1985: 47). However, Jones (ibid) cautions that in carrying out the interviews, ambiguity should be avoided. The problem of ambiguity arises when the researcher allows the respondents to ramble in any direction they choose without giving specific directions as to the purpose of the interview. This problem can be encountered if the respondents have no clear idea of what the researcher's interests and intentions are. Jones (1985) argues that researchers are more likely to get useful data if respondents are informed at the outset about the research topic, even in broad terms, and given a justification of the researcher's interest in the investigation.

In the process of carrying out the interviews for this study, the respondents were informed of the research topic, objectives, interests and the reasons behind the study and informed consent was granted by the interviewees. The most interesting thing which made this research possible is that the researcher, as an experienced journalist, had prior connections and linkages to the journalists, government and

opposition respondents and had worked with civil society organizations. The respondents from the non-state actors were also willing to participate and to assist to make the research successful. Both members of the journalistic profession and of civil society assisted in making the respondents comfortable in the process of the interviews and assisted to make them open up to the questions with comfort and confidence. The respondents' were mainly former workmates of the researcher, and some civil society leaders were keen to tell their stories to the researcher with a view to making sure that their struggles were captured, recorded and became part of the history of their contributions to the democratic struggles during the crises periods. There was a clear individual and institutional interest in participating in the interviews.

It is important to distinguish the interview from other methods of gathering data. Forcese and Richer (1973: 168) suggest that what distinguishes the interview from the questionnaire, among other things, is that the interview is recorded by the researcher rather than by the respondent. As was the case during interviews for this dissertation, there was dialogue between the researcher and the respondent, a feature which Forcese and Richer submit is not possible in a self-administered questionnaire. In addition, as was the case during the interviews, the face-to-face interview contains many more unstructured questions than a questionnaire can:

An essential difference between the questionnaire and the interview is the detail obtainable in the latter; the respondent can be allowed to talk until he exhausts a particular point rather than simply being presented with several structured questions containing a pre-determined set of responses, choices. The interview form may look like a questionnaire except for its relative emphasis on unstructured questions. This means that in constructing the interview questions, the researcher will leave a large space beneath each question so that extensive answers can be recorded, Forcese & Richer (1973: 169)

During the fieldwork, respondents had the opportunity to expand, elaborate and exhaust their responses to the questions posed. However, I would ensure that the respondent would not ramble on and on without addressing the essence of the various questions to which I sought answers. This is because I had specific questions that needed robust and honest responses.

3.4 The advantages of in-depth interviews

This research uses the in-depth interview to gather data. Hennik et al (2011: 109) define an in-depth interview as a one-to-one method of collecting data that involves an interviewer and an interviewee discussing specific topics in great detail.

In-depth interviews, for this dissertation, aimed to elicit rich responses from the perspective of a particular respondent on the topic under investigation. As suggested by Taylor, (2003 in Liamputtong, 2009: 43), the aim of in-depth interviews:

..is to explore insider perspective. To capture in the participant's own words, their thoughts, perspectives, feelings and experiences. The process involves a meaning-making effort that starts out as a partnership between researcher and participant. It necessitates asking and listening actively.

Bertrand and Hughes (2005) suggest that in-depth interviews take seriously the notion that people are experts on their own experience and so they are best able to report how they experienced a particular fact of life. It is argued that if different people are interviewed on the same event or experience, as was the case in this study, there will be a range of outcomes and perspectives (Darlington & Scott, 2002). This method was useful especially for this study because, as postulated by Darlington and Scott, the in-depth interview gives great importance to the idea that people are experts on their own experiences. The informants in this study were best suited to tell their own stories about how they experienced political repression and that resulted in receipt of a wide range of responses and perspectives from the 51 respondents interviewed.

It is suggested that in-depth interviews have the advantage of being valuable for exploring research topics where limited information is known. This allows researchers to examine the perceptions of the participants and how they give meaning to their lived experiences. The participants' own words can be captured; hence the researcher can focus on issues that are vital to the participants while, at the same time, giving the participant the power and control over what and how they will speak. The researcher has the opportunity to probe and explore in great depth and then to clarify answer and researchers are able to record non-verbal behaviour during the interview, (Liamputtong, 2009: 61).

Denscombe, (2003: 165) justifies the use of in-depth interviews over breath interviews in research, such as that carried out for this dissertation, arguing that if a researcher investigates emotions,

experiences and feelings rather than dealing with clearly factual matters, interviews are better than using questionnaires, because the nature of emotions, experiences and feelings, “is such that they need to be explored rather than simply reported in a word or two.” He further argues that data based on sensitive issues, such as the torture, harassment and detention of journalists, as is the case in this study, call for careful handling and perhaps more interrogative and coaxing in order to get the respondent or informant to be more open and honest. Data based on privileged information requires critical handling:

Here the justification for interviews is based on the value of contact with key players in the field who can give privileged information. The depth of the information provided by interviews can produce best value for money if the informants are willing and able to give information that others could not – when what they offer is an insight they have as people in a special position to know, (Denscombe, 2003: 166).

3.5 The disadvantages of in-depth interviews

From experiences in the field, one can argue that in-depth interviews are a time consuming process, particularly in regard to the data transcription and analysis. Data gathering experiences in Zimbabwe show that the interview format may differ between participants and it could be problematic for novice researchers, who may lack good knowledge and technique, to elicit in-depth information, as they may fail to further probe when they interview difficult respondents.

It was discovered during fieldwork that in-depth interviews can be exhausting for researchers, especially when interviewing vulnerable groups, particularly those journalists who had been tormented through arrests and detention by state security agents. Denscombe, (2003: 190) cautions that the data from interviews may not be reliable:

The data from interviews are based on what people say rather than what they do. The two may not tally. What people say they do, what they say they prefer and what they say they think cannot automatically be assumed to reflect the truth in particular, interviewee statements can be affected by the identity of the researcher.

The problem is that a voice recorder can inhibit informants who are sensitive, while tactless interviewing can be perceived as an invasion of privacy that can cause a respondent not to be open enough to give credible and useful information.

This is a plausible argument in the context of research where emotional stories on the experiences of the journalists at the time of the arrests, the bombings of *The Daily News* office and its printing machines,

and several detentions, could, during the heat of the moment, arguably be different from their feelings ten years later, when the condition of repression have been relaxed.

The power dynamics during the interview process lie in the hands of the researcher. Respondents are vulnerable to the researcher's whims. In-depth interviews thus have the power tilted unfairly against the informant, as captured. During my field research, respondents had a reasonable opportunity to speak and elaborate on their points in order that their views were not distorted and to make meaning.

3.6 Semi-structured interviews

The interviews used for this study were mainly semi-structured interviews. This variant of interviews allows the interviewer to be flexible in terms of the order in which the questions are asked of the respondent. Most significantly, it allows the interviewee to develop more ideas on the subject matter and to speak more widely on issues raised by the respondents. In this case, Denscombe, (2003) suggests that the respondents' answers are open-minded and it gives opportunities for the interviewee to elaborate on points of interest based on their experiences. In the case of this study, this type of interviews allowed the researcher to solicit in-depth information about the experiences of the journalists and other respondents' assessment of how the journalists navigated a repressive political environment. It gave respondents opportunities to be exhaustive in their narration of the events while the researcher remained cautious that they were responding to the research questions.

3.7 Unstructured interviews

Denscombe, (2003: 167) observes that unstructured interviews go further in the extent to which emphasis is placed in the interviewee's thoughts, while the researcher's role is to avoid being invasive during the interview. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews operate on a continuum. Denscombe posits that any interview will slide back and forth among the two types of interviews. He argues that what separates these two types from structured interviews is their ability to allow respondents to use their own words and to develop their own thoughts:

Allowing interviewees to speak their minds is a better way of discovering things about complex issues and, generally, semi-structured and unstructured interviews have as their aim 'discovery rather than checking'. They lend themselves to in-depth

investigations, particularly those which explore personal accounts of experiences and feelings, (Denscombe, 2003: 167).

Structured interviews are distinguished from semi-structured and unstructured interviews by the degree of control exercised by the researcher over the nature of the responses and the length of the answers allowed to the interviewee, Denscombe suggested. This study solicited views from journalists who were arrested, humiliated, had their offices bombed and raided, while operating in a hostile and repressive conditions. Their trials and tribulations required giving careful attention to their detailed experiences and their feelings about how they were treated and how they managed to continuously work under conditions of repression.

3.8 Desktop/archival research

As submitted in this section, primary data is gathered at first hand through interviews, among other methods such as surveys and participant observation. Secondary data was used in this research and comes in various forms, such as public documents. This dissertation used documents, such as Acts of Parliament, court records, and the Zimbabwean Constitution, United Nations treaties, media watchdog reports and newspaper articles.

In modern societies, written documents are kept by various agencies and some of them can be used for social research. It is noted that in order to protect the privacy of those whose lives are recorded, the material may be kept confidential for a long period of time, or it may be available in a form where individuals cannot be identified. Such records include school records and other records kept by government agencies. Not all of these are easily or, indeed, ever available to outsiders, but they should still be available as potential sources of data, bearing in mind that they are produced as by-products of social, economic and political policies.

Secondary data can thus be defined as pre-existing or pre-recorded data which were not collected for the specific ends of a particular researcher (Forcese & Richer, 1973: 179). Accordingly, Forcese and Richer suggested that there are three types of data: Firstly, expressive documents which reflect the writer's own perception and interpretation of events. It is noted that such types of documents are extremely low in the extent to which a second observer could produce the same data. This suggests that data collected using this method is not totally reliable. Secondly, mass media reports avoid the mistakes of the first category of secondary data that are suggested by Forcese and Richer, (1973: 179) in that

although the writer may have an interest in biasing his report, s/he is constrained by a network of editors, colleagues and the public sentiment that is attendant on publication of the reports. These mass media reports include newspapers, magazines, radio and television. It is further observed that the notion of objectivity is a powerful journalistic norm. However, it is cautioned that the writer remains a selector and interpreter of what he considers to be relevant events, a fact that should be taken into consideration when using information from mass media reports. Thirdly, it has been argued that official records are the most free of selective recording and personal manipulation. As such, Forcese and Richer, (1973: 180) suggest that they are highly reliable, allowing reasonable confidence in their levels of accuracy. Such records include registration data; births, deaths; divorces; voting statistics and social service records or census data, or surveys done by non-state actors, business and organizational records:

Sociologists have used secondary data in three ways; first they have been used as ends in themselves, as providing all the data for a complete study. They have been used as partial data for study; that is as “fillers” or variables the researcher has decided not to collect himself. They have been used to validate and check data gathered by the researcher, (Forcese and Richer, 1973: 180).

The main disadvantage of secondary data is that it is sometimes difficult to obtain and there are probabilities of getting data that may have shortcomings. Some whole documents maybe missing or they might not contain the exact information the research could be investigating. This is because the data has not been gathered by the researcher and therefore may not conform to the researcher’s precise expectations, it has been argued.

Scott, (in Burnham et al, 2004: 185) argues that the authenticity of a document concerns its genuineness:

whether it is actually what it purports to be. This involves a consideration of the notion of soundness (is the document an original or a copy and has it been corrupted in any way?) and authorship (is it possible to authenticate the identity of those responsible for producing the document?).

Scott contends that the authenticity of public records can easily be established. The form and criteria for such records are usually compatible with the procedures known to have been used by the government department responsible for its creation. Scott asserts that the criterion for credibility is closely related to that of authenticity. “Once a document has been authenticated (beyond any reasonable doubt), it is then necessary to ask how distorted its contents are likely to be,” (Scott, 1990: 22 in Burnham et al 2004). In this regard, the sincerity and accuracy of the author of the document should be questioned, and this requires the researcher to pay attention to the conditions under which the document was produced and the material interest that drove the author to write that document, Scott posits.

3.9 Personal fieldwork reflections

When I returned to Zimbabwe from London in June, 2012, I was fired from my job. The organization where I had worked for close to a decade informed me that they could no longer afford to pay my salary due to financial difficulties.

This was a huge blow to my fieldwork because it meant that I had no workplace from where I could arrange my interviews, nor a safe place to carry out some of the interviews. The company also took away the vehicle allocated to me as a senior manager and withdrew my phone allowances. These are important tools when one is carrying out field interviews, especially in volatile political environments like Zimbabwe.

At the beginning of the fieldwork, I used commuter transport to visit a number of institutions and offices to arrange meetings and to brief potential respondents on the subject of my investigation before I arranged meetings. I had to make physical visits to most of the respondents to arrange the meetings because I was too broke to make phone calls. In some instances I felt tired because it was during the hot days of summer, 2012, when I started my fieldwork. The psychological impact of the job loss and the financial implications for my studies and family took a huge toll on me. There was a time when I thought of abandoning the research and withdrawing from the programme. As a result of the dismissal, it took me some time to return to normalcy. However, the determination to carry on with my studies, together with my close networks in Zimbabwe, assisted me in settling down.

3.10 Access issues and interviewing process

Special credit and mention should be given to the Media Centre, a media advocacy organization in the country that decided to house me for the duration of my fieldwork. The Media Centre is a resource centre for freelance journalists and provides training and mentorship programmes for journalists. It has unlimited access to the internet and operates twenty hours a day. It provided me with a safe studio in which to record interviews with respondents who I could not interview at their workplaces. The management of ANZ, the publishers of *The Daily News*, was extremely helpful. They allowed me to have interviews with their journalists during very tight deadlines, as it is a daily paper. They actually

provided me with an office where I could interview journalists while they did other duties. I also accessed their archives freely to build on my literature on the journalists' past work.

Most interviews took place at the offices of respondents in government institutions, civil society organizations and at the university. These were the respondents' preferred places. Organizing interviews was relatively easy, given that most respondents were either former workmates, fellow journalists or sources with whom I had good relations during my time as a journalist with *The Daily News*. They were eager to participate in and contribute to my investigation. Since most respondents had a prior working relationship with me, they did not request anonymity, especially journalists from both private and state institutions.

The actual process of interviewing provided challenges. Firstly, interviewing my former colleagues on what was an emotional aspect of their professional career, which included personal attacks, detentions and arrests as well as losing jobs, was not easy. The problem I sought to address from the beginning was to avoid a situation where my former colleagues in the media and civil society would respond to my questions in order not to disappoint me or to tell me what they thought I would want to hear. During my debriefing sessions, I would ask these colleagues to be as open and honest as possible in order to assist me to achieve a credible and robust product and not to shy away from expressing their thoughts on the questions posed to them. I also emphasised that this investigation constitute a valuable contribution to media and communication in emerging democracies such as Zimbabwe, so it was important to be honest and frank in the interviews in order to assist in the production of a credible piece of work. Secondly, I interviewed respondents in government who were generally hostile to the private media. However, because the study was reflecting on mostly past experiences during a period of crisis they were open to discuss how they responded to a robust, critical and often media. State bureaucrats were knowledgeable about the subject and were interested to interrogate the role of the media in a democratizing state. The officials were interested to have the side of the government in the management of the media during the crisis heard. Government respondents also wanted to show the intellectual side of the regime. Thirdly, I used my experience as a senior journalist to make my respondents comfortable and confident and the interviews took place in a friendly but robust manner. More so, these state officials were once my sources during my days as a senior journalist so it was like relieving our experiences of professionally but critically questioning authorities. The interviews were punctuated by laughter and other lighter moments which made the respondents even more comfortable to be open and genuine in their responses and clarification of issues that arose from the conversations.

I offered the respondents option of being anonymous, but the majority consented to have their names appear in my thesis. This was done to address issues of the reliability and validity of data collected from interviews. The 51 respondents were selected using purposive sampling techniques. Most respondents were key participants, with huge institutional and personal experiences in the subject under investigation.

The most interesting and helpful encounter was with a former Minister of Information, who was responsible for the crafting of repressive media laws. After a month of constant calls and promises to allow the interview, one day in September, 2012, he called and said:

Academia is all our homes after all, please let's meet so that we have the interview; otherwise you will think I want to sabotage your studies.

For this to happen with such a key informant, I had to exercise patience, persistence and persuasion, as well as professionalism. The interview took place at coffee shop in one of Harare's leafy suburbs.

The interviews took place in an environment that had changed remarkably from the situations of violence, detention and the arrests of journalists by the state. It was an environment where a coalition government existed and in which political parties in the new regime agreed to democratize the media, re-open closed newspapers and license more papers in order to broaden the democratic space. In this regard, journalists and state bureaucrats were free to reflect on past experiences. Most respondents were keen to talk about their experiences and the nature of the new media regime that they envisaged in a democratic society.

3.11 Problems with influential people and state bureaucrats

Arranging interviews with government ministers, state bureaucrats and newspaper editors was one of the most difficult parts of my fieldwork. Mostly, they would not make appointments and when they had the opportunity, the interviews would be interrupted on several occasions. It took me five aborted appointments before I got an interview with one of the country's most celebrated journalists and when an interview was finally granted, it took me three days to complete it because of disruptions. I took three months to arrange this interview, but when I finally got the man, it was a delay worth enduring because he has vast media experience and is associated with some critical investigative stories in Zimbabwe. I had to remain calm, humble, persuasive and convincing in order to have the interview.

State bureaucrats and government ministers would want to see a letter from the university acknowledging that I was doing fieldwork for academic purposes. They also required proper and adequate debriefing on the research's objectives and that the interview was solely for academic purposes and should take place at their offices. In some cases I would interview state bureaucrats in the presence of other officials, who would also be taking notes as I made my recordings.

Because of the letter from the university that I had, which confirmed to respondents that I was carrying out academic research, most respondents were free to express their views on the subject and did not ask to remain anonymous. All they requested was to be quoted accurately.

The most difficult encounter was with the Chair of the Zimbabwe Media Commission. The man requested all information, including written questions, about my research, and a letter from the university which asked respondents and institutions to assist me during that research. Having done this, and after several preliminary meetings with him, he refused to be interviewed. The man was the Chair of a commission responsible for the banning of five newspapers between 2003 and 2005 and is now the Executive Director of a newly constituted media council.

A former senior editor of *The Daily News*, with whom I worked during my days at the paper, cancelled seven scheduled meetings and eventually refused to cooperate. He asked for questions so that he could respond. The questions were sent, but he did not respond, despite several phone calls to remind him. It is vital to observe that the plans that one has prior to conducting fieldwork may be completely turned upside down because of circumstances beyond the researcher's control. In this regard, the researcher should quickly improvise and have alternative plans in order to complete the field research.

3.12 My Personal Experiences at *The Daily News*

In this dissertation I avoided an extensive detail about my five-year working experience at *The Daily News*. I felt that the detailed experiences of my colleagues captured in study hugely reflects and captures what I went through working together as a team of mostly activist and defiant journalists. The arrests, detentions and beatings of reporters captured in this research is what the majority of journalists including myself experienced. Their emotional stories were part of my struggles as well. Having the opportunity to interrogate these issues in an academic manner was more satisfying for me. I therefore felt that adequately capturing in detail the experiences of my colleagues represented the struggles that more than 80 *Daily News* journalists encountered. One of the strengths of the interviews was that I was

able to explore the emotions and experiences of the battered journalists in an in-depth manner using their own voices in an environment of relative freedom. I was also able to interrogate through first hand information why the government officials put in place repressive media laws and why they tormented activist journalists. One of the weaknesses of the interviews is that they took place seven years after the period of crisis ended. In this regard, it was difficult for the respondents to relive their actual experiences during the crisis. Some crucial detail could have been lost due to the passage of time. I could sense that the environment had changed and the real emotions such as cries and wounds from the beatings were healed. Alternative methods such as participant observation and auto-ethnography could have been appropriate and useful for this study. However, they are time consuming and require huge financial resources. I also felt that due to my networking capacity with the respondents and my experience as a senior journalist in Zimbabwe the interview method was best suited for my study. It worked well because I had access to adequate information and respondents to address the vital objectives and major research questions of my investigation.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

In carrying out research there are ethical issues that the researcher should consider before, during and after carrying out the investigation. Dane, (1990: 39) points out that before the research is undertaken, respondents should agree to voluntarily participate. In his view, voluntary participation refers to participants' rights to freely choose to subject themselves to the scrutiny inherent in the research.

Anyone involved in the research should be a willing participant. Sometimes, however, research practice may involve intentionally preventing people from knowing that research is being conducted. The ethical balance of voluntary participation includes two separate issues' coercion and awareness, (Dane, 1990: 39).

Coercion includes issuing threats or force, as well as offering more incentives than would reasonably be considered fair compensation. This may involve presenting participants with offers they cannot refuse. Dane points out those incentives may be rewards, or promises that are meant to prevent punishment. Awareness refers to voluntary participation, which includes being part of the research in cases of observation. In carrying out this research all 51 participants agreed to voluntarily participate without conditions, but this was after they had been taken through the topic of the dissertation and agreed to contribute.

Informed consent, a principle which refers to providing potential research participants with all of the information necessary to allow them to make a decision concerning their participation, should be given unequivocally before the interviews take place. This involves the physical or mental disclosure of the participant and this is considered necessary information because it is reasonably argued that health risks can alter the respondent's decision to participate. In this research, there were no health risks and all participants agreed to participate unconditionally before the research began. It is argued that the key element in informed consent is not the comprehensiveness of the information, but its relevance to the participant's decision. It is the responsibility of the researcher to inform participants about all relevant information in the research and s/he should not expect respondents to inquire about such information.

Deception should be avoided when carrying out research. This means that the objectives and all the questions should be made clear to the interviewee. Physical harm against the participants should be avoided. In this regard, the researcher is ethically bound to protect participants from any physical harm that may be reasonably expected to result from the project. In this study, participants were interviewed in safe places and no harm was involved.

Dane, (1990: 39) also notes that participants should be prevented from psychological harm; worry, embarrassment and loss of self-esteem.

The responsibility to protect participants from psychological harm extends beyond attempts to rectify potential harm after the fact. To the extent possible, researchers have an obligation to protect participants before the fact by informing them of the potential psychological impacts, (Dane, 1990: 44).

One of the ethical issues in research is the concept of self-determination, which encompasses most of the ethical considerations so far discussed. Self-determination refers to the idea that individuals have the right and, it is assumed, the ability to evaluate information, weigh alternatives and make independent decisions for themselves. It is observed that preventing awareness undermines self-determination by preventing respondents from making the choices that are available in order to make informed decisions. Similarly, Dane (1990) posits that restricting informed consent undermines respondents' abilities to evaluate information given to them by the researcher and to consider the choices at their disposal.

It is important to resolve ethical issues before starting the project, but that is not always possible because conditions during research of a project may change. The researcher's identity must be accurately presented. This is because the identity and affiliations of the researcher may affect a respondent's decision to participate and should be considered relevant to their ability to give informed consent,

because in some cases respondents may not want to participate in a project sponsored by particular companies or institutions.

Behaviour changes in participants during the research process should be considered. According to Dane (1990), this refers to any change in participants' behaviours from which one might infer some alteration of behavioural style or ability. During the interviewing or research process, respondents should be treated with consideration to ensure that objectionable treatment of participants is avoided throughout the process.

Dane (1990) points out participants have the right to retract their consent in the process of the research in light of new information that may influence their decision to withdraw. The researcher has an ethical obligation to allow the respondent to quit the project at any time. It is also pointed out that when a researcher has misled respondents through omission or active deception, there is an ethical obligation for de-briefing:

which is a procedure by which any relevant information about the project that has been withheld or falsely presented is made known to participants. One purpose of debriefing is to provide participants with as much information about the project as they care to know. It also assures participants do not feel cheated, (Dane, 1990:50).

3.14 Ethical issues after the project

Firstly, when sensitive information about participants is collected, it is ethical to ensure that the anonymity of the respondent is secured. Anonymity exists when nobody, including the researcher, can relate a participant's identity to any information associated with the research. When data are collected anonymously, no one knows which data come from a particular respondent. In this research, all 51 participants did not ask for anonymity. They made it clear that they would want to be identified, but stressed that the information that they gave during the interviews must be recorded accurately and used in the context of the project so that it retains its value and meaning.

Dane, (1990: 51) points out that confidentiality is different from anonymity. Confidentiality arises in a project when only the researchers are aware of the participants' identities and have promised not to reveal those identities to others. Obtaining respondents' names during data collection and then destroying the record of their names on completion of the project is one way to maintain confidentiality. In this dissertation, participants were informed that their identities would be known to other participants and to the public because their information would be part of a public and scholarly output on the study's

completion. All 51 participants agreed to the request and wanted their views known within the context of this investigation.

3.15 Conclusion

The chapter has mainly focused on the procedures used to gather data for this study. The main method used was qualitative, using in-depth interviews with purposefully selected informants, among them journalists, government ministers and civil society leaders. By using the qualitative method of in-depth interviews to investigate journalists' experiences in confronting an authoritarian regime in Zimbabwe, the study sought to interpret the possible meanings of the journalists' actions, as well as the motives behind the state's media regulation policies and repressive activities in the context of struggles for democracy. Using this method, the study was able, as demonstrated in Chapters Four and Five, to gain evidence that addresses the crux of the investigation, which deals with an alternative newspaper and its journalists' experiences while working in a repressive environment in an emerging democracy, in order to further broaden the scope of understanding of various forms and sites of opposition against authoritarianism. Characteristically, as Finch (1986) posits, the logical procedures of data interpretation in this study are inductive rather than deductive, in that data collected from the respondents, mainly from the journalists, are used to develop and not just to test generalizations. The next chapter focuses and examines the nature of the media in Zimbabwe, the policies that govern the regulation of that media and the reasoning behind the enactment of laws that muzzled and targeted the private press the relationships between the state and the media, especially the private press, and the major debates in the media after independence. Data obtained from the respondents is categorised into themes that address the alternative media analytical framework of the study. Thematic analysis of the findings are therefore captured and discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

CHAPTER FOUR

Alternative media and opposition politics in Zimbabwe

4.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the history of the media in Zimbabwe, structure, ownership patterns and the policies that govern media regulation. It examines and critiques the major debates that have informed the formulation of media policies and the political environment that has influenced those policies. A profound focus on the history and founding of the privately-owned newspaper, *The Daily News*, and the work of its journalists, which is the case study of this dissertation, is examined in order to evaluate the contribution of the newspaper and its journalists to alternative and activist journalism in the democratisation processes in Zimbabwe in the context of an economic and political crisis. It examines the media laws and argues with evidence why the government enacted the laws. Evidence adduced from respondents is used to demonstrate that the enactment of the laws was to muzzle activist journalists and to entrench the political rule of the government in power.

The trajectory of alternative media is traced from colonial to postcolonial times in order to build and strengthen the thread of alternative and activist journalism in the study of media and communication in Zimbabwe under conditions of repression. In analysing the legacy of the post-independence role of the alternative press in Zimbabwe, it is perhaps insightful to note the observations of some media scholars on the relations between the press and governments after independence in most African countries. Barton, (1979: ix) notes that:

As political freedom came to the continent, so did press freedom disappear. This is the paradox of the press in Africa: nobody should have been surprised at this, much less dismayed. Nothing that has happened or is happening to the press in Africa has not occurred in many countries which today claim some form of press freedom.

This view is relevant to this study because it assists us in appreciating that democratic struggles are continuous searches for the ideal type of government. Media freedoms should be guarded from the excesses of those that are in power, no matter how benevolent they may be, at all times in all societies.

4.1 Colonial media legacy and post-independence Zimbabwe's response

In the 1950s, the growth of the black press's sympathy and response to the nationalist struggle led to the black, and later the white, liberal press components of the national print media becoming targets of state repression. It has been submitted that a major factor in the consolidation of white civil society behind the Rhodesia Front was the regime's expert manipulation of the public and private media through take over, banning, harassment and censors in both the government and the privately-owned media institutions. Like a host of other inherited social institutions, the mainstream media at independence in 1980 was crafted to serve the interests of a minority State which was experiencing a costly guerrilla war and sanctions imposed by the international community after Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain in 1965.

At Independence, the South African based Argus Press enjoyed a monopoly of the press in Zimbabwe through its subsidiary, the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company (RPP), which operated two daily newspapers, *The Herald* and *The Chronicle*, and three weeklies *The Sunday Mail*, *The Sunday News* and *The Manica Post*. Alternative publications which made an effort were closed down under the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) and other security laws were used during the colonial period to stifle political dissent and organization by the Black Nationalist movements and their public intellectuals. Apart from RPP publications, the print media in 1980 also consisted of the weekly *Financial Gazette*, launched in 1969. The paper survived censorship during the repressive era of UDI, mainly by staying away from publishing politically sensitive stories, as Chuma suggested, (2010: 91). There was also *Parade* magazine, which has since closed. Both *The Financial Gazette* and *Parade* were owned by Zimbabwean white capital with the former targeted at the business sector, while *Parade* targeted black readers along the lines of South Africa's *Drum*. The *Financial Gazette* is now owned by a consortium of black entrepreneurs led by the former Reserve Bank Governor, Gideon Gono.

The once banned Catholic-run opposition aligned *Moto* magazine, which is now defunct, was re-launched in 1981 and operated as a monthly. Broadcasting remained a state monopoly, serving State interests until 2001, when efforts to liberalize the sector were made with little success.

4.2 The government's media policy response

Saunders, (1991: 57) observed that, at independence, the Ministry of Information clearly reflected both the re-politicization of the inherited Rhodesian Front (RF) bureaucracy by the ruling ZANU PF party, and the closeness of the connection between the party's internal structures and those of the public media. At the Ministry of Information, Nathan Shamuyarira, a central committee member and the party's Secretary for Information in the political bureau, became the Minister of Information. Below him, a hierarchy of party members filled the state bureaucracy that had been left vacant by the departing whites. In media, under the Ministry of Information's direct supervision, a similar dynamic was evident, as the "bush broadcasters" from ZANU PF's Maputo-based, war time *Voice of Zimbabwe Radio* programme were slotted into senior positions at the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), (Mano, 2009; Saunders, 1991). By 1984, ZANU PF's invasion of the Ministry of Information and the media had reached an extent to which even Minister Shamuyarira could not claim that there was a distinction between the aims and goals of the ruling party, on the one hand, and those of the public media, government and the state, on the other.

Mano (2009), Rønning and Kupe (2000) point out that appointments to ZBC were made from the ranks of party loyalists, some trusted heroes of the liberation struggle, and people closely connected to the ruling elite. Chuma, (2010: 92) observes that the recruitment policy:

...ensured strict ZANU PF hegemonic control over broadcasting from the outset. It is important to note that for both the UDI and the Zanu PF regimes, broadcasting – in particular radio – was a critical medium because of its pervasive reach in the country compared with other media, such as the printed press.

Similarly, Rønning and Kupe (2000: 160) describe newscasts and discussions on national and political affairs as having a tendency to shun controversies and to be lacking investigative approaches. They argue that broadcasting in Zimbabwe, as was the case during the colonial period, "is used to consolidate regime power, smother opposition, and legitimate the ruling party's policy agenda by defining political reality on its own terms, behind the shield of developmental journalism", (Rønning and Kupe, 2000: 160).

This political hegemonic control of the media was the genesis of clashes between the government and the private media, as the authorities battled to silence dissenting voices during crisis periods. However, as revealed in the interviews with key government officials for this research, as under the colonial

regime, the independence regime also suggested that the control of broadcasting and of the press in general was to protect national security, national interests and the sovereignty of the state, as discussed in Chapters Five and Six. However, there are contradictions between the Minister of Information at the time of the crisis and his Permanent Secretary regarding the state-control of the press. While, the Minister stated that state-control of the media was to safeguard the national interest, in this Chapter and Chapter Five the Permanent Secretary points out that it was to gain control of state power under ZANU PF, which the alternative paper, *The Daily News*, and its journalists, working with other political and civil society dissidents, wanted to obliterate.

In the print media, the government created the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT) to harness a short-termed consensual political solution which, in Saunders's view, both appeased the conservative white interests of foreign and domestic capital and allowed future room for the interference of the ruling party in its instrumental use of the media under public control. The role of the ZMMT in creating a buffer between the government and, mainly, with Zimpapers, a company which controlled the public print media such as *The Herald*, *The Chronicle* and *The Sunday Mail*, was undermined from the onset by the appointment of senior party officials to lead the boards of both the Trust and Zimpapers.

Saunders (1991) pointed out that the State was forced to abandon immediate plans to re-shape the media as a substantially expanded, black-run, rurally-centred social service national press.

At the same time, ZANU PF's commitment to the maintenance of a free private press in contrast to the practices of the previous colonial regimes made ruling party incursions into the realm of the private media more difficult to sustain, Saunders (1991: 57).

Saunders (1991) and Rønning and Kupe (2000) indicate that despite the safeguards established by the ZMMT to protect the public print media from political control, the inherited culture of media supervision, together with challenges to ZANU PF's social and consensual hegemonic leadership from civil society, led to new attempts by the political party leadership to impose its own order on the media. ZANU PF's new media policy, according to Saunders, marked not just a departure from the censorship and manipulation of the Rhodesia Front (RF) but also a continuation of what he described as "defeated hegemonic strategies" (1991: 58). The historical post-independent hegemonic control of the media is what led to confrontations between the state and the private media when newspapers such as *The Daily News* actively challenged ZANU PF's oppressive politics by providing political and civic dissidents

with a platform on which to voice their concerns about the political and economic turmoil, as examined in this chapter and Chapters Five and Six.

4.3 Justifying the focus from state and media relations in Zimbabwe

The liberal democratic appreciation of the role of the press is contrary to what prevailed in Zimbabwe in the early years of the country's independence as well as during the crisis period at the turn of the 21st century. There were various debates relating to the role of the media in Zimbabwe that need to be interrogated in order to appreciate the politics behind media repression. Some of the central themes in the debates were: the media as a political tool, media response to a one-party state, the postcolonial developmental role of the media and the national security agenda. The focus on alternative media operating under conditions of repression in an oppressive regime, especially the experiences of journalists, was not captured in the years following independence in 1980.

4.4 Media as a tool with which to consolidate political authority 1980-1990

Public media in Zimbabwe has served the ruling forces in the post-independence era. As is noted by Mano, (2009: 147), the new government's priorities were to consolidate state power, safeguard the national independence of the country and reconcile the various social forces, among them racial groups, political and socio-economic forces. In the view of the new regime, television and other media were expected to promote national transformation and prop up a positive image of the elected government.

The first decade (1980-1990) of Zimbabwe's independence had, therefore, a government that was pre-occupied with reforming the inherited minority-oriented social and political infrastructure to meet the demands of the new dispensation. At independence in 1980, a reformed State was expected to confront the challenges of nation building, development, decolonization and reconciliation. The argument was that the inherited mainstream media were meant to serve minority interests. It had to be dismantled to meet the expectations of the Independent government. As articulated elsewhere in this dissertation, the mainstream media were dominated by the RRP, a subsidiary of Argus which operated from South Africa where it runs a media empire. The broadcasting sector was and is still under State control. In order to control the mainstream print media the new government bought Argus shares to the tune of \$5 million dollars in 1981, using money donated by the Nigerian government for that purpose

and then established the ZMMT to manage the chain of newspapers under the newly created Zimbabwe Newspapers' (1980) stable. The ZMMT was also supposed to create a buffer between the State and government-controlled newspapers with a view to safeguarding editorial autonomy but, as Saunders (1991) points out, this was disregarded by the Department of Information, a division of the Ministry of Information, which directly runs government media through directives on editorial appointments, content and outputs of the newspapers to reflect the position of the ruling ZANU PF.

Saunders (1991: 207), in his analytic study of the ruling party's use of the public print for hegemonic projects in Zimbabwe in the first decade of independence, argues that as early as the late 1980s, Mugabe's regime came to see the public media as being important tools in consolidating its political authority against political opposition organized under the ZAPU, led by Zimbabwe's late Vice President, Joshua Nkomo. Saunders (1991) points out that Ministry of Information officials regularly met editors and senior journalists of the state-controlled publishing house, Zimpapers, in what became known as 'prayer meetings' – meetings in which they were told what the government wanted to read and hear in the media.

Functionalist scholars have suggested that media institutions ensure that the major media conform to a national or general public interest, or at least operate within the limits of what is considered broadly acceptable in terms of its oversight role of criticizing the government (McQuail, 1992). The problem with this theory is that the question of power is not adequately addressed, although its exercise is recognized in the emphasis placed on the need for direction, control and the internal cohesion of social systems. This theory could explain the problems that *The Daily News* and its journalists faced in their relationship with the Mugabe regime, which put more emphasis on media control and censorship. The theory is further criticized for its attempt to view society as always being consensual when, in fact, societies can also be in a conflict situation.

ZANU PF managed to control and consolidate its state power by making no changes to the structures and operations of the state media, apart from wresting it away from the white minority that was established at Independence in 1980. There are continuities that defined the takeover of the state media by the new government.

Unlike in Zimbabwe, in the South African situation, total capture was avoided because there was a popular movement with radical concerns that made sure that both sides had to ensure acceptance of any deal by their supporters, Sparks observed, (2009). For instance, there was a mass demonstration demanding public broadcasting and the involvement of ordinary citizens, which led to the establishment of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) in 1994. The IBA was designed as a buffer between the government and broadcasting to make sure that no single party could capture it in the way the National Party had in the past.

