

THE ROLE OF PRINT MEDIA DURING ELECTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF
ZIMBABWE

BY

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Abstract

The study analyzed the role that print media had in framing participatory democracy in Zimbabwe during elections. The Daily News and The Herald newspapers in the July and August 2013 editions were used in the study. This was the pre-election, the election and the post election period (the election period). The study established the openness of citizens and their influence on the voters (other citizens) in making informed decisions during the election period. The qualitative study method was employed in in-depth interviews and focus group discussion was used as the research instruments. Nine media specialists and eight media students were used as the research subjects. The documentary review method was used to provide information on how the nature of the letters to the editor and the analysis/opinion columnists tackled contentious issues of the election period in this public platform. Overallly the newspaper platform was a public sphere for debate but citizens' voices were muffled by the partisan nature of media houses and national coverage was mainly confined to the urban areas together with the use of e-mail facilities. Gender mainstreaming in the media fraternity leaves a lot to be desired both in the form of citizens' contributing to election debate and the nature of posts in media field. The study recommends that media houses in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Electoral Committee should educate Zimbabwean citizens on the importance of exercising their rights of freedom of expression during election periods. Women should take an active role in educating women to be active in public debate and should not shun writing their opinions to media houses during election periods. It is also recommended that further research be undertaken to establish how best citizens in the peripheries of Zimbabwe can become participants in the democratic platform provided by newspapers.

Declaration

I Mercy Mukono declare that this Dissertation is my original work except where sources have been acknowledged. The work has never been submitted, nor will it ever be, to another University in the awarding of a degree.

STUDENT..... Signature.....

DATE.....

SUPERVISOR..... Signature.....

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Dedication

To God be the glory!!

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

This dissertation sought to explore and critique the significance of print media in framing democracy in Zimbabwe during election periods. The research sought to establish the extent to which the press acted to promote critical debate, public enlightenment and choice, on the one hand, or on the other, served to obstruct public participation through withholding key information, and generally closing the avenues of public debate. Herman & Chesney (1997) comment that:

At a political level, the media play a central role in the working of democracies. Historically, a critical feature of movements towards democracy has been the creation of a “public sphere”.

The media was viewed as having the role of an open forum for debate and discussions representing the public voice through forms like letters to the editor, opinion and analysis columns. In election periods the letters to the editor, opinion and analysis columns played an influential role of providing a mechanism for citizens to be heard therefore influencing political agendas and having an impact on fellow voters.

This role as a forum for public debate is a complex one in post-conflict situations, in Zimbabwe we take the 2008 election period as one characterized by conflict, therefore the 2013 election period had to be carefully managed by professional media as (Howard 2004) says that good journalism is like good medicine. Its values should not be political,

cultural or racial. It helps support the good health of democracy. As one report on media in the context of elections and political violence in East African states that the media serve as a forum for competing political actors to vie for power and to offer alternatives to the national project¹. The media platform is powerful because it means that the press could be a valuable space for dialogue between competing political perspectives amongst the citizen body at large. When perspectives are engaged effectively this could help to reduce polarization of political ideas, and further define and consolidate the state- and nation-building agenda in terms of informed choices in leadership by the citizens.

The media's inability to serve as a forum is a weakness for fragile states that may not have the institutions to manage this kind of public discussion. The media allows those that control the media houses the capacity to control what news and information the citizens will contribute and will receive. Therefore, under ideal conditions, print media has the mandate to provide a two way communication between media owners and the citizens. A close textual analysis is offered on the letters to the editor opinion and analysis columns, as the citizens respond to the diverse election issues on the contested leadership choice in Zimbabwe during the 2013 Harmonized elections. The study investigated the extent to which the press as a platform stood up to promote or undermine democracy and the democratic process through giving a chance to citizens' voices to be heard. The polarized views between the privately-owned newspaper (*The*

¹ ACE Encyclopedia, 2013

Daily News) and the public owned newspaper (*The Herald*) as they vie for supremacy of the public sphere were brought under the spotlight.

The media plays an indispensable role in the proper functioning of a democracy. Discussion of the media's functions within electoral contexts often focuses on their "watchdog" role: by citizen scrutiny and discussion of the successes and failures of candidates, governments, and electoral management bodies. The media can publish letters, opinions and analysis from the public commenting on how effectively they have performed and help to hold the rest of the citizens to account for their decisions in the election process. The citizens are informed and given a platform to exercise their democratic rights through media platforms like letters to the editor, opinion and analysis columns this had an extremely significant impact on the public's views and way of thinking.