Mano (2009: 138) avows that, in the case of Zimbabwe, political control of broadcasting is meant to gain and control power. For instance, Mano (2009: 139) asserts that television, especially news programmes, has been used to promote the political aims of the controllers of political power in Zimbabwe. He examined ownership and control of public television in Zimbabwe and reveals how it shaped and was itself influenced by the dominant political order. Mano (2009: 147) submitted that the new government sought to consolidate state power, safeguard the independence of the country and reconcile the various social forces, and television and other public media were supposed to highlight and promote that national transformation.

It can be argued that the power and influence of the broadcasting media in Zimbabwe, especially given their monopoly, was to entrench party political power rather than serve the national and public interest. In this sense, the media are a tool for sustaining the hegemony of the ruling elite. Consensual leadership by the ruling elite can be achieved through cultural productions that are articulated using the medium of the press, a common phenomenon that took place during periods of crisis in command when the ruling party faced disenchantment and organized dissent from workers and students during the economic crisis of the late 1990s and early 21th century in Zimbabwe.

4.5 Media as a premise of development

The media in Zimbabwe had a development agenda that was defined and run by the government. Ansah (1988) and McQuail (1994) point out that development theory intends to recognize societies as undergoing a transition from underdevelopment and colonialism to independence and better material conditions but often lack the infrastructure, the money, traditions, professional skills and even the audiences needed to sustain media institutions comparable to those of developed and developing

countries. It is suggested that because of the priority given to these ends, limited resources available for media can legitimately be allocated by the government and journalistic freedom can also be restricted. The responsibilities of the media are emphasized before their rights and freedoms.

In this regard, the first decade of Zimbabwe's transition from colonial rule was pre-occupied, on the part of the independence government, with reforming the inherited minority-oriented social and political infrastructure to meet the demands of the new dispensation (Chuma, 2005). The developmental role of the media in Zimbabwe was in tandem with worldwide thinking around modernization in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Hyden and Leslie (2007:2) posit that:

The focus in those days was not directly on democracy but rather on socio-economic development, the assumption being that democracy would only be feasible once society had been modernised.

However, Ansah, (1988) disagrees. He suggests that the human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens are also tied to other national developments, such as the economy, and there is little need to relegate human rights to the periphery of the development agenda. The discourse emphasizing, promoting and protecting selected human rights by governments is outdated. According to the United Nations' Vienna Declaration adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25th June, 1993, human rights are interdependent and indivisible and their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of governments.

As in most African states in their early years of independence, the democratic role of the media was limited in Zimbabwe. However, as analysed in this thesis, to democratise state politics involves questioning the basic monolithic assumptions about how the state is governed, power myths, personality cults and the demystification of the state. These issues were considered taboo in the early discourses on the role of the media in democratic processes in Zimbabwe.

4.6 Media responses to the one party-state agenda 1983-1990

Saunders (1999) put forward the view that the government's growing influence through Zimpapers and the Zimbabwe Inter Africa News Agency (ZIANA) and its manipulation of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), were fuelled by rising political tensions in the country as early as 1981. ZANU PF wanted to create a one-party state in the 1980s, in line with its socialist ideology. PF ZAPU became the primary target of attacks through programmes of disinformation and propaganda that were meant to malign the opposition party as a group of dissidents. There were also simmering conflicts between

ZANU PF and PF ZAPU, which escalated in 1983 when the Mugabe regime sent security forces that included the Fifth Brigade to ‘crush’ the dissidents, leading to thousands of civilians being murdered, tortured, raped and their properties destroyed.

Mano, (2009: 161) emphasises that the power of politicians over broadcasters in Zimbabwe was made possible by systematic use of government and ruling party appointees in Zimbabwe Television news structures who were meant to serve the interests of the ruling party. He argues that for three decades television in Zimbabwe was at the forefront of ZANU PF’s power consolidation project. In other words, television worked side by side with the ruling elite to entrench a one-party state dictatorship.

However, the government was not successful, owing to the presence and the work of privately-owned monthly magazines, such as *Moto*, *Parade*, *Horizon* and the weekly run *Financial Gazette* newspaper, which mainly served the interests of businesses and the small middle class. Credit is also given to government-controlled newspapers, such as the Bulawayo-based *The Chronicle*, a daily newspaper, which in the late 1980s exposed a massive car-racket involving ruling party officials and Cabinet ministers who accessed cars at Willowvale Car Assembly, where the state had shares, at cheaper prices and sold them later at higher prices in what became known as the Willowgate Scandal. One Minister committed suicide and several others were fired. However, the editor of the paper, Geoffrey Nyarota, was transferred and later fired. Attempts to have a one-party state therefore failed, partly because of opposition and activist journalists as well as the combined efforts of civil society and the fragmented political opposition.

4.7 The media and the national security agenda 1997-2010

The emergence of a vibrant private press in the late 1990s created new challenges for the regime. The birth of *The Daily News* in 1999, *The Zimbabwe Independent* in 1996 and *The Standard* newspapers in 1998, presented enormous challenges to the regime of media control by the state. The MISA-Zimbabwe Chapter (2007) points out that the State responded to the emergence of these papers, including *The Tribune*, by crafting restrictive laws such as AIPPA to stifle media freedoms.

However, the government insisted that it was in the national security interest to regulate the media. The then Minister of Information, Jonathan Moyo, told Parliament during the debate on the AIPPA Bill that the government was concerned with sections of the media that were used by unscrupulous politicians to

foment ethnic divisions which threatened the unity, peace and stability of the country (*Hansard, 2002 Volume 28 Number 48*). Moyo accused the private press of attempting to cause conflict and civil war in Zimbabwe by reporting on the Matebeleland and Midlands human rights violations that were committed by the security forces in the 1980s.

The government further suggested that there was a global trend to regulate the media. Moyo noted that the law was meant to fulfil the requirements of the SADC Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport that had been adopted by Heads of State and Government in 2001, (*Hansard, 2002 Volume 28 Number 48*). The literature from media watchdogs, such as MISA, lacks a thorough study of what some scholars have described as Mugabe's 'legislative oppression'² which affected journalists and media institutions, such as the *Daily News*. The point to note is that institutional analysis of the operations of journalists in a repressive political environment does not capture the experiences of those journalists, their oppositional and activist roles and their contribution to democratization, an investigation that this dissertation interrogates.

4.8 Enter *the Daily News*: the founding of the paper and its shareholding structure

The *Daily News* was a publication of the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ) launched in April, 1999, under the editorial leadership of one of Zimbabwe's celebrated investigative journalists, Geoffrey Nyarota. Nyarota is one of the most outstanding post-independence investigative journalists in Zimbabwe having received nine international journalism awards, most of them while working for *The Daily News*. In 2001, the Committee to Protect Journalists awarded Nyarota the *International Press Freedom Award*, which recognizes journalists who show courage in defending press freedom despite facing attacks, threats, or imprisonment. The World Association of Newspapers awarded Nyarota the *Golden Pen of Freedom Award* in 2002. That same year he was also awarded UNESCO's *Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize*.

In his book, *Against the Grain: Memoirs of a Zimbabwean Newsman*, (2006: 230), Nyarota points out that he co-founded ANZ with Wilfred Mbanga, who had previously worked as the Chief Executive Officer of the state-run Community Newspapers Group (CNG), which had provincial newspaper titles

²In this research, legislative oppression refers to undemocratic and oppressive laws that the regime of President Mugabe enacted to muzzle the media and democratic forces

across the country. Mbanga became the founding CEO, while Nyarota was the founding Editor-in-Chief. The two purchased the joint shareholding of a shelf-company which they registered in 1998. This company, Motley Trading (Pvt) Ltd., became the forerunner of ANZ, a joint venture with foreign shareholders. A newly established British consortium, Africa Media Investments (AMI), was ANZ's foreign partner through its special purpose vehicle, AMI Zimbabwe (AMIZ). According to Nyarota, AMIZ eventually became the majority shareholder, with 60 percent of shares, after they failed to attract the requisite level of local investment in ANZ. Nyarota and Mbanga held nominal shares in the company, with more substantial options being warehoused for allocation to them once the company started operating. Forty percent of the shares were reserved for future local investors, including Nyarota and Mbanga.

Nyarota confirmed and reiterated the shareholding structure of ANZ publishers in *The Daily News* in interviews held in Harare on 13th October and 17th November, 2012, in the course of this study. AMIZ was a subsidiary of AMI,

... ..a rather ambitious venture created by a conglomerate of newspaper companies in the United Kingdom to facilitate high-quality media products throughout Anglophone Africa," Nyarota, (2006: 23), pointed out.

The concept envisaged the creation of an innovative venture by British investors in the potentially profitable African media industry. The idea was inspired by the successful investment in South Africa and elsewhere on the continent of the biggest Irish concern, *Independent Newspapers PLC* headed by Tony O'Reilly.

Mbanga and I were told in confidence that *Independent Newspapers* would be one of the prime movers in AMIZ and therefore a shareholder in ANZ, but that O'Reilly was reluctant for his involvement to become public, (Nyarota, 2006: 231).

The Independent Newspapers, however, did not invest in ANZ, but AMIZ did and was represented by Derek Smail, who is still a director of ANZ. The project kicked off with provincial newspapers such as *The Mercury*, *The Eastern Star* and *The Chitungwiza Express*, in 1998. The papers were abandoned because they were not financially viable. Nyarota pointed out that it was also his long held dream to run a privately owned daily paper in Zimbabwe. ANZ then launched *The Daily News* on 1st April, 1999.

In August, 1999, *The Daily News* started experiencing cash-flow problems because the owners did not inject finances to fund the initial operations of the paper. The CEO of ANZ, Mbanga, resigned after he was asked to deputize for Muchadeyi Masunda, who had stepped down as the board's chairperson.

From July to October, 1999, the board was headed by Nkosana Moyo, who represented two shareholders, Batanai Capital Finance and NDM Investments. When Moyo, resigned, he was replaced by Stuart Mattinson who represented foreign investors.

Masunda was tasked with finding investments to inject into the company, as it was battling with staff unrest because of delayed salaries. He negotiated a loan of 200 000 dollars with the Botswana based Southern Africa Media Development Fund, (Samdef). The money was not adequate for the capital needs of the company. Faced with continuing financial problems, Nyarota pointed out that he approached Zimbabwean telecoms business tycoon, Strive Masiyiwa, in 2001, and he injected huge capital and acquired 60 percent of the shares, the remainder being held by AMIZ represented by Smail.

4.9 *The Daily News*: capturing the historical moments

The focus of news coverage was generally political. I think it was dictated by the political times of the moment. Zimbabweans wanted an open media platform for free expression and *The Daily News* provided them with an adequate platform. You would recall that during those years the paper's coming also coincided with the beginning of political violence and people wanted to hear true stories. At the height of political violence and commercial farm invasion, victims of political violence would actually start by reporting at *The Daily News* before they went to the police and to hospital for treatment. The paper's newsroom resembled hospital outpatients where people with different injuries came to present their ordeals. These victims had faith the newspaper would tell their stories as they were, without fear or favour. They came to the paper because they wanted the real story to be told to the world, they wanted the real story to be told to the people of Zimbabwe. Obviously the real story was that we were dealing with a criminal state; a state that treated its citizens as a threat to the government. We saw the government engaged in brutal assault of the people it was supposed to protect," (Interview with Geoffrey Nyarota, Harare, on 17th October, 2012).

This type of news coverage from a daily national newspaper that was privately owned, it could be argued, had no precedence in the history of state media relations in Zimbabwe. The robust and investigative nature of the paper and its journalists brought a new and possibly radical dimension to the way the Zimbabwean story during the crisis period was covered. The paper became an alternative medium in the sense that it captured the stories and experiences of ordinary victims of political repression.

The Daily News coverage was completely opposite to the way news was covered by state-owned newspapers. For instance, where the state newspapers attacked opposition political leaders, *The Daily News* would oppose government policies and used activist and inflammatory language against President Mugabe, as is shown in some of the headline stories used in this section, Chapter Five and Chapter Six. It can possibly be suggested, therefore, that the paper and its journalists contributed to the broadening and opening up of the public sphere, which did not involve mass demonstrations and protests. This dissertation therefore, interrogates the various ways in which *The Daily News* and its journalists, in an oppositional, activist and often radical way, wrote investigative stories, giving alternative and marginalized voices a platform from which to express themselves while confronted by an authoritarian regime and its often violent apparatus.

As Willems (2010: 3) observed, the focus on dramatic confrontations between Zimbabweans and the government that were expressed in street protests, ignored other means used by ordinary Zimbabweans. This study elaborates how an opposition newspaper and its journalists opposed the government's authoritarian administration by organising and giving voice to others of the regime's dissenters. Similarly, scholars in the field of subaltern studies have pointed to the important role of ordinary people in bringing about revolutions and rebellions. This is not to say that journalists are ordinary people, but to argue that the role of oppositional and activist journalists, especially their experiences and their contributions to the democratization struggles in Zimbabwe, have not been adequately investigated because the focus has been on the agency of 'Big Men', as Willems (2010) postulates in her study of the agency of "Small Men", which examined the role of rumour and humour in confronting authoritarian rule in Zimbabwe during a crisis period. The agency of journalists, through their confrontation with an oppressive regime in the democratization processes in Zimbabwe, is therefore a focus of the study that will enrich and broaden the understanding of the contribution of journalists to Habermas' concept of the public sphere, and to the struggles against state authoritarianism.

Haynes and Prakash, (in Willems, 2010: 3), asserts that resistance against authoritarianism should be defined as the broader set of practices used by the dominated to challenge those who make attempts to dominate them. It is submitted that the concept of resistance should encompass a wide-ranging collection of practices, such as rituals, gossip, humour, dress and behavioural codes. One could therefore posit that the preoccupation of scholars who examined the Zimbabwe crisis through huge events such as

riots and protests ignore everyday struggles by the media, such as the experiences of *Daily News*' journalists in the democratic struggles during periods of instability.

Nyarota, (2006: 243) submits that at the time *The Daily News* was conceived, *The Herald*, the government's once profitable flagship, had become staid and boring, with a fast diminishing pagination and declining circulation. In his view, conceiving and producing a better paper than the *Herald* proved to be an easy task. Nyarota points out that the editorial mission of the paper was to tell the Zimbabwean story "like it is, without fear or favour". He professes that editors at government controlled newspapers were shaken out of their customary lethargy by the sudden emergence of *The Daily News* and its prospects of robust competition. "By the time *The Daily News* appeared, government spokesmen had become hysterical in their denunciation of it, but condemnation of any newspaper by representatives of a discredited government is excellent publicity," he observed, (Nyarota, 2006: 244).

In a wide ranging interview during this research in Harare, Nyarota reiterated that his vision of a newspaper was to serve the public interest and to be autonomous of the investor and the government. That was his notion when he thought of launching a privately owned paper in the country.

When I came back from Mozambique with plans to launch a newspaper, my plan was to launch an independent newspaper. Independent of government control but, as you are aware yourself, it is not only government control which is a problem. Control by owners can be a more serious problem than control by government. So when I thought of a newspaper I thought of a newspaper that is controlled by the journalists who write for it, even if they are not owners. Owners would just put money, because newspapers are big business, so owners invest in the newspapers they take the risk of not controlling it but they own it. They leave that to journalists that they trust to bring a credible newspaper on the basis of their professional assessment of situations. It seems too simplistic, but that is my dream newspaper and what does the proprietor benefit? The investor gets the dividends because it is business and the journalists get salaries and they may own a stake of the business in future. If the investor is a good businessperson he should create a lasting relationship with those that take care of his business. So that is my belief and the policy of the newspaper is to produce a publication for the public, not for themselves, not for the investor, not for the government but for investors who have invested the least in the newspaper (Interview with Geoffrey Nyarota, Harare, 17 October, 2012).

Nyarota said this while reading from his personal memoirs. He also pointed out that *The Daily News* was a unique tabloid newspaper in a media environment that was dominated by state-controlled newspapers, and its role was to promote the democratic cause by allowing citizens to know what was happening in

the country through stories, opinions and letters to the editors' column. Its role included capturing the voices that were muzzled by the state's daily newspapers *The Herald* and *The Chronicle*, and stories that were avoided by the official media

This study contends that disparate voices from students, workers, farmers, civic society organizations to opposition political parties, were brought together by *The Daily News* to confront the State about the deteriorating socio-economic and political situation in the country. The paper gave form and purpose to the democratic actors during the democratic struggles against authoritarian rule, some respondents in this study observed.

In the ensuing democratic struggles, *The Daily News* became a medium for pro-democracy forces to spread their messages of reform to the population. The paper became a mouthpiece for opposition and civic actors opposed to Mugabe's dictatorship. Given the timing of the launch of the paper and its oppositional stance, this suggests that *The Daily News* came at a time (1999) when opposition forces were in disarray, despite growing agitation for reforms from the grassroots.

The Daily News assumed the role of the opposition, thereby setting itself against the State in a situation where there was rampant lawlessness spearheaded by veterans of the liberation struggle who were disillusioned by the failure of the political elite to look into their economic and social conditions two decades after independence; a compromised judiciary that could not dispense justice, and a partisan security apparatus that failed to uphold the rule of law, especially against opponents of the ruling elite. Cases of extra-judicial activities and impunity from groups aligned to ZANU PF against the private press, civic society and the opposition political party activists assist to define this moment and the role of activist journalists in defying repression.

The Daily News broke the monopoly of state-controlled media in the dissemination of news and became the alternative to government newspapers. Waldahl (2004) noted that, at its peak, *The Daily News* reached a daily circulation of 100 000, compared to the State-run *The Herald* newspaper's 90 000. Willems (2011) evaluated the significant growth trajectory of *The Daily News* if it is compared to *The Herald* between 2000 and 2003 through analysis of circulation from media research bodies, such as the Zimbabwe Advertising and Research Foundation and the Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey (ZAMPS). For instance, in 2000, a year after *The Daily News* was formed, 73 percent and 79 percent of low density and urban residents had read *The Daily News* and *The Herald* respectively in the past six months of that year. In 2003, before the paper was closed on 21 September 2003, 77 percent and 49

percent of low density and urban residents had read *The Daily News* and *The Herald* respectively in the past six months of that year.

A 2002, ZAMPS report show that in the last six months of 2002, of a total sample of 2,945, 051 people, 308,570 read the *Daily News* from cover to cover, compared to 170,986 who read *The Herald* and 100,615 for *The Chronicle*. The same report also reveals that of 6,728,778 sampled, 2, 061,009 had read *The Daily News*, 1,947,536 and 922,565 had read the *Herald* and the *Chronicle* respectively in the last six months.

The coming of the paper captured issues of the moment in that context. It coincided with popular opposition and a wave of discontent. The paper then took a deliberate position to support the opposition, as this study examines further in Chapters Five and Six. *The Daily News* set the news agenda during the three main elections during in its life, the referendum in February, 2000, the June, 2000, elections and the 2002 presidential elections. It also sided with the political oppositions during the by-elections, as well as in local government polls that took place between 2000 and 2003. The paper extensively covered the invasion and takeover of the white-owned commercial farms that was spearheaded by veterans of Zimbabwe's liberation war as it was suggested that this was the unfinished business of the independence war, as well as the need to democratize the political economy of the state. Cases of human rights violations against farm workers and the white farmers were widely covered by the paper.

4.10 *The Daily News* growth and opposition politics in Zimbabwe

The nightly appearance on television of government officials frothing at the mouth in panic-stricken condemnation of *The Daily News* seemed to whet the public's appetite for the newspaper. With the motto '*Telling it like it is*' boldly emblazoned under its masthead, *The Daily News* refused to acknowledge the existence of any sacred cow on Zimbabwe's political landscape. A combination of daring and thoroughly investigated exposés, coupled with hard-hitting editorial comment, in-depth articles and adroit cartoons that parodied the many shortcomings or excesses of an increasingly unpopular and beleaguered regime, quickly endeared the paper to its readers. This, of course, was far more than ZANU PF politicians could stomach. In their eyes, the paper's reporters were clearly writing against the grain. *The Daily News* had created a public platform for the MDC and its allies, the ZCTU and various civil society organizations. By then the ruling party had launched a vicious campaign to destroy both the newspaper and every vestige of political opposition, (Nyarota, 2006: 254).

During my field research on 17th October, 2012, in Harare, Nyarota submitted that *The Daily News* captured the issues of the moment in a period of political and economic instability:

The Daily News tended to be populist as it went with the people at a time when the government was becoming increasingly unpopular. So *The Daily News* supported the popular sentiment, which explains why it later incurred the wrath of the government. It was like *The Daily News* was giving a platform to ZCTU, was giving the MDC a platform and was giving commercial farmers a platform. It was giving a platform to anybody that was a victim of the government oppression. This was not a difficult position to take once you unshackled yourself of government control. Our stories were about depicting the problems of ordinary people. We gave victims of state violence a voice, a space and home to articulate their views. It was a paper for ordinary people not for experts, (Interview with Geoffrey Nyarota, Harare, on 17th October, 2012).



A Daily News headline showing an assaulted opposition supporter in the run up to the 2000 election

In 1999, the year of the launch of the paper, the government bowed down to pressure from the NCA and its political and civic alliances for constitutional reforms as a prelude to holding possibly free and fair elections in 2000.

A government-appointed Constitutional Commission (CC) gathered the views of the people for a year and produced a report which made sweeping changes on the structure of government and its powers. The proposed changes to the law would have limited future presidents to running for two terms of five years each. The President could stand in two more elections. In addition, the government and military officials would have been rendered immune from prosecution for any unlawful acts committed while serving. The State would also have been given the power to confiscate white-owned commercial farms for redistribution to the blacks, without payment of any compensation, saying it was the obligation of the colonial master, Britain, to do so.

A constitutional referendum was held on 12th and 13th February, 2000, and the government lost it. According to Nyarota, the outcome took ZANU PF by surprise and it was a major embarrassment ahead of the parliamentary elections in March. The elections were postponed to June, 2000.

To start with, the success of its campaign against the new constitution fuelled the MDC's popularity. For *The Daily News*, the outcome of the referendum signalled the start of a period of re-energized growth, Nyarota pointed out, (2006:246).

Four months earlier, while the constitutional commission was campaigning for the draft constitution, *The Daily News* conducted an opinion poll of its own, asking readers to respond to the desirability of the proposed constitution. The most popular question was: which candidate respondents would vote for if a presidential election were to be held immediately? Most respondents greatly preferred the MDC leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, over President Mugabe.

At the height of the campaign in January, 2000, *The Daily News* was experiencing financial problems that were associated with its disastrous launch, with circulation hovering below 30,000 against a projection of over 100,000 copies a day. ANZ failed to pay its workers in November and December, 1999, due to cash flow problems. The paper lacked advertisements and business people were not willing to inject funds into the project.

One evening, I pulled the referendum file and took it to our next news conference. We decided to ask the department of statistics at the University of Zimbabwe for a professional assessment of the results. Their analysis had the makings of a fascinating story, and we published it a few weeks before voters went to the polls. The issue of the paper sold out within hours, while correspondence on the outcome of our poll dominated the letters page right up to the polls, (Nyarota 2006: 247).

The Herald dismissed this as thoroughly unprofessional.

We insisted that it was representative of political sentiment in the country and boldly predicted that the majority would vote against the draft constitution. When this prophecy came to pass in February, *The Daily News* was given a new lease of life, its credibility instantly endorsed,

Nyarota noted in his memoirs, (2006: 247).

After the paper predicted the outcome of the referendum against the ruling party, the circulation of the paper jumped to 50,000. By the beginning of April, 2000, circulation reached 70,000 daily, and by May, 2000, the figures had rocketed to 90,000 daily after the company started to import newsprint, which was in short supply in Zimbabwe, from South Africa.

Our moment of glory was on 28th June, when we published the results of the controversial, violence-wracked parliamentary election. We gambled on a mammoth print run – 127, 500 copies. The issue was sold out, (Nyarota, 2006: 247).

To show the decline of the government paper as a result of the competition provided by *The Daily News*, as an alternative form of news, especially to previously sidelined voices, Nyarota points out that in its heyday in the 1980s, *The Herald* printed and sold 165,000 copies a day. However, a year after the launch of *The Daily News*, that figure dropped to 50,000, while, during the same period, the circulation of *The Daily News* grew to more than 100,000 copies day, said Nyarota.



In 2001, two years after it was launched, The Daily News became the country's leading newspaper, toppling the state-controlled Herald newspapers, which had been on the market for over 100 years. The paper captured the voices that were previously excluded from the official media, mainly dissident and opposition voices.

Through investigative journalism in an environment that was violent, *The Daily News* exposed the human rights violations that were associated with the referendum and election campaigns, mainly on the side of the MDC and civil society organizations. They mounted campaigns that discredited the ruling

party and ZANU PF's political invincibility collapsed. Despite mounting a coordinated onslaught against the opposition, the independent press, the judiciary and white farmers,

whose land was invaded and seized in a bloody operation mounted by war veterans and ZANU PF activists, Mugabe's party came closer to losing power than at any other time during his two decades in office,

Nyarota said (2006:247).



Opposing and criticizing the land reform process as chaotic and unlawful seizures of private properties in 2000

ZANU PF won 62 of the 120 contested constituencies, the MDC got 57 and Zanu Ndonga won a seat. Mugabe's party, however, retained its majority in the 150-seat Parliament because the President had the right to appoint 30 more non-constituency legislators. What it is significant to note is that Mugabe's powers were eroded; his party could not make constitutional amendments because it lacked the required two-thirds majority.

The election result also gave *The Daily News* a major boost. The paper had consistently campaigned for political change, and although ZANU PF remained in power, its supremacy had been significantly diminished. The politically tense election campaign had seen a phenomenal 325 per cent growth in our sales, from a modest 30,000 to 127,500 copies, with practically every issue selling out,

Nyarota revealed (2006: 247).

In interview, Nyarota reveals how *The Daily News* changed the political dynamics of the 2000 election because of its robust coverage of opposition politics. In doing so, he acknowledged how the paper and its journalists were involved in actively opening up of the public sphere and the political system in Zimbabwe.

So *The Daily News* opened space for debate, for discourse at the level that never existed. Previous elections had been done in an environment of media monopoly by government institutions, both print and electronic. For the first time, in February, 2000, there was an open campaign against the government position in terms of the referendum. This had never happened before and stories and columns where they were attacking government positions, attacking the person of the president himself, in terms of his utterances. People could challenge the President for the first time and there was a ground swell of disgruntlement with the government, and this was articulated mainly through *The Daily News*. It was for this reason that the circulation of *The Daily News* in one year shot from zero to 129,000, and the people had seen an outlet for their own sentiments. The result of the referendum fell in line with this new development and that is why the government came, guns blazing, at *The Daily News*. From February to June the election was totally different in terms of outcome from the previous elections. This was because democracy had cracked into the media institutions in terms of people having freedom of expression and you would say freedom of choice, (Interview with Geoffrey Nyarota, Harare, on 17th October, 2012).



The Daily News headline after the 2002 disputed presidential election, criticizing President Mugabe's victory. After criticism by the Commonwealth, Mugabe pulled Zimbabwe out of the group in 2003.

The above alternative approach, taken by *The Daily News*, especially its exposure of human rights violations and the provision of an alternative space for opposition voices against the government, challenging government newspapers and state propaganda on a daily basis, led the state to re-think its policy positions and how it could respond to this freedom in order to maintain its hegemonic politics on the State. Government and party bureaucrats had to find ways to manage the private press's erosion of the ruling party's authoritarian control of national politics and public discourses in the wake of rising demands for democratic reforms and governance.

4.11 Government's policy response to opposition media and *The Daily News*

The government was initially tolerant, but later became less approving of *The Daily News*. From 2000 to 2004, journalists working for the independent media were relentlessly harassed and harangued, tortured

and threatened with death, wantonly arrested or had to run from the city. War veterans and ZANU PF activists banned the distribution of non-government newspapers in rural areas and small urban centres; a printing press was destroyed by a bomb; editorial offices were targeted for attack. After ZANU PF's close shave with defeat at the parliamentary polls in June 2000, the state-sponsored campaign of violence spiralled. The motto of *The Daily News*, 'Telling it like it is', did nothing to endear the paper to the country's rulers, but notwithstanding concerted efforts to repress and silence all critics, political opposition mounted, (Nyarota, 2006: 255).

Rónning and Kupe (2000: 172) point out that the coming of an oppositional newspaper, *The Daily News*, provoked the:

most worrying response from the government; both the Minister of Information, Chen Chimutingwende, and the Industry and Commerce Minister, Nathan Shamuyarira, criticised the project for being foreign dominated and for having the potential to destabilize the political order and furthering opposition political agendas.

However, the two scholars dismissed the two ministers, arguing that:

it is characteristic of the relationship between the government and the press in monolithic systems that representatives of the rulers tend to attack the independent press on the basis of two sorts of arguments; either that they represent a divisional threat to national unity and cohesion, or that they purvey slander and lies, (Rónning&Kupe 2000:172).

Rónning and Kupe therefore postulated that in such a political atmosphere there is a great cause and compelling reasons why a principled liberal media ideology easily finds proponents, particularly in circles wanting to further a democratic policy and defend a free and independent press. This could possibly explain the relationship between the democratic political opposition and civil society organisations in their confrontation of the authoritarian regime in Zimbabwe during the crisis period, as this study examines.

Media analysts have argued that as the ruling party's legitimacy was increasingly being battered as a result of the failure of the Bretton-Woods driven economic adjustment reforms and the workers strikes, as well as calls for democratic reforms by the opposition, President Mugabe's government became predatory and militarized, (Chuma, 2010). The government's pseudo-democratic overtures were abandoned and it adopted coercive media policies in order to control the growing chorus of dissent that found its expression in the private press, such as *The Daily News*.

The government responded by putting in place a legal arsenal between 2001 and 2002 with which to address pockets of nationally organised political dissent. These laws were crafted to criminalize and negate the practice of journalism and, at the same time, promoting the political ends of the then governing ZANU PF party. However, in an in-depth interview on 13th September, 2012, at his office in Harare, George Charamba, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Publicity and the Presidential Spokesperson, defended the laws, arguing that the country needed to protect its sovereignty and independence from foreign governments that were working with local journalists to effect a change of government. Charamba said:

Remember the environment that I described; this was an environment where ZANU PF was at stiff odds with very powerful forces. If you look at the laws that were made during that period, they were laws which were calculated to defend the state. So you find that all laws were meant not to pass the democratic test you talk about, but they were meant for the preservation of the state under ZANU PF,(Interview with George Charamba, Harare, 17th October, 2012).

In circumstances where the state enact laws that deliberately seek to silence alternative voices, the roles of alternative news media and activist journalists become vital in order to serve the democratic interests of oppressed sectors of the community, such as agents of social change.

Chuma and Moyo, (2010), as well as Bourgault, (1995),submit that suppressing journalists in Africa, and in Zimbabwe in particular, took the form of legal and bureaucratic procedures to control the media: commercial mechanisms such as heavy taxes on newsprint, state licensing and requirements to post expensive bonds with the government before initiating publications, as well as unlawful detentions and harassment by state agents.

In Zimbabwe, President Mugabe inherited colonial laws at independence, and then added more oppressive ones in an apparent case of history repeating itself. Despite the rhetoric against imperialism, Mugabe's government continued with the oppressive media policies of yesteryear's oppressors that he conveniently blames for all of the country's problems.

In an interview on 14th August, 2012, in Harare, the eminent political scientist and publisher, Ibbo Mandaza, suggested that there are little differences between the colonial media policies and those of the independence government:

Basically, there has been continuity by the state in terms of repression. The law and order laws and regulations in the colonial times and the postcolonial times are similar. It was as difficult to operate private media in the Rhodesian days as it is today.



The Daily News journalists Lloyd Mudiwa and Nyarota at the Harare Magistrate Courts in 2002. The two were standing trial for publishing a false story that a woman was beheaded by a group of Zanu PF supporters in the Mashonaland West Province, west of the capital, Harare, as part of widespread political retribution after the March, 2002, presidential election, which was won controversially by President Mugabe. The two were acquitted after the court ruled that publishing a false story was not a criminal offense. The paper also published a front page apology for the mistake.

There are several laws that infringe on the operations of the media, such as The Official Secrets Act, The Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act and The Interception of Communications Act. However, for the purpose of this study, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2002, The Public Order and Security Act, (POSA) of 2002, and the Broadcasting Services Act of 2001, will be evaluated because they underpinned the state's repression of the media and the journalists more than the other laws. The law that was most used against media and journalism freedoms were AIPPA, especially the private print media and *The Daily News* and its journalists in particular. An

examination of these laws, how they were implemented by the government, and their impact on the practice of journalism is therefore of enormous significance for this study.

4.12 The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2002

Firstly, before the law was passed, President Mugabe had, in 2000, disbanded the Ministry of Information and replaced it with a Department of Information in the Office of the President and Cabinet. The Department had a Minister and a Permanent Secretary. Its advantage was that it received enormous resources from the President's Office to enable it to engage in a number of projects to defend the regime during the crisis periods. The Department was headed by a professor of political science, Jonathan Moyo, a long time critic of the President and his party. He was the architect of the media policies and media repression that characterised Zimbabwe as it grappled with the twin crises of legitimacy and governance.

During an interview for this study in Harare on 20th September, 2012, Moyo submitted that because the country's political sovereignty was being threatened by foreign powers who were working with the private media and civil society organizations to oppose and denigrate the land redistribution exercise and to orchestrate a change of government, it was necessary to craft the laws as a form of defence.

However, on the enactment of AIPPA, like many other repressive laws, there were no public consultations of media stakeholders. Despite its misleading title, AIPPA was enacted in order to control the operations of both journalists and print media organisations. The law was justified by the need to facilitate public access to information, to put an end to media excesses and ensure Zimbabweans' ownership of the print mass media³.

The enactment of AIPPA in March, 2002, was described by the media watchdog, the Media Institute for Southern Africa's Zimbabwe Chapter; (Misa-Zimbabwe) as sounding "the death-knell for a vibrant, free and diverse media in Zimbabwe". At some point during debates in Parliament, the bill was twice rejected by the opposition and ZANU PF's representatives in Parliament. An example was the late Dr. Eddison Zvobgo, who led the Parliamentary Legal Committee at the time, and ZANU PF's Secretary for Legal Affairs in the political bureau and a constitutional lawyer, who criticized the law saying,

³Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debates, 2002, Vol. 28, No 48, pages 4383-4544

... this bill, in its original form was the most calculated and determined assault on our liberties guaranteed by the Constitution... what is worse, the bill was badly drafted in that several provisions were obscure, vague, overbroad in scope, ill-conceived and dangerous..., (Misa-Zimbabwe, 2002).

AIPPA's purpose was to make public information available to the media and members of the public while, at the same time, ensuring the right to privacy of citizens. However, this study disputes the claims because in reality, the law succeeded in making public information difficult to access, especially for the media. For instance, the application process and the time to respond before a public body could release information, was too long.

The most controversial sections of the law are Sections 79 and 80, which require media companies and journalists to register with the Media and Information Commission (MIC), which was replaced by the Zimbabwe Media Council (ZMC) in order to operate in Zimbabwe. The two sections enforce compulsory registration and accreditation. The government used these sections to victimize media houses and journalists that oppose the political establishment. Under AIPPA, registration certificates for journalists and media houses can be cancelled without notice, should the Minister of Information use his discretionary powers. Unregistered journalists are not allowed to be employed in media houses in Zimbabwe and should that happen the media house may lose its license. One could be fined, and/or face jail, for breaching this provision. The powers of the then MIC and the Minister hugely affected the private press, such as *The Daily News*, that was critical of the government.

A number of media houses, among them *The Daily News* and its journalists, have since the inception of AIPPA been denied registration and accreditation due to stringent requirements, as well as arbitrary administrative actions by the MIC. However, following the amendment to the law in 2008 after the inception of a coalition government, accreditation is now a formality for local journalists, but foreign journalists are still restricted. Where they are accredited the fees are prohibitive.

Further, according to Section 17 (1) of AIPPA, access to information can also be denied if its disclosure would prejudice "national security", which it is argued is vague and too broad, because there are no stated mechanisms to measure what constitutes national security and the extent, if it exists, to which the disclosure of information would be prejudicial to national security. The clause is controversial because, in Zimbabwe, the national security interest is often confused with parochial and hegemonic party interests that are meant to serve the interests of powerful ruling party elites.

Section 65 of AIPPA, which prohibits foreigners from owning or investing in media services, hinders the enjoyment of freedom of expression and interferes with the right to receive and impact on information and ideas in violation of Section 20 (1) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. It also violates Section 23 of the Zimbabwe Constitution, which forbids discrimination.

Given these provisions and the spirit of the law, and how it was applied, one is persuaded to argue that the enactment of AIPPA did not democratize the media. These sections and the powers of the Minister of Information to appoint members of the MIC before 2008 clearly indicate a strong intention on the part of the executive to control and stifle the media. The amendments effected by the coalition partners did little to avert overbearing executive interference in the media because even the members of the newly created Zimbabwe Media Commission are appointed by a parliamentary committee made up of political party representatives.

Chuma, (2010: 98) observes that besides granting the public very limited access to information, and rendering public institutions unaccountable to the public, AIPPA's provision to outlaw majority shareholding by foreign companies in Zimbabwe was restrictive to media growth. He criticized the law and argued that it was designed to silence a critical media while, at the same time, it increased the powers and influence of the Minister of Information.

4.13 Broadcasting Services Act, (BSA) of 2001

Until the passing of the law, President Mugabe's government had, since 1980, perpetuated the broadcasting policies that had been articulated mainly in the form of laws, such as the 1957 Broadcasting Act (Ndlela, 2007). Ndlela pointed out that after advocacy pressure to deregulate the broadcasting sector, measures were taken in 1995, but it took another five years before the new law was passed. The move to come up with a new law was meant to address a legal lacuna that was created following a successful challenge against a telecommunications monopoly by a private company, Retrofit, now Econet Wireless, in 1995, and not to democratize the airwaves, as George Charamba, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information pointed out in an in-depth interview during the research. Interestingly, Econet's owner, Strive Masiyiwa, became the majority shareholder of *The Daily News*. Charamba argued that the business tycoon's investment in the media was meant to get back and attack the government as part of his revenge for their refusing to give him a mobile phone license that he

had been awarded through the courts in 1995. Charamba suggests that, broadly, the paper was supposed to facilitate the change of government in Zimbabwe by supporting opposition political parties and civil society organisations, funded by Western governments opposed to the land reform programme undertaken by President Mugabe's government at the beginning of 2000.

The BSA was ostensibly promulgated to regulate a liberalised electronic mass media industry. However, the law entrenches the monopoly of the sole state broadcaster, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), to the extent that no private television and radio stations operated in the country until recently, 2012, when the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) licensed two private radio stations. However, the ZBC still maintains a monopoly over television broadcasting. A number of provisions of the law place severe restrictions on the exercise of freedom of expression and on the diversification of the broadcasting sector. The Parliamentary legal committee, on 29th March, 2001, delivered a report to Parliament noting that a number of the sections of the Bill contravened Section 20 of the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of expression. However, the Committee's advice was ignored and the Bill was enacted into law without amendment.

In 2001, a private radio station, *Capital Radio*, challenged the Act in the Supreme Court, arguing that it violated Section 20 of the Constitution. The Court declared some provisions of the BSA unconstitutional, but it still endorsed and entrenched the ZBC's monopoly and left the Minister of Information, the chief architect of the law, with immense powers in the licensing and processing of applications for broadcasting services. The law was amended in 2003 to address the findings of the court, but the amendments did not effectively democratise the State's broadcasting monopoly. Further amendments were made in 2007 through a political pact between ZANU PF and the MDC ahead of the 2008 general elections, but these did not bring substantive changes.

For instance, among other things, the 2007 amendments reduced the regulatory powers of the Minister of Information. Regulatory powers were transferred to the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), a move that could be deemed democratic, given the arbitrary powers which should not be vested in the hands of a single person, especially of a politician with party interests to promote and protect. However, this works only if the body in question is genuinely independent and without control from outside forces. It is argued that the BAZ has thus far failed to exercise its duties, among others, the liberalization of both radio and television services in the country. Ndlela, (2007) argued that the broadcasting media have been crucial for the political survival of ZANU PF and the little space

given was closed when Zimbabwe embarked on an anti-Western and anti-globalisation agenda due to the crises of political legitimacy with which the political elite were grappling.

In enacting the BSA, the Information Ministry Permanent Secretary, George Charamba, submitted that the government was not interested in democratizing and in opening up the sector, but in protecting the monopoly of the ZBC. Charamba elaborated:

And you notice, interestingly, that the first attempt at media law in Zimbabwe comes in broadcasting, because that is the law that has been challenged which means the policy is following a legal challenge. It is not guiding the growth of a sector and secondly it's promulgated under temporal powers of the president because you are dealing with an emergency. There is a policy lacuna, there is a legal lacuna and people are beginning to claim their legal rights in an area which is traditionally structured that is what holds the ring until its formalized by an act of parliament in 2001. Then you have AIPPA. AIPPA comes hard on the heels of BSA because we feared that the successful challenge to broadcasting was itself a prelude. It was going to be an opening of the floodgates; that there will be going to be more challenges again in the print media so we decided that why don't we move law for the print media, (Interview with George Charamba, Harare, 17th October, 2012).

Charamba pointed out that if the purpose of the law was to open up the system to diverse people to do business in broadcasting, there would be no need for the government to put in place stringent measures in a capital intensive sector. The government's spokesperson's position is corroborated by Caesar Zvayi, then Deputy Editor of the government-run *The Herald* newspaper:

The law that really serves the interest of the government, and I heard this from the horse's mouth, the Permanent Secretary, George Charamba. When you speak to him, he will confirm this. He came when I was doing my masters degree at the University of Zimbabwe, for a guest lecture. He openly said the BSA was never enacted to open the airwaves. It was enacted to protect the monopoly of ZBC. So, going through POSA and AIPPA, if journalists register and get accredited, they can write what they want, but the law that really serves the interest of Zanu PF is the BSA, by closing the airwaves. (Interview with Caesar Zvayi, Harare, on 16th August, 2012).

Zvayi was promoted to Editor of *The Herald* on 18th October, 2013, and was suspended shortly afterwards, on 19th December, 2013, after presiding over a string of critical stories about the ruling ZANU PF party that attacked leaders of one of the party's warring factions, a move which shows the regime's intolerance and interference with press freedoms in the state-controlled newspapers' stables.

4.14 Public Order and Security Act, (POSA) of 2002

The POSA is fundamentally a security law, crafted mainly to protect the political hegemony of the incumbent government that was increasingly facing an organized challenge from civic and political movements calling for democratic reforms, as well as a plural media that was scrutinizing government and ruling party excess in a period of economic and political crisis. The law infringes on the exercise of fundamental civil and political liberties by making it unlawful to assemble protest or demonstrate without police authority, as well as making it a criminal offense to criticize the President and the government. The insult provisions of the law adversely affect the practice and operations of the media.

Section 5 of POSA and Section 2 of the Preservation of Constitutional Government Act (PCGA) list offences that are categorized under the general title of the subversion of constitutional government. The provisions create three offences that are relevant to journalists and mass media provisions. It is an offence for a journalist, in terms of Section 5 of POSA to:

organise(s) or set up or advocate(s), urge or suggest the organisation or setting up of any group or body with a view to that group:

Coercing or attempting to coerce the government; overthrowing and taking over the government through unconstitutional means; supporting or assisting any group or body that attempts to engage in any of the above.

Section 2 of the PCGA is couched in similar language to Section 5 of POSA and therefore has the same practical meaning and implications. In the course of their work, journalists are not normally expected to organise or set up organizations that have the objective of overthrowing the government. However, in a democratic society, they may set up or advocate the setting up of an organization which has as its objective the coercion of the government. It is also plausible for journalists to suggest, in certain circumstances such as those that exist in Zimbabwe at the turn of the 21st century, that one way in which there could be a change of government is if citizens follow the uprisings in Eastern Europe that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The section uses the phrase “any person” in defining the parameters of the offence, and this means that it applies to everybody, including journalists.

Among other deterrents to freedom of expression, Section 15 of POSA criminalizes the publication of false statements that are prejudicial to the state. In an authoritarian state, a mild criticism

of powerful political elites can easily pass for a prejudicial statement, resulting in the criminal prosecution of the individual or of the media organization concerned. As this study seeks to validate, journalists from privately owned newspapers, such as *The Daily News*, *The Standard* and *The Independent*, were the victims of this law. The journalists were accused of supporting civic society organizations and opposition political parties whose aim was to remove Mugabe's incumbent regime,

A senior human rights lawyer who represented journalists, especially those from *The Daily News* who were arrested by the authorities for violating the laws, argued that the laws served no democratic purposes.

When the MDC was formed in September 1999 and when it became obvious that it was becoming a political force and that it could really get sympathy and it did get sympathy from some of the private run newspapers, and it became necessary as far as those in power were concerned to regulate and control the operations of independent newspapers. So there can be no question that the laws that were passed became effective and were passed for the purposes of being able to control and manipulate the political terrain and to ensure that opposition political parties do not have a kind of access to media that would articulate their positions as widely as they would if those media were allowed to operate freely. So my view is that these were definitely laws meant to control the operations of private media, to control the flow of information and to ensure the authorities had access to the media that would articulate the particular position of the then ruling party, (Interview with a human rights lawyer, Harare, 19th October, 2012).

On 15th December, 2012, in Harare, another leading human rights lawyer, who administers a network of lawyers who provide legal representation to human rights defenders in Zimbabwe, has this to say about the repressive laws:

I think you recall in an interview, the then Minister of Information, Professor Jonathan Moyo, did not mince his words that the coming into being of these pieces of legislation were to basically counter the operations of the independent media, because it was deemed to be aligned with opposition, which was the main opposition party in the country the MDC. But the BSA basically entrenched and encouraged a state broadcasting monopoly. AIPPA made the practice of journalism extremely difficult in this country. The registration fees for media institutions and journalists were extremely high. The criminalization of some of the activities of journalism made sure that their operational space was constrained and reduced. The POSA was basically a tool that was meant to harass opposition political parties and journalists from the independent media, including international journalists who had come to observe the area of particular interest to the world. These laws were

basically meant to protect and entrench the political interests of the ruling party, (Interview with a senior human rights lawyer, Harare, 10th October, 2012).

As asserted in Chapters Five and Six, the passing of these laws also meant that alternative media institutions and journalists had to devise ways of operating under this repressive legal framework. Human rights lawyers became part of a network of human rights defenders who protected the arrested and persecuted journalists during the crisis period.

4.15 The impact of media repression and the rise of opposition and activist journalism

In September, 2001, the Minister of Information and Publicity in the Office of the President and Cabinet, Professor Jonathan Moyo, announced that:

In the interest of law and order, competent authorities will crack down on some well-known individuals in order to curb the law of the jungle they are trying to create in the country through the media”, (cited in Nyarota, 2006: 256).



Information Minister Professor Moyo threatened the Daily News' editor, Geoffrey Nyarota, in 2001, before enacting AIPPA in March, 2002. Following his dismissal by the paper in January, 2003, Nyarota (after several threats against his life) went into exile in the USA, where he started an online publication; ZimbabweTimes.Com

Hyden and Leslie, (2007: 12) have avowed that, in Africa, the privately owned media have played fundamental roles in the democratization process by probing government policies and behaviour as well as by facilitating a discursive public sphere in which public national issues were interrogated in an open and free atmosphere. In the case of Zimbabwe, the private media's investigative role and the exposure of government excesses and human rights violations during the crisis periods had chilling consequences for the operations of journalists.

Nyarota, who personally experienced personal attacks through numerous arrests, death threats, office bombing and detentions as editor-in- chief of *The Daily News*, until he was forced into exile in the United States in 2003, fearing for his life, pointed out that from 2000 to 2004, journalists who worked for the independent media,

were relentlessly harassed and harangued, tortured and threatened with death, wantonly arrested or run out of town. War veterans and ZANU PF activists banned the distribution of non-government newspapers in rural areas and small urban centres; a printing press was destroyed by a bomb; editorial offices targeted for attack, (Nyarota, 2006: 255).

Nyarota submitted that apart from strict legal requirements for licensing newspapers and journalists to operate, the physical harassment of journalists, arrests, detentions, and the bombing of the paper, the government used its financial muscles in the advertising industry to cripple the operations of privately owned newspapers, such as *The Daily News*.

Newspapers survive on advertising and if you do not have advertising, your days are numbered. There are papers that I see today and I am filled with trepidation because there is no advertising. You know that a lot of advertising comes from government institutions, ministries and parastatals. In the *Patriot* today there was an advertisement remembering Rex Nhongo, which looked like a supplement, with the Zimbabwe Prison Service, Zimbabwe Republic Police, and the Zimbabwe Defence Forces. If *The Daily News* and *Newsday* became equally patriotic, then they would be as successful in canvassing government advertising as the *Patriot* and *The Herald* would do, (Interview with Geoffrey Nyarota, Harare, 12th October, 2012).

During research for this dissertation, in an interview in Harare on 12th February, 2013, in Harare, Luke Tamborinyoka, the paper's Political Editor, corroborated Nyarota's assertions when he described how he and his colleagues were traumatized by war veterans in the course of their duties when they went to cover a story at a farm on the outskirts of Harare in 2001, at the height of the farm seizures:

We went to Stonebridge Farm when we heard reports that war veterans had raped innocent girls. It was in 2001. I went there with Shame Mukamba, the driver, and Tsvangirai Mukwazhi, a photo journalist. While we were busy interviewing these girls, who were narrating how they were abused by the war veterans, word went around that there was *The Daily News* team in the compound. We took refuge in the farmer's house. The war veterans besieged the farm owner's house and demanded that we came out. The door was locked, we had to use the land line of the farmer to call Hatfield police station and a police inspector came with six cars and rescued us. It was a traumatic experience. We were besieged in the farmer's house for almost an hour before the police turned up. These war veterans were armed; they were beating the gate to the house and demanding that we come out of the farm house. We

actually thought that the police were not going to help us, but it was one of those real moments that the police turned up to assist us and rescued us from imminent danger, (Interview with Luke Tamorinyoka, Harare, on 12th February, 2013).



A white farmer was killed during the farm occupations in 2002. Most of the alleged killers were never brought to trial by the government.

Nyarota further pointed out that both local and foreign journalists were targeted, with impunity, for victimization by the government. As a result of the ongoing threats and arrests, Nyarota argues that the independent press found it difficult as critical and efficient platforms for public discourses and information. It was during this period that foreign correspondents from reputable news organizations, like the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Cable News Network (CNN), were expelled from Zimbabwe.

Chiumbu and Moyo, (2009: 208) submit that the laws led to the closure of publications such as *The Daily News*, *The Tribune*, *The Daily News on Sunday* and *The Weekly Times*, rendering quite a number of journalists jobless, forcing them to emigrate to countries like the United States of America, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Canada in search of greener pastures.

The independent media were muzzled and the government employed a combination of legal pressure, harassment and imprisonment to prevent the independent domestic and foreign outlets from reporting freely. Therefore through regulatory and institutional restructuring of the media, the government sought to ensure control over the flow and dissemination of information, (Chiumbu & Moyo, 2009: 191).

As articulated in this study, the purposes of these laws were to stifle the operations of the alternative media and to starve the opposition and civic groups, as well as victims of state oppression, a platform for public discussion of the crisis and the human rights violations associated with the turmoil.

Chuma (2010: 97) observes that the closure of three privately-owned newspapers in a space of eight months under AIPPA, *The Daily News* and its sister paper, *The Daily News on Sunday* in September, 2003, and the weekly *Tribune* in May, 2004, clearly showed the devastating effects of the law and what it was meant to achieve: to silence the dissenting voices against the establishment. ANZ publications were closed down after the Supreme Court dismissed their constitutional challenge to the AIPPA, while *The Tribune* failed to inform the MIC, the regulatory arm of the law changes, to its shareholding structure.

4.16 The agency of alternative media journalists

It is perhaps important to observe that during these trials and tribulations, Zimbabwean journalists were not passive victims of state propaganda and repression. As this study examines further in Chapter Five and Six through more in depth interviews with some of the journalists, these media practitioners exercised a relatively high degree of agency, exploring and devising several ways of defining the crisis in the country in their own terms including, among other methods, joining political parties, underground journalism and joining civil society organizations where they continued to practice journalism without the scrutiny of the state.

Some of the journalists started alternative media ventures, including web-based newspapers, while in exile, especially in South Africa, the UK and the USA. Clandestine radio stations and internet blogs which contributed to public debate during the crisis period, including debate on media repression and human rights violations, were created between 2000 and 2004. Prominent among the websites are the UK-based *NewZimbabwe.com*, *ZimDaily.Com*, *Association of Zimbabwe journalists in the UK.com*, *ChangeZimbabwe.com* and *Nehanda Radio.com*. There was also *ZimOnline.com* which was created mostly by exiled former *Daily News* reporters in South Africa, *The Zimbabwe Times.com* which was run by the exiled Nyarota from the USA, while clandestine stations that linked extensively with opposition and civic and social movements at home include the *Short Wave Radio Africa*, *Voice of the People and*

Voice of America's Studio Seven. These were organized responses to state-organized and legalized repression against the practice of journalism.

4.17 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed and examined the ecology of media in Zimbabwe and the major policy issues and debates that were important to the new government that assumed political power in 1980. With the rise and clamour for democratic governance in post-independent Zimbabwe a vibrant and investigative press also emerged which in some way mirrored the early African media that fought alongside liberation movements against colonialism in the 1960s and 1970s. From there, this chapter discussed the trajectory of the opposition press in post-independence Zimbabwe, where publications such as *Moto*, *Parade*, *Horizon*, and *The Financial Gazette* in the 1980s, and these were joined in the 1990s by *The Zimbabwe Independent* and *The Standard* in opposing the one-party state ideology of ZANU PF. The first three were monthly magazines, while the last three were weekly newspapers with a focus on business and expert commentaries. The critical difference that *The Daily News* brought was its wide circulation and that it was a daily newspaper that came at a critical historical moment when the state and the ruling party were facing political and economic crises. Further, as shown by its news coverage, the paper concentrated on writing stories of ordinary people in the extraordinary political circumstances of a political crisis under conditions of repression, as is captured through interviews with journalists, lawyers, government officials and opposition and civic dissidents in Chapter Five. Most worthy of observation also is that before 2000, apart from security laws such as the state of emergency and defamation laws, there was no law that specifically regulated the print media in Zimbabwe. So the legal and political framework under which *The Daily News* and its journalists operated brings to the fore the need to investigate the experiences of an opposition newspaper and its journalists while they were operating under repression, as is explored and argued in Chapters Five and Six.

In a case of history repeating itself, the independent government of Zimbabwe put in place a litany of oppressive laws to protect its power from a mobilized opposition and a civil society that was finding alternative media platforms from which to confront the state's dictatorship under the ruling party.

However, some of the media regulatory policies, including laws such as AIPPA, ironically made information less accessible to journalists, particularly those from the private media. POSA and AIPPA

became a systematic expression of the State's media policy in crisis ridden times, much predicated on colonial type laws during the days of Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965.

The Minister of Information and Publicity is responsible for the operations of the government-controlled mass media, such as Zimpapers and ZBC, which are in fact competitors to the independent media. It is therefore objectionable and undemocratic that both BSA and AIPPA enable the private media's control by a competitor in the industry. The BSA establishes BAZ to regulate and control the operations of electronic media, while AIPPA created MIC to do the same with the print media. In his absolute discretion, the Minister used to set up, appoint, dismiss and remunerate both state institutions. Additionally and ironically, both organizations double as disciplinary tribunals over prescribed violations by the media and journalists. In the majority of cases, only journalists from the private media were found to be foul of the laws. More so, the media licensing system gave the government power to control the flow, nature, instruments of dissemination and quality of the information disseminated by all of the mass media.

In the following section, Chapter Five, data collected from key informants, such as government ministers and journalists, will shape, validate and solidify the contribution of this dissertation to the field of media and communication in emerging democracies. The data is presented and analysed in Chapters Five and Six to bring out the critical threads of opposition, resistance, alternative, activist, and often radical, journalism of *The Daily News* and its journalists, which form the core of this investigation. The impact of the government policies on the media and the ways in which journalists from *The Daily News* responded to these transgressions in the democratic struggles that ensued in Zimbabwe, are assessed. Interviews with key journalists who operated under conditions of repression, government authorities who crafted the laws, opposition dissenters who used *The Daily News* as an alternative platform from which to voice their concerns, and human rights defenders who confronted the abuse of human rights by the repressive state apparatus, underpin the analysis in order to create a coherent framework of alternative and activist journalism in the democratisation politics in Zimbabwe within an oppressive environment.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Daily News and opposition politics in Zimbabwe

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the main findings from my interviews. In doing so, it addresses two important questions; what was the relationship between the independent/alternative news media and, more especially, *The Daily News*, with oppositional political forces such as the MDC and civic groups, and why and how did individual Zimbabwean journalists choose to fight in conditions of repression during the Zimbabwean crisis? What are the linkages between emerging democracies and alternative news media?

Fifty-one respondents were interviewed over a period of a year, between July, 2012, and July, 2013. Most of the interviews were carried out at various places and offices in Harare. The respondents included three cabinet ministers, a presidential spokesperson; journalists from both the state and private media, apart from those from *The Daily News*, including the award winning journalist, Geoffrey Nyarota. Senior members of political parties, civil society organisations, labour, lawyers and academics, are among the list of respondents used to obtain data for this study. Two of the cabinet ministers have since left the government after the elections on 31st July, 2013, that ended the life of the coalition government.

Data obtained from interviewing state officials show that the government's position, that *The Daily News* journalists were opposition and activist elements, is validated as some of them crossed to join the opposition party, MDC, the main organised political opponent of the ruling party. One became a minister and another a spokesperson for the Prime Minister in the coalition regime that ended after the disputed elections that were won by President Mugabe and his party on 31st July, 2013. Findings, such as the embedded and activist nature of *The Daily News* journalists in opposition and advocacy networks and their biting critique of the government validate the finding that the newspaper and its journalists played alternative journalism roles. The tabloid nature and language of the headlines of the paper, demonstrated below, further show the agency and radical nature of the paper and its reporters, corroborating the key argument that the paper was a site for opposition forces and a mouthpiece for dissenting civic and political voices. The scathing headlines of the paper, which reflect the ideological or editorial position of a newspaper that usually coincided with the holding of key meetings, such the

United Nations General Assembly, the African Union (AU), the Commonwealth and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) where Zimbabwe was on the agenda for various reasons, including human rights violations and electoral malpractices during the crisis period. One could therefore propose that the purpose was to influence the decisions of these bodies; an arguably oppositional and activist lobby position from the paper. The most valuable proposition is that the data validates and confirms the role of alternative media and its commitment to fight for social change and justice.

5.1 The *Daily News*: organising the opposition front

In discussing the relationship between *The Daily News* and the opposition MDC, the party's former spokesperson during the crisis period, former Minister of Information, Communication and Technology and organizing secretary of the party, Nelson Chamisa, pointed out that:

It was a partnership of convenience and also a partnership of conviction. It was a partnership of convenience in the sense that we all believed that we needed to usher in a new democracy so the midwife of that democracy, the nurses and doctors to deliver through an operation of that democracy, was the MDC. You will find that *The Daily News* was helping that effort because there was a consensus between us in terms of the conviction. The MDC's formation and its challenge against an authoritarian establishment was the story of the moment. There was cross-pollination of ideas. Some ideas were shared while some were not shared but all motivated by one common enemy, (Interview with Nelson Chamisa, Harare, 8th December, 2012).

Given this relationship, one can discern that *The Daily News*, as an alternative medium during a period of crisis, to a larger degree served the interests of the opposition. This possibly explains the reason why the government sought to curtail the operations of alternative and privately controlled newspapers through undemocratic laws.

Downing, (2001: 9) articulates that radical alternative media serves to express opposition vertically from subordinate or oppressed groups towards the power structure and its behaviour while, at the same time, building support, solidarity and networking, laterally against the policies and the survival of the power structure. It is submitted that the radical alternative media work with social and political movements to challenge the political power structures by providing them with a platform from which to mobilize dissent. This section seeks to explore through evidence and to examine the relationship between *The*

Daily News and its journalists with opposition political parties and advocacy networks in the democratization process in Zimbabwe during the crisis period. The main purpose is to delineate how the paper and its journalists contributed to the democratic process, how it navigated repression and what informed the journalists' agency to work under conditions of repression. Curran (1991: 121) observed that, for historical and understandable reasons, the debate about what is entailed in media independence has been centred on the state. It is postulated that the attitude is related to a liberal way of thinking that proposes that the primary democratic function of the media is to act as a public watchdog, checking the state and the abuse of state authority. Rónning and Kupe (2000: 175) take this view further and postulate that the watchdog role of the media is critical in the service of the democratic ethos.

Particularly in societies where government practices are not transparent, where there exist gross abuses of political power, and where the independent press is weak, it is easy to argue that critical surveillance of government and the state is the most important aspect of the democratic functions of the media and it is essential to build public confidence in the news media.

It can therefore be suggested that *The Daily News* and its journalists played the role described above in a significant manner. Rónning and Kupe (2000) further point out that the history of investigative reporting and the uncovering of public scandals and corrupt practices by the independent press and courageous journalists in the official media in Southern Africa are indicators of how the media perform a public service by investigating and stopping corrupt practices by public officials. "This often entails considerable risk to individual journalists and editors, because the powers that be would rather have a docile press, (2000: 175).

In passing a raft of repressive laws, the government's former Minister of Information and Publicity in the Office of the President and the Cabinet, Professor Jonathan Moyo, then said that the country needed to protect itself against the "forces of regime change". The minister accused the United States' government of trying to work with the media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to aid a change of government in Zimbabwe. The Minister has been re-appointed to the same post in a new cabinet announced by the President on 10th September, 2013, following Mugabe's victory on the 31st July, 2013, elections.



One of many stories written by the paper where the British government, led by the former Prime Minister, Tony Blair, opposed and criticized President Mugabe's rule.

The Access to Information and Privacy of Protection Act was actually triggered by a specific event involving the then American Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs who, in an appearance before a congressional committee upon being asked what his government was doing to ostensibly promote democracy in Zimbabwe, said among other unacceptable things, that his government was working with some other governments in the Southern African region but more with NGOs, journalists and media houses inside Zimbabwe to seek regime change. If a Minister of Information and a representative of a foreign government say they are going to work with the media in your country and with NGOs, and so forth, to seek regime change, what do you do? When the Americans and their allies talk about regime change, they are not talking about elections; they are not talking about free and fair elections to change a government. They are talking about subverting a constitutional government using the institutions of civil society, such as opposition newspapers, (Interview with Jonathan Moyo, Harare, 20th September, 2012).



In June, 2002, The Daily News published a story from the Magistrate in which Job Sikhala, a senior member of the opposition MDC and a former Member of Parliament for St. Marys, told the court that Minister Moyo was involved in a gay affair with the then Chief Executive Officer of the state-run Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation. The paper did this well aware of President Mugabe's stance against homosexuals, who he describes as "worse than dogs and pigs."

Minister Moyo pointed out that in the circumstances of what he described as foreign intervention by powerful states working in cahoots with alternative media and journalists, the government had to protect and defend itself by passing restrictive laws. Moyo further submitted that elections can change a government, but they cannot change a regime:

You cannot change a regime through elections, but you can change a government through elections. It is inherently undemocratic because it has nothing to do with changing the government; it has everything to do with changing the fundamental ethos and institutions of a country. And when a foreigner goes to the legislature of his or her country to announce that they are embarking on such a programme, as the Minister of Information, you have got to find a response and the best response, if not the only response, which puts everyone on notice in terms of understanding what the rules would be, is through the law. We went to Parliament to do that, (Interview with Jonathan Moyo, Harare, 20th September, 2012).



In April, 2001, The Daily News investigated and published a story alleging that Minister Moyo abused funds from the Ford Foundation in Kenya, when he worked as a consultant for the organization. The paper further alleged that Moyo, who prior to joining Zanu PF during the Constitutional Commission in 1998, and the government as a Cabinet Minister in 2000, was doing so in order to seek protection from possible arrest by the Kenyan authorities.

George Charamba, a top government bureaucrat who also doubles as Permanent Secretary in the Information Ministry and Spokesperson for the Presidency, was more direct in linking *The Daily News* to the main political opposition, the MDC, and posits that most of the laws that were passed at the turn of the 21st century were meant to defend the state.

Well, it was a direct relationship. We saw some blurred boundaries between individuals who were in fact political players, and persons who staffed the newsrooms. We also saw a link between the disgruntled white commercial farmers and the overall equipping of *TheDaily News*. There was a very compelling case, which was picked up by the establishment, to say that some of the computers that were being used in the newsroom of *TheDaily News* had in fact been donated by farmers. The money for newsprint and some form of support that was being extended to *TheDaily News* came from structures that were, in fact, political. In some cases,

you had a situation where the road to finding newsprint would intersect with the road to finding funding for the MDC,

argued the bureaucrat, who was at the centre of crafting media laws working with the Minister of Information, (Interview with George Charamba, Harare, 13th September, 2012).



Professor Welshman Ncube, former Secretary General of the MDC, explaining the police raid on party Offices in 2000

Given the government's perception of the relationship between the paper and its main political rival, the opposition MDC, the former minister asserted that *The Daily News* was not a media institution but a political party, from the point of view of ZANU PF:

The paper was part of the political party, the MDC. In fact, *The Daily News* was an opposition political outfit. *The Daily News* in Zimbabwe has never been a newspaper. It has always been propaganda first, very sophisticated. It had well written stories by very experienced journalists. The paper had assembled some of the best pool of journalists, all of them driven by money and never by any professional ethic or value. They were very good at what they were doing and it could only be countered by as good a strategy, if not better. Any Mickey Mouse was not working, because its stories were well thought out, well written and well-presented and its

layout was very appealing and therefore quite serious, (Interview with Jonathan Moyo, Harare, 20th September, 2012),

Moyo pointed out; as he justified the measures the government took to stifle the operations of the private media.



The Daily News announcing protests by the MDC after the party lost the 2002 presidential election. In this article, the paper was actively involving public awareness of the Protest against President Mugabe's government. This is part of the mobilization work that the paper and its journalists did for the opposition and its partners in social movements, such as labour and students.

The Minister further pointed out that, “Well, I actually think that the passage of time has proven that *The Daily News* of that period was a systematic MDC project, or part of the MDC project. It was the opposition mouthpiece”. Such perceptions of *The Daily News* and of the independent press in general, by government officials are aptly captured by Kasoma, (1995: 537) in his evaluation of the relationship between the independent press and African governments, when he noted:

Government ministers, particularly both before and after the fall of the one-party states, have looked at the independent media as the opposition press, which is irresponsible and which has a tendency of overstretching the limits of press freedom. They claim that criticism and dissent in the media threaten political stability and national unity.

Consistent with the observations of Esipisu and Khaguli, (2009), Ansah (1988), Bourgault (1995), Hyden et al (2007), in Africa, and in Zimbabwe in particular, as this study has examined, the media have been shown to be the cornerstones of opposition against oppressive regimes. The media have been a critical site of resistance by opposition forces against the authoritarian tendencies of the government.

Evidence in this study suggests that *TheDaily News* and its journalists worked to promote the political interests of the opposition party, the MDC, as admitted by the spokesperson of the party at the material time, who is now a former cabinet minister in the unity government. The headlines of the front page stories against government ministers that were in the paper corroborate this finding: that *The Daily News* provided leadership and a platform for political dissenters.

Rónning and Kupe (2000: 175) affirm that the watchdog role of the press is particularly important in societies where political parties have failed to provide an effective opposition to the ruling party, as was the case in Zimbabwe:

In such circumstances, it is doubly important that the press examine the conduct of the rulers and question how public resources are managed. An important prerequisite for a developed democracy is that there exist institutions which can defend public interests and question government acts and discussion in a public manner on behalf of a variety of cultural and social interests and opinions.

The two scholars point out that in liberal democratic societies, that should be the role of parliament, especially of the opposition political parties in parliament, but when parliaments do nothing but toe party lines and when parliamentarians who attempt to voice other views are silenced, then one of the critical safeguards of freedom of expression is weakened. Rónning and Kupe (2000: 175) therefore argue that:

In such a situation the independent press more or less automatically will take the place of the absent parliamentary opposition, and together with other civil society institutions defend the interests of the public.

According to the editor of the paper, Geoffrey Nyarota, *TheDaily News* and its journalists demonstrated and played that role by telling the story of Zimbabwe under conditions of persecution that included several arrests and beatings of its staff, without ‘fear or favour’.

Minister Chamisa’s acknowledgment of the role played by *TheDaily News* and its journalists to promote and prop up the interests of the MDC and the broader democratization process further corroborates scholarly assertions that in countries where opposition political parties are weak or non-existent owing to state repression, the private press can occupy that role of opposition.

Chamisa, the opposition MDC spokesperson, pointed out that *TheDaily News* and its journalists gave his party positive coverage:

Well, it was very positive. In fact to some extent *TheDaily News* was not balanced. They were not sitting on the fence, because under circumstances of a crisis it would be foolish and hard for anybody to sit on the fence. They chose to take sides and they took sides with democratic forces. They took sides with those that were fighting for political change, (Interview with Nelson Chamisa, Harare, 8th December, 2012).



MDC MP Honourable Mpala later died from injuries sustained. The suspects were tried but acquitted. The author of the story, Mduduzi Mathuthu, later fled and sought asylum in the UK. He started an online publication, NewZimbabwe.Com.

While the MDC, ZANU PF and government officials seem to agree that the paper and its journalists were supporting opposition politics by giving them a positive platform from which to articulate their agenda, the paper and its journalists refute allegations that they were part of a regime change agenda.

The positive coverage of stories about opposition political parties by newspapers and journalists is supported by who have argued that:

Alternative media, I argue, are crucially about offering the means for democratic communication to people who are normally excluded from media production. They

are to do with organizing media along lines that enable participation and reflexivity, (Atton, 2002: 2).

Atton has submitted that, culturally and politically, scholars like Downing define such media as alternative, while others call them oppositional because of the social change agenda that is outstanding to their operations.

In arguing for social change, alternative media may then not only be understood as producing instrumental discourses (theoretical, expository, organizational) to provoke change, but they are able to enact social change through their own means of production, which are themselves positioned in relation to the dominant means of production, (Atton, 202: 18).

Atton, (2002) and Downing (2001) posit that at the heart of alternative media is social change, the agents of media activism in the face of blockages of public oppression, as well as the provision of counter hegemonic platforms to individuals and forces that are denied public expression by the main stream media. Some *Daily News* journalists, probably wanting to reassert professional neutrality, suggest that there was no direct relationship with opposition political parties, apart from the fact that they were telling the story of Zimbabwe truthfully during a period of social, economic and political turmoil.

In an interview with me, Luke Tamborinyoka, the Political Editor of *The Daily News*, and still the Spokesperson of the former Prime Minister and opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai said of the role of *The Daily News* then:

The Daily News became the platform of the people and in the June 2000 election, where ZANU PF won narrowly. The people voted “no” in the constitutional referendum in February, 2000. *The Daily News* was a vehicle of the people’s articulation of the no vote. *The Daily News* became a platform for victims of the land reform programme; the white commercial farmers and the farm workers, where they could tell their stories of violent assaults during the evictions. It should be remembered that we were actually one of the first publications in Zimbabwe to cover the killing of the white farmers. *The Daily News* was at the forefront of covering the eviction of farm workers from those farms. And also the year 2000 coincided with the rigged election of June, 2000. It should be recalled that there was robust coverage of the court processes which led to the nullification of eight constituencies by the High Court on allegations of political violence and human rights violations. *The Daily News* reported these cases of abuses and impunity under conditions where they were assaulted in some cases, (Interview with Luke Tamborinyoka, Harare, 12th February, 2013).

It could be suggested that the daily, wide national news coverage of the electoral process *The Daily News* could have assisted the political opposition in seeking political change. This was arguably the first

election where opposition parties got the support of a national newspaper that reported news about ordinary people in both urban and rural areas during critical electoral processes. I remembered that at some point *The Daily News* operated like a casualty department at a major hospital at its Harare offices. Ordinary victims of political and human rights violations would come to tell their stories to reporters before they reported them to the police and sought medical attention. This was probably due to the faith and belief of victims of abuses that their stories would get fair coverage to make the authorities stop the abuses and seek international attention for the crisis in the country.



The Daily News coverage of the 2002 presidential election violence. In the story, the militias are referred to as members of President Robert Mugabe’s ZANU PF party operating with the acquiescence of the state. The MPs allegedly fleeing are members of the opposition MDC.

Tamborinyoka disputes assertions by the government that the paper was a mouthpiece of the opposition and that it promoted the interests of the former colonial power, Britain, and its western allies such as the United States.

We happened to be two babies born around the same time (1999) and it was not deliberate. There was a perception, really, during the first days in the life of the newspaper that *TheDaily News* was riding on the popularity of the MDC, but I think the converse was also true: that the MDC was also riding on the popularity of *TheDaily News*. *TheDaily News* was a popular newspaper and obviously the people saw that as a platform to articulate their views. There was therefore a relationship which I think was mutually beneficial. But it was not a deliberate relationship to push

the agenda of the MDC. It should be remembered, as a matter of fact that *TheDaily News* was born first; in April 1999, while the MDC came later, in September 1999, (Interview with Luke Tamborinyoka, Harare, 12th February, 2013).

Former CEO of the paper, former Minister of Water Resources and a senior member of the MDC, Samuel Sipepa Nkomo, who was in charge when the paper was shut down by the government, denied the existence of a relationship between the paper and the opposition party:

I must say that during my time as chief executive officer of *TheDaily News*, the paper was independent. It would criticise ZCTU and the MDC. I can say with confidence that it had no alliance at all with any of the opposition parties but the opposition parties were the victims and so *TheDaily News* would actually interview the victims and published their stories some of them very sad experiences where the state security agents were involved in human rights abuses against political opponents of the government. We focused on the regime that was the perpetrator of violence and one would say we were favouring the opposition. We were not; opposition activists and other dissenters were victims of a violent political establishment. The role of the newspaper was to tell things as they happened, (Interview with Ex-Cabinet Minister, SipepaNkomo, Harare, 24th January, 2013).