The media was presented as the primary means through which public opinion is shaped and at times manipulated. Elections constitute a basic challenge to the media, putting its impartiality and objectivity to the test. At this juncture the task of the media is not and should not be to function as a mouthpiece for any government body or particular candidate. Its basic role is to enlighten and educate the public and act as a neutral, objective platform for the free debate of all points of view. Therefore the editor should be vigilant in the choice of letters, opinion and analysis' that are to be published.

1.1.1 Zimbabwe: History and Politics

The background to the development of the press in Zimbabwe identifies the political, social and economical interventions that have shaped the editorial policies and directions of the press. Mukasa (2006) notes that:

The press exhibited three eras that reflected the ideological and socio-political environment of the country – the colonial or nationalistic (pre-1980), the Transitional period (1980-1990) and the Post-transitional (1990- present).

Zimbabwean media landscape was that of a monopolistic media inherited from the colonizers and this is noted by the colonial or nationalistic era before 1980, whereby the press fundamentally mirrored settler-colonial ideology of the State and social polarization along racial lines (Mukasa, 2006). The media catered primarily for the needs of the ruling white elite who were in the minority. The white minority are those who had the hegemony as put across by Gramsci in that they used power and ideas to convince their subjects (the black majority) that it was best for them and commonsensical to have these whites as their leaders. A parallel African press was created to quench the thirst in Africans for news and information. Mararike (1998) cites important newspapers that catered for the black majority to include the *African Daily*, *Bantu Mirror*, *Moto*, among others. Yet, strictly speaking, insists (Mararike, 1998), the White Press remained to the large measure the medium of authority and final appeal. In 1980 The Rhodesian Front won all 20 seats under the white roll. Monitors from Commonwealth countries considered that, under the circumstances following many years of armed conflict, the elections were free and fair (Barry, 2004).

The effect of state dominance in the media has been the narrowing of the public sphere and hence an impoverishment of democracy (Moyo, 2005). Media coverage was still geared mainly towards white readers who still had control as executives, editors and advertisers. Editors too have engaged in self-censorship as they had to comply with the policy and mandate of their owners or they risk losing their jobs if they publish material that is contrary.

The transitional era was characterized by a revolutionary fervor of the emergent black political regime whose stated ideology of socialism regimented Zimbabweans under an authoritarian state. With this scenario the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT) was created by the government of Zimbabwe in January 1981 as an articulation of the new independent government's media policy (Ronning & Kupe, 2000). ZMMT was to act independently of the government and was not to be answerable to politicians, with supreme authority vested in an independent board of trustees. (Mazango, 2005) comments that:

Ownership and control of the largest share of the media market has allowed the government to dominate spaces of public communication and to control an important instrument of veto.

Using strategic timing, the overriding aim was to sidetrack criticisms that allege poor governance and human rights abuses by placing land and economic empowerment as the central issues for national debate. Through the ready platform presented by government controlled media, ruling party political communicators and political

persuaders who denied the opposition an opportunity to air contrary views and this resulted in them being painted as enemies of the state.

As the 1980's unfolded, the ZMMT was no-longer seen as a neutral buffer between the ruling party ZANU PF and the public press. ZMMT grew to depend on the state for financial, planning and political support. Zimpapers came under direct control of the then Ministry of Information and hence the ministry became more involved in hiring and firing of newspaper editors. This denoted that the public owned media in Zimbabwe operated on the basis of an Authoritarian Concept. The press was always subject to the direct or implied control of the state making the press to function from the top to the grassroots where the ruler decides what was to be published at the same time monopolizing aspects of truth and information. Makumbe (2009) comments that

The era of post-transition, that is the period 1990 to present, was characterized by citizens being more assertive and independent. Williems (2004) supported this view and commented that:

The tense political environment of the late 1990s, in which the Zimbabwean government was confronted with a more vocal civil society and a new political party, set the stage for the introduction of a new private newspaper, *The Daily News*. This paper posed for the first time a serious challenge to the long-standing monopoly of the government-controlled daily newspaper, *The Herald*.