The Daily news coverage of cases of political violence in the 2000 disputed parliamentary election

Throughout the interview, Nkomo distanced the paper from linkages with the opposition:

I do not know about being the mouthpiece of the opposition, but what *The Daily News* would do is that when a white farmer's property was invaded and a farmer was beaten and killed, we would report it. If that means we were the mouthpieces of that dead farmer, then we accept that. But we had a duty to report that a white farmer had been killed. Everyone has the right to life, and farmers are human beings whose rights should be protected as well. Actually, what we were saying was that the regime that was in power did not deserve the vote of the people, because they were bringing violence on the people. The policies of the government were destructive. The government, through its media promoted hate speech and propaganda against its opponents. If *The Daily News* had something to do to change the regime we would do so. If we were asked whether, as a newspaper, we were happy with the ZANUPF regime; we would say no. If that is regime change, there is nothing wrong with the regime change. Even now I am in the MDC, and all we want to do is regime change, (Interview with Ex- Cabinet Minister, Sipepa Nkomo, Harare, 12th February, 2013).

Nkomo, a veteran of the liberation struggle who spent 14 years and nine months in prison for opposing colonial rule, said it was the duty of a national paper to stand for truth by reporting accurately the issues affecting the citizens during that historical epoch. What is interesting in this research, as will be discussed elsewhere, is that senior journalists, such as Tamborinyoka, Nyarota and Nkomo, *The Daily News* Chief Executive Officer, later joined the MDC. While they all deny prior membership of the opposition party before they joined, government authorities argue it was clear from the onset that the paper and the opposition party were working together to effect a change of government, thereby justifying its onslaught against the paper, its journalists, the MDC and other political dissenters in civil society and labour.

5.2 *Telling it like it is: activist journalism and experiences of The Daily News journalists*

It has been argued that radical media activists have very often experienced state repression, execution, jailing, torture, assaults, the bombing of radical radio stations, threats, police surveillance and intimidation tactics, (Downing, 2001:19). The experiences of alternative, radical and activist journalists, as painfully experienced by *The Daily News* journalists during numerous cases of arrests, beatings and detentions, are full of tensions and hostility from the authorities, primarily because radical media challenges state power and hegemonic institutions. By playing an alternative media role giving voices to silenced groups through challenging government policies and offering dissenting groups a channel through which to articulate their alternative policies, one can plausibly posit that *The Daily News* and its journalists were playing a counter-hegemonic role, as opposed to the sycophantic position of the state-run newspapers that served the political interests of the ruling regime.

Hyden and Leslie (2007:12) have argued that privately-owned newspapers that have emerged in Africa in recent years play a primary role in the process of democratization in at least two important ways:

As a means of probing government policies and behaviour – African governments in previous decades got used to the notion that what they did was beyond public scrutiny. The officially owned media would only criticize a particular party leader or government official if it had the permission to do so from the highest authority. The second role of the media is to help foster a discursive public realm, in which issues of national or local concern are ventilated in an open and free fashion.



The Daily News' printing press was bombed in January, 2001, by yet to be identified people, after a series of stories exposing corruption, violent farm seizures and human rights violations during the parliamentary elections in 2000, when the ruling ZANU PF party won by a narrow four seats.

Testimonies by the journalists and management of the paper assist in revealing that through their investigative, oppositional and activist journalism, *The Daily News* provided a public realm for discussion, criticizing public policies, and exposing official corruption among powerful people in government. As result of this oppositional journalism during the crisis period in Zimbabwe, *The Daily News* was bombed twice in 2000 and 2001, its journalists arrested, detained, assaulted and intimidated on numerous occasions by state agents and groups associated with the regime, such as party supporters and veterans of the liberation struggle. This section sets the ball rolling on the personal experiences of the journalists as they covered national events during the political turmoil between 1999 and 2003.

The stories of harassment of *The Daily News* journalists were widespread. For example, a senior editor with *The Daily News*, explained how, together with a photo journalist and the driver, they were assaulted in June, 2002, by the police for covering a public event:

My worst moment was when I was assaulted by riot police on 16 June 2002. We were covering the international youth day. There was a youth procession in Harare

Gardens where they were going to be addressed by various leaders. *The Daily News* was invited, so were other newspapers, but we were the first to get there. We were brutally assaulted for about thirty minutes, (Interview with Guthrie Munyuki, Harare, 16th May, 2013).



Journalists Munyuki, Mauluka, and their driver Shadreck Mukwecheni. After three severe beatings in the course of her duties, Mauluka left her job and sought exile in the UK. Munyuki remains an assistant editor of the paper.

Asked to explain why they were assaulted by the police for covering a public event to which they were invited, the journalist said:

The police said we were not supposed to cover the event because we were MDC journalists. The police said we were an opposition newspaper formed to change the ruling party. The police said the MDC was an agent for change being used by the imperialists to effect regime change in Zimbabwe. They broke my arm that time. It was my worst moment, and I was detained for three nights at Harare Central Police Station. Ridiculously, they said we had thrown stones at moving police vehicles. The court questioned them about how and why journalists could throw stones when we were doing our job. The case just collapsed and we were cleared and set free, (Interview with Guthrie Munyuki, Harare, 16th May, 2013).

Munyuki vividly described the three nights he spent in police custody as a humiliating and inhumane experience:

It exposed us to the total decay of state institutions that we should have public confidence in. There was running sewerage, people squashed in small cells that are supposed to hold at most nine people, but we were almost 40 in one cell. People would not go out to relieve themselves, particularly if you had eaten solids. People had to take in liquids, because if you eat solid food it would have been difficult to relieve yourself, because the toilet was in the same cell where people were squashed. People would say that once given a break to go and stretch, that was when they would relieve themselves, because remember we were too many in the cell and it would have been difficult to make intervals to go to relieve ourselves. For me, this was a shocker and, secondly, the police officers, we could see that they were not happy keeping us, because most of the holding cells were full of political activists, more than other criminals that you would say are found in society, (Interview with Guthrie Munyuki, Harare, 16th May, 2013).

Narrating the ordeal that journalists faced in an interview in Harare on 17th February, 2013, one of Zimbabwe's leading human rights lawyers and the former President of the Law Society of Zimbabwe, Beatrice Mtetwa, a victim of police attacks for representing the journalists during that era, corroborated the view that conditions in the police cells were inhumane and were a violation of human dignity:

The conditions in Zimbabwe's police stations, especially the holding cells, are very well known, and apart from threadbare blankets, if you get any, everyone knows how overcrowded they are, how we all have to share ablution facilities in the same room. The ablution facilities are never quite flushed because the flushing mechanism is outside the room. You know that being in custody basically means that you are just basically stripped off, virtually, all basic decency in that you have to do all your private business, like using those ablution facilities in the full view of other prisoners. Basically, the minute you are locked up in those prison cells you lose virtually every aspect of your humanity by virtue of those conditions and, of course, you add in the fact that the police will deliver and show that you don't have access to basics like food. The police don't provide the food to you, you have no access to water, and your family cannot access you, because sometimes they don't know where you are. Your lawyers will spend days trying to locate you, (Interview with a Human Rights Lawyer, Beatrice Mtetwa, Harare, 17th February, 2013).



The Daily News describes how a High Court judge was wrongfully arrested, locked in a very filthy police cell, but was later acquitted of the charges levelled against him. It was during that period that President Mugabe’s government purged the judiciary of senior and independent judges, mostly white, who ruled against human rights violations during the farm occupations.

As a senior lawyer representing most of *The Daily News* journalists who were arrested on various charges, Mtetwa pointed out that none of the journalists were ever convicted by any court of law in Zimbabwe, stating that the arrests and detentions were meant to intimidate and stop the journalists from covering the political issues of the moment during the crisis period. Mtetwa explained:

It’s interesting that I did most of my cases in the magistrate’s courts and in early 2000. The magistrate’s courts were professional. We didn’t have the kind of corruption that is openly talked about and that’s evidently everywhere. The magistrates tried as much as possible to be as professional as they could be during a very rare, difficult time, and I take my hat off to a whole lot of them, because they consistently tried to look at the law as it ought to have been looked at. Generally, the journalists that I represented were all acquitted and it was nothing to do with any skills that we, as lawyers, possessed. It was much to do with the magistrates, who interpreted the law as it ought to be and refused to cow down to political pressure. So you find we had a whole lot of these journalists who were harassed and put in

custody in these horrific conditions but, ultimately, they were acquitted, (Interview with a Human Rights Lawyer, Beatrice Mtetwa, Harare, 17th February, 2013).



British Guardian journalist Andrew Meldrum after acquittal for allegedly publishing a false story. Between 2000 and 2003, the government expelled most foreign journalists, especially those from Western countries that opposed the land reform exercise and those critical of ZANU PF and President Mugabe’s disputed victories in the 2000 and 2002 parliamentary and presidential elections, respectively.

Harrison Nkomo, a senior human rights lawyer who also represented some arrested journalists, agrees with Mtetwa, pointing out that,

If you do your research well, you will agree with me that in the history of this country, unless it escaped me, I have not come across a case in which a journalist was convicted for contravening AIPPA, unless it happened in the remote courts of this country, (Interview with a Human Rights Lawyer, Harrison Nkomo, Harare, 20th November, 2012).

In his view, Nkomo submitted that the arrests of the journalists and the abuse of legal due processes by the government were meant to achieve the political goal of maintaining the political hegemony of the government of the day. In an interview in Harare on 20th November, 2012, Nkomo argued that the laws:

... ..were to basically counter the moves of the independent media, because it was deemed to be aligned with the main opposition party in the country, the MDC. AIPPA made the practice of journalism extremely difficult in this country, and the registration fees were extremely high, while the criminalization of some of the activities of journalism made sure that their operation space was muzzled and limited. The POSA was basically a tool that was meant to harass opposition political parties and journalists from the independent media, including international journalists who had come to observe the area of particular interest to the world, especially the farm invasions and the violent and deeply disputed elections that followed, (Interview with a Human Rights Lawyer, Harrison Nkomo, Harare, 17th February, 2013).

Some of the most violated journalists were those who went out to the farms to cover demonstrations by political parties and civic organizations, and the forced eviction of white, commercial farmers during the controversial fast track land reform programme, where the government evicted hundreds of farmers in order to settle landless black peasants.

Precious Shumba, a senior reporter of *The Daily News* described how he was arrested by the police on two occasions in 2002:

The National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) Chairperson, Lovemore Madhuku, was arrested sometime in March, 2002. He was incarcerated and denied access to legal representation and food. I was assigned to cover a demonstration by NCA supporters who were marching in the streets of Harare demanding his release from jail. A group of people, wearing ZANU PF regalia and in the company of the police, descended on us, and a lot of people were brutalized for taking part in the protest. We were arrested, thrown into one of their pickup trucks. We were taken and detained at the Law and Order Section at Harare Central Police Station. Secondly, sometime in April, 2002, I was arrested again by the police for what they considered covering an illegal meeting. Some MDC supporters were meeting near Town House in Harare. Police officers then came to the meeting and everyone at the meeting including myself. We were taken to Harare Central Police Station, detained for nearly one hour and released without charges.

The most frightening experience that I had was somewhere in Bindura towards Mt Darwin in 2003. I had gone there with one of our drivers to cover a story on the eviction of a commercial white farmer. It was the first eviction after the expiry of the eviction notices issued to white, commercial farmers by the government. I went there after a besieged farmer rang us about his troubles. When we arrived, there were thousands of demonstrators chanting ZANU PF slogans. I was dressed in a suit, so they thought I was a government official. Realising that we were in danger, I asked the driver to follow my instructions, but he refused to disembark and remained in the car. I told him that I was risking moving past the big crowd into the house, because I knew where I was going to. I wanted to see and interview the besieged farmer. As I passed, everyone was saluting me and calling me chef. When I got to the door, there was a reporter from the UK's *The Telegraph*. She called out my name and asked if I

was the guy from *The Daily News*, and the farmer's wife realised that I had been endangered, so they opened the door and pulled me in. When the demonstrators heard that I was coming from *The Daily News*, they started breaking the windows, throwing spears and stones inside the house. I remember the farmer asking me to take off my suit blazer because I was being seen from outside. I took off my suit and hid under the bed. The demonstrators demanded that I come out. They set alight to one of the curtains. It was frightening. The wife of the farmer was hit by a stone thrown by the angry protestors. We were rescued by the police, who dispersed the protestors. Besides these scary situations, I remember that we had some very exciting moments where we could break a lot of very exciting stories. For example, we led with stories on election results from a lot of constituencies, and our political desk was doing a good job to tell the story of Zimbabwe during the hotly contested elections in 2000 and 2002, (Interview with Precious Shumba, *The Daily News* journalist, Harare, 10th May, 2013).

Shumba said he lost interest in journalism, and he now works for a non-governmental organisation that lobbies for better service delivery by local government authorities in Harare.

During the crisis period, there was a lot of impunity for people connected to top government officials. A case in point was the beating of *The Daily News* staff by Jocelyn Chiwenga, the wife of the Army Commander, General Constantine Chiwenga, inside a police station, for covering a protest by the opposition MDC party. One photo journalist, who broke his finger during the assault, describes the circumstances in an interview on 18th March, 2013, in Harare:

I remember in 2003, on the 18th March when I was covering a stay away organised by MDC. I was taking pictures in a Harare suburb called Budiriro. So Jocelyn Chiwenga saw me carrying a camera, taking pictures of people who were moving around. I had to run away, because previously *The Daily News* had published a story where one of our photographers was arrested taking pictures of soldiers queuing for basic commodities, because there were food shortages in the country at that time. Chiwenga recognized me. She then ordered the soldiers who were escorting her to arrest me. She ordered that I be taken to Glenview Police Station, and the soldiers did that. She later came to check if I was at the police station. When she saw me, she took off her shoes and started to beat me up while I was in custody. Chiwenga ordered me to sleep on the floor and roll. I suffered a broken finger that day, and have not recovered. I have a permanent disability because of her assaults. *The Daily News*' legal affairs secretary, Gugulethu Moyo, a lawyer, came to the police station to try to rescue me. However, she was arrested and beaten up by Jocelyn Chiwenga. We were transferred to Harare Central Police Station, where we were locked up in police cells. Actually, nobody at the company knew where we were from the 18th to the 21st, until we were taken to the Highlands Police Station. Our families did not even know we were detained by the police for all those days. *The Daily News* had to publish a story that the two of us were missing following our arrests. They also filed an urgent court application demanding our release. It was on 21st March when the

Chief Executive Officer, Samuel Sipepa Nkomo, and our lawyers, came and asked that we should have medical attention. We had complained that we were in pain. We were taken to Parirenyatwa Hospital. Before we were treated, we were taken back to the Harare Central Police Station, where we were released without charges, (Interview with Phillimon Bulawayo, Harare, 10th October, 2012).

Tsvangirai Mukwazhi, a senior photo journalist, was not spared the attacks either. He recounted how he was attacked and left for dead while covering a demonstration by the war veterans in Harare:

In 2002, I recall taking pictures of war veterans who were demonstrating in the city centre. It was an election year. As I took pictures of the protest, these war veterans viciously pounced on me. I lost consciousness. I remember waking up at the Avenues Clinic. This is just one of the incidents I can speak about. They took my equipment, my cameras, and I have never recovered them until today. The lawyers attempted to recover my equipment, but failed because there was no rule of law. Lawyers were not respected either, (Interview with Tsvangirai Mukwazhi, Harare, 10th October, 2012).

Senior management and the editors of the paper were not spared from the arrests, detentions and persecutions by the state, in the course of their duties. Award winning journalist and founding Editor-in-Chief of the paper, Geoffrey Nyarota, was arrested, detained, his office was bombed in 2000, and he was threatened with death on more than six occasions:

My saddest experiences extended over the period of the land invasions in 2000. It is my hope that I will never again endure that kind of hardship, not personal, but that of the people under my charge. There was nothing as painful as having to take a decision in terms of the assignment of staff. To assign a member of staff to an area where you knew that their lives were at risk, you knew that the assignment was fraught with danger. People were going out for assignments in situations of crisis, but the assignment had to be carried out by somebody.” He recounted the difficulties he faced in managing a team of journalists in conditions of state-sponsored human rights violations, (Interview with former *The Daily News* Editor-in-Chief, Geoffrey Nyarota, in Harare, 5th November, 2012).

Nyarota, an experienced journalist, added:

There is no way a paper like *The Daily News* would say “if that is the situation, as in farms, then, ladies and gentlemen, let us wait and see,” which is what *The Herald* was doing. Young photographer Eugenia Mauluka went out with Colin Chiwanza to Wedza to cover a story in the farms. They were beaten up, and Eugenia came back crying, but what do you do then? You cannot say: “Eugenia, you can no longer go out there, and, Colin, from now on you will not go out there, and to the driver, you will not go out there,” which would be the sensible thing, perhaps. The responsibility was on *The Daily News* to address these issues, to expose these issues, because that was

the expectation of the people. I have always been a family man, during all this time, and most of the staff members were family people. Eugenia, when she left the paper, she did not leave because she was scared of the environment or that she was scared of going out into the field, but she said: “Mr. Nyarota, my husband said I have to quit”. I said: “sorry to lose you, Eugenia, but your husband is correct.” So that is how Eugenia left, and it was painful and I was with the staff in tears, and you feel you cannot protect them, (Interview with Former *Daily News* Editor, Geoffrey Nyarota, in Harare, 5th November, 2012).



Church leaders came out to condemn the 2000 violence that engulfed Zimbabwe before the June, 2000, parliamentary elections

Nyarota said that despite the arrests at times at midnight, he did not abandon the paper because:

There was an unwritten contract between *The Daily News* and the people of Zimbabwe, which was binding on us. The government imprisoned me at Rhodesville and Harare Central Police Stations, but because of that unwritten contract it also incarcerated me during the time that I was outside Rhodes Ville. You do not publish a story on the front page of your paper saying “I quit,” and put your picture, which would be suicidal. The people had grown to have so much faith in *The Daily News* as their saviour. We had to fulfil that role (Interview with Former *Daily News* Editor-in-Chief, Geoffrey Nyarota, in Harare, 5th November, 2012).

After numerous arrests and detentions, Nyarota said these were daily routines that he could no longer be afraid of:

I had reconciled myself to the prospect of physical harm to myself, and I had accepted it as an occupational hazard. If you are a soldier in the army and going to the war, and this reference to war is only made to illustrate my point, you know that there is going to be some gunfire at some point. I relied on the support of my deputy,

Davison Maruziva, and our editor's assistant, Bill Saidi. We just stood together against what we then viewed as our enemy, because the authorities by 2000 viewed themselves as being inimical to our interests, the interest of the *Daily News*. Obviously, what they wanted was to scare us off, and we took a determined position not to run away, because that would have given them victory on a plate, (Interview with Former *Daily News* Editor-in-Chief, Geoffrey Nyarota, in Harare, 5th November, 2012).



Editor-in-chief Nyarota, arrested in 2002. In 2001, the Committee to Protect Journalists awarded Nyarota the International Press Freedom Award, which recognizes journalists who show courage in defending press freedom despite facing attacks, threats, or imprisonment. The World Association of Newspapers also awarded him its Golden Pen of Freedom Award in 2002. That same year he was also awarded UNESCO's Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize in recognition of his work, and the team's and the newspaper's contributions to press freedom in Zimbabwe.

A senior news editor who worked with several state-run newspapers, but who crossed the line to join *The Daily News* because of what he believed was its professional coverage of the political events during

the crisis period, was arrested in 2002 together with Nyarota, and one assistant editor and a reporter who had written a story that the authorities deemed offensive.



Nyarota, Bill Saidi and John Gambanga were arrested in 2002 after publishing a story that cattle were feeding on wheat in one of the occupied farms in Karoi, west of the capital, Harare. The journalists were later released without charge. However, the author of the story, Sam Munyavi, later fled into exile in the UK in 2004.

We were interrogated. I remember the publication of a picture of SamMunyavi that our reporter took in Karoi. It was during the land invasions, and he brought a story about cattle feeding in a wheat field. There was no story on the front page of the paper that day. There was just that picture of cattle feeding on wheat at a time when there were food shortages. The story was inside, and it was a true story. The police picked up my boss at home. I think at 15:45pm, and then they picked up Sam Munyavi, and then Bill Saidi. That day I remember very well. I had gone to the bank to withdraw some money. My secretary then phoned me and she said I shouldn't go to the office, because there were police officers looking for me. However, I went in, and none of them knew me. They just drove past me, and when I went in I decided to go to the police to hand myself over. When I handed myself over to the police they asked me why I had presented myself. I told them the police were looking for me at the office and that two of my seniors and a reporter were arrested. The police then arrested me and locked me in the cells at Harare Central Police Station. There was no charge really. The police said the story that we published was not correct and that it caused alarm and despondency. After some time, our lawyer, Lawrence Chibwe, came to the police to represent us. My boss, Nyarota, was not feeling well; he had

left his tablets at home. I spoke to Lawrence, and he went to collect the tablets and, fortunately, he brought us food. Eventually, our lawyer negotiated with the police and we were released just before midnight. The following day, the police came to the office and took us to the police station, but this time it was just interrogation for about five hours, in the presence of our lawyers. They later released us and said they would proceed by way of summons, but they never summoned us because there was no case, really. It was just a matter of harassment to instil fear in us so that we would change our reporting slant, (Interview with a former senior editor, in Harare, 13th September, 2012).

Kelvin Jakachira, the paper's reporter in the eastern province of Manicaland, describes a frightening encounter with the veterans of the liberation struggle in the course of his work:

I had a nasty encounter with the war veterans in 2001, near Osbourne dam in Mutare. The war veterans had invaded a farm belonging to a Zimbabwean, Enock Musabayeka. They said that that farm belonged to a white person, and this guy was being used as a front. But, in actual fact, Musabayeka owned this farm. So when I went there to cover the story about the invasions, we parked our vehicle a few metres away from the farm gate, disembarked and headed towards where the war veterans were grouped. They were about 30 or so. They asked me what I was up to, and I told them I wanted to find out what was happening on the farm. They surrounded me and ordered me to sit down. They said I was a sell-out, and they were waiting for the Chairperson to come to the scene. While seated, I realised they were slaughtering a beast a few metres away, while others were preparing a fire to cook. Others were singing and beating drums, waiting for their Chairperson to arrive. One of the war veterans recognized me, because I used to write stories about a senior ZANU PF member, Shadreck Beta that he knew. He thought the stories were in their favour, and he ordered my release. That is how I was saved from possible attacks. They said: "This is the guy who wrote that good story of our case," (Interview with Kelvin Jakachira, in Harare, 17th June, 2013).



A story in 2003 describing how the land occupations were destroying the country's economy

During the interview, Jakachira also described how he was arrested over a story that he wrote in 2001, where he quoted President Robert Mugabe, threatening his political adversaries with death for opposing his rule. The president was officially opening a water project in the province, Jakachira noted, pointing out that he was not allowed to cover the political rallies of the ruling party in the province. His circumstances depict the problems that many *Daily News* reporters faced during the crisis period in the rural areas and in other provinces outside the capital, Harare.

A senior editor, who was present when the government ordered the closure of the paper in September, 2003, described the situation as his worst experience working at the paper:

The worst moment in my career as a journalist was when *The Daily News* was finally closed. We were rounded up on a Monday evening while preparing for the following day's edition. The police arrested us and took us to Harare Central Police Station. We were later released the following day, without charges. When we came back to work, we found out that the police had taken all the computers and all the equipment to Chikurubi Maximum Prison. That was the end of my job. Until now, we never saw the computers, (Interview with Former *Daily News* Senior Editor, in Harare, 15th September, 2012).

Chikurubi Maximum Prison is the country's most secure prison, where hard core criminals serve their sentences. It has been condemned by various court judges for not meeting acceptable standards of prison conditions that are meant to rehabilitate convicts. The circumstances assist in exhibiting the extreme

brutality that reporters faced daily while doing their work. However, the majority of them remained defiant.

5.3 *The Daily News* journalists joined the opposition MDC party and civic groups

It's not crossing the floor as such, they are in the same camp, and it's just someone leaving a newspaper to go to the political party. It's like ZANU PF; it has its paper *The Voice*. Can you say someone who has left *The Voice* newspaper to join ZANU PF has crossed the floor? *The Daily News* discourse and the MDC discourse are the same, the language is the same and the objective is the same. It is a regime change agenda. They are pursuing the same goal to unseat ZANU PF, (Interview with *Herald* Deputy Editor, Caesar Zvayi, 12th October, 2012).

Zvayi explained the decision by senior *Daily News* journalists to join opposition politics meant that they had always been members of the opposition party. However, unlike *The Voice*, owned by ZANU PF, *The Daily News* is a privately owned newspaper. What is undisputed is that some senior editors and managers of *The Daily News* have crossed the floor to join the MDC, the biggest opposition threat to the government, while other journalists have joined civil society organisations that also dissented against President Mugabe's administration. This crossover to join main stream politics, especially given circumstances where the government accused the paper of working with the opposition party, western governments and civil society organizations, seems to validate the claim. The founding Board Chairperson and CEO of *The Daily News* Muchadeyi Masunda was appointed the Mayor of the capital, Harare following the opposition MDC's victory in council elections in 2008, while his predecessor was Samuel Sipepa Nkomo was appointed Cabinet Minister in an inclusive government in 2009. However, some of the journalists and one manager in question disagree, stating that there was no prior relationship with the party apart from sharing common goals and principles on respect for human rights and democratic governance.

William Bango, a former political detainee of the independence struggle and News Editor of *The Daily News*, who became Leader Tsvangirai's spokesperson in 2002, disagreed that he was an opposition member and embedded journalist before he left the paper to join mainstream politics. Bango was a losing MDC candidate in the 2008 harmonized election. On 16th April, 2013, in Harare, he explained that he had a longstanding relationship with Tsvangirai before the paper was formed.

It's interesting. I was approached by Morgan Tsvangirai. He wanted somebody who was experienced in the media to assist build the information unity of the party. I had

known Morgan Tsvangirai since 1985, when he was with the Mine Workers Union. I was with the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists. Tsvangirai was Vice-President of the union, and I was Vice-President of our union. We went together to Moscow on a study tour of trade unions in the late 1980s. We got to know each other very closely, and over the years, looking at a broader picture, I felt it was necessary to change my career and move away from mainstream journalism, and assist in a broader national cause. At no time did I ever feel constrained about my decision. I felt it was the right thing to do. I joined Morgan Tsvangirai when almost nobody wanted to work with the MDC. That was after they had lost, or allegedly lost, the election in 2002. So when he approached me, I saw sense in what he was saying. I knew people would come up with stories that Morgan Tsvangirai was calling the shots at *The Daily News*, but the truth, as we know it, is that the MDC has no direct control of the editorial content at *The Daily News*, especially when I was the News Editor. I kept on trying to balance the story to hear both sides of the story,

Explained Bango, adding that the political crisis at the time persuaded him to make a contribution to the national democratic aspirations of the people.

Tamborinyoka, a political editor of the paper, and now the former Prime Minister's spokesperson, explained that after *The Daily News* was bombed and later shut down, he joined the MDC-T as Director of Information.

My personal view was that the closure of *The Daily News* was a political move and, naturally, I felt that I should join politics because this whole thing was political. I thought that I should be actively involved in the politics of the country to democratise the environment and make sure that, in future, such a thing -- where newspapers are bombed and closed down -- will never happen again,

he explained in an interview in Harare on 12th February, 2013.

Tamborinyoka asserted that the idea that he joined the MDC did not mean that he was promoting the interests of the party when he was the political editor of the paper. He further argues that not all journalists on the paper joined the party, or believed in its values and principles. "It was my own personal decision, but it was not an institutional decision for all the people who were at *The Daily News* to join the MDC," he pointed out. He further submitted that during the crisis period, *The Daily News* and its journalists were persecuted in a similar manner to opposition political activists and this made them share similar perceptions about the state of political affairs in the country:

We were both victim of repression. We were both victims of bad governance. That is why you find that the MDC supporters were brutalized and attacked and *The Daily News* printing press was bombed as well. We were common victims of a repressive regime and naturally we tended to sympathise with each other. We shared a common political vision of a democratic country where the rule of law would guide the

politics of the state, (Interview with Luke Tamborinyoka in Harare on 12th February, 2013)

Samuel SipepaNkomo, now a senior member of the MDC, a former minister and former Chief Executive of *The Daily News*, agreed with his former employees that they did not parrot the position of the opposition party when they worked for the paper. He stated:

Well, I think if the government draws a conclusion like that, it's up to them. The journalists were professionals. However, I can tell you that during my time, and even now, if I had to choose to join a political party, I can't join a party that perpetrates violence and injustice against its own people. The only party that I could join, to which I was invited, was the MDC, because it's a democratic party. There is no democracy in ZANU PF, so I could not be part of that party. ZANUPF does not allow people to make public their opinions. In the MDC, you can say whatever you want to say and they protect and respect the democratic rights of people. That's why I joined the MDC, that's why Luke Tamborinyoka joined the MDC, because to us we were fighting for democratic change. It would actually be absurd for us to join ZANU PF, the same party that is not a democratic one, (Interview with Sipepa Nkomo in Harare on 24th January, 2013).



Opposition, MDC candidate abducted in Bulawayo during campaigns for the 2000 parliamentary elections

Lawrence Paganga, a junior journalist, who joined the MDC after the paper was closed, noted that he wanted to contribute to the opening up of the democratic space. He said:

The media environment remained closed and, for me, the MDC was offering real change to the people of Zimbabwe. So I thought if the MDC win power and implement democratic governance principles, then the media environment in Zimbabwe will improve, leading to better news coverage and positive media laws. So, for me, I thought it was better to fight for that than to remain as a journalist, (Interview with Lawrence Paganga in Harare on 8th May, 2013).

The reporter explained. He had relocated to South Africa in search of work following the closure of the paper.

However, other journalists submitted that the paper, as well other privately-owned newspapers, provided platforms for alternative views from opposition political parties and civic society organizations and, in some respects, these papers became the focal points of opposition public forums. Dumisani Muleya, the editor of the privately-owned business weekly newspaper, *The Zimbabwe Independent*, on 10th November, 2012, in Harare, aversthat in many respects *The Daily News* propagated the interests of the opposition:

When one analyzes the content of *The Daily News* at that time there is no question that the MDC was working closely with *The Daily News*. The MDC needed a newspaper, just like ZANU PF had *The Herald*. It needed a paper through which it could communicate with its own publics, communicate with its supporters and followers. *The Daily News* officials started developing a very close relationship with the MDC, but what helped was that there were these people that you mentioned who were very supportive of the MDC's political agenda as individuals and as people holding positions in institutions,

Muleya highlighted further pointing out that:

the other connection is that, at that time, the MDC as a party had also succeeded in developing close relationships in the private media.

Muleya said *The Daily News* case became prominent because it was the only daily newspaper available to alternative voices, especially voices against the policies of the ruling party at the time, so it became very convenient to develop that close relationship. To some good measure it was a mouthpiece of the MDC, but at the same time:

Whilst the paper gave the MDC a platform, they tried to remain as professional as possible, but certainly they were pushing the MDC agenda. There is no question about that, because content tells you and the relationship tells you. However, the state had no case at all to victimise the paper and its journalists, because there is nothing wrong in a newspaper or an organization taking a political position against a ruling government. In the United Kingdom, you have seen newspapers endorsing

agendas of the parties during elections or even outside election periods. If a newspaper chooses to associate itself with the ideas and programmes of a particular party as an institution that is legitimate, in fact, that is democratic, (Interview with Dumisani Muleya, editor of *The Zimbabwe Independent* in Harare on 10th November 2012).

However, in an interview on 16th August, 2012, in Harare, Chakanyuka Bosha, a senior journalist with *The Daily News*, now working with a media rights organization, argued that it was too simplistic to suggest that the former daily's senior journalists who joined the MDC were promoting the agenda of the party during their days at the paper. He posits that what was apparent was the sharing of ideological values between the MDC and the paper.

I see nothing wrong with that because every newspaper has an ideological standpoint. In my view, *The Daily News* had chosen an ideological standpoint where they focused on the other story affecting victims of a violent political establishment, and to align itself with those forces in the country that were being denied coverage by the state media. So they had pitched their stories around the unreported stories. For example, if the white commercial farmers had done something positive, you were sure that *The Herald* would cover them in a negative light. So *The Daily News* was looking for the other story. The issue was that the MDC vision and *The Daily News* vision sort of coincided. The two tended to share the same vision of democratizing the country's politics, (Interview with Chakanyuka Bosha in Harare on 16th August, 2012).

Bosha confesses that journalists at *The Daily News* did not have a homogenous political ideology, and the journalists who joined political parties had a democratic right to do so.

In any organisation there are moderates and radicals so those journalists who may have joined the opposition maybe representing those who were radical and overzealous but there were a number of good journalists who remained professional in that stable. In any struggle, for example during the liberation struggle was there anything wrong with a journalist working for the liberation forces? There was nothing wrong with the issue of regime change because we are basically saying we want to change a system of government so that we have a more democratic system. These journalists could have clearly seen that the government as constituted under ZANU PF was now a threat to democracy, a threat to the country's prosperity; in the same manner as the Rhodesian government was a threat to prosperity of the majority of the citizens during the colonial period, (Interview with Chakanyuka Bosha in Harare on 16th August, 2012).

Foster Dongozi, a former senior reporter, now working with the Secretary General of Zimbabwe Union of Journalists, (ZUJ), points out that there were situations where journalists tended to be activists in their

coverage of news, where they exaggerated the numbers of people who attended opposition political rallies in order to boost their morale. Dongozi observed:

There tended to be some component of activism by journalists. But, again, remember these are people who were arrested and detained. Sometimes professionalism would be very hard to uphold in such an environment. So, yes, people tended to go over board and at times exaggerate figures of people who attended MDC rallies, as opposed to ZANU PF rallies, (Interview with Foster Dongozi in Harare on 17th December, 2012).

From the testimonies of the journalists' experiences and the use of law to muzzle the media, it is persuasive to claim that freedom of expression, under the prevailing circumstances, existed at the benevolence of the government. Keane further argues that public discussions must never be dependent on the sufferance of the government. "Political freedom ends when the government can use its various discretionary powers to silence its critics," as a leading German journalist August Ludwig Von Schlozer noted, prior to the French Revolution, "enlightened rulers might permit wide ranging press freedom, but where freedom of the press is dependent on a sovereign power, it could be taken away just as easily as it was granted," (cited in Keane, 1991:147).

This study reveals that while it would be simple to try to make connections and deductions about the journalists' decisions to join opposition politics and about their previous work, the issues that drove them might be more complicated than that. For instance, more than a dozen journalists interviewed during the study joined civil society organisations; anti-government privately owned newspapers, online publications and human rights organizations, as well as democracy lobby groups, after the paper was closed. Consistently, they submitted that their main mission was to open up the political system and allow the free exercise of civil and political liberties by citizens through the exposure of human rights violations to the attention of the international community, who might assist in stopping the abuses.

As elaborated elsewhere in this dissertation, this researcher was a News Editor of *The Daily News* at the time of the closure, was arrested three times by the police and ZANU PF officials, was detained and later freed without charges. During all these trepidations, the researcher became convinced that the only way to liberate myself was to contribute to a norm compliant society, where human rights are respected and citizens protected by the State. My duty was to investigate and write stories about previously silenced voices, abuses against minority groups, and the political opposition during that turbulent period. I did not join the opposition parties, but I shared their values and principles on the rule of law, transparent governance, and the need for a democratic constitution to create a limited government and

leadership. I therefore took a lively interest in the activities of constitutional movements and political parties that were challenging the long incumbency and human rights violations associated with the government. The stories that I investigated were meant to contribute to the opening up of society and the protection of human rights defenders in a politically volatile environment.

When *The Daily News* was closed in 2003, the researcher joined the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, a lobby and advocacy conglomerate of civil society organizations in the country, who aim to address what it called “the twin crises of legitimacy and governance” following violent and disputed 2000 and 2002 parliamentary and presidential elections respectively.

The organization is an activist political advocacy group that lobbied governments in the Southern African Development Community, (SADC), the African Union, (AU), the European Union, (EU) and the United Nations, to put pressure on the Zimbabwe government to open up the democratic space by allowing closed newspapers, such as *The Daily News* and *The Tribune*, to re-open, to stop the persecution of lawyers, journalists and other political human rights defenders. I prepared and researched evidence of human rights abuses to present at the meetings of these institutions and used my journalism skills and connections to amplify the voices of civic groups. The point is that I continued to play an active role during the crisis period without necessarily being a rank and file member of the official opposition. It was not the membership of opposition political parties that mattered, but the shared common values of norm compliance and the need to have a culture of respect for human rights by the State.

Angela Makamure, a junior reporter who lost her job after the paper was closed said that she and her colleagues connected with foreign newspapers and online publications that could publish their stories. She pointed out that it was one way of making sure that they contributed to the opening up of society.

Individual journalists continued to write and publish their stories using pseudonyms, some started off their individual blogs, contribute to different online Diaspora newspapers, because most mainstream publications would not dare publish most of these critical stories. It was also another way of keeping the spirit and values of our paper, which was to tell the stories of the human rights violations, abduction of opposition supporters without fear,

said the journalist, who also worked for the women’s media lobby, the Federation of African Media Women of Zimbabwe, in an interview in Johannesburg, 7th August, 2012.

A senior journalist who joined MISA became involved in lobbying for the return of closed newspapers. He was involved in putting the case of *The Daily News* closure at the African Commission for Human Rights in the Gambia in 2003 and 2004. The Commission, which operates as a quasi-judicial body, ruled that *The Daily News* should be re-opened, and sections of AIPPA and POSA that offend freedom of expression repealed.

Describing his new work in an interview in Harare on 10th September, 2012, the journalist pointed out that his new employer promotes democratic norms, similar values to those for which *The Daily News* stood.

Statements of condemnation against harassment, or any threats against journalists, would be issued by MISA. We came up with the legal defence fund, where we assembled a group of lawyers that would, on short notice, represent journalists arrested for violating sections of AIPPA or POSA. Fortunately for the journalists, most of them were never convicted by the courts,

said the senior journalist, pointing out that the arrests were meant to intimidate the journalists so that they didn't write or investigate critical stories about the prevailing political environment, which was replete with human rights transgressions against the government's opponents.

5.4 *The Daily News*: A platform for advocacy for social change forces

Unger (1990) has suggested that in emerging democratic societies, such as most African states, a free press may, in fact, be more effective than an opposition party in achieving change in an oppressive political system. This thesis posits that this role of the media in countries such as Zimbabwe could be helpful in trying to understand the role of the opposition and the independent or private press in confronting an authoritarian administration.

It was not only the MDC that benefited from having an opposition newspaper platform from which to articulate its policies and political agenda in *The Daily News*, but also social movements, such as labour and other human rights organizations. It seems difficult, therefore, to sustain the argument that the paper was a mouthpiece of the country's biggest opposition political party. What seems undeniable are the revelations by civil society organizations that *The Daily News* and its journalists were at their service in their struggles for social change.

Muleya submitted that civic society organizations, such as the constitutional reform movement, the NCA, also found space in *The Daily News* to articulate and mobilize calls for a new democratic and people-driven constitutional making process.

The NCA had become not just a platform for expressing the demand for constitutional reform, but it had become a platform for expressing the political demands for broad change. Those forces did not have anywhere to express themselves immediately and on a daily basis. They found *The Daily News* to be the only viable outlet. The Internet had not really developed in Zimbabwe to the extent that we have today, where people are free now to put a lot of material onto the internet to express their opinions and views. The oppositional, traditional media offered an opportunity and platform of expression to forces that included the MDC, civil society and the constitutional movement that remained behind after the MDC became a political party. *The Daily News* offered a platform to workers and many other forces that were agitating for one kind of reform or another. That is why the government found it very inconvenient as a newspaper. That is why the government saw it necessary to have repressive laws. The government needed to consolidate the prevailing media terrain in order to suppress and crush the development of media. *The Daily News* was offering that platform for coalescing groups that agitated for reforms. It had to be targeted, (Interview with editor of *The Zimbabwe Independent*, Muleya in Harare on 10th November, 2012).

What is interesting is that even the war veterans who were at the forefront of the land occupations and were accused of human rights violations, as noted in this study acknowledged the significant role of newspapers such as *The Daily News* of providing a platform to stifled voices during the period of political disturbances.

Andy Mhlanga, Secretary General of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA), further agreed that, in some instances, the paper promoted its cause for land reform through publicity on the invasions of commercial white farmers' properties, although much of the publicity was critical and oppositional.

The Daily News played a very critical role in the democratization process because the stories which were not captured by *The Herald* and other state papers were captured by *The Daily News*. In politics or in any country, critical papers are not for the government. In this case, it was *The Daily News*. As the leadership of the war veterans, we used to demonstrate against *The Daily News* because of its critical reporting. Some headlines were really annoying, because it could come up with headlines which could attack the war veterans' organization. But, as you know, that process of criticism in itself is what made us vibrant as an organisation or as the leadership of the war veterans at that time. *The Daily News* contributed in making us vibrant, in making us be seen, heard, recognized, and even to be respected, because most of those touching headlines made us known. Our land reform cause became an international issue because of the publicity we got from hugely circulated papers like

The Daily News. We did not worry too much about the bad publicity, because our message of taking back our land was being circulated across the world,(Interview with Andy Mhlanga, Harare, 20th December, 2012).



Demonstrating war veterans march to State House in 1999 demanding compensation for their efforts to liberate Zimbabwe. The veterans of the liberation struggle later led the invasion of mostly white-owned farms arguing that they were redressing colonial injustices that led to the war of independence against colonial settlers.

The war veterans’ leader highlights that while some of the stories and headlines offended them, their demonstrations at the farms needed vibrant reporters and observations because some people with different agendas were committing crimes at the farms in the name of the association.

Our relationship with *The Daily News* was good, because we used to call quite a number of press conferences where *The Daily News* journalists attended. They captured our press conferences and our ideas very well. I remember at one time there were some problems at the farm for our commander Air Marshall Perence Shiri in

Marondera. He was accused of chasing the farmer and his workers away, using his political influence and his standing in society. He was also accused of later chasing away the ordinary people who had settled on the farm. I remember *The Daily News* captured that story very well when we called for a press conference where we made it clear that Shiri had an offer letter from the government and was at the property legally. The journalist wrote our explanation correctly, and our proposal that the people on that land should be allocated land elsewhere by the government. The journalist wrote accurately that the problem was not Shiri, but the land allocation authorities in the government, (Interview with Andy Mhlanga, Harare, 20th December, 2012).

Mhlanga explained, further pointing out that even the bad publicity that war veterans got from *The Daily News* was important, because it made the world know about their cause and the need to distribute land equitably in Zimbabwe.

Mhlanga thought that *The Daily News* served a democratic purpose for the former liberation fighters by covering their protests demanding compensation for participating in the war of independence. He said their grievances were ignored by the official media, but *The Daily News* alerted the government through their stories.

In an insightful interview at the University of Zimbabwe, where he teaches law, Lovemore Madhuku, the Chairperson of the NCA and a constitutional law expert, noted that there is little doubt that *The Daily News* and its journalists contributed to the opening up of the democratic space during his organization's fight for constitutional and democratic reforms in the country. He refuted suggestions that *The Daily News'* relationship with other democratic forces was ambiguous, pointing out that:

I think there was a very clear relationship there. *The Daily News* saw itself as part and parcel of the democratic agenda. It was a newspaper, yes, but a newspaper with an agenda to open up society and to oppose undemocratic practices, especially by the state. That was a clear position by the newspaper. So it would see itself as being in the trenches with these organizations and you get almost every encouraging thing done by the other players, *The Daily News* would publish. Stories about the protests by students, civil society and the opposition were not published in the state-controlled newspapers. The state run-papers positioned themselves as the defenders of President Mugabe's regime and its oppressive policies. On the contrary, *The Daily News* covered people's expressions and disillusionment with the system. The paper thought it was in the trenches with other democratic forces, (Interview with LovemoreMadhuku, Harare, 13th February, 2013).



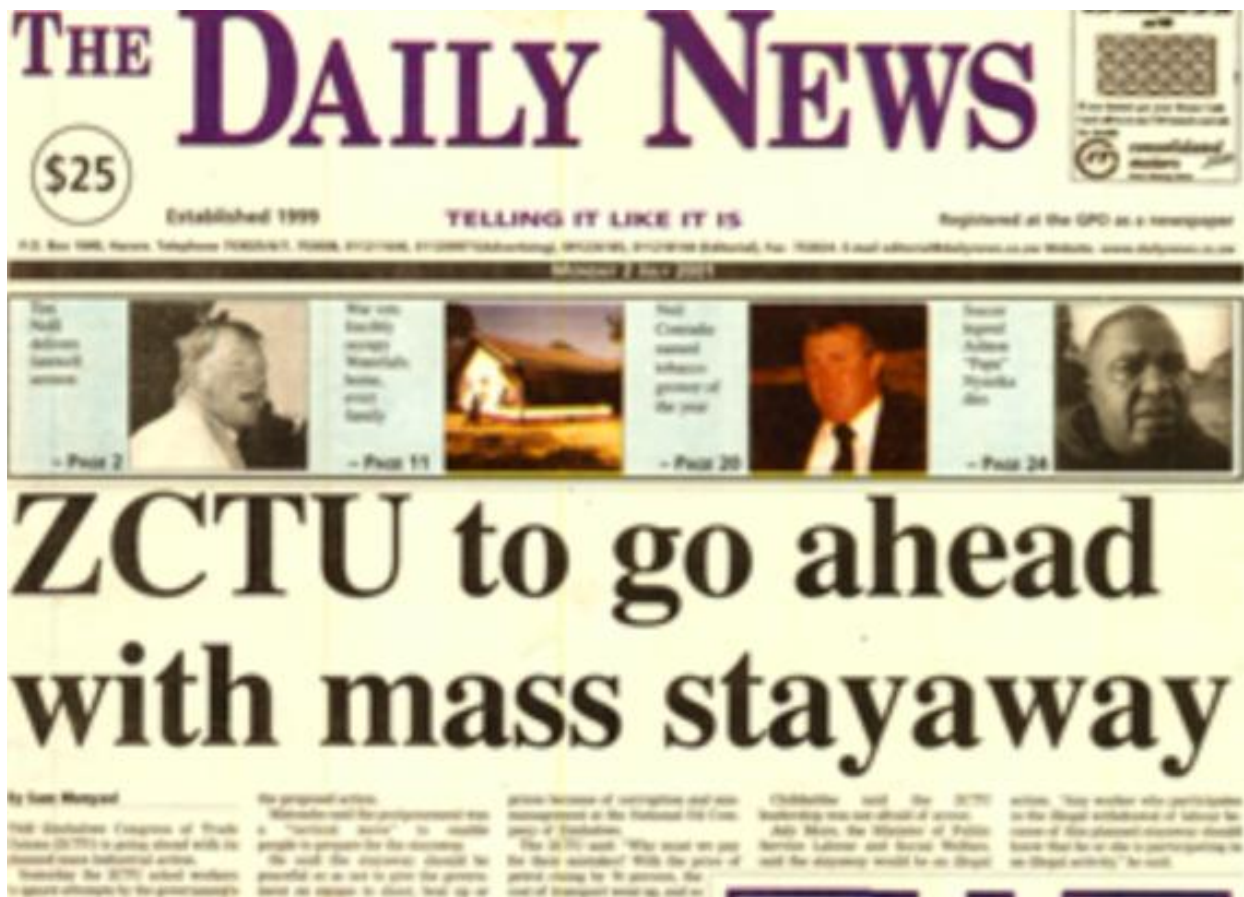
The Daily News publicizing an NCA protest in 2000. The NCA was formed in 1997 by a group of academics, labour, students and farmers, to lead the call for a democratic constitution that would create a limited, restrained and democratic developmental state

We got the most coverage of the activities of the referendum from *The Daily News*; what the campaign was all about and the issues we raised about presidential term limits, the need for constitutional human rights and anti-corruption commissions, as well as the need to harmonize the elections. *The Financial Gazette* and *The Zimbabwe Independent* also covered our campaigns to reject the draft law, but these were weekly newspapers with limited circulation. If we didn't have *The Daily*, I think many people would not have known that we were campaigning for a NO vote, because the impression, reading it from government papers, was that there was the referendum and the only way to vote was to vote YES, because that's what the government and the Constitutional Commission wanted,

Madhuku pointed this out, arguing that the paper contributed immensely to the defeat of the government and to the Constitutional Commission's position.

Japhet Moyo, the Secretary-General of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), a leading formation in the protests for better working conditions, constitutional reforms and the institution that facilitated the formation of the MDC, submitted that *The Daily News* and its journalists were the voice of silenced communities due to the state's hegemonic control of the media. He noted, in an interview in Harare on 7th December, 2012 that the struggles of workers benefited hugely from the publicity they got from the paper.

Government officials may say what *The Daily News* did was radical, but what *The Daily News* came to be was the voice of the voiceless. For us in the labour movement and other civic organizations, our struggles, issues and the concerns that we raised in our efforts to democratize the country were either not reported, or unfairly criticized by the state media using government authorities. What *The Daily News* did was to put into the picture, and for the public to know and judge for itself, the constitutional reforms' activities of the NCA, the protests and demonstrations for better working conditions by the ZCTU, and the struggles and demands for academic freedoms and student support by the Zimbabwe National Students' Union (ZINASU). Our programmes were captured by *The Daily News*. As a result, we had a very close relationship with the paper, because it was fighting on the side of the masses. It identified with our struggles, Moy explained.



The Daily News encouraging protests by the labor movement against increasing cost of living during the political and economic crises in 2000

Moyo further pointed out that *The Daily News* came at an appropriate time in the history of Zimbabwe, in 1999, when opposition and civic formations were clamouring for democratic reforms in the country. He explained:

The Daily News opened our muzzled voices and space at a very critical moment in our struggles. Where *The Herald* and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation attempted to mislead our members and the public on our protests for a living wage and constitutional reforms, *The Daily News* would accurately report on our agenda on a daily basis. The paper gave us a platform we had never experienced before, in that our voices could no longer be silenced and muzzled by the state, (Interview with Japhet Moyo in Harare on 7th December, 2012).

Throughout the interviews carried out with civil society leaders, it was apparent that the paper promoted their calls for reforms and shaped the discourses of the day in a manner that benefitted them.

Raymond Majongwe, the Secretary General of the Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ), pointed that his membership had a special connection with the paper that allowed them to capture and publicize the human rights violations against teachers in remote parts of Zimbabwe.

Our teachers in the remote areas would use the cellphone to text us on our hotlines about hot spots. We then relayed that information to a hotline number at *The Daily News*, and their reporters would investigate and expose the violations, including attacks and the displacement of teachers in rural areas. The most important thing is that when other people saw stories of these violations coming up in the paper, it encouraged quite a number of them to speak out. This becomes a national movement to expose abuses, (MajongweInterview, Harare, 12thNovember, 2012).

Majongwe further stated that:

The Daily News became the vehicle through which news would reach remote communities, with the support of pictures of victims of violence and destroyed houses and burnt buildings. This assisted to draw the attention of the authorities and stop the abuses, (Ibid).



Teachers, mostly in rural areas, were subjected to political violence in the run up to the March 2002 presidential election

The Daily News covered the most disputed elections in 2000, 2002, and the constitutional referendum in February 2000 where, for the first time since 1980, the government lost a plebiscite to the combined forces of civil society and the political opposition.

Rindai Chipfunde-Vava, Director of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, (ZESN), a coalition of civic groups' calls for the promotion of holding democratic elections in the country, submits that *The Daily News* and its journalists played substantial roles in fostering and nurturing democratic electoral processes.

For us, *The Daily News* was giving voice to the voiceless. It was the only channel where we could have our views aired to the public. Sometimes we would send our adverts to *The Herald*, and if they were critical of ZANU PF the paper refused to publish them, but *TheDaily News* would cover almost everything from the MDC to civil society. It became more like a mouthpiece for civil society organisations and the MDC, giving us space and coverage in terms of the kind of activities that we will be doing on the ground, (Interview with Chipfunde-Vava in Harare, 15th September, 2012).

She concedes that *TheDaily News* brought a new culture of political reporting on electoral issues.

The 2002 presidential election was very exciting, particularly the coverage of the presidential candidates. *The Herald* was making cartoons of Morgan Tsvangirai as a tea boy while, on the other hand, they cartooned President Mugabe, at the same time offering more space to the MDC. The paper was very critical of President Mugabe and I think that is what eventually led to its closure after the 2002 presidential elections, (Ibid).

During the constitutional 2000 referendum, the paper assisted in terms of giving voice to the NCA and MDC-T, who were urging people to vote against the draft constitution, and they succeeded. However, I think the paper became much more crucial when political parties were headed for the presidential 2002 election. In the absence of *The Daily News*, I do not think MDC candidate Morgan Tsvangirai could have fared the same way without *The Daily News*. I think the paper played a very crucial role in that particular election,

Chipfunde-Vava observed during a discussion on 15thSeptember, 2012, in Harare, on the role of *The Daily News* and the media in general in the democratic process in Zimbabwe.

She pointed out that the paper critically evaluated the whole electoral cycle, such as the political campaigns, the electoral laws, and the state of the voters' roll, which it described as shambolic. She noted:

The paper really made it so evident that there was no equitable balance in terms of allocation of state resources among contesting political parties and candidates. It also

made the issue of elections much more interesting, because it carried lively debates in its letters to the editor and opinion pages, where people challenged political parties on their campaign manifestos. *The Daily News* provided space for opposition political candidates. This space was denied to them on state-run television, radio and newspapers that were covering President Mugabe and ZANU PF. This was very useful for people to make comparisons and to be able to choose a candidate from an informed basis, so it made debates and power contestations much more interesting than before, (ibid).

Vava-Chipfunde's submissions are viewed similarly by other civic actors. Rashweat Mukundu, formerly Director of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zimbabwe Chapter, a media rights body that lobbies regional governments to embrace and promote freedom of expression, argues that, from a news production point of view:

I think *TheDaily News* was a breath of fresh air in terms of the ability of civic and political parties to communicate their message to the public on their various causes. For MISA, this was an entity formed to promote media diversity and plurality. So MISA was also geared up to assist *The Daily News* in the many challenges that it was facing with the state. This included the arrest of journalists, harassment of the newspaper, the beatings, the bombings that took place, all these challenges we saw MISA actively coming in to help *The Daily News*,(Mukundu Interview, 20th July, 2012, in Harare).

I am sure political scientists will analyse this and come to the same conclusion that the MDC immensely benefited from the coming in of *The Daily News*. However, I don't think that there was a direct relationship between the two. The polarized nature of our politics and the fact *The Daily News* and the MDC literally found themselves in the same boat in terms of being labelled agents of western governments, being accused of anti-regime activities and being dually victims of political harassment by the state, made them to feel for each other,(ibid).

Madhuku submitted that because *The Daily News* captured a lot of economic, social, and political problems that Zimbabwe was facing, this sort of coincided with the messages of the MDC, which was a message of change, and a message to bring economic stability to Zimbabwe.

So, to me, it was the coincidence of social challenges that Zimbabwe was facing, which *The Daily News* was reporting, and that the MDC was promising to resolve should it get into power. That would apply to which was pushing for the need to have a democratic constitution and this coincided with a number of challenges that Zimbabwe was going through, (Interview with Lovemore Madhuku, Harare, 13th February, 2013).

He argued that the paper captured critical issues of the moment during the crisis period, which most anti-government organizations were advocating should be addressed through several means, including a democratic change of government.

Key being the economic collapse that Zimbabwe was going through in the late 1990s, culminating in demands for change in terms of the constitutional order. Citizens were demanding a limited, accountable and responsible government. The messages that the NCA was putting across coincided with the message of *The Daily News*, so it opened up a platform for many voices. *The Daily News*, the NCA, the MDC and MISA sort of found themselves on the same side as a result of the political struggle that Zimbabwe was in,(ibid.)

Mukundu explained that the relationship between *The Daily News*, civil society and opposition political parties was circumstantial, a product of historical events, a result of similar minds meeting to address a common social problem.

Given the role played by *The Daily News* and its journalists, as narrated by a number of civil society leaders in this study, one is therefore persuaded to agree with Ansah (1988), who concluded that, in the African context where one is dealing with new and fragile political institutions, the press should be a watchdog of democracy. It is suggested that it is only the press which can provide regular scrutiny on the activities of the government in between elections to evaluate how performance matches campaign promises

In a democratic society, actions of the government, which is only a trustee of the collective will and power of the people and expected to be regulated by the force of public opinion, and the press is the most appropriate medium of gauging and reflecting public opinion. In the absence of any such mechanism for regularly monitoring and evaluating the government's performance before the bar of public opinion, there is a great likelihood of the government falling into complacency, unresponsiveness and irresponsibility, (Ansah, 1988:13).

5.5 Differences within an alternative newspaper

While the most harrowing experiences by the journalists were at the hands of the repressive state machinery and its agents, there were also internal contradictions and problems that *The Daily News'* journalists faced. These include the firing of senior journalists without due notice and the decision by management to refuse to register the paper. These internal problems also expose the contradictions associated with the opposition newspaper and the broader opposition groups that came together to oppose ZANU PF rule despite their disparate interests and class differences.

The decision by the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ) management, publishers of *The Daily News*, to refuse to register with the government regulatory statutory body, the Media and Information Commission (MIC), in December, 2002, that divided public opinion and led to internal fissures and suspicions that the organization's hierarchy had played into the hands of the government and facilitated the paper's closure. The journalists were not consulted because they were not shareholders in the company, one could argue, despite investing their lives in the paper while working under conditions of repression.

ANZ, the holding company of *The Daily News*, disregarded advice from its editors and other privately-owned newspapers who, after a meeting of stakeholders in October, 2002, agreed that they should register and then challenge aspects of the AIPPA, which they deemed unconstitutional. On the contrary, management refused to register, and approached the Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality of requiring newspapers to register with the MIC. The Supreme Court ruled against the paper and on 17th September, 2003, the paper was shut down by the government for operating outside the law.

A senior editor, now working for a media watchdog, points out that there were cases of improper labour practices at the paper. He explained:

I think you are aware of the changes that happened in 2003 when Francis Mdlongwa then Editor in Chief of *The Financial Gazette* joined *The Daily News*. There were displacements, and I think you were among those that were affected by that decision. The manner in which they came was not professionally handled. There was no prior notice that these people were coming. Many people, as you are aware, were displaced. I would give an example of Leo Hatugari a senior editor who was just told he had been retrenched, just like that. Tendai Nyakunu, who was the Chief Sub-Editor, was similarly retrenched without notice. After that they came to me and said I was fired summarily for being absent from work without official leave, which I disputed. I am told, and I think it's a fact of history, that suddenly the circulation of the newspaper went down. Eventually the paper was closed down. It was quite a very sad chapter, not just for the journalists that suddenly found themselves unemployed but. I think the people of Zimbabwe were affected most. I think that was the saddest moment, to know of colleagues that I have worked with who suddenly wake up and they are no longer employed and they don't know how best they are going to get their next meal. I miss the colleagues that I worked with at *The Daily News*, (Interview with a former Senior *Daily News* Editor, Harare, 13th December, 2012).

Despite the internal personal problems that he faced from the people he thought would behave differently from the political establishment that the paper was exposing, the Senior Editor thinks that *Daily News'* journalists were professionals who were committed to serving their country under difficult conditions, mainly threats from the state. He pointed out that:

Those were journalists that were dedicated to their profession. Despite the risks, despite the threats, the abductions, the assaults that happened, they will still turn up the next day and carry on with the work. This is despite the bombings that took place at the office and the printing factory. If it were other individuals, or other journalists, I am sure they would have said they could not continue to work for a paper where they were not certain about what will happen to them by way of the victimizations, the threats and assaults. But they said they will soldier on, and I think in the near future, beginning today, those journalists need to be honoured one way or the other, (ibid).

In wide ranging discussion of internal contradictions at the paper that escaped public scrutiny, a senior sub-editor on 25th November, 2012, in Harare argued that journalists were not only facing harassment from the state but even from the paper's management. The worst events for him were events leading to the paper's closure, when the interference from management started to be manifest, leading to the closure of the paper, he pointed out.

At my early days I perceived *The Daily News* as a fair employer but before the closure of the paper, management was failing to get our salaries on time and these were bad moments. However, the mission and vision were still there, but when the management began to interfere, it was a problem. I was not near the seat of power then, but I could see that the editor-in-chief and the chief executive officer were always clashing, culminating in the unceremonious dismissal of the editor-in-chief. Management then handpicked the editorial team from *The Financial Gazette* and put them on top positions above everyone in the newsroom. We then felt that these people did not have any gratitude, because of their management system and their style. The new staff did not find it easy to integrate with the system or workmates. I could see the paper crumbling right in front of my eyes. The spirit and the openness in the newsroom disappeared and it was now like where I worked previously, in the government papers where factions and suspicions existed. The new staff started writing stories with no sources, even in straightforward stories, contrary to the tradition of the paper. That culture, that critical component disappeared and, in tandem with that, circulation plummeted. As journalists, we no longer had a sense of ownership.

He further suggested that the editorial changes that saw the dismissal of Nyarota also contributed to the fall of the paper.



Nyarota was fired in December, 2002, after clashing with Nkomo. He later went into exile in the USA in 2003.

Nyarota and Nkomo had different versions of the dismissal of Nyarota and why the paper refused to register with the government statutory body, the Media and Information Commission, leading to its closure for failing to comply with the law.

Nkomo strayed into enemy territory when he became the Chairman and when he subsequently became the Chief Executive of ANZ.

In December, 1999, *The Daily News*, I in particular exposed him for his transgressions at the mining industry pension fund, causing him to lose his job. It is a miracle that he did not go to jail, and it is also a bigger miracle that he had to come to the same *Daily News* as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman. He had an axe to grind with *The Daily News*. I don't think Nkomo is an angel, and I did not see evidence of his angelic behaviour, so he had an axe to grind with me, primarily, and *The Daily News* in general, (Nyarota Interview in Harare on 5 November, 2012).

Explained Nyarota, insisting that this could be the reason why he was fired in December, 2002.

Nyarota argued that management played into the hands of the state by refusing to register, against the advice of other privately-owned papers, and that the decision not to register had no merit.

There were a lot of personal issues that came into play. The Chief Executive Officer took the position that he did not want to register *TheDaily News*. It was like a personal decision, disregarding advice on these issues. I was his advisor, but he disregarded the advice. I do not know where he got this advice of not registering from. I reported to him, to the company, the positions adopted at the meeting of other editors and publishers that we should register, (Ibid).

However, Nkomo pointed that Nyarota was dismissed for disobeying management decisions by paying the salaries of employees who were on strike. He defended his decision not to register, arguing that it was the position of the majority shareholder of the company, Strive Masiyiwa.

Let me say that the newspaper was predominantly owned by Strive Masiwa. I was merely the chief executive officer, appointed by the major shareholders. Now, at the time when we were supposed to register I had to listen to the owners of the newspaper, and there was debate within the corridors of power of the shareholders and they got some legal opinion, both within and without, which legal opinion actually said that it was unconstitutional and therefore we should not register. We even delayed making a decision because we were waiting for them to make up their minds. I know that there are people who say that we should have gone ahead to register, but it was not such an easy thing to do. I could not just take the shareholders' newspaper and register it. The owners of the newspaper directed us to challenge the registration requirement. We were directed not to register and that's how it happened, (Interview with Nkomo in Harare on 24th January, 2013).

However, the majority of journalists interviewed during the research were of the opinion that the paper should have been registered and that management should have taken Nyarota's counsel. In an interview on 19th August, 2012, in Harare, one of *The Daily News* editors said about the decision to refuse registration,

Nyarota, as the most senior journalist on the paper, should have been listened to. His views were not considered as far as the licensing was concerned. He joined the other media gurus at a Harare hotel to discuss the issue and it was agreed that newspapers would register and raise complaints later. Only the chief executive officer, then Sipepa Nkomo, took the decision not to register. He knew very well what would happen if the paper was not registered. There was no excuse for *The Daily News* to refuse to register.

Legal experts, however, assert that in a constitutional democracy where the rule of law prevails, the paper could have won its case.

The decision not to register was quite a good decision in terms of strategy. The *Daily News* was quite convinced that the media is not supposed to be regulated to the extent that AIPPA had done. If it had just rushed to register I think the impression would just be these are just business people making money out of the struggle of the people. In that way you would say it behaved like an activist newspaper. I think the laws that Mugabe and his people were enacting were both undemocratic and unconstitutional, it therefore made sense just to make a point, refuse to register and approach the Supreme Court,

pointed out Madhuku who is a constitutional law lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe, further arguing that:

... ..differently constituted, the Supreme Court may easily have ruled in favour of *The Daily News*. I think it was also the politicisation of the Supreme Court at the time

of the political crisis. Under the circumstances, one must not condemn *The Daily News* and argue it was a wrong strategy, (Interview with Lovemore Madhuku, Harare, 13th February, 2013).

Madhuku further points out that Zimbabwe's constitution says anyone who has their rights taken should approach the courts, stating that:

I would say that the judgment of the Supreme Court should be the one that is supposed to be condemned as a wrong judgment, rather than the strategy of *The Daily News* not to register. I am very much convinced that if you had had a Supreme Court presided by former Chief Justices Antony Gubbay and Enoch Dumbutshena, the two would easily have found that *The Daily News* acted properly. The law is not valid, it's void. It shouldn't insist on registering journalists. It's therefore the right of anyone to refuse to register and seek recourse in the court, (Ibid).

Irene Petras, the Director of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), is also of the view that a different but independent judiciary could have ruled in favour of *The Daily News*.

If we had a different bench that was more proactive, a bench which was more human rights friendly, more willing to take risks, the outcome could have been different. We could be certain *The Daily News* made the right decision, (Interview with Irene Petras, Harare, 23rd October, 2012).

At the turn of the 21st century, the government purged the judiciary and removed senior judges, mostly white ones, after it lost a string of cases against political opposition dissenters. The judges had also ruled that the invasion of white-owned commercial farms was unconstitutional and ordered the eviction of the land occupiers. The government responded by firing Chief Justice Gubbay and other senior judges. It promoted compliant lawyers to the bench, including lawyers who participated in the war of independence, in order to protect its interests and maintain its hold on the State.

5.6 *Daily News*; opposition, agency and defiance: why work under conditions of repression?

Most of the journalists and senior managers interviewed for this study submitted that they took a deliberate activist and oppositional position in order to confront and expose human rights violations by the government, because they wanted to contribute to the realisation of a country that respects the rule of law and protect its citizens. Some of these views are captured on the paper's front page headlines, such as the one below. As discussed in Chapter Four, front page stories and headlines usually depict the ideological and editorial position of a newspaper. In the headline below, the paper is taking an active

position, calling for President Mugabe to leave power. Such a headline, among other critical ones, one would argue, convinced the government and its ideologues that the newspaper was an opposition publication.



A story written by this researcher in February, 2002, a month before the 2002 presidential election, called for President Mugabe to retire from politics, while urging the opposition MDC party not to boycott the poll.

The call was that it was now a requirement for change in Zimbabwe. ZANU PF had failed; they had betrayed the tenets of the liberation struggle, the values and principles of the liberation struggle, so they must be changed. Somebody must stand up and *The Daily News*' workers and journalists answered to that call. That is why they would be beaten, but come back to work tomorrow. I remember we were thrown into filthy cells at Harare Central Police Station, but we will be there at work tomorrow. The journalists were fighting for a cause; if all good men keep

quiet, evil will thrive, so they chose to stand up and be counted, (Interview with Sipepa Nkomo, Chair and CEO of the paper, Harare, 24th January, 2013).

This study explored why *The Daily News* journalists defied state repression; the arrests, the beatings, the assaults, detentions and newspaper bombings, as well as risking their lives and families by continuously working on a newspaper the authorities targeted. In the course of interviews during my research, various reasons were given, among them that the journalists were waging a democratic struggle against the authoritarian regime and that it was a national duty to write and expose human rights violations. Others argued that it was the best environment in which to develop as professional journalists and they were interested in standing up to the challenges. Nyarota, the Editor-in-Chief, argues that the newspaper had a social contract with the people, to report accurately what was going on during the crisis period, which he could not breach.



The Daily News printing press bombed in January, 2001. The bombers still remain at large.

Maxwell Sibanda, an assistant editor with the paper and formerly Entertainment Editor, noted that public encouragement made him persevere. He, however, pointed out that he thought he was a liberation fighter for a democratic cause:

Some people would encourage me to keep on doing the good work. To others it was good work but thought it was propaganda. To us at *The Daily News*, we thought we were liberators. There are citizens who are proud of what we were doing. We continued working under difficult conditions because we said this was a struggle. Remember that there were ordinary people who demonstrated in the streets and some of them were killed during the crisis period. We were playing our part as journalists to write about these events, (Interview with Sibanda, in Harare on 10th July, 2012).

Sibanda reviewed music from rebel artists, such as Thomas Mapfumo, criticising corrupt practices by the government. During that period, Mapfumo, who later sought exile in the United States, composed an album that was reviewed by Sibanda in *The Daily News* with songs about government ministers. On this album he derided them and also sang about how the country was destroyed through corrupt practices and human rights violations, contrary to what people fought for in the war of liberation, in songs entitled: *MukomaJono* (brother Jonathan) and *Mamveve* (torn clothes), respectively, released in 2000. The same singer, as discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, also composed songs urging Zimbabweans to join the liberation struggle in the 1970s and was once arrested by the colonial government.

Despite twice being arrested, detained and released without charges, putting her family's security at risk and being labelled an opposition political activist for writing for a newspaper that was oppositional and critical of government policies by the people in her neighbourhood, the senior entertainment reporter, Margaret Chinowaita, remarked in an interview in Harare on 30th July, 2012, in Harare, that she remained working for the paper because, "it was really like a struggle and I had to contribute."

The former Features Editor, Nyasha Nyakunu, suggested that public confidence in their product encouraged the journalists to keep on working under conditions of repression. In an interview in Harare on 16th August, 2012, he noted:

I think the feedback from the reading public kept us going. They would encourage us; they would tell us that you are doing the right thing without us they will not be aware of the goings on in the country. That drove some of us. We got the feeling that what we were doing was a national duty; that I was contributing to the democratisation of Zimbabwe. That I think drove most of the individuals that worked for *The Daily News* under conditions of assaults, arrests and poor salaries.

A former senior reporter, who later joined *The Voice of America* following the closure paper on 17th July, 2012, in Harare, said;

We took ourselves as liberation fighters because we could see the results of what we were writing. Each time the paper was published we would hear people saying: 'this is good journalism'. We received messages from readers encouraging us to continue writing the truth. This inspired us to continue working, despite the arrests and acts of intimidation by state agents. This was the paper that everyone read and everyone would want to be associated with such things.

A photo journalist, Philimon Bulawayo, who broke his finger after being assaulted by the wife of a senior army commander while covering an opposition protest offered:

Working as a photo-journalist that time, the harassment and the arrests and the beatings hardened me and gave me more strength to work, so that we reported what was happening in the country. I did not think I was hurting anyone, but it was a blessing in disguise because I ended up being employed by Reuters. I had chosen this profession and working for it was a good challenge that pushed my career as a Zimbabwean journalist, (Interview with Bulawayo in Harare on 18th March, 2013).

Consistently, the idea that the journalists were fighting a democratic struggle came out to explain why they did not abandon the paper and work in other institutions, where there was no clampdown by the state.

Stanley Gama, the current Editor of *The Daily News*, explained on 13th September, 2012, in Harare why he remained defiant:

It was a struggle for democracy; it was a struggle to democratize Zimbabwe so in a struggle there are victims. You can't win where there are no victims. It's like the liberation struggle for the independence of our country. During the liberation struggle, so many people were killed and they never tasted the fruits of democracy at independence in 1980. Some people have to sacrifice and fight for independence.

The journalists had to come up with methods and ways to navigate this repression as they remained defiant. On 6th October, 2012, in Harare, Brian Mangwende, the Chief Reporter, now Associate Editor with Alpha Media Holdings, the publishers of *The Zimbabwe Independent*, *The Standard* and *News Day*, said MISA and ZUJ came to the assistance of arrested journalists by creating the Media Defence Fund, "where they would assist arrested and detained journalists. They also financially assisted journalists facing financial difficulties when the paper was closed down."

Mangwende pointed out that the journalists had to be vigilant in the manner in which they carried themselves to avoid getting into danger.

We were basically very vigilant. We knew that we were operating in a community that was not tolerant of divergent views. We made sure that we were safe at home; that we were reachable at any given moment, would also create an atmosphere where we would find ourselves at certain places and gatherings that threatened our security, (Interview with Mangwende in Harare on 6th October, 2012).

Conway Tutani, former Senior Sub-Editor now working for *News Day*, a privately owned daily newspaper that is critical of the government, pointed out that the publication of true stories was one method to ensure that they continued to publish and avoided arrests and harassment by the State.

I think the strongest element was that we always worked for the truth, without sanitizing it. This was done to avoid falling into the trap of publishing false stories. That was one of the insurance methods that we used to remain safe. We used to write true and accurate stories so it would be difficult for anyone to pin you down. That is why the government then used underhand methods of intimidating and bombing. We were eventually defenceless as individuals, and as a newspaper. By the end of the day, we were at their mercy.

Tutani elaborated on the means that the paper used in order to operate in conditions of repression in an interview in Harare on 27th September, 2012.

5.7 Conclusion

Rónning and Kupe (2000: 176) capture the role of the alternative news media and the struggles for democratisation in Zimbabwe when they postulated that:

The democratic impulse in Zimbabwean society has mainly been expressed by the numerous civic society organizations in the country, a vocal intellectual community, churches, and human rights organizations, and a small, but vocal independent press.

It is further observed that in early 2000, the judiciary, before its purge, was independent and principled in its defence of the constitution.

This despite everything has kept Zimbabwean society relatively open. And it is the struggle over maintaining this open space and extending it, which is currently a factor in the conflict between President Mugabe and ZANU (PF) leadership on one hand and the independent press on the other. An authoritarian state ideology is posed against the democratic agenda of a multifaceted civil society, Rónning and Kupe (2000:176) argued.