This era saw *The Daily News* being founded in April 1999 (Barry, 2004) by Geoffrey Nyarota, the former editor of *The Chronicle* who was removed from his post because he had revealed a major scandal involving new motor cars at Willowvale Industries which involved government officials. The formation of the MDC in 1999 (which was the same

time *The Daily News* came into play) changed the situation of the ruling ZANU PF which was virtually ‘winning’ all elections since independence the formation of the MDC generated such tremendous interest in electoral politics.

The Daily News assumed the role of coordinating those disparate voices from the citizens who were more assertive and independent. This tacit role of an opposition press rather than a mere alternative to the state-controlled media became apparent (Moyo, 2005). Space for freedom of expression in the media became severely restricted after the authorities closed down the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ) who were publishers of the much circulated *The Daily News* and *The Daily News on Sunday*, on 12 September 2003 after it had failed to meet a legal deadline for all newspapers to register with the government of Zimbabwe. The closure was considered by critics as, without doubt, one of the most devastating blows to freedom of expression since independence. The only independent daily newspaper in the country had been a constant thorn in the side of the government, exposing its abuses and providing a platform for political voices other than those of the ruling party (Chiumbu, Minnie & Bussiek, 2009).

Chiumbu et al (2009) highlights the history of Zimbabwean politics in relation to the media as one with,

The state’s monopoly violated the rights of freedom of expression and the freedom to impart information as stipulated in the Constitution of Zimbabwe. This situation may change with the formation of an inclusive government of all major political parties in February 2009 which committed itself to “liberalizing the air waves”, “freeing the media” and “ensuring that plural voices are heard through both electronic and print media”.

Some thirty years down the line, after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the United States Department's 2010 Human Rights Report on Zimbabwe believes that the past four elections in 2002, 2005, 2008 and the presidential run-off elections in 2008 were not free and fair (Media Hand Book, 2013). The "Global Political Agreement" (GPA) between ZANU-PF and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations of September 2008 as well as the Constitutional Amendment (19) of February 2009 recognizes "the importance of freedom of expression and the role of the media in a multi-party democracy."

The print media, in the form of newspapers' publishing of letters to the editor, opinion and analysis views from the public, can then be viewed as a platform of promoting or stifling participatory democracy as the citizens have a right to express themselves and make informed decisions of electing those that will be in authority after the 2013 elections in Zimbabwe. The media reports about politics in an extremely sceptical way therefore citizens should be given the platform to air their views on such matters so that when it comes to going to vote they have informed knowledge of their role as participants in the electoral process. The researcher investigated the political bias or the apolitical nature of the different newspapers, in this case the public owned *The Herald* and the privately owned *The Daily News*, by making an analysis of the letters to the editor, the opinion and analysis columns that are selected by editors for publication and

the content of the chosen articles that highlight issues on the case of the 2013 election period.

1.1.2 Zimbabwe's media landscape

Understanding the media landscape of a given country also includes understanding *how people use media*. Deane (2003) notes that:

People living in poverty face particular obstacles to achieving freedom of expression and access to media which are associated with the conditions of poverty...distribution and the cost of licences...political obstacles include repression and lack of will of many states to allow democratic expression and lack of will and many states to allow democratic expression and give voice to marginalised groups, as well as censorship by government.

The use of the media is determined by the availability of media, people's personal preferences, work location and routines, overall trust in news sources as well as general media literacy. A study conducted by Altai in 2010 in Afghanistan found that only 13 percent of the population turned to the printed press for information. This low percentage was a result of literacy levels and access.

According to the (United Nations Declaration of Human Rights 1948: Article 19):

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Why do some citizens who write to the editors' column write without disclosing their names? Does being anonymous point to the fact that they fear victimization? Why is it

that issues that citizens are free to comment on issues *which* are not political and considered “safe” have names of contributors published?

The press is dominated by pro-government newspapers published by the Zimbabwe Newspapers Group (Zimpapers). The company is majority-owned by government which holds 51.09 per cent of the shares; with Old Mutual (one of the biggest financial institutions in the country) holding 23.80 per cent and the remaining 25.11 per cent owned by private companies (Chiumbu et al, 2009). The Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa adopted by the African Union’s Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights in 2002, for example, says “a State monopoly over broadcasting is not compatible with the right to freedom of expression” and demands that “state and government controlled broadcasters should be transformed into public service broadcasters accountable to the public.”