As observed in the various struggles and contestations between *The Daily News* and its journalists, the political opposition and advocacy networks, on the one hand, and the government as represented by the ruling ZANU (PF) party, on the other, it is plausible to advance the view that public speech and its expression in the mainstream media by opponents of the government was a huge challenge in the context of the crisis. It was in the context of the introduction of these restrictive measures, as discussed elsewhere in this study that journalists and opposition activists were arrested, but the journalists continued to operate under such conditions. In the next chapter, the alternative role and contributions of *The Daily News* is fiercely contested by experts, journalists, government officials and civil society organisations who largely submit that the newspaper and its journalists contributed immensely to the opening of the public sphere and making the government accountable.

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion and analysis: alternative media and alternative groups

6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the relationships and linkages between theories and discourses on the role of mass media in the democratization process, the data and findings from the field research to either validate or invalidate some of the claims from the lived experiences of alternative and activist journalists in Zimbabwe. It examines the questions; how did *The Daily News* affected, reflected, facilitated and influenced opposition politics in Zimbabwe? Did the newspaper contributed to the democratization processes and what was the relationship between alternative media and democracy during the Zimbabwe crisis? The idea behind the analysis and focus is to offer an informed understanding of the contributions and implications of opposition and activist journalism in media and communication studies.

As discussed in Chapters One and Two, and empirically proven in Chapters Four and Five, the role of the opposition press in the democratization agenda has been subject to various interpretations and continues to be a topic of much debate and controversy. This is reflected in the interviews used in this dissertation and postulated by various scholars. Using evidence and experiences from field research, this chapter among other things, evaluates the role of an alternative newspaper; the *Daily News* and its journalists during the period under investigation. There is a robust debate between regime sympathisers and its opponents about the contributions of the paper to the political and economic issues during the period of turmoil but the general consensus among the adversaries is that role of the paper and its journalists in reflecting and affecting the crisis was quite profound.

6.1 Representing alternative politics: *The Daily News* and elections in Zimbabwe

In this dissertation it is argued that, in Zimbabwe, the alternative public news media in general, and *The Daily News* and its journalists in particular, played an active role as agents of change, as a site of opposition politics, including during three national elections; the national constitutional referendum in

February, 2000, the June, 2000, and the March, 2002, parliamentary and presidential elections, as articulated in Chapters Four and Five of this study. As is also observed by Chiumbu and Moyo (2009) and Willems (2010 and 2011), Zimbabweans have not been passive victims of state propaganda and repression. They have instead exercised a relatively high degree of agency, exploring and devising numerous ways of defining the crisis in their own way (Chiumbu & Moyo, 2009: 208).

From fieldwork, the Presidential Spokesperson, George Charamba (2012), indicated that the *Daily News* and its journalists had a bigger agenda than simply opposition politics and the broadening of the public sphere:

My own problem with that view is that we are underestimating the intentions of *The Daily News*. *The Daily News* did not seek to oppose ZANU PF. The newspaper was seeking to replace the ruling party in the context of MDC politics. So it really got embodied in it and moved from simply opposing to preparing for a new political structure that excluded ZANU PF. At some point, *The Daily News* became cleverer than the MDC. It became a more meaningful site of resistance to ZANU PF politics and a more meaningful site for inaugurating the new politics of the country, (Interview with Geroge Charamba, Harare, 13th September 2012).

As outlined in Chapter Four, Charamba suggested that in circumstances where the government was under threat from both domestic and foreign forces being organized by an opposition newspaper; *The Daily News*, the government saw it necessary to enact a raft of repressive media and security laws to protect the political hegemony of Zanu PF. Perhaps it is important to observe that a senior bureaucrat, President Mugabe's spin doctor, believed that *The Daily News*, through its robust investigative journalism, was acting as a site for organised opposition politics, inaugurating a new kind of politics with a potential to change the organization of state politics at that time. Consistently among the opposing respondents, was the opposition and activism of the journalism role, a critical finding of this thesis and a contribution to media and communication studies is vindicated through in-depth interviews from respondents in Zimbabwe.

Charamba further noted that the role of *The Daily News* during the crisis period was to mobilize and organize the political opposition:

The *Daily News* gave form and solidity to what has been disparate dissent. It crystallized it, but also popularised the politics of the opposition. What I also want to say to you is that, in recognition of this, there were more serious adjustments in Zimpapers than in *The Daily News*. Zimpapers was beginning to lose readership.

Zimpapers' currents of events were being challenged routinely by *The Daily News*, and I can assure you people soul searched at Zimpapers, because they saw the risk. You then saw adjustment of the editorial policy from an extreme position of being reflexively ZANU PF, to an attempted balance, so as to undercut *The Daily News*. You will notice by the time the law kicks in, that *The Daily News* had been reduced to a shadow of itself. In fact my worst regret in this life as a bureaucrat was that we redeem the dying the day *The Daily News* lost its case in court. The day that *The Daily News* lost that case in court, is the day the dead institution resurrected, (Interview with George Charamba, Harare, 13th September, 2012).

Dumisani Muleya, the Editor of *The Zimbabwe Independent*, a privately-owned weekly, in Harare, concurred with Charamba and the state's fears of the robust, radical and oppositional posture of *The Daily News* journalism, when he observed that:

There were some journalists, and there are still some journalists, who strongly believe that there is need for political change in Zimbabwe, given that after Mugabe's rule for three decades Zimbabwe had become a political and economic failure. Journalists want the situation to change, just like many other citizens. *The Daily News'* oppositional stance also coincided with a chorus of voices from the opposition and constitutional movements that wanted accountable and responsible government. *The Daily News* gave form and voice to all these groups. Journalists wanted the state to be democratized after the reign of terror starting in the early 1980s. Journalists wanted change and were driven by a passion for democracy and the passion to have a new political culture altogether, (Interview with Dumisani Muleya, Harare, 10th November, 2012).

Muleya, himself an award winning investigative journalist, posits that the quest for political change among the alternative media could be seen from the view that the journalism profession was not rewarding enough at that time, because of hyperinflationary conditions. The country was experiencing an unprecedented economic crisis with inflation running into trillions:

Those journalists who remained at work during that time were dominantly driven by the need for political change and for democratization; the need for Zimbabwe to move away from Mugabe's authoritarian project into a new open and accountable political dispensation. That is why you find out that private media organizations during the time of hyperinflation were not able to pay a journalist \$10 per month. Journalists remained at work when they could make money by trading in the streets, joining foreign currency traders, or fleeing into exile altogether. They remained because they wanted to see political change; they wanted to nurture the democratization process that was unfolding. They wanted to see Zimbabwe coming out from degenerating into an authoritarian state. We had to do this job because we have platforms where we can marshal the voices of discontent and voices of change in a positive direction, (Interview with Dumisani Muleya, Harare, 10th November, 2012).

The change-seeking journalists joined ranks with opposition politicians in agitating for social change. Muleya asserts that widening the scope of opposition to undemocratic practices by the ruling party came naturally from the private press operating under difficult conditions. *The Daily News* was the lead alternative newspaper because of its mass circulation and its daily publication status, which meant that it affected the situation on a daily basis.

The activist role of journalists is also confirmed by other prominent journalists living and working in Zimbabwe at that time. A former Senior Editor of *The Daily News*, who previously worked for several state-controlled news media under the Zimpapers flagship, including the (Zimbabwe) *The Herald*, and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), also corroborated the militant stance taken by journalists against the political establishment. In an interview, the senior veteran journalist perceives the role of *The Daily News* and its journalists at this time as being unique and unprecedented:

We covered the dark side of the election campaigns in 2002, the beating up of people, and corruption by public officials, threats and harassment of journalists, the abuse of aid from the donor community by ZANU PF to force people to vote for it, especially in the communal areas. In both rural and urban areas, we exposed the beating up of the opposition members and, in some cases, by security forces who were supposed to protect them. Those elections saw a lot of violence against supporters of the newly set up MDC, and we carried those stories. This kind of coverage had never been done before. I think this is why we were tainted, especially some of us who were in senior positions as politicians hired and paid by the MDC. In my view, the paper contributed a lot in making people aware of their voting rights and what and why they were voting for particular parties and candidates. Some of our stories managed to create awareness that had hitherto never been done by any publication in the country, (Interview former Senior *Daily News* Editor, Harare, 12th October, 2012).

This watchdog role is important for democracy. Explaining and arguing why democracies require media monitoring, Trappel (2011: 14) posits that democracy refers to the principle that all the power in society is rooted in the people, and that the government is accountable to the people,

it also refers to the equality which is best understood to the principle of one man one vote; but it also refers to the process of decision making, where those affected by decisions should participate.

Complementing this view in an African context, Esipisu and Khaguli (2009), in their evaluation of the role of the media and elections in the Commonwealth, observe the deepening understanding that the

media are now viewed as being the “Eyes of Democracy”. They postulate that the media hold a mirror to society.

A free, lively and responsible media is a prerequisite for a functioning democracy, as much at election time as in between... Good elections and good media are not things apart: they are intertwined, (Esipisu&Khaguli, 2009: 18).

This study has demonstrated the self-evident crucial role of an alternative medium and its journalists supporting scholarly views by Scammell&Semetko (2000: xi) who posit that:

A free and vigorous press is both a symbol and guarantor of democracy; by contrast, increased control of the media and the muzzling of journalists accompany the coming to power of authoritarian regimes, as surely as night follows day. The converse, the emergence of a free press and critical press is a key indicator of the transformation to democracy. This much is beyond dispute.

Kasoma (1995: 539) has stressed that it is only the press which can exercise regular scrutiny on the activities of the government in between elections in order to evaluate and reveal how performances match campaign promises and how programmes are implemented. It is therefore, generally agreed by both media and democracy scholars that the mass media are one of the key democratic institutions vital in improving the quality of the electoral system, political parties, parliament, the judiciary and the executive arm of the state, and in safeguarding their democratic performance.

As evaluated in this dissertation through oppositional and activist journalism by *The Daily News* and its journalists, earlier studies have shown that:

Africa’s independent media can significantly be credited for contributing to political change in two ways: first, the independent media has broken the myth once on the continent that African dictatorial presidents were invincible, and could not be criticized. The once idolized presidents are no longer untouchable and, for the first time, have become the subject of criticism. They have been criticized for wrecking the economies of their countries through their largely unattainable socialist principles, (Kasoma, 1995: 542).

It is worth noting Kasoma’s (1995) view that the once so-called dissidents have found a voice in the independent press to express their oppositional and alternative views against incumbent regimes. In the case of Zimbabwe, evidence in this dissertation suggests that *TheDaily News*, through its alternative stance became the organiser and, in some respects, the thought leader of opposition political parties and civil society dissenters.

This study, through its analysis of a sample of front page editorials from *The Daily News*, clearly illustrated an oppositional and activist way in which the paper and its journalists criticized the ruling party's governance system. The stance taken was unparalleled in state and media relations in post-independence Zimbabwe. A good example, as demonstrated below, is when *The Daily News* called for President Mugabe to resign ahead of the 2002 presidential elections, citing the results of a survey where citizens interviewed expressed their reservations on his capacity to continue as the country's president.



The Daily News carried a front page story calling for President Mugabe to retire ahead of the 2002 presidential election. Mugabe won a disputed poll on 31st March, 2002.

Chris Mhike, a human rights lawyer, former *Daily News* senior journalist and board member of the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC), a cross-party initiative established under Constitutional Amendment Number 19 as part of the arrangement for a coalition government that came to power in February, 2009, in an interview in Harare pointed out that *The Daily News* highlighted the importance of opposition, robust and constructive criticism of those in power:

The Daily News was very critical of those who wielded state power, which is a characteristic of nurturing a democratic society. Citizens should be able to criticise

their leaders, and they did so through the platform of *The Daily News* in a robust way. The paper and its journalists gave an opportunity to those in power to learn how to live with legitimate public criticism. There might have been consequences for those running *The Daily News*, but political authorities learnt that they are in power to serve the citizens not themselves. This was done through investigative stories on corruption and human rights violations, especially in the farms during the land reform process, (Interview with Chris Mhike, Harare, 23rd October, 2012).

However, a responsible media is also required in a democratic society in order to guard against any excesses by journalists and media owners. Nyamnjoh (2009: 70) pointed out that in the early 1990s, in Mali for example, elements of the press exacerbated ethnic tensions and conflicts in the north of the country by encouraging students to paralyse the education system for three years and they cooperated with the opposition to make the country ungovernable. When the media plays such a role, it is argued that it is destroying, rather than nurturing, democratic practices.

As discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, Hamelink (2001) proposes that the media are important for defending human rights, which are an important ingredient of a democratic society. It is observed that the media expose human rights violations, allow citizens to know about rights abuses. The cases of attacks and, in some instance, the killing of opposition supporters, farmers, the assaults, kidnappings, detentions and arrests of *The Daily News*' journalists as they actively exposed these human rights violations, which is articulated in Chapters Four and Five, goes to show the importance of the media in promoting human rights, which are inescapably linked to the promotion and nurturing of democratic norms and values. *The Daily News* and its journalists, through their lived experiences in a dictatorship, as this study shows in Chapters Four and Five, were not bystanders observing the violations but were also violated, and they made a huge contribution by actively participating and then exposing the violations through investigative stories that they wrote despite the threats and the beatings they faced. The victims of political violence were given a platform to narrate their stories with pictures that exposed the callousness of the regime and its hostility to public scrutiny. This is arguably one of the critical contributions of the opposition and the activist media to the democratization process in Zimbabwe.

As Hamelink (2001) and Freire (2007) suggest, the exposure of perpetrators of human rights violations requires massive coverage by the media. In trying to expose human rights violations by state parties and powerful private entities, the media and journalists, as discussed in interviews with a number of journalists detailing their experiences in Chapter Five and as corroborated by international

organizations, such as the United Nations, who gave awards to *The Daily News* and its journalists. The private press; *The Daily News* and its journalists, became victims of violations to their right to freedom of expression as evaluated in Chapter Five.

However, it should be pointed out that the media are not saints. They can also be perpetrators of human rights violations, as was the case with Radio Television Mille Collines (RTMC), a private radio station in Rwanda that incited and instigated Hutu majority of the population to kill ethnic minority Tutsis through their propaganda and hate speech. On 24th April, 2002, *The Daily News* printed what turned out to be a false story about a woman having been decapitated, allegedly in the presence of her children. This was soon after the 2002 presidential election, as part of alleged ZANU PF post-election victimisation. The state proved that the story was a hoax and *The Daily News* was taken to court. Alternative news media, therefore, do not always get it right, especially when they do not check facts before publishing stories. In the said story, *The Daily News* apologized and attempts by the state to prosecute the editors of the paper were thrown out by the courts, who agreed with the paper's lawyers when they argued that it was not criminal to "genuinely" write a false report.



***The Daily News* headline story on 24th April, 2002, which was proved false by the police**

The findings of this research, especially in regard to the activist role of the paper and its journalists, the manner in which they provided opposition political parties with a platform to reach out to the public for support in the electoral process, authenticates and validates the role of the opposition press media in the

democratization process. The alternative journalism of *The Daily News* and the behaviour of its journalists upheld democracy. As is noted by Curran (2002: 225):

The media can be viewed in an expansive way, as an agency of information and debate which facilitate the functioning of democracy. In this view, the media brief the electorate and assist voters to make an informed choice at elections. Independent media also provide a channel of communication between governments and the governed. Above all, the media provide a forum for debate in which people can identify problems, propose solutions, reach agreement and guide the public direction of society.

This is to some extent true of the role of alternative news media during the Zimbabwe crisis. From my findings, and related to electoral processes, *The Daily News* and its journalists provided a vibrant public sphere to the electorate and the general public and enabled citizens to discuss matters of public policy and governance, as shown by the headlines and stories published by the paper in a repressive political set up. The public sphere being a space where access to information affecting the public is widely available, where, ideally, discussion is free of domination and where people who are participating in public debate do so on an equal basis, (Curran, 2002). *The Daily News*, to a greater degree, facilitated the nurturing and existence of the public sphere, albeit in conditions of repression where citizens could not get copies of the newspaper because the authorities would not allow its national circulation, and in circumstances where reporters were assaulted, arrested and their printing machine bombed.

The Daily News was popular with social and civic movements and political opposition parties, most probably because it captured accurately their protest messages, as reflected by the political and economic situation during the crisis period. As is noted by Willems (2011), unlike other papers, *The Daily News* did not rely on experts in its news coverage but told the stories of ordinary people in their own voices and circumstances. This unfettered view of ordinary people is important. As discussed before, the public sphere "... must also be truthful, in so far as it reflects the genuine and sincere intentions of the speakers," (McNair, 1999: 22). Political communication must be based on realities on the ground, especially because representative democracies largely have "mediated politics, experienced by the great majority of citizens at one remove through their print and broadcast media of choice", (McNair, 2000: 1).

Despite operating in conditions of repression, *The Daily News* and its journalists resisted the oppressive political environment and actively facilitated the constitution of the public sphere by providing a platform for public debate on a wide range of issues, such as electoral and farming ones, and

allowed public opinions in its columns of letters to the editor. In any case, the public sphere is always a contested arena with limitations, such as how it is constituted and who is able to access it. The extent to which *The Daily News* contributed to the broadening of the public sphere is equally contested, but its opposition role, captured through its experiences and its journalists while operating in conditions of violence and legal constraints, to contribute to the role of the democratization processes in Zimbabwe, cannot be denied.

One is therefore tempted to propose that the private media were playing a surmountable role in opening up the political system in Zimbabwe, which arguably remains largely authoritarian. In this regard, Hyland (1995: 36) submits that political rule could be conceived as democratic to the extent that people who are significantly affected by political decisions have equal rights of participation at all levels of decision-making, with the understanding that this effectiveness is crucially dependent on adequate access to the resources necessary to enable full and meaningful participation. In the case of Zimbabwe during the crisis period, such an understanding did not exist, and this study contends that *The Daily News* and other private media worked to democratise the political system.

Tilly (2000: 13) also contends that a regime is democratic to the degree that political relations between the state, or those who hold power, and the citizens, feature broad, equal, protected and mutually binding consultations. The violations of human rights discovered from the experiences of the journalists and the victims of state brutality in this thesis further support the view that the regime in Harare had undemocratic practices. The passing of a cocktail of repressive laws, like AIPPA and POSA, as discussed in Chapter Four, impinged on the exercise of civil and political liberties. Freedoms of the media, expression and assembly, as shown by the closure of five private newspapers in a space of two years and the banning of opposition rallies, affirms the resistance, activist and, often, radical position that *TheDaily News* envisages in its coverage of the political dynamics during the crisis period.

A modern state, argues Huntington (1997: 3), could be perceived as having a democratic political system,

to the extent that its most powerful decision makers are selected through fair, honest, periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually the entire adult population is eligible to vote.

In questioning the credibility of polls, the voters' roll, exposing the political purging of the judiciary and giving dissenting voices under circumstances where the paper was twice bombed and journalists assaulted and arrested, one can argue that *The Daily News* and its journalists were, to a greater extent,

fulfilling some of these democratic tenets postulated by Huntington through their alternative and activist coverage of the political and economic turbulence of the time.

The private media, *The Daily News* and its journalists, through their alternative journalism as shown in this study, not only questioned the violation of the civil and political liberties of citizens during the crisis period, but went further to interrogate the capacity and integrity of critical state institutions, such as the judiciary and the executive arm of the state such as the police and the army and how they uphold the rule of law. One can therefore argue that the paper and its journalists sought to address fundamental democratic ingredients, in an advocacy, activist and sometimes confrontational manner with the authorities that has not previously happened in the relations between the state and the media in post-independence Zimbabwe. This makes a huge contribution and a different dimension for critiquing and understanding media and communication in emerging democracies during times of crises.

Francis Harahwa, the Managing Editor of *The Daily News* and an experienced journalist, having been arrested while working under authoritarian regimes in Malawi under the late dictator Kamuzi Banda, in Lesotho under King Mswati, and Zimpapers' *Chronicle* newspaper in Zimbabwe under President Mugabe, on 13th December, 2012, in Harare, proposed that *The Daily News* worked to open up the political system. He noted:

The fact that all government activities, whether it was the state of the voters' register, the way people were voting, and those issues, were covered by the paper. The paper questioned the credibility of the election results in the 2002 presidential election, because the management of the process was not transparent. We questioned the economic implications of the unplanned and violent farm occupations and the complicity of the judiciary through its failure to uphold the rule of law. We were trying to bring the government to account for their own actions, and we were trying to point out the anomalies of a situation where government claimed it won the elections when there were disputes. I remember during the June, 2000, elections, the government had said that they were going to publish all the results by 6 p.m., but when they realised that they were losing they started stretching the process. People went to bed believing that ZANU PF had lost the election, only to see ZANU PF winning by four seats the following morning.

In this regard, *The Daily News* played a principal democratic role which, according to traditional liberal media theory, is to act as a check on the state. As Curran notes,

... ..the media should monitor the full range of state activity, and fearlessly expose abuses of official authority. This watchdog role is said in liberal theory to override in importance all other functions of the media, (2002: 217).

The examination of the surveillance of the state is a crucial component of the democratic functioning of the media. However, Curran (2002) also cautions against holding the government as the sole object of press vigilance because of the view that is commonly held that government was the only centre of power. He suggested that a revised conception is needed in which the media are understood as being a check on both public and private power. The watchdog role is also needed on the church, civic groups, and even on individual members of society.

6.2 How *The Daily News* influenced opposition politics

Chapter Two of this dissertation examined the trajectory of anti-colonial media and the oppositional role of the press in the post-colonial era in Africa, where the media operated as a site for resistance against official authoritarian practices. This dissertation, after a survey of relevant literature and findings from fieldwork, contends that in post-independence Southern Africa, the private media, and *The Daily News* and its journalists, in particular, successfully took up this role in an activist and oppositional way while working under conditions of repression.

Nyamnjoh (2005: 29) submits that in the context of a stifled society,

... ..real life points to a situation where people do not necessarily shut up, stay still and sacrifice their interests in the face of repression. People normally seek alternative channels, sometimes in subtle and masked ways, for fulfilling their interests in such situations.

In this study, the agency of *The Daily News* and its journalists in confronting the government after authorities closed channels of communication to political dissenters and opponents of the ruling party and outlawed public gatherings and protests, were apparent in the manner they exposed government corruption and abuse of human rights, opened its space for alternative voices in an active and radical way that saw the state responding by numerous arrests of journalists, as well as the bombing of the printing press. It is suggested that the direct confrontation approach by the journalists assisted in opening up the political system during the crisis period, especially to opposition parties and other groups, such as farmers whose land the government seized violently.

Drawing lessons from the critical evaluation of the role of the media in liberal democracies, media and democracy, McNair (1999) avows that in democratic societies, the media serve as channels for advocacy of political viewpoints. “Political parties require an outlet for the articulation of their

policies and programmes for a mass audience and thus the media must be open to them ” (McNair, 1999: 22). This view is further articulated by Schudson (2008: 12) who argued that “the news media can serve as advocates for particular political programmes and perspectives and mobilize people to act in support of these programmes.”

As evaluated in this dissertation through evidence from respondents, *The Daily News* provided information, a coherent framework for interpreting the farm invasions, wrote loudly against the beating of opposition supporters, publicised and analysed the root causes of the economic and social crises. It highlighted the negative impact of the chaotic farm invasion on food security and warned about the impending loss of jobs to farm workers and in upstream industries. It also provided a public platform for dialogue for voices that were shut down by the official media, and confronted the authoritarian practices of the government rigorously on a daily basis that had not happened before in the history of media and communication and its relations with the State. The organized opposition, activist and advocacy journalism in conditions of repression in Zimbabwe, within an African context is submitted as a contribution of this thesis to the study of media and communication. It also gives a different dimension for appreciating other forms of opposition to Mugabe’s authoritarian rule, apart from the large scale demonstrations and revolutions that are associated with countries’ experience of economic and political turmoil.

Mathew Takaona, the former President of the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ), now a Commissioner of the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC), who was fired by the government in 2003 for meeting *The Daily News* journalists after the closure of the paper that year while he worked for the state-run weekly *The Sunday Mail*, observes that under the political circumstances of repression, *The Daily News* took the right decision to confront authoritarian practices. Takaona asserts that:

In a situation of repression you can’t avoid being activist journalists. A properly trained journalist is one who seeks justice. It is something that has to drive a good journalist. If you are driven by justice, especially under circumstances of human rights violations that were taking place in the country against ordinary citizens, somehow you have to become an activist in different ways and forms. There is no question about it. If you are good journalists driven by the need to seek justice, then you end up being an activist for just causes. That is what *The Daily News* journalists did, and they were rewarded by huge public support seen by the circulation of the paper at the height of the political crisis. I personally paid the price. I lost my job for paying attention to the just cause of the journalists whose paper was banned, (Interview with Matthew Takaona, Harare, 30th November, 2012).

In this thesis I have submitted that in repressive political set ups, such as Zimbabwe, where there is a plethora of restrictive security and media laws, such as those discussed, there appears to be less interest in in-depth investigative reporting. This is why alternative media were useful in providing information and interpretations of the world which are usually absent from the public sphere. Such media are more interested in the flow of ideas than in profit. Downing (2001: xi) contends that there is a tendency within the internal organization of radical media “to try to be somewhat more, or sometimes considerably more democratic than conventional mainstream media (this accounts for their capacity to question the use and abuse of power)”.

As demonstrated in this study, *The Daily News*’ journalists were arrested, attacked and abused by state security agents because of their reportage on the national crisis. As an acknowledgement of the work the journalists were doing under dangerous circumstances, the Editor-in-Chief of *The Daily News* was rewarded with nine international journalism awards, which corroborates the findings of this study. It is beyond doubt that *The Daily News* promoted democratic liberties such as freedom of the press. For instance, in 2001, the *Committee to Protect Journalists* awarded Nyarota the *International Press Freedom Award*, which recognizes journalists who show courage in defending press freedom despite facing attacks, threats, or imprisonment. The awards to Nyarota arguably help to show the activist and alternative journalism by the paper, as confirmed by the citations for the awards. The finding that the *Daily News* was a site for opposition and debate against the authoritarian practices of the state adds new thinking to the study of media and communication under authoritarian circumstances. It also opens new avenues for confronting undemocratic political practices beyond the electoral processes and mass protests that are associated with traditional ways of advancing democratic rule.

Vimbai Chivaura, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe and a regular panellist on the *Zvavanhu* (people’s culture) and *National Ethos* programmes, both nationalist programmes run by the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, (ZBC), has offered mixed views on the opposition role of *The Daily News* and its journalists. Asked whether private newspapers in Zimbabwe, such *The Daily News*, worked as sites for opposition politics against democratic practices Chivaura, who is also a board member of the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), responded:

That scenario is very correct. You have people that are against the government and they are conducting pirate radio stations and so on, just like we had guerrillas fighting for the freedoms against Rhodesians. The perception of the media towards the present government is the same perception of the liberation struggle towards the Rhodesians.

To the independent media, they see the government of Mugabe the same way the guerrillas saw Rhodesia, because they themselves are not in support of the liberation struggle. They want to free the country from Mugabe. Here, I am characterizing the relationship between the media and the government of the day. Tsvangirai himself says go and return the country to where it was, and we will free it. Straight away he is saying you didn't free this country, (Interview with Vimbai Chivaura, Harare, 25th October, 2012).

What Chivaura fails to articulate in his statement is that, after independence, many African governments did not genuinely democratise the media and where change did occur, other initiatives clawed back media freedom. As argued by Sparks (2009) through his theory of media and elite continuity, institutional frameworks of the media do not change, apart from largely changing personnel. In a sad case of history repeating itself, Hyden and Leslie (2007) write about the state monopoly on the use of radio and television by nationalist governments, using it to promote themselves and entrench their political hegemony:

Radio broadcasts were devoted to reporting everything that the top leadership did. In a systematic fashion, the radio became an instrument of political propaganda aimed at serving the interests of the incumbent elite. The print media suffered increasingly the same fate. In some cases, ownership was nationalized so that the political leadership could control the editorials. In others, newspapers were closed down (Zimbabwe). In the few that survived as privately-owned, self-censorship increasingly becomes necessary in order to continue, (Hyden & Leslie, 2007: 39).

The observation is also true of most other African countries. Kasoma (1995: 537) criticises the failure of African governments to break away from colonial practices, postulating that:

During the colonial times, the press was generally more independent from government control than it had been during the era of one-party or military rule. Colonial governments even allowed African nationalists to use newspapers to criticize them, as well as agitate for emancipation. Today, on one hand, there are those, mainly from the government side, who have always seen the presence of the independent media as fomenting political trouble, (Kasoma 1995: 537).

The alternative journalism role of *The Daily News* and its journalists was arguably bequeathed in the coverage of electoral processes compared to the sycophantic role of the public media, especially that of *The Herald* and the state-broadcaster, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation. For instance, in its

report of the media coverage of the 2002 presidential election, released in February 2003, the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ), an independent Trust that works to promote freedom of expression and responsible journalism in Zimbabwe through monitoring and analysis of the news and current affairs output on domestic radio and television and in the print media, posited that the public media ignored the campaign programmes of the opposition.

In stories published between January 7th and March 8th, 2002, the public media gave blanket coverage to campaign activities of ZANU-PF, at the same time largely ignoring the Tsvangirai campaign. In its selection of issues, too, the public media focused on the land question, which was given priority by the Mugabe campaign, over the variety of governance and economic policies that formed the planks of his challenger's campaign, (MMPZ, 2003: 10).

The report revealed that in their reporting of the election results, the public media of the obfuscation of the Registrar's office about the size and distribution of the voter's roll and the size and the nature of the turn-out.

They did not question the implications of the serious shortages of the polling stations in urban centres and the need to extend voting into a third day. The private media did a much better job in this regard, although they did not hold the Registrar General sufficiently to account on the constant juggling of figures, (MMPZ, 2003: 10)

The MMPZ reports on the 2005, 2008 and the 2013 elections consistently pointed out that the public media distorted news to favour President Mugabe and his party. In the 2008 election where, for the first time since independence in 1980, President Robert Mugabe lost the election in the first round of the 29th March presidential election, as well as the parliamentary poll, to the Movement for Democratic Change's (MDC) leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, and his party, respectively. The MMPZ post-election report noted:

The public media gave extensive and approving publicity to the allegations of conspiracy and national betrayal against the MDC- expressed by ZANU PF politicians, including its presidential candidate, and used these as justification to unleash its own hate propaganda campaign against the opposition. This hate crusade against the MDC was most virulent in the June presidential election campaign and even consisted of publicly threatening the electorate with war if they did not vote for ZANU PF's candidate, (MMPZ, 2008: 10-11).

In its review of the 31st July election outcome, released on 6th August, 2013, the MPPZ accused the public media of vilifying the former Prime Minister for challenging President Mugabe's victory in court. It said:

Reports celebrating ZANU PF's victory in the July 31st elections and urging former Prime Minister Tsvangirai and his MDC party to concede defeat characterized the official state media's coverage of Zimbabwe's post-election era. While the state media was revelling in ZANU PF's victory, the private media's coverage of the post-election period was diverse. Not only did they report on ZANU PF expressing its satisfaction with the outcome of the elections, but they also gave sufficient space to those with reservations in the manner in which the polls were conducted and assessed the validity of their concerns, (MMPZ, 2013: 1).

These reports on how the public media were biased against dissenting voices in matters of critical public importance, such as elections, assist to appreciate the significant gap that *The Daily News* filled and occupied. The paper was as an alternative platform that allowed other voices, especially those that challenged the political authority of Mugabe, to reach out to the public and also allowed the public to articulate their views on how they were governed and the form and nature of the government they sought to have via electoral processes. In Chapter Five and elsewhere in this section, opposition, civic groups and human rights defenders have argued that *The Daily News* provided oxygen to their democratic aspirations while working under conditions of repression. Stories of ordinary farm workers and the besieged and helpless farmers and opposition victims of what appeared to be state-sponsored violence were carried by *The Daily News* in a manner that riled the authorities.

As advanced in this dissertation, through legal and extra-legal regulation of the media and the abuse of journalists, and from evidence gathered from journalists and government policy officials, the Zimbabwe government regarded private media, especially *The Daily News*, as part of the political opposition. In fact, as pointed out above, the Minister of Information described *The Daily News* as an opposition political party whose role was to cause discontent, disunity and ultimately to change the government. The same view was shared by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, as discussed in this chapter. This was despite the fact that the newspaper was a registered media institution, but the thrust of oppositional and often confrontational way in which *The Daily News* went about its news coverage, despite the arrests and assaults of its reporters, made the authorities label it as an opposition newspaper.

In circumstances where the political opposition is either weak or stifled and the media is also muzzled, this dissertation has sought to show that a free press may be more effective than an opposition party in achieving change in an oppressive political environment. This is not to argue that there was a free media in Zimbabwe, but to drive the argument that the alternative and often radical journalism of *The Daily News*, while operating in conditions of repression contributed to the democratization process. It adds evidence and literature on the role of media and communication in times of political and

economic strife. It further assists to dispel widely held views, as Willems (2010) argues, that the absence of physical and mass protests in the streets of Harare during the crisis period does not mean Zimbabweans were passive recipients of the government's authoritarian practices. To borrow from Willems, there were everyday forms of resistance that shaped the struggles of the time, and oppositional and activist journalism was another strand responding to oppression.

This study exposes the difficulties of the private and opposition media and of the journalists operating in repressive conditions in an African context, as expressed in the harrowing experiences of *Daily News* journalists. The experiences of *The Daily News* and its journalists, and the role of the media in the struggles to nurture a democratic Zimbabwe, are aptly captured by Ogundimu (2007: 213) when he argues that, in an African context,

... ..by trying to be adversary, the media expose themselves to the risk of harassment by the authorities; by trying to be watchdog, they run into the wall of secrecy surrounding public office; and, by trying to set the agenda, they are likely to be accused of arrogance.

The study has also analysed the character of an arsenal of security and media laws, discussed in Chapter Four that were introduced for the purpose of curtailing and muzzling the operations of the media during the Zimbabwe crisis. The evidence shows that the regulatory changes were to protect and entrench the political hegemony of the ruling government during a period of political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe. Most importantly, the study has discussed and analysed the physical threats, assaults and arrests of journalists, including two bombings of *TheDaily News*, leading to its closure in September, 2003, ostensibly for failing to comply with AIPPA. The implications of alternative journalism that are explored in this dissertation through the work of *TheDaily News* and its journalists offer a broadened analysis and understanding of agency and the role of media in a specific context at a specific time. In this regard, the alternative media were arguably the site, if not the centre, of opposition against state authoritarian policies. The alternative newspaper effectively mobilized and brought together forces of dissent that were fighting for social justice

6.3 *The Daily News*' democratic role: debates and contestations from the field

This section revisits the various meanings, debates and contestations of democracy from Western and African viewpoints, as critically evaluated in Chapter One and elaborated in a context of African

opposition against colonialism in Chapter Two. The idea is to relate these theoretical arguments with the findings of this dissertation elucidated from field research, discussed in Chapters Four and Five. It is largely submitted by the majority of respondents that, by exposing human rights violations during the crisis period; providing opposition political dissidents with an alternative platform to reach out to the public during elections, advocating for political change and largely working as a site for opposition forces, *The Daily News* and its journalists were contributing to the nurturing of a democratic culture in Zimbabwe. One of the most interesting findings of this research is that there is common ground among opposing respondents during the crisis, especially government communication officials and *The Daily News*' journalists whose newspaper contributed to the opening up of the democratic public sphere during a period of political disturbances.

As examined in Chapter One there are various, though not necessarily contradictory, ways of understanding what democracy entails (Schmitter & Karl, 1993). As a result, understanding and defining democracy can range from a minimalist requirement for free competitive elections to definitions emphasising multiple forms of participation. Democratisation can therefore be best understood as 'a complex, long term, dynamic, and open-ended process; it consists of progress towards a more rule-based, more consensual and more participatory type of politics' (Whitehead, 2002: 27).

Democracy, therefore, is widely contestable and manifestly polymorphous, argues Sadiki, (2004). Its study brings under scrutiny the various interrelated strata of complexities, among them the conceptual, historical, empirical and epistemological, to the study of democracy, as previously discussed. Benhabib (1996) argues that the democratic debate is a process subject to continuous changes and interpretations at various stages in human history. As discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, unlike other systems which preceded it, the ethos of democracy has no fixed loci of power and what is most worthy about redefining democracy as an ethos is its capacity to survive in all kinds of societies. The findings from the fieldwork resonate with this framework of critiquing Western perceptions of democracy to argue that even though Zimbabwe is far from being a liberal democracy, even though there are differences in the procedure of implementing democratic changes, there is general agreement that there is a need to democratize the political system in Zimbabwe and that through opposition and activist journalism during a period of political turmoil, *The Daily News* and its journalists played a significant role. Asked whether *The Daily News* and its journalists, through their opposition to

government policies and the way they articulated the Zimbabwean issues during a period of political and economic crisis, Minister Moyo said:

I think so. I really think so, because I think that in public life I cannot imagine any situation that does not impact the public in one way or the other. I believe that there are many good things that have happened but had no good consequences, and some bad things which have happened which have had a lot of good consequences. I think by its very nature the public is moved more by bad things than good things. I think that every bad experience, and bad it was, had a lot of good things. For one thing, when I, as a major protagonist player in the situation I learnt a lot out of it, both from a public policy point of view and from a personal point of view. It forced me to realise that things cannot be taken for granted and prepared me to do better in future. I think that if I were to encounter a similar situation I certainly, without doubt, would handle it differently. That's what experience is. I had not bargained for things like that, but now I think I would handle it differently and I think I would also handle it better, (Minister Moyo interview in Harare on 20th of September 2012).

As critiqued in the majority of chapters, especially Chapters Four and Five, Minister Moyo was credited with crafting a raft of laws that impinged on the civil and political liberties of Zimbabweans, especially the right to freedom of expression. During his period as Minister of Information, before his re-appointment in August, 2013, five privately owned newspapers; *The Daily News*, *The Daily News on Sunday*, *The Tribune*, *The Weekly Times* and *The Saturday Tribune*, were banned between 2003 and 2005 for violating the media law, AIPPA. Only *The Daily News* and *The Daily News on Sunday* were re-licensed in 2010 after the inception of the coalition government. Moyo somehow regrets his decisions and thinks that government relations with the alternative media could have been handled better. He reflects:

On the other side, when I come into contact with some of my compatriots who were on the other side, even the likes of Nyarota, notwithstanding that they continue to write rubbish, I feel that there is considerable regret on their side that there are some things that they would have handled differently. I have no doubt in my mind that if the old hands of *The Daily News* were in charge of *The Daily News* today we would see the difference, because I don't believe that you would have a vindictive approach. I think that the other newspapers, like *The Zimbabwe Independent* and, to some extent, *the News Day*, have been the beneficiaries of that situation. You can see that there is a reflective thought out approach to avoid pitfalls while managing their constituencies. So now, people want something of informational value, or something more creative, of a thoughtful process which they would say: "hey, why didn't I see things that way". So, in a nutshell, therefore, I think we are better off as a result of that bad situation because bad situations tend to have much more lasting impacts in

terms of value formation attitude making than good things, (Interview with Jonathan Moyo, Harare, 20th September, 2012).

However, rights lawyer and former *The Daily News* senior reporter, Chris Mhike, while agreeing with Moyo to some extent, is less critical of the omissions of *The Daily News*. He suggests that a democratic role was played significantly. He noted:

The Daily News did play the ideal function that the media should serve in any democracy; that of informing the citizens about important governance issues and holding the government accountable to its public constitutional mandate. *The Daily News* was a brilliant platform in terms of informing citizens of the facts about exactly what was happening on the ground during fast track land reform, the referendum and the elections. It was an effective platform for alternative voices to be proffered. I think it also served the purpose of encouraging citizens to be more brave citizens, because it covered stories about powerful politicians and exposed human rights violations on its front page daily and consistently, without fear, in a manner never done before by a private newspaper. *The Daily News* played a role in terms of carrying forward the message of the opposition and the members of the civil society. I helped shape the electoral and political processes and outcomes of the time (Interview with Chris Mhike, Harare, 23 October 2012).

But the former ZUP President Mathew Takaona is convinced that the democratic role played by *The Daily News* through coverage of news cannot be underestimated. He observed:

The Daily News will always be in the history of this country in terms of promoting democratic values and very difficult conditions. In post-independent Zimbabwe, no newspaper was ever bombed, twice for that matter, and its journalists violated in the manner we saw with *The Daily News*. This tells us that the paper was confronting undemocratic forces. For instance, when Zimbabwe's political crisis was discussed at SADC and AU, *The Daily News*' closure was a major issue, because even regional leaders recognized that it served a critical component of a democratic society; that of promoting freedom of expression. Its closure gave weight to arguments that there was no democracy in Zimbabwe. I remember there were demonstrations in Harare by the public, calling for its return because it was a popular people's newspaper as shown and had huge circulation figures. *The Daily News* fought, and their fights have resulted in a liberalized print media environment. We now have two privately-owned daily newspapers and a proliferation of many other newspapers. This freedom was fought for by the private media led by *The Daily News*, (Interview with Mathew Takaona, Harare, 30th November, 2012).

As advanced from a rare source, Minister Moyo, who appears to have experienced a Damascene moment after being at the centre of media repression, important lessons that will assist to shape the discourses on media and communication with a focus on resistance and activist journalism in Zimbabwe

in a global context, were learnt, albeit with a lot of both physical and emotional scars for *The Daily News* and its journalists.

Dumisani Muleya, suggests that critical insights could be derived from the work of the private media and the activist role of *The Daily News*' journalists while working in conditions of repression:

The lessons to be drawn are very critical; that for the private media believing in a certain idea, a certain legitimate agenda and applying passion can yield positive results. *The Daily News*' journalists demonstrated that if you want change, for instance and if you want democracy you have to believe and commit yourself to the cause, despite the price they paid. You also have to fight for it. They did. They showed that desirable positive change in troubled societies is not going to come cheap,"

he notes:

.....we have seen all over the world that democracy doesn't come cheap. It's a legitimate thing for journalists to demand change and democracy whilst packaging those values and norms in a professional manner. We can learn that despite the odds, despite repression, we can still fight for change; we can still fight for democracy, despite these attempts to blackmail. We can still fight, despite attempts to close and legitimize repression, as the government did, (Interview with Dumisani Muleya, *The Zimbabwe Independent's* Editor, 10th November, 2012).

Muleya's observations, while they reflect the general positions of the alternative journalists interviewed for the study, it should be noted that he works for a newspaper that has a similar editorial policy to *The Daily News*. The major difference between his publication and *The Daily News* is that *The Zimbabwe Independent* is a weekly whose sources are mainly experts and has a special focus on business news.

As presented evaluated in Chapter Two, where a trajectory of cultural resistance from colonial to post-independence was discussed, Kasoma (1995:543) argues that one of the significant contributions of the independent press to democratic and political change in Africa has been the fact that some of the few leaders who have been the most fervent supporters of independent newspapers have themselves been political aspirants of the new order and have used the newspapers to propel their ideas of dissent against the government.

Kasoma (1995: 543) observes that before the emergence of multi-party politics, Africans had seen, in the independent media, a chance to mount concerted opposition that would result in the electorate voting incumbent governments out of power.

Freedom of the press, and hence the independent press may be said to be both a pre-requisite and co-requisite for democracy in Africa...If democracy means making the government accountable for its actions or lack of them to the people individually and collectively, the independent media are the major vehicles for such accountability,

Kasoma (1995: 543-554) noted.

As examined in Chapter Five, a number of senior *Daily news* journalists moved from the paper to join the opposition MDC and contested the elections on the opposition party ticket. One became a minister, while another was a Spokesperson of the Prime Minister in the inclusive government whose term ended after the elections on 31st July, 2013. Interestingly enough, Nyarota contested but lost a primary election of the MDC in Makoni South Constituency in Eastern Zimbabwe, when he sought to represent the opposition, but in the 31st July, 2013, general election, in which the opposition party lost to President Mugabe's ruling ZANU PF party. As critically examined and discussed in Chapter Five, questions arose due to this cross membership situation between senior journalists of *The Daily News* and the opposition MDC, with the state arguing that the journalists were part and parcel of the opposition. On the contrary, the journalists posit that they were not, but have a democratic right to join political parties of their choice. What is undeniable, though, is that the activist, oppositional and often radical nature of the journalists while they were working for *The Daily News* dovetails with the values that the opposition advances. Both groups from the finding of this study wanted to have a change of government and have new politics that respect and protect citizens' fundamental liberties.

However, Ibbo Mandaza, a former permanent secretary in Mugabe's government in the 1980s, now independent publisher, remains cautious of the role of the media in nurturing democratic processes in Africa, suggesting that:

The role of media in Africa is overlaid as an agency of democracy. The media normally is a reflection of the society in which it is operating. It's less an agent than a reflection and that relationship need to be interrogated very carefully, (Interview with IbboMandaza in Harare, 14th August, 2012)

Andy Moyse, the Director of the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe, (MMPZ), a freedom of expression watchdog group and former editor of the privately-owned *The Standard* newspaper, appears to concur with Mandaza. Moyse also formerly *Horizon* and *Parade* magazine's editor, who has been arrested a number of times by the government while editing these papers, thinks it was difficult to

measures the impact of *The Daily News*, especially its attempts to democratize government public policies. He had a mixed view:

I think it did contribute to the broad democratization process, though it did not contribute to the government becoming democratic because the authorities resisted reforms. It contributed to the idea of people knowing more about their democratic rights and people's participation in political and electoral issues. It supported the growing idea of political change that expressed itself in the MDC. It provided information and news about the excesses of the government, about the need for accountability and the need for transparency and accountability in administering public affairs, (Interview with Andy Moyse, Harare, 20th May, 2013)

However, despite its shortcomings as an alternative news medium, *The Daily News* created real challenges to those in power. As put forward in Chapters Four and Five through the experiences of journalists and opposition political dissidents being arrested, assaulted and, at times, detained in filthy police cells, nurturing democratic governance requires active agency and advocacy. *The Daily News* provided a site for opposition dissenters, not only to oppositional forces but also to the journalists who acted as change, advocacy, political and social agents, while confronting an authoritarian and often violent political regime.

6.4 The contestations on the *Daily News*' democratic role in crisis Zimbabwe

The role of *The Daily News* during the Zimbabwe crisis is criticised by others. While agreeing that the paper and its journalists played a significant role in the political process in Zimbabwe, in a discussion on 16th August, 2012, Cezar Zvayi, the former Deputy Editor and, as of 1st October, 2013, promoted to be Editor of the government-controlled *Herald* newspaper, observes that the role was limited to the election process. Zvayi posited:

I would say as far as the electoral side, yes *The Daily News* made significant contribution by profiling the MDC. I think *The Daily News* played an important role in building the profile of the MDC especially among the urbanites. However, democracy is much more than elections. What the paper contributed was minimal democracy which I consider to be the electoral aspect. But there is expansive or substantive democracy which is what I consider as the empowerment of the people, the individual, to take part in all facets of life social, cultural, economic, political sector of the body politic in Zimbabwe, (Interview with Caesar Zvayi in Harare, 16th August, 2012).

As Ake (1991), Kwesi (1995), Lumumba-Kassongo (1998 and 2005) and Zuern (2009) articulate, while arguing that African experiences and contributions are ignored in scholarly works and debates on democracy, they have also argued that Africans are more interested in interrogating substantive democratic issues relating to access to economic empowerment by ordinary citizens, after years of segregation under successive colonial regimes. In this regard, Zvayi points that:

As far as the expansive aspect of democracy is concerned, *The Daily News* and the MDC have failed dismally by failing to support the pro-people policies that would empower the person, the individual or the society. *The Daily News*, through its news coverage, opposed the land reform process, which was meant to address a substantive issue of equal land ownership by the majority of the population, (Interview with Zvayi in Harare on 16 August, 2012).

The presidential spokesperson, George Charamba, conceded that while *The Daily News* promoted procedural democratic rights it lacked a deeper analysis of the political economy of Zimbabwe. He suggested that by opposing the land reform programme, the paper and its journalists were also undermining the rights of people who want to access the means of production to fulfil their fundamental economic rights, as well as social rights like the right to education.

However, procedural analysts and some respondents have disputed the above assertions, insisting that during the political crisis of the time, *The Daily News* and its journalists' approach would still result in the realization of substantive democratic issues.

Constitutional law expert, Lovemore Madhuku argued that it would not be a well-placed criticism to accuse *The Daily News* of failing to articulate substantive democratic issues.

It is not just *The Daily News* that gets such kinds of unjustified criticism from people associated with the government. You get that sort of misplaced arguments being made even against opposition political parties; the NCA and other organizations that do not agree with the bad governance policies of the Mugabe regime, (Interview with Madhuku in Harare on 13th February, 2013).

Madhuku pointed out that this line of thought

is to misunderstand the state of affairs at the time. *The Daily News* was doing its work. We are up to now a much paralyzed society, where those who were advancing so called political economy issues, social justice issues, property rights, and so on, were not genuine and sincere. They were doing it just to spite the opposition and others, but to also to try and cover up their oppression, (Ibid).

Madhuku is of the view that people and organizations that raised and parroted the economic justice argument at the height of colossal human rights abuses were mostly appendages of the ruling party. He observed:

For instance, they argued that people were needlessly killed during the land redistribution because they wanted to empower people, but you are doing this in an environment where you are violating citizens' democratic rights by killing them. If one starts to raise the issues without distinguishing the message of empowerment or of economic or political rights that will not be meaningful. You would rather start addressing the political questions of the day, which was bad governance. In this case, *The Daily News* argued that; look let's fight and democratise our society, so that political civil rights are realized, then in an environment of political and civil rights you then deal with economic liberation, and so forth. So I think it was not a weakness on the part of the newspaper, (Interview with Lovemore Mahduku, Harare, 13th February, 2013).

Madhuku's view is shared by human rights law expert, Beatrice Mtetwa, a victim of police brutality and harassment in the course of representing arrested journalists, human rights defenders and opposition activists. Commenting on the contributions of *The Daily News* to democratisation politics in Zimbabwe, she noted:

Well, there can be no question that *The Daily News* played a huge role in the democratisation process in Zimbabwe. When the paper started publishing, it became possible for the main opposition party, MDC, to be successfully launched. The party became viable largely because it had an outlet that was able to articulate its policies, and why it sought to be a new government. That's why the MDC was able to almost defeat ZANU PF in the June, 2000, elections, nine months after its formation in September, 1999. The NCA benefited hugely from the existence of *The Daily News* during the Constitutional Referendum in February, 2000, when the government lost the poll. So when the history of Zimbabwe's democratization struggles is written, *The Daily News* must definitely get a lot of credit for the work it did, (Interview with Beatrice Mtetwa, Harare, 7th February, 2013).

Mtetwa further thinks that if *The Daily News* did not play a significant role in the democratization processes in Zimbabwe, especially in 1999 and 2000, it would be difficult to explain why the government put in place an arsenal of repressive media and security laws, including POSA and AIPPA, the most used repressive laws used against opposition dissent and, mostly, the private media respectively and concomitantly, as ZANU PF sought to protect its political hegemony. She observed that:

All the harassment and the illegal detentions that *The Daily News*' journalists went through, as well as the two bombings of the paper, would not have been directed to *The Daily News* if it was not serving a significant democratic process. With its work

under conditions of beatings and assaults, anyone would recognise that *The Daily News* was playing a huge role. The paper and its journalists had a huge impact on how the country was governed through exposure of official brutality and abuses. That is why it was felt that it must be obliterated. It is important to note that the government could not have invested in activities that damaged its image and eroded its political standing through the enactment of oppressive laws. Equally, the government could not have played a role in the banning of newspapers and the arrests of journalists on the newspaper if it were an insignificant political player, (Ibid).

In his extensive evaluation of liberal democracy in the African context, Lumumba-Kasongo (2005) avows that democracy should be a struggle against social inequality, injustices, exploitation and social miseries.

That is to say, democracy is more than social formal political pluralism or the process of producing an electoral code or electoral commission... Democracy is both a process and a practice that involves equal economic and social opportunities for the citizenry. It is a corrective process in which a given society especially a former colonized society is born again... It is a ritual process of new ideas and policies in a given society, (Lumumba-Kasongo, 1998:34).

Using Lumumba-Kasongo's assertion to redefine democracy, particularly the view that African democracies should be guided by principles of cultural diversity, social equality and equitable access to resources, it is difficult to discount the substantive democratic role of *The Daily News*. One can therefore argue that the causes propagated by *The Daily News*' oppositional and activist journalism, as articulated through journalists, opposition supporters and dissidents' lived experiences in confronting a dictatorial regime, is a significant contribution of this study to further help understand media and communication in emerging democracies. These anti-Mugabe forces articulated both procedural and substantive democratic issues, as discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

Cognisant of the debates regarding the indivisibility and universality of human rights, if the elusive concept of democracy is a desirable form of government in most societies, its study and understanding in the African context should be tied and aligned to global debates. While the issue of democratization should thus be tied to social and economic rights, the quest for social and economic rights should not lead to putting civil and political liberties on the periphery of interrogating democratic debates in Africa. It is posited that both sets of rights should be promoted and practiced simultaneously. Using and advancing the Universalist argument to the study of human rights, this study contends that *The Daily News* and its journalists, by exposing government corruption, violations of human rights,

giving voices to marginalized groups such as opposition political dissidents, governance advocacy groups, and critiquing the destruction of the farming community through unplanned and violent farm seizures that led to continuous national food deficits, they contributed to the deepening understanding and interrogation of both civil and political liberties and social and economic justice issues under conditions of repression.

6.5 Conclusion

Taking the interplay between alternative media and democracy that has been discussed and sufficiently linked to the social justice struggles in preceding chapters, the study especially demonstrated the significant role played by an alternative newspaper, *The Daily News*, and its journalists during a period of political and economic turmoil that was replete with human rights violations. Most importantly, this chapter linked the theoretical foundations, debates and contestations discussed in Chapter One and the trajectory of opposition and cultural resistance in both colonial and postcolonial struggles in Africa to argue, using evidence from the respondents, that *The Daily News* was an important site for opposition politics against the oppressive policies of the government of Zimbabwe. What are arguably captured in this dissertation are the institutional analysis of an alternative newspaper and the experiences of its journalists and the researcher while working under conditions of repression. The primary experiences, the primary voices through the trials and tribulations of the reporters, are not adequately captured by most academic studies on the role of the media, especially the private and opposition press during the crisis in Zimbabwe. The closely linked and cross-membership relations between *The Daily News* and the opposition MDC party, and civil society, as they confront the regime, is also a critical finding which helps to unravel the opposition-oriented position of the paper.

What is also valuable for this discussion is an affirmation from senior government bureaucrats that *The Daily News* and its journalists did indeed drastically change the politics of the state and assisted in reforming the state media in order to match the robust competition from the investigative and oppositional institutional framework of the opposition newspaper. Of significance in the chapter is that, despite different views on the extent of the contribution of *The Daily News*, there is a general consensus, though contested and varied, that the paper and its journalists have played a significant role in opening up the political system by allowing ordinary and oppositional citizens to have a voice in how they were

governed; to organize and advocate for change using the paper as a platform for debate and the articulation of issues. The democratic contributions of *The Daily News* are also as contested as the term 'democracy' itself. The contestations that are based on procedural and substantive democratisation are captured from the points of view of different respondents. Their contestations validate debates elsewhere in this dissertation about different meanings and perceptions of democracy for different people and different societies. In the end, however, there seems to be general agreement that democracy is a desirable form of government. In Chapter Seven, the final chapter of this study, the major findings and contributions of an opposition newspaper, *The Daily News*, while are highlighted and summarised--including how further research could be undertaken to broaden the essence of this contribution.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Concluding reflections

7.1 Alternative media and democracy in Africa

As discussed in this dissertation, an institutional analysis of the role of the opposition media in the emerging democratization process in Zimbabwe does not adequately capture the experiences of opposition newspapers and journalists working under conditions of repression during a crisis period. By investigating, profiling and evaluating the experiences of *The Daily News* and its journalists under conditions of repression, this study has sought to provide primary literature to assist in understanding how and why the opposition press in Zimbabwe navigated political repression. By capturing the experiences of the opposition press, this dissertation dispels the view that the lack of mass protests in the streets of Zimbabwe during the economic and political crisis meant there was a lack of opposition to and resistance against the totalitarian regime in Harare.

A significant finding of the study is that, despite the abundance of academic analyses on the deepening political and economic crisis at the turn of the 21st century in Zimbabwe, few studies have focused on the way in which the opposition media, mainly *The Daily News* and its journalists in Zimbabwe, experienced, negotiated and actively opposed and resisted authoritarian tendencies in a spirited, coordinated, oppositional and often radical manner. As a result, through the experiences of battered, arrested and detained journalists, and a twice bombed newspaper, alternative journalism especially in a non-western context; Zimbabwe in particular has been the major contribution of this research to offering new ways of thinking and analyzing media and communication in developing and democratizing countries.

The other valuable issue captured by this research are the internal contradictions within *The Daily News* as an alternative newspaper. Whereas the journalists and the newspaper confronted an authoritarian regime, there were differences between the management of the paper and the journalists on the issue of the registration of the paper in compliance with the provisions of Section 66 of AIPPA. The majority of the journalists interviewed in this research are of the view that the paper's management went against the grain by refusing to take their advice to register the paper. The journalists proposed that the

paper should have sought registration before making its constitutional challenges against Sections 66 and 80 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), which compel media institutions and journalists to register before practicing. The journalists insisted that the management gave the regime an easy victory by refusing to comply with the law. On its part, the management argued that it had no obligation to obey an unjust law. The Supreme Court dismissed the application and the paper was shut down. The disputes about the registration issue add critical insights into the lack of democratic practices in an institution that broadly and substantively fought a bigger and higher democratisation struggle.

The failure by academic studies to capture the experiences of journalists in Zimbabwe and how the state regulated the media through an arsenal of repressive laws could be due to the fact that, during the crisis, it was difficult to do fieldwork in the country because authorities would not allow it. Apart from security considerations, Willems (2011) submits that economic problems, such as shortages of basic commodities like fuel, could hinder research. This research is a post-crisis study done by a researcher who understands the Zimbabwean political terrain and who is closely connected and linked with important players and institutions in the field of research, having been a senior journalist with *The Daily News*, a student leader and activist.

Willems (2011) suggested that the failure to examine other aspects of the crisis in Zimbabwe could also be explained by the fact that politics continued to be conceptualized as the actions of “big men”, with President Mugabe frequently being attributed a leading role in the events unfolding from 2000 onwards in both media and academic analysis. This study takes a different approach that adds value and new ways of interrogating and analysing the media as a site of opposition, as the organisers and mobilising agents of the dissident groups, using the experiences of *The Daily News* while operating under conditions of repression and the authoritarian and often violent responses of the State through detentions, arrests, bombings and closure of the paper.

This study, through interviews with 51 journalists, civil society leaders, government ministers, ruling party and opposition officials, has demonstrated through an examination of *The Daily News*, as a site of opposition politics against authoritarian tendencies and the alternative and activist role of its journalists, how the media in an African context can also play a significant role in broadening the public sphere and nurturing a democratic culture for the respect of human rights and for fostering a limited and accountable government.

Chapter Four examines the history and the reasoning behind the passing of repressive media laws and their effects on the operations of the private press, especially *The Daily News*, as captured in Chapters Five and Six and disputations by media scholars, such as Moyo (2005:110), who argued that:

The closure of *The Daily News* is not a matter of a repressive regime suppressing press freedom. Rather, it is important to draw links between the closure of the paper's shaky financial base, its 'foreign funding' and the general tone – within the larger context of the changing political climate triggered by the controversial land reform and resultant international campaign against the country's leadership.

Firstly, Moyo's analysis lacks empirical data to support the claims of a financial crisis at the time of the closure of *The Daily News* in September, 2003. Samuel Sipepa Nkomo, the Chief Executive of Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ), the publishers of *The Daily News*, disputed the claims. He pointed out that:

I am an accountant by profession and one of the things I look at is not only the bottom line of operating a business. I also look at the top line that includes the sales of *The Daily News* in the market, especially at the time of the closure in 2003. We were doing extremely well in our business. If *The Daily News* had financial problems, how did it manage to pay the workers for over a year after we had closed down, when we were not making any money? You remember also that the police raided us and took away all our computers and locked them up at Chikurubi Maximum Prison, but we moved on. So it is not true that we were a dying horse, (Interview with Samuel Sipepa Nkomo, Harare, 24th January, 2013).

Nkomo believes that the extra-legal activities by the state, such as locking up publishing equipment in a prison, the prosecution of journalists without a single successful conviction by the courts, and twice bombing the newspaper, suggests that the paper was a viable and formidable institution playing its democratic watchdog role in an environment where dissident voices were muzzled by the public media at the instigation of the government.

Secondly, as pointed out in Chapters Five and Six by key government informants who presided over media regulation, *The Daily News* was a threat to the hegemonic political interests of the ruling ZANU PF party that actively organized and mobilised the political opposition to effect a change of government in Zimbabwe. In that regard, as pointed out by both Minister Jonathan Moyo and his Permanent Secretary, George Charamba, in separate interviews in Harare on 20th September, 2012, and 13th

September, 2012, respectively, the government had to put in place laws to regulate the media and curtail the activist role of the private press, especially *The Daily News*. Both Minister Moyo and Charamba submit that *The Daily News* was an effective opposition instrument with the capacity to effect a change of government. Measures, which included the enactment of oppressive media laws, were taken to curtail the growing opposition influence of *The Daily News*' coverage of the politics and crisis. Empirical evidence suggests that the closure of *The Daily News* was political rather than self-inflicted, due to an unsubstantiated economic crisis.

Another interesting dimension that requires evaluation is the allusions by scholars, such as Moyo (2005) and state bureaucrats and pro-regime intellectuals, that *The Daily News* was a neoliberal project. In Chapters Five and Six, through its alternative and activist journalism, *The Daily News* globalised the Zimbabwe crisis. Journalists, policy makers and civil society informants who were interviewed for the research pointed out that the paper informed the international audiences of the European Union, World Bank, African Union and Southern African Community Development Community meetings and other international forums, about the political and economic crisis in the country during critical moments, such as the land reform programme and the elections in 2000 and 2002, that were often violent. The paper publicized the effects of the crisis to both the region and the international community through stories of massive immigration to countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Australia, the UK and the United States of battered victims of political violence and those looking for greener pastures as refugees. *The Daily News* and its journalists addressed the liberal values of the respect for human rights, the rule of law and the need to have a limited government, but not necessarily neoliberal values. D'Souza (2008: 1) defines liberalism: "as a general philosophical world view as well as a political theory and political practices comprising a set of ideas about the relationship between law, state, economy and the individual," while Harvey (2005: 110) postulates that neoliberalism,

is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating the individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free market and free trade.

Most importantly, Crouch (2011:17) posits that the principal tenet of a neoliberal agenda is that optimal outcomes:

will be achieved if the demand and supply of goods and services are allowed to adjust to each other through the price mechanism, without the interference by

government or other forces – though subject to the pricing and marketing strategies of oligopolistic corporations.

The editorial position and ideology of *The Daily News* was to tell the story of Zimbabwe during the political crisis as it happened and through the experiences of ordinary people, including workers and students' protests and their demands for better working and living conditions. It espoused an alternative media approach in the sense that it covered the stories of ordinary people and victims of a repressive regime as important news sources. The paper also espoused liberal views, not necessarily neoliberal ones. For instance, it is posited that neoliberals are hostile to trade unions which seek to interfere with the operations of the labour market through demonstrations and protests. As argued in Chapters Five and Six, *The Daily News* promoted and publicised the mass protests of the main labour body, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), demanding minimum wages. The paper was a platform for a variety of disparate dissenting voices, including the voices of protesting veterans of the liberation struggle's demands for compensation for their role in the 1970s' war of liberation, as pointed out in Chapter Five. The neoliberal tag on the paper and its journalists is therefore contestable.

It is therefore plausible to submit, as postulated by Mouffe (2005:18), that every political system has some form of exclusion and that every hegemonic order is susceptible to being challenged by counter-hegemonic practices, "i.e., practices which will attempt to disarticulate the existing order so as to install another form of hegemony." Although the extent of installing a new political hegemonic order through alternative and activist role of *The Daily News* and its journalists could be a subject of considerable discussion and dispute, what the study has contributed are important nodal points of consensus that dissenting voices excluded by the state media found a mouthpiece and a home of expression in *The Daily News* to challenge the abuse of power and proffer a liberal democratic way of conducting national politics. In this respect, *The Daily News* was a vital site of opposition for counter-hegemonic groups, such as the political opposition, labour unions and white farmers whose land was expropriated by the state without compensation in the midst of a political crisis.

The main reason why I sought to dispute Moyo's claims about the ideological position of *The Daily News* during the crisis period as well as his claims of self-inflicted closure was to provide an evidence based argument that points to a premeditated agenda by the state based on the significant democratic role of the paper. This smaller but significant argument was raised in the concluding chapter after having presented and interrogated evidence in Chapters Four, Five and Six that arguably presents a convincing proposition that the state was unsettled by the advocacy, activist and often radical journalism of the

newspaper that sought to change the political culture of the State. In my view, the conclusion is arguably the suitable platform to discuss and provide clarity to small debates that assist to provide a counter narrative to views raised by other scholars on the problems of *The Daily News* having addressed the most significant and broader contributions of the thesis in the data and analysis sections of the thesis. This helped to attend to arguments raised in existing literature related to the role as problems encountered by an opposition news medium during an undemocratic political transition.

As put forward by media and democracy scholars, the research has also shown that the mass media can play a salient role in democratising countries, less pragmatically and more normatively, the requirements of democracy include certain habits, beliefs, attitudes and values, (Dahl, 1989; Diamond, 1963) and the role of the media can provide insights into the development of a democratic civil society and individual political development. Through its robust coverage of the political and electoral processes during the three elections in February, 2000, June, 2000, and March, 2002, *The Daily News* deepened the need for the government, political parties and their supporters, as well as the general citizen, to value and nurture the respect for human rights by exposing human rights abuses and corrupt official practices. *The Daily News* and its journalists therefore contributed to the broadening of the liberal watchdog role of the press that is associated with old democracies, mostly from the West.

The alternative and activist journalism of *The Daily News* and its journalists that are examined in this dissertation confirms that the media is capable of producing changes in how citizens and those who govern them associate with one another in line with democratic struggles globally.

Media can play an instrumental role in the resocialisation and modernisation by teaching a new way of participating in politics and socio-economic life by encouraging new individual and national aspirations, (Gross, 2002: 90).

Based on the reviewed literature, captured in Chapters One and Two, and empirically proven in Chapters Four, Five and Six, one might plausibly propose that the contribution of the opposition media in circumstances of political repression to the democratisation process might be at its strongest during periods of political uncertainty and turmoil, as was the case in Zimbabwe at the turn of the 21st century, when the private media and *The Daily News* in particular, rose to become oppositional and activist in the manner in which they confronted the authoritarian practices of the state. This is unlike in the later stages of democratic consolidation, where the media often become watered down by market pressures as well as political emerging political constraints (Randall, 1993). Randall observes that it is these kinds of rare

occasions that represent the high point of the media's role in the democratisation process, which then gets gradually weaker as the political system becomes more consolidated:

The media tend to be more supportive of democracy at a particular political conjuncture, when they are themselves emerging from political control, are strongly identified with the process of democratization and, moreover, benefit from the public's enormous hunger for change. At an earlier stage, their contribution will eventually be more restricted but to the extent that they offer alternative accounts of social and political reality and even that they draw people into a sense of shared space, they can be seen as helping to pave the way for democratization. As the process of transition approaches the consolidation stage, the media's contribution becomes more equivocal. When deprived of state financial support and facing a public whose news appetites have been blunted by growing cynicism, they increasingly become prey to the pressures of commercial survival, (Randall, 1993: 245).

The point demonstrated above is that during periods of political turbulence, the media especially the alternative media can assist agents of social change to open up the political system more influentially than during periods of stability.

7.2 Strengths of the study and areas of further research

One of the significant aspects of this study is that among the 51 respondents, there appears to be general agreement that *The Daily News* and its journalists disrupted the information monopoly of the government's chain of newspapers and its broadcasting monopolies on radio and television. That consensus, through evidence provided in Chapters Four, Five and Six, especially the view by the Information Ministry's Permanent Secretary that *The Daily News* was leading opinion making and was organising the dissident voices, mainly the opponents of the ruling party, which adds value to understanding the role of the newspaper, as a mouthpiece of the opposition in a society where opposition and dissenting views were muzzled in the government-controlled media. The paper's market leadership could also possibly explain why extra-legal measures, such as the bombings of the paper's office and printing machine in 2000 and 2001, respectively, were probably undertaken to silence and decimate it. *The Daily News* and its journalists, in the process of breaking that century-old monopoly in a remarkably short period of less than five years between 1999 and 2003, enabled civic and political dissenters, as well as ordinary citizens, to use it to organise themselves in the face of oppression. Through its opposition and activist journalism in the face of assaults and arrests and poverty as a result of poor salaries due to the hyper inflationary environment of the time, the paper enabled political dissenters,

such as the MDC, ZCTU and NCA, to share and discuss their ideas, building group identities and organizational structures with which to mount an organised and sustained opposition to President Mugabe's dictatorship. How *The Daily News* investigated and covered the activities of these civic and political dissenters revealed its organising role in the democratic struggles, a point that a government senior bureaucratic pointed out as having caused the authorities to find ways of curtailing the operations of the paper, as discussed. In this regard, *The Daily News* and its journalists were active participants against undemocratic practices. They opposed and resisted the undemocratic practices of the government by taking part in opposition politics. Although it is possibly not rare for newspaper to play this kind of opposition role; the experiences of arrests, bombings and beatings, and the continued determination of *The Daily News* and its journalists to continue to operate under circumstances of oppression in order to change their oppressed circumstances, and possibly the rest of society, is what makes this study worthwhile.

There appears to be broad agreement among respondents, though, that as a consequence of the alternative, activist and often radical journalism of *The Daily News* and its journalists, the gradual easing of state control over print media, the private press of late, especially after the formation of a coalition government, in 2009 became platforms for disseminating alternative information and critical viewpoints, thereby contributing to further democratic delegitimation of the undemocratic practices of the government. An important observation is that the situation currently obtaining in state and media relations in Zimbabwe is born of the struggles of the private press and, more specifically, of *The Daily News* and its journalists. The strength of this dissertation was therefore to research these struggles so that they inform academic discourses on the study of media and communication in authoritarian regimes and their contributions to the democratic struggles in a context where African governments continue to curtail the growth of a vibrant, liberal and opposition media.

Unlike other studies on media and communication during the crisis period, which have concentrated on reviewing what newspapers wrote about, the strength of this dissertation could be premised on the face toface interviews with journalists, where they narrated their ordeals and lived circumstances while working under conditions of repression. Added to this are the explanatory views by the government bureaucrats who crafted the repressive media laws and presided over a generally oppressive environment. Very few studies have done this as an in-depth study of the media's role in the democratisation process in Zimbabwe, where the protagonists at the relevant time tell their own stories. Whereas the trials and tribulations of the journalists, through arrests, beatings, abductions and

detentions, were often reported in newspapers, and while the stories of the editors were widely written about and they received honours and awards. As shown in Chapter Six, this study captures the struggles of junior reporters and photo journalists on the frontline, explaining their lived circumstances as they covered different stories about Zimbabwe, among them the violent electoral processes and farm occupations of the time. The biographies of these journalists, captured in this dissertation, their defiance in the face of real oppression and how they navigated repression, are the strengths of the study.

The personal interest of the researcher, as a former journalist of *The Daily News* and a victim of state repression during that time, could possibly be a weakness of the study as my perceptions may possibly lack objectivity. However, this could also be strength in some respects, in that the motivation was to fill a gap in the literature on media and communication in authoritarian regimes through opposition and activist journalism where the voices of the victims are heard, and why they sought to confront an autocratic system that was often violent against them. The academic contribution to broadening the study of media and communication in a democratising society was the overriding impetus for the study. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent, reliability and confidentiality, were considered during the research process to make sure that former colleagues of the researcher would not tell him what they thought he sought to hear, but their genuine and impartial assessments of their experiences while working under conditions of repression. This researcher did not interview the ordinary citizens; the audiences of *The Daily News* who contributed to the rise of the paper. This is possibly a weakness, but it is an area where future researchers could investigate and examine why the newspaper grew phenomenally in a short period of time by talking to the consumers of the product.

7.3 The Significance of the study

In carrying out the study, the research sought to investigate the experiences of an alternative newspaper and its journalists, to assess political repression and media regulation in Africa, and in Zimbabwe in particular, to assess alliances between media, political parties and civic society, and to evaluate contexts and cases of oppositional journalism and the role and rise of opposition, activist, alternative and often radical journalism in Zimbabwe. The value of this project is therefore to add an important academic contribution that other societies, such as Zimbabwe, in an African context can also contribute to the study of media and communication through alternative, activist and often radical journalism, as shown by the way *The Daily News* and its journalists confronted a dictatorial regime under conditions of

repression. As far as policy making is concerned, the findings in this study suggest that the relationship between institutional media reforms and democratisation in Zimbabwe is not simple and over. There is therefore need to seek empirical evidence and consider the socialisation processes of the gains of the new constitution in future policy articulation. The new constitution signed into law on 22nd May, 2013, guarantees freedom of the media as an institution, as well as freedom of expression, unlike Section 20 of the previous constitution, which only guaranteed freedom of expression. The study also shows that media laws, such as AIPPA and BSA, serve little democratic purpose but are meant to entrench the political hegemony of the ruling party. Contrary to its name; the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) in practice did the opposite; it stifled information dissemination and muzzled the media and curtailed the practice of journalism through the use of its provisions to arrest and prosecute both media institutions and journalists. However, as observed in Chapter Five by a human rights lawyer who represented *The Daily News*' journalists following their numerous cases of prosecution, not a single journalist was ever convicted of violating the law. Equally, the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA), instead of facilitating the opening up and liberalisation of the broadcasting sector, in essence assisted in maintaining the monopoly of the state-run broadcaster, ZBC, to serve the political hegemony of the ruling party, a point that was clearly put across in Chapters Four and Five by President Mugabe's spokesperson, who also doubles as the Information Ministry's Permanent Secretary.