The media is used by the government to promote government policies, and the private media sees its role as watching on the government, exposing corruption and more importantly exposing human rights violations. News coverage in Zimbabwe is, therefore, characterized by a clear polarization between the state- controlled and private media that is *The Herald* and *The Daily News*. For this reason, the Zimbabwe government sees the private media as rivals who have a political agenda. The government has put the media under direct control through regulations requiring media houses to be registered and Journalists licensed. Four newspapers were closed since

2003 for failing to meet registration requirements and tens of Journalists arrested for violating these laws². This is the background scenario within which the letters to the editor, opinion and analysis columnists harness the democratic potential to champion democracy and the exercise the citizen right to freely express their ideas. To what extent do the print media aid or impinge on participatory democracy is the brief of this research.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Most exciting studies focus on the often negative contributions of the media to the escalation of violence phases of conflict (Gilboa, 2009). An example is the Rwandan Genocide. The purpose of this study is to establish the role that print media played in framing participatory democracy during the 2013 election period in Zimbabwe to ensure a democratic environment that facilitated voters to make informed decisions in the electoral process. After establishing the role that the media played in framing participatory democracy during election periods the researcher made recommendations to the media houses, Zimbabwe Electoral Committee, Women's organisations and the peripheral regions of Zimbabwe to fully utilize the platform presented by the media that is citizens' letters to the editor, opinion and analysis columns to gather information on prevailing election environment. The research also gave a green light to other

² <http://www.misazim.co.zw>: February 2014

Zimbabwean citizens who were sceptical and had fears in using the editorial platforms in newspapers to exercise their right of freedom of expression.

The study looked into the thematic issues that drove citizens to write letters to the editor and post their opinions and analysis' on election matters. The researcher found out what criteria and editorial policies that the editor used to discern which letters to publish and which of the letters not to publish, the relevant opinions and analysis articles to be included in a particular edition of a newspaper. It was interesting to note that either editors operate on an independent basis or their decisions were influenced by the "owners" of these papers or the government of the day. Editorial independence is important in that the editors produce influential work thus framing democracy while if they are dependent on the voice of their owner or the government of the day democracy is stifled.

Writing about the role of print media as a platform for political expression in influencing the conduct of democratic elections in Zimbabwe highlighted whether print media was stifling or promoting participatory democracy. Therefore with the background pointed out above the purpose of the study was to raise awareness to stakeholders that the print media can be a platform for participatory democracy during an election period.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Print media has been researched as a tool for perpetrating cultural violence, violence that occurs in a symbolic sphere produced in and by the media (Allen & Stremlau, 2005). The print media is seen as perpetuating violence especially with the use of rhetoric and hate speech. This is exemplified by the 2008 elections held in Zimbabwe which were marred by violence and the print media was highly involved in the footages. This has stigmatized the newspaper as a platform that cannot be used to create a peaceful election conducive environment, therefore the citizens would not want to be involved in ‘politics’ that is writing to the newspapers and airing their views. Therefore this study aimed to analyze the role of print media as a platform of participatory democracy by the citizens according to Jurgen Habermas’s concept of the public sphere.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The research informed the researcher on the practicality of the role that print media can be used as a platform for framing democracy in a participatory manner and be able to utilize the letters to the editor, opinion and analysis platforms in the future. The results either proved or disapproved the theories that have been propounded on the relationship between media and democracy. The results of the research contributed to addressing socio-political problems that have to do with citizens’ need for platforms to air their views in the media fraternity. The editors were encouraged to open platforms and invite more citizens to write to the papers in order to frame participatory democracy in Zimbabwe.

1.5 Assumption of the Study

It is assumed that there is a significant relationship between print media and the promotion of participatory democracy during election periods in Zimbabwe. This assumption is so because many researches show print media as a tool for perpetrating cultural violence, violence that occurs in a symbolic sphere of our existence through flags, hymns, speeches and also kinds of texts produced in and by the media (Allen & Stremlau, 2005).

This being the case the researcher assumes that there is a positive aspect that is presented in print media. The assumption is that the citizens can use the press as a platform to air their views and concerns during election periods. This participatory platform in the print media through letters to the editor, opinion and analysis columns can be used without fear or prejudice and enable the citizens to make informed decisions by airing their views to the authorities thus making print media a platform for participatory democracy.