In this regard, future studies should examine and interrogate how the laws could be repealed or amended to serve the interests of the journalism profession and the broader democratic system and to fall in line with the democratic provisions of the new Constitution borne out this struggle. From the interview and discussion with the Minister of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services, Professor Jonathan Moyo, it seems there is a rethinking of how the laws have impacted on the practice of journalism. New research could examine and interrogate this possibly revisionist approach by Moyo, and see how far the government intends to reform the controversial and oppressive media laws and the responses of media institutions and journalists. This is especially important because of the history of Moyo before he joined Zanu PF during the Constitutional Commission period in 1999. Minister Moyo's previous record was that of a liberal political scientist concerned with the realisation of both procedural and substantive democratic tenets. He was once the leading critic of the authoritarian and corrupt tendencies of the government, especially when he was a university lecturer in the 1990s. It could be crucial to see, through his admission in this research, that if he was given a second chance in government, he would do things differently, and his position that *The Daily News* and its journalists contributed to the democratisation

process in Zimbabwe, was well meant. Other studies can research the newspaper readership to understand why they relied on the paper, and why it managed to surpass the readership of the state newspapers that had been on the market for a hundred years.

7.4 Conceptual contribution to alternative media studies

One of the most enduring contributions of this study on alternative media studies as well as existing work on media and democracy is its capacity to expand the conceptual framework. It de-westernises media studies by contributing to new insights on media practices on how to harness media for political change in the global South. The case analysis of *The Daily News* in a non-western context during moments of political turmoil points to a successful use of the alternative media analytic lens in democratising contexts. Most significantly, the successes of a commercial newspaper to profoundly play the role of an alternative news medium expand the framework and the horizons of alternative media theory. This is a significant contribution because as put forward by scholars such as Atton (2002), Downing (2001), Johnson (1991) as well as Louw and Tomaselli, (1991) alternative media are not for profit entities and are surely financially supported by donors. *The Daily News* case analysis has demonstrated that in an African context during periods of political turmoil a privately-controlled commercial newspaper went against the grain and played the role of an alternative news medium at the expense of its commercial interests to advance the cause of democratisation. The original authors of alternative media theory did not envisage this rebellious but significant contribution to a new and refreshing way of understanding alternative media in democratising contexts. It also shows that private newspaper owners in contexts of repression also serve the broader national and democratic public interests that address community based interests, views of oppressed groups seeking social change than the profit agenda that they are normally associated with. Political science studies often underestimate the role of market forces to unlock political change in authoritarian contexts as shown by *The Daily News* and its journalists. More so, the role of human agency is often disregarded but this study has sufficiently demonstrated that under conditions of repression, there is no total domination against voices of social change and resistance as show by the activist and advocacy journalists who rose up as agents of hope against negative agents of social change. The study further demonstrates that human agency can never be killed by oppressive political practices. This dimension is often little acknowledged in political science and media and communication studies.

Therefore, what the research has sought to contribute to the study of media and communication in Zimbabwe could probably be new generalizable findings that assist to differentiate and understand the role of alternative news media, especially *The Daily News*, as a site of opposition through alternative and activist journalism, by having in-depth interviews of the journalists, bureaucrats, civic leaders and politicians during the democratisation process in Zimbabwe. The study therefore strengthens a sufficient theoretical postulation of alternative and activist journalism in a non-western context under conditions of repression, by interrogating the experiences of an opposition newspaper and its journalists that problematizes existing work on media and democracy.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Schedule of Respondents (Interviewees)

1. **Andy Mhlanga** – Secretary General of the Zimbabwe National Liberations War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA). Mhlanga was in the executive that spear-headed the farm occupations after the government lost the constitutional referendum in

February 2000. The war veterans were blamed for the violence associated with the elections in 2000, 2002 and 2005. They were also accused of human rights violations in the process of occupying the farms, a charge that Mhlanga disputed in the interview. Mhlanga was interviewed for this research in Harare on 20 December 2012.

2. **Andy Moyse**- Veteran journalist and director of the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ). Former editor of privately owned *Standard newspaper*, *Parade* and *Horizon* magazines in the 1980S and 1990s. He was arrested on numerous occasions while editing the Standard newspaper. The interview took place on 20 March 2013, Harare.
3. **Angela Makamure** – Angela joined *The Daily News* as a junior reporter in 2002 and left after the closure of the paper in September 2003. She became the director of Africa Association Female Journalists in Zimbabwe. She also served as the vice chairperson of MISA between 2009 and 2010. On 7 August 2012 she agreed to be interviewed on this research in Harare
4. **William Bango** –A veteran journalist and ex-detainee of the armed struggle, Bango worked for the state media institutions such as the Zimbabwe Inter-Africa News Agency (ZIANA) before joining the Daily News in 1999. He was the *Daily news* editor before he left to join the opposition MDC in 2002. The interview was held on 16 April 2013 in Harare
5. **Brian Hungwe** – Brian is the BBC correspondent in Zimbabwe. The interview was held on 10 April 2013 in Harare. He is an award winning journalist having worked for the privately-owned *Zimbabwe Independent* newspapers for a number of years.
6. **Aaron Ufumeli**– Aaron is former *Daily News* photo journalist now working for the privately-owned daily paper, the *News Day*. The interview was held on 4 July 2012 in Harare.
7. **Brian Mangwende** – *The Daily News* former chief reporter and now associate editor at Alpha Media Holdings, publishers of the *Zimbabwe Independent*, *the Standard* and *News Day*. He was interviewed on 6 October 2012 in Harare

8. **Caesar Zvayi** – Deputy Editor of the government-run *The Herald* newspaper. He was interviewed 16 August 2012 and 12 October 2012 in Harare.
9. **Chakanyuka Bosha** – Former *Daily News* sub editor now with Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ). The interview took place on 16 August 2012 in Harare.
10. **Dr. Vimbai Chivaura** – University of Zimbabwe lecturer and board member of the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ). He appears on a number of state television programmes addressing cultural, political and land issues. He was interviewed on 25 October 2012 in Harare. He teaches English literature.
11. **Chris Goko** – *The Daily News* deputy editor. He was the business senior reporter when the paper was closed down. The interview took place on 9 August 2012 in Harare.
12. **Collin Chiwanza** – Former *Daily News* senior reporter. He left the paper in 2002 to pursue other businesses. The interview took place 25 August 2012 in Harare.
13. **Columbus Mavhungu** – Former *Daily News* reporter. He left the paper after its closure and joined the NCA and later the MDC as an information officer. He was interviewed on 8 August 2012 in Harare.
14. **Conway Tutani** – A veteran journalist, sub editor. He worked the government-controlled Herald before and after the paper was closed. He is a former *Daily News* deputy chief sub editor. He now works for the *News Day*. The interviews took place 15 and 27 September 2012 in Harare.
15. **Ernest Mudzengi** – Director of Media Center and former director of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and now director of the Media Center, a media freedom of expression body.
16. **Foster Dongozi** – Former *Daily News* reporter after joining the paper from the state-run Chronicle daily which operates from the country's second largest city, Bulawayo in western Zimbabwe. He is secretary general of the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists. The interview took place 17 December 2012 in Harare.

17. **Dumisani Muleya** – Editor of the privately-owned weekly the *Zimbabwe Independent*. Muleya is an awarding winning journalist and one of the country's leading investigative journalist. He was interviewed on 10 November 2012 in Harare.
18. **Geoffrey Nyarota** – Founding editor-in-chief of the ANZ and *The Daily News*, now with the opposition MDC. Nyarota is the most celebrated investigative journalist and a biting critic of the ZANU PF government. Before founding *The Daily News*, he worked for the state media as editor of the Chronicle before he was demoted and later fired for exposing a massive car racket known as the Willogate Scandal in the late 1980s. He was interviewed on 17 October and 5 November 2012 in Harare where he runs a private communications business.
19. **Godwin Mangudya** – Former senior *Daily on Sunday News* senior reporter. After the closure of the paper, he joined Studio 7's Voice of America. The interview was recorded on 17 July 2012 in Harare
20. **George Charamba** – Presidential spokesperson and permanent secretary in the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services. The interview took place at the government complex, *Munhumutapa Building* on 13 September 2012 in Harare.
21. **Guthrie Munyuki** – *The Daily News* assistant editor and former entertainment reporter before the paper was shut down. The interview was recorded on 16 May 2013 in Harare.
22. **Harrison Nkomo** – Human rights lawyer and defender. He was interviewed on 20 November 2012 in Harare. He is a member of the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights.
23. **Dr. Ibbo Mandaza** – Academic and publisher of *The Zimbabwe Mirror*, now defunct. The interview was recorded on 14 August 2012 in Harare.
24. **Irene Petras** – Lawyer and director of the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights. She was interviewed on 23 October 2012 in Harare. Her organization provides free litigation to victims of human rights violations most of them human rights defenders.

25. **Japhet Moyo** – Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). The interview was recorded on 7 December 2012 in Harare.
26. **Jawet Chigaure** – *The Daily News* sub editor. The interview was held on 28 July 2012 in Harare.
27. **Kelvin Jakachira** – Former *Daily News* reporter who later joined *News Day*. The interview was recorded on 17 June 2013 in Harare. He now works for a private radio station in Harare.
28. **Lawrence Paganga** – Former *Daily News* reporter, crossed to join opposition party MDC following the closure of the paper. The interview was recorded on 8 May 2013 in Harare.
29. **Professor Lovemore Madhuku** – Law lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe and chairperson of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), turned into a political party on 28 August 2013. The interview was recorded on 13 February 2013 in Harare.
30. **Luke Tamborinyoka** – Former *Daily News* political editor, spokesperson of MDC Leader and former Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai. The interview was recorded on 12 February 2013 in Harare.
31. **Margaret Chinowaita** – *The Daily News* community editor. She remained with the paper after its closure until its return in June 2010. The interview took place on 30 July 2012 in Harare.
32. **Maxwell Sibanda** – *The Daily News* assistant editor. He was the entertainment editor of the paper when it was closed in 2003. The interview was recorded on 10 July 2012 in Harare.
33. **Samuel Sipepa Nkomo** – ANZ chief executive officer, crossed to join the MDC after the closure of the paper, former Minister of Water Resources between 2009 and 31 July 2013 and now Member of Parliament. The interview was recorded on 24 January 2013 in Harare.

34. **Nelson Chamisa** – Former Minister, MDC former spokesperson and now party organizing secretary of the opposition party. He is also a former youth chairperson of the MDC. The interview was held in on 8 December 2012 in Harare.
35. **Chris Mhike** – Lawyer, former *Daily News* reporter, Commissioner of the Zimbabwe Media Commission. The interview was recorded on 23 October 2012 in Harare.
36. **John Gambanga** – Former *Daily News* editor. He worked as editor for a government-run weekly *Manica Post*. Gambanga now work for the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). The interview took place on 13 September 2012 in Harare
37. **Tsvangirai Mukwazhi** – *The Daily News photo* journalist. He was interviewed on 10 October 2012 in Harare. He is an awarding winning photo journalist.
38. **Kindness Paradza** – Publisher of the banned *Tribune weekly* private paper and former President of the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists. He is now Member of Parliament representing ZANU PF. The interview was held on 7 September 2012 in Harare.
39. **Chengetai Zvauya** – *TheDaily News* senior reporter. He joined the MDC as information officer when the paper was closed and rejoined it when it was re-licensed. He was interviewed on 17 August 2012 in Harare.
40. **Philion Bulawayo** – Former *Daily News* photo journalist and now with Reuters. The interview was held on 18 March 2013 in Harare.
41. **Beatrice Mtetwa** – Human rights lawyer, former President of the Law Society of Zimbabwe and member of the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights. The interview was recorded in Harare on 7 February 2013.
42. **Francis Harahwa** – Managing editor of *The Daily News*. Harahwa is a veteran journalist having worked in Malawi and Lesotho. He also worked for the government press before joining the ANZ in 1998. The interview was recorded in Harare on 13 December 2012.
43. **Nyasha Naykunu** – Former news editor of *The Daily News* now with Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA). He worked for both the *Herald* and *ZIANA* before he

joined the Daily News in 1999. The interview was held in Harare on 16 August 2012 and 10 September 2012.

44. **Raymond Majongwe**- He is Secretary General of the Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) and member of ZCTU. The interview was held on 12 November 2012 in Harare.
45. **Professor Jonathan Moyo** – Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting, Zanu PF central committee and political bureau member and political strategist for the ruling party. The interview was recorded on 20 September 2012 Harare in Harare.
46. **Rindai Chipfunde-Vava** – Director of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN). The interview was recorded on 15 September 2012 in Harare.
47. **Stanley Gama**– He is the current editor off *The Daily News*. The interview was recorded in Harare on 13 September 2012. Gama worked as senior sports reporter for the state-run weekly *Sunday Mail* before joining *The Daily News* in 2003.
48. **Mathew Takaona** – Former, *Sunday Mail* news editor, former ZUJ president and now Commissioner of the Zimbabwe Media Commission. The interview was held in Harare on 30 November 2012.
49. **Barnabas Thondhlana** – Former editor of *The Daily News on Sunday*. He worked for the *Zimbabwe Independent* newspaper as news editor. Now runs a privately weekly tabloid, the *Observer*. The interview was held in Harare on 16 June 2013.
50. **Precious Shumba** – Former *Daily News* reporter and now director of Harare residents Trust. He joined Combined Harare Residents Association after the closure of the paper in 2003. The interview was recorded in Harare on 10 May 2013.
51. **Rashweat Mukundu** – He is a former *Zimbabwe Independent* reporter and director of media watchdog, MISA. The interview was held in Harare on 20 July 2012. Mukundu is the director of a Harare based public policy research think tank, the Zimbabwe Democracy Institute.

Appendix B: Semi-structured questions for qualitative interviews

To *The Daily News* Journalists

1. Firstly, I want to know about yourself that is your history as a journalist before you joined *The Daily News*.
2. What are your general views about the media laws and policies in Zimbabwe?
3. How would you describe the media and political environment during your time at *The Daily News*?
4. What influenced you to join *The Daily news*?
5. Some media critics including media watchdogs such as MISA have criticized laws such as AIPPA for muzzling press media and the operations of journalists. Do you think it's the case and why?
6. Do you think the law served the interests of press freedom apart from complaints that it was used to attack and ban papers such as *The Daily News*?
7. What is the relationship between media and democracy and what are the experiences from Africa?
8. In Zimbabwe, how have the government controlled private media such as *The Daily News*?
9. What kind of stories did your paper cover? How did the various publics such as politicians respond to your coverage of national events such as the land reform program, allegations of corruption?
10. Describe your personal experiences, the good, the bad, the happy moments working as a journalists at *The Daily News*?
11. What would you say was the saddest experience of your career working at *The Daily News*?
12. I understand that most journalists complained that they were subject to arrests, unlawful detentions, assaults by police and alleged party supporters, did you experienced such things?

13. If you did, may you describe what happened and how it affected your career, your views working for the paper, your family? Did you quit the job? If not, why did you remain at The Daily News in such circumstances?
14. What was the relationship between the independent media, and more especially *The Daily News*, with oppositional political forces such as the MDC and civic groups and how did you cover their stories?
15. Why and how individual Zimbabwean journalists did chose to fight conditions of repression during the Zimbabwean crisis?
16. *The Daily News* was subject to two bombings between 2000 and 2001 and subsequent ban in 2003. How did you respond to these situations?
17. How for instance did you manage to work in circumstances of arrests and bombings?
18. How have Zimbabwean journalists' been coerced, negotiated or resisted under these conditions of repression?
19. What made you to remain defied in circumstances where you life and possibly that of your family were at risk?
20. How do you respond to allegations by the government that the paper and its journalists were mouthpieces of the opposition and interests of white farmers and imperial forces such as Britain?
21. What did you do following the banning of the paper? Did you remain there until it came back in 2010?
22. In your opinion, what would you think were your contributions to media and democratic freedoms in Zimbabwe when you worked as a journalist in Zimbabwe?
23. What do you think Zimbabweans should learn from your experiences as a journalist working for *The Daily news* in contributing to the democratization process?
24. What are the implications for media resistance theory and what lessons can be drawn from this study to build on democratization?

Questions to editor-in-chief Geoffrey Nyarota

1. Firstly, I want to know about yourself that is your history as a journalist before you formed Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ), publishers of *The Daily News*.
2. What are your general views about the media laws and policies in Zimbabwe?
3. How would you describe the media and political environment during your time at ANZ (*The Daily News*?)
4. What influenced you to form *The Daily news*?
5. How was ANZ funded and what was the ownership structure?
6. Could you describe the editorial ethos of the group?
7. Some media critics including media watchdogs such as MISA have criticized laws such as AIPPA, POSA, BSA and other security laws for muzzling press media and the operations of journalists. Do you think it's the case and why?
8. Do you think these laws especially AIPPA served the interests of press freedom apart from complaints that it was used to attack and ban papers such as *The Daily News*?
9. Using your vast experience in the media industry, what would you say is the relationship between media and democracy and what are the experiences from Africa?
10. Apart from the laws, in Zimbabwe, how have the government controlled private media such as *The Daily News*?
11. What kind of stories did your paper cover? How did the various publics such as politicians respond to your coverage of national events such as the land reform program, allegations of corruption?
12. Describe your personal experiences, the good, the bad, the happy moments working as the editor-in-chief of *The Daily News*?
13. What would you say was the saddest experience of your career working at ANZ (*The Daily News*?)
14. I understand that most journalists complained that they were subject to arrests, unlawful detentions, assaults by police and alleged party supporters, did you experienced such things as the Editor-In-Chief and founder of the paper?

15. If you did, may you describe what happened and how it affected your career, your views working for the paper, your family? Did you quit the job? If not, why did you remain at *The Daily News* in such circumstances?
16. What was the relationship between the independent media, and more especially *The Daily News*, with oppositional political forces such as the MDC and civic groups and how did you cover their stories?
17. Why and how individual Zimbabwean journalists did chose to fight conditions of repression during the Zimbabwean crisis?
18. For you as the Editor-In-Chief and most probably the most targeted journalists, what was it like leading journalists in such a repressive environment.
19. *The Daily News* was subject to two bombings between 2000 and 2001 and subsequent ban in 2003. How did you respond to these situations?
20. How for instance did you manage to work in circumstances of arrests and bombings?
21. How have Zimbabwean journalists' been coerced, negotiated or resisted under these conditions of repression?
22. What made you to remain defied in circumstances where you life and possibly that of your family were at risk?
23. How do you respond to allegations by the government that the paper and its journalists were mouthpieces of the opposition and interests of white farmers and imperial forces such as Britain?
24. What did you do following the banning of the paper? Did you remain there until it came back in 2010?
25. In your opinion, what would you think were the paper and your contributions to media and democratic freedoms in Zimbabwe when you worked as a journalist in Zimbabwe?
26. What do you think Zimbabweans should learn from your experiences as a journalist working for *The Daily news* in contributing to the democratization process?
27. What are the implications for media resistance theory and what lessons can be drawn from this study to build on democratization?

Questions to government, political and civic respondents

1. What is the relationship between media and democracy and what are the experiences from Africa?
2. In Zimbabwe, how have the government controlled private media such as *The Daily News*?
3. What was the relationship between the independent media, and more especially *The Daily News*, with oppositional political forces such as the MDC and civic groups?
4. Why and how individual Zimbabwean journalists chose to fight conditions of repression during the Zimbabwean crisis?
5. What are the implications for alternative media theory and what lessons can be drawn from this study to build on democratization?
6. What are the government media policies and what inform these policies?
7. Do you think the media laws such as BSA, AIPPA are serving the policies of the government in the media adequately
8. Before these laws came into at the turn of the 21st century, how would you describe the operations of the media and what necessitated the promulgation of these laws?
9. How and what do these laws seek to broadly address in the area of media and operations of the media?
10. There have been complains by journalists, journalists unions, civic groups and media activist institutions such as MISA that laws such as IPPA criminalize the profession and practice of journalists citing the arrests of several journalists and banning of newspapers such as *The Daily News*. How do you respond to this allegation?
11. In your view, do you think that the private media especially *The Daily News* and its journalists have been working professionally
12. Some government officials have described the private press particularly *The Daily News* as a mouth piece of the opposition, as a paper that is anti-government policies such as the land reform program and pro-white commercial farmers. Why is the government of this view?

13. *The Daily News* was closed after failing to register with the Media and Information Commission (MIC) alleging its constitutional rights was violated. The ban followed a Supreme Court ruling saying its decision was unlawful. How do you respond to the decision of the Daily News to contest the provisions of AIPPA by refusing to register?
14. After the Supreme Court ruling in September 2003, *The Daily News* then approached the MIC for registration but they were denied registration. The paper approached the Administrative Court and won its case but MIC refused to register it again. It won two High Court rulings for registration but still the government defied the rulings. Why did a government body behave in this manner, defying court decisions?
15. Is it fair to suggest the laws were targeted at controlling and emasculating the operations of the private press?
16. In your view, how would you describe the relationship between the private press and the government as well as that of the private press such as *The Daily News* with the opposition and other anti-government groups?
17. What in your view are the lessons that one can learn from the relationship between *The Daily News* with the government?
18. The paper was re-licensed in June 2010 by a reconstituted Zimbabwe Media Council in terms of the agreement made by political parties. How do you think the government and the paper should relate?
19. Do you think the media laws and policies serve the interests of democracy where the media plays its critical roles in serving the democratization agenda?

Appendix C: Sample of Interview Transcripts

1. Geoffrey Nyarota

Question: What was *The Daily News* ethos, the editorial position as a newspaper?

Answer: *The Daily News* tended to be populist as it went with the people at a time when the government was becoming increasingly unpopular. So *The Daily News* supported the popular sentiment, which explains why it later incurred the wrath of the government. It was like *The Daily News* was giving a platform to ZCTU, was giving the MDC a platform and was giving

commercial farmers a platform. It was giving a platform to anybody that was a victim of the government oppression. This was not a difficult position to take once you unshackled yourself of government control.

Question: What kind of stories did *The Daily News* covered during the period of the political crisis?

Answer: *The Daily News* opened space for debate, for discourse at the level that never existed. Previous elections had been done in an environment of media monopoly by government institution both print and electronic. For the first time in February 2000 there was an open campaign against the government position in terms of the referendum. This had never happened before and stories and columns where there attacking government positions, attacking the person of the president himself in terms of his utterances. People could challenge the president for the first time and there was ground swell of disgruntlement with the government and this was articulated mainly through *The Daily News*. It was for this reason that the circulation of *The Daily News* in one year shot from zero to 129 000 and the people had seen an outlet for their own sentiments. The result of the referendum fell in line with this new development and that is why the government came guns blazing at *The Daily News*. From February to June the election was totally different in terms of outcome from the previous elections. This was because democracy had cracked into the media institutions in terms of people having freedom of expression and you would say freedom of choice.

2. George Charamba

Question: Why did the government put all these legal requirements against the media?

Answer: Remember the environment that you described; this was an environment where ZANU PF was at stiff odds with very powerful forces. If you look at the laws that were made during that period they were laws which were calculated to defend the state. So you find that all laws were meant not to pass the democratic test you talk about but they were meant for the preservation of the state under ZANU PF.

Question: In Zimbabwe how has the government regulated the private media and particularly *TheDaily News*?

Answer: And you notice interestingly that the first attempt at media law in Zimbabwe comes in broadcasting because that is the law that has been challenged which means the policy is following a legal challenge. It is not guiding the growth of a sector and secondly it's promulgated under temporal powers of the president because you are dealing with an emergency. There is a policy lacuna, there is a legal lacuna and people are beginning to claim their legal rights in an area which is traditionally structured that is what holds the ring until its formalized by an act of parliament in 2001. Then you have AIPPA. AIPPA comes hard on the heels of BSA because we feared that the successful challenge to broadcasting was itself a prelature. It was going to be an opening of the floodgates; that there will be going to be more challenges again in the print media so we decided that why don't we move law for the print media

3. Luke Tamborinyoka

Question: Most journalists complained that they were subject to arrests, unlawful detentions assault by the police and alleged party supporters did you experienced that? If you did, can you describe and explain the circumstances?

Answer: We went to Stonebridge farm where we heard reports that war veterans had raped innocent girls. It was in 2001 and I went there with Shame Mukamba, the driver and Tsvangirai Mukwazhi, a photo journalist. While we were busy interviewing these girls who were narrating how they were abused by the war veterans, word went around that there was *The Daily News* team in the compound. We took refuge in the farmer's house. The war veterans besieged the farm owner's house and demanded that we came out. The door was locked, we had to use the land line of the farmer to call Hatfield police station and a police inspector came with six cars and rescued us. It was a traumatic experience. We were besieged in the farmer's house for almost an hour before the police turned up. These war veterans were armed; they were beating the gate to the house and demanding that we come out of the farm house. We actually thought that the police was not going to help us but it was one of those real moments that the police turned up to assist us and rescued us from imminent danger.

4. **Philimon Bulawayo**

Question: Most journalists complained that they were subject to arrests, unlawful detentions assault by the police and alleged party supporters did you experienced that? If you did, can you describe and explain the circumstances?

Answer: I remember in 2003 on the 18th of March when I was covering a stay away organised by MDC. I was taking pictures in Harare suburb called Budiriro. So Jocelyn Chiwenga saw me carrying a camera taking pictures of people who were moving around. I had to run away because previously *The Daily News* had published a story where one of our photographers was arrested taking pictures of soldiers queuing for back commodities because there food shortages in the country at that time. Chiwenga recognized. She then ordered the soldiers who were escorting her to arrest me. She ordered that I be taken to Glenview Police Station and the soldiers did that. She later came to check if I was at the police station. When she saw me, she took off her shoes and started to beat me up while in custody. Chiwenga ordered me to sleep on the floor and roll. I suffered a broken finger that day and have not recovered. I have a permanent disability because of her assaults. *The Daily News*' legal affairs secretary, Gugulethu Moyo, a lawyer, came to the police station to try to rescue me. However, she was arrested and beaten up by Jocelyn Chiwenga. We were transferred to Harare Central Police Station we were locked up in police cells. Actually nobody at the company knew we were from the 18th to the 21st until we were taken to the Highlands Police Station. Our families did not even know we were detained by the police for all these day. *The Daily News* had to publish a story that the two of us were missing following our arrests. They also filed an urgent court application demanding our release. It was on 21 March when the chief executive officer, Samuel Sipepa Nkomo and our lawyers came and asked that we should have medical attention. We had complained that we were in pain. We were taken to Parirenyatwa Hospital. Before we were treated we were taken back to the Harare central Police where we were released without charges.

5. **Tsvangirai Mukwazhi**

Question: Most journalists complained that they were subject to arrests, unlawful detentions assault by the police and alleged party supporters did you experienced that? If you did, can you describe and explain the circumstances?

Answer:In 2002, I recall taking pictures of war veterans who were demonstrating in the city center. It was an election year. As I took pictures of the protest, these war veterans viciously pounced on me. I lost consciousness. I remember working up at the Avenues Clinic. This is just one of the incidences I can speak about. They took my equipment, my cameras and never recovered them until today. The lawyers attempted to recover my equipment but failed because there was no rule of law. Lawyers were not respected either.

6. **Minister Jonathan Moyo**

Question: What was the purpose and reasoning behind a flurry of media laws that you promulgated as the minister in charge of media and information?

Answer: The Access to Information and Privacy Protection Act was actually triggered by a specific event involving the then American Assistant Secretary of state for African Affairs who in an appearance before a congressional committee upon being asked what this government was doing to ostensibly promote democracy in Zimbabwe said among other unacceptable things that his government was working with some other governments in the Southern African region but more with NGOs, journalists and media houses inside Zimbabwe to seek regime change. If you are a minister of information and a representative of a foreign government says they are going to work with the media in your country and NGOs and so forth to seek regime change what do you do? When the Americans and their allies talk about regime change they are not talking about elections, they are not talking about free and fair elections to change a government. You cannot change a regime through elections but you can change a government through elections. It is inherently undemocratic because it has nothing to do with changing the government; it has everything to do with changing the fundamental ethos and institutions of a country. And when a foreigner goes to the legislature of his or her country to announce that they are embarking on such a programme, as the minister of information you have got to find a response and the best response if not the only response which puts everyone on notice in terms of understanding what the rules would be is through the law. We went to Parliament to do that.

7. Former Minister Nelson Chamisa

Question: What was the relationship between the opposition MDC and the private media such as *The Daily News*?

Answer: Well, it was very positive. In fact to some extent *The Daily News* was not balanced. They were not sitting on the fence because under circumstances of a crisis it would be foolish and hard for anybody to sit on the fence. They chose to take sides and they took sides with democracy. They took sides with those that were fighting for change.

8. William Bango

Question: You are one of the senior management team at *The Daily News* you who joined the opposition MDC and become the spokesperson of the MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai. How do you reconcile your crossing over to the party and the allegations by the government that you were serving the interests of the opposition?

Answer: It's interesting. I was approached by Morgan Tsvangirai. He wanted somebody who was experienced in the media to assist build the infirmation unity of the party. I had known Morgan Tsvangirai since 1985 when he was with Mine Workers Union. I was with the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists. Tsvangirai was vice president of the union and I was vice president of our union. We went together to Moscow on a study tour of trades unions in the late 1980s. We got to know each other very closely and over the years looking at a broader picture I felt it was necessary to change my career and move away from mainstream journalism and assist in a broader national cause. At no time did I ever feel constrained about my decision. I felt it was a right thing to do. I joined Morgan Tsvangirai when almost nobody wanted to work with the MDC. That was after they had lost or allegedly lost the election in 2002. So when he approached me I saw sense in what he was saying. I knew people would come up with stories that Morgan Tsvangirai was calling the shots at *The Daily News* but the truth as we know it is that the MDC has no direct control of the editorial content at *The Daily News* especially when I was the news editor. I kept on trying to balance the story to hear both sides of the story.

9. Maxwell Sibanda

Question: Why did you remain working for *The Daily News* under conditions of arrests, detentions and general repression?

Answer: Some people would encourage me to keep on doing the good work. To others it was good work but others thought it was propaganda. To us at *The Daily News*, we thought we were liberators. There are citizens who are proud of what we were doing. We continued working under difficult conditions because we said this was a struggle. Remember that there were ordinary people went to demonstrate in the streets and some of them were killed. We were playing our part as journalists to write about these events.

10. Caesar Zvayi

Question: In your view, do you think that *The Daily News* during that time before it was closed and even now serves the interests of democracy.

Answer: I would say as far as the electoral side, yes *The Daily News* made significant contribution by profiling the MDC. I think *The Daily News* played an important role in building the profile of the MDC especially among the urbanites. However, democracy is much more than elections. What the paper contributed was minimal democracy which I consider the electoral aspect. But there is expansive or substantive democracy which that I consider as the empowerment of the people, the individual, to take part in all facets of life social, cultural economical, political sector of the body politic in Zimbabwe As far as the expansive aspect of democracy is concerned, *The Daily News* and the MDC have failed dismally by failing to support the pro-people policies that would empower the person, the individual or the society. *The Daily News* through its news coverage opposed the land reform process which was meant to address a substantive issue of equal land ownership by the majority of the population.

11. Professor Lovemore Madhuku

Question: In your view, do you think that *The Daily News* during that time before it was closed and even now serves the interests of democracy?

Answer: It is not just *The Daily News* that gets such kind of unjustified criticism from people associated with the government. You get that sort of misplaced arguments being made even

against opposition political parties; the NCA and other organizations that do not agree with the bad governance policies of the Mugabe regime. Taking that line of thought is to misunderstand the state of affairs at the time *The Daily News* was doing its work. We are up to now a much paralyzed society where those who were advancing so called political economy issues social justice issues property rights and so on were not genuine and sincere. They were doing it just to spite the opposition and others but to also try and cover up their oppression. For instance, they argued that people were needlessly killed during the land redistribution because they wanted to empower people but you are doing this in an environment where you are violating citizens' democratic rights by killing them. If one start to raise the issues without distinguishing the message of empowerment or of economic or political rights that will not be meaningful. You would rather start addressing the political question of the day; which was bad governance. In this case *The Daily News* argued that; look lets fight and democratisise our society so that political civil rights are realized then with in an environment of political and civil rights you then deal with economic liberation and so forth. So I think it was not a weakness the party of the newspaper.

12. Japhet Moyo

Question: What was the relationship between *The Daily News* and civil society organizations such as the ZCTU?

Answer: “Government officials may say what *The Daily News* did was radical but what *The Daily News* came to be the voice of the voiceless. For us in the labour movement other civic organizations our struggles, issues and concerns that we raised in our efforts to democratize the country were either not reported or unfairly criticized by the state media using government authorities. What the Daily news did was to put into picture and for the public to know and judge for itself the constitutional reforms activities of the NCA, the protests and demonstrations for better working conditions by the ZCTU and the struggles and demands for academic freedoms and students support by the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU). Our programmes were captured by *The Daily News*, as result; we had a very close relationship with the paper because it was fighting on the side of the masses. It identified with our struggles.

13. Dumisani Muleya

Question: How do you describe relationships between the private press in general and in particular *The Daily News* and MDC and civic society organizations such as the NCA during that period?

Answer: The NCA had just become not just a platform for expressing the demand for constitutional reform but it had become a platform for expressing the demand for broad change. Those forces did not have anywhere to express themselves immediately and on a daily bases. They found *The Daily News* to be the only viable outlet. The Internet had not really developed in Zimbabwe to the extent that we have today where people are free now to put a lot of material onto the internet to express their opinions and views. The traditional media offered an opportunity and platform of expression to forces that included the MDC, civil society and the constitutional movement that remained behind after the MDC became a political party. *The Daily News* offered a platform to workers and many other forces that were agitating for one kind of reforms or another. That is why the government found it very inconvenient as a newspaper. That is why the government saw it necessary to have repressive laws. The government needed to consolidate the prevailing media terrain in order to suppress and crush the development of media. *The Daily News* was offering that platform for coalescing groups that agitated reforms. It had to be targeted.

14. Minister Samuel Sipepa Nkomo

Question: Working under conditions of repression, how did you make sure that your workers would come back tomorrow after being beaten and after appearing in court and why did they remain defiant and resilient?

Answer: The call was that it was now a requirement for change in Zimbabwe. ZANU PF had failed; they had betrayed the tenets of the liberation struggle' the values and principles of the liberation struggle so they must be changed. Somebody must stand up and *The Daily News* workers and journalists answered to that call. That is why they would be beaten but come back to work tomorrow. I remember we were thrown into filthy cells at Harare Central Police Station but we will be there at work tomorrow. The journalists were fighting for a cause; if all good men keep quite evil will thrive, so they chose to stand up and be counted.

15. Mathew Takaona

Question: Is it fair to suggest that private media and *The Daily News* journalists by criticising the government and being sympathetic to opposition political parties were pursuing a political agenda to facilitate a change of government?

Answer: In a situation of repression you can't avoid being activist journalists. A properly trained journalist is one who seeks justice-justice. It is something that has to drive a good journalist. If you are driven by justice especially under circumstances of human rights violations that were taking place in the country against ordinary citizens, somehow you have to become an activist in different ways and forms. There is no question about it. If you are good journalists driven by the need to seek justice then you end up being activist for just causes. That is what *The Daily News* journalists did and they were rewarded by huge public support seen by the circulation of the paper at the height of the political crisis. I personally paid the price. I lost my job for paying attention to the just cause of the journalists whose paper was banned.

Appendix D: The Structure of the Media in Zimbabwe

The press

- *The Herald* - government-owned daily
- *The Chronicle* - Bulawayo-based, government-owned daily
- *The Sunday News* – Bulawayo-based, government-owned weekly
- *The Sunday Mail* – government
- *The Financial Gazette* - private, business weekly
- *The Standard* - private, weekly
- *The Zimbabwe Independent* - private weekly
- *The Daily News* – privately daily
- *The Daily News on Sunday* –private weekly
- *The Zimbabwe Mail* - private daily
- *NewsDay* – private daily
- *The Weekend Post* – privately weekly
- *Bulawayo Metro* – Bulawayo-based, government weekly

- *Harare (H) Metro* – Harare-based, government weekly
- *The Zimbabwean* – Harare-based privately daily
- *The Zimbabwean On Sunday* – Harare-based privately weekly
- *The Manica Post* – Mutare-based, government weekly
- *Masvingo Star* – Masvingo-based, privately weekly

Television

- Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) - state-run, operates ZTV1

Radio

- Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) - state-run, operates National FM, Power FM, Radio Zimbabwe and S-FM
- SW Radio Africa - studio in London, broadcasts via shortwave and online to Zimbabwe
- Voice of the People - broadcasts to Zimbabwe from hired shortwave transmitter on Madagascar
- Studio 7 - based in Washington DC, via shortwave, medium wave (AM) and online, operated by Voice of America (VOA).
- Zimbabwe Stereo FM – privately
- Star FM – government owned through Zimbabwe Newspapers Group

News agency/internet

- New Ziana - state-run
- ZimOnline - private, South Africa-based
- Zimdaily.com - private, UK-based
- Nehanda Radio –private, UK based
- NewZimbabwe, private, UK based