1.6 Research Objectives

The research should be able to:-

1. Identify the pattern of democracy as presented by print media during the 2013 harmonized election period in Zimbabwe.
2. Examine the relevance of print media to the Zimbabwean readers in their perception of democracy in the harmonized elections of July 2013 in Zimbabwe.

3. Analyze the role of print media towards the promotion of democracy in Zimbabwe during the July 2013 harmonized election.

1.7 Research Questions

1. What is the pattern of democracy as presented by print media during the 2013 harmonized election period in Zimbabwe?
2. How relevant is print media to the Zimbabwean readers in their perception of democracy in the harmonized elections of July 2013 in Zimbabwe?
3. How proactive has been print media towards the promotion of democracy in Zimbabwe during the July 2013 harmonized election?

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

Letters to the Editor and political columns in, *The Herald* and *The Daily News* editions of July and August 2013 zeroing on the letters to the editor, opinion and analysis columns were studied to analyze the nature and content of election issues that were written by the citizens whether they dwell on the contentious issues of the election period or the issues were ignored. The period of study restrained the researcher to focus on these two newspapers and the two months only though there are many more newspapers and months that deal with the election period of July 2013 harmonized elections in Zimbabwe. Editors of the mentioned newspapers gave insight to the responses of the citizens on what they would have read and on what other citizens would

have written on. The editors also gave insight on the criteria used to choose letters to publish and also answer the reason for selecting those particular letters. The Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services in Zimbabwe headed by Jonathan Moyo deputized by Supa Mandiwanzira or the directors of this particular ministry were inform the researcher on the legislation and policy that informs print media's role as a platform for framing democracy. July and August 2013 Herald and Daily News newspapers was the period used to analyze the participation of citizens in the pre-election, the election and post-election periods whereby the researcher analyzed the extent to which citizens were free to air their views on political matters.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study were the time frame and the amount of newspapers that the researcher had to go through. In order to solve this they looked at one public owned newspaper *The Herald* and one privately owned newspaper, *The Daily News* with these two newspapers the researcher looked at the issues published in July 2013 and August 2013. The minister of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services (Jonathan Moyo) might not be available for an interview therefore the researcher opted to have an interview with the deputy minister (Supa Mandiwanzira) or directors in the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services.

1.10 Definition of Concepts

Democracy

The researchers working definition was that democracy is the citizen's free participation in government matters and the citizens being given the freedom to exercise their rights. This entails a participatory platform where the citizens can 'talk' to one another and be in a position to hold public discussions on contentious election issues at will as the outcomes of the elections will affect their livelihoods. Participation therefore involves authorities being open to give the citizens platforms and space to hold their discussions. In a democracy the citizens themselves can learn from each other using authorized platforms and make informed balanced decisions in election periods.

This study sought to describe and understand critically the role played by print media in framing democracy in Zimbabwe during the 2013 election period. In 1863, Abraham Lincoln, the President of the United States of America who led the war against slavery, defined democracy as "government of the people, by the people, for the people..."³. Democracy is when citizens are presented as stakeholders in government Koryakov & Sisk (2013) note that:

Participation is essential to the core meaning of democracy and good governance as it improves information flow, accountability and due process, and gives a voice to those most directly affected by public policy. Furthermore, citizens' feedback allows timely identification of community needs and priorities.

³ The ACE Encyclopedia 2013

It is, therefore, critical to note that freedom and democracy walk hand in hand and is difficult to be found operational with a system that has totalitarian rule. Mazango (2005) points out that:

Ideally a prerequisite for a democratic society will be the existence of ‘media spaces’ or ‘communicative spaces’ where people can participate openly and on equal terms in the definition, discussion, negotiation and debate on commonly shared but often controversial and problematic issues.

This study focused on letters to the editor, opinion and analysis columns as platforms for participatory democracy as Berger (1998) defines it as participation by means of real electoral choice in matters of government. It can refer, too, to significant participation in the media, by right, of stakeholders like members of the public. In contemporary society media plays a pivotal role in how citizens view their environment helping to shape popular opinion on key political, social and economic issues defining their society. The public media is used by government to promote government policies while the private media sees its role as watchdog on the government, exposing corruption and more importantly exposing human rights violations⁴.

Print Media

These are organized publishing's that are used to give information and news to the citizens. The publishing can be on weekly or daily basis. The researchers working definition of media was that the print media is a messenger between the citizens and the

⁴ www.misazim.co.zw: February 2014

electoral participants be they political parties, observers or owners of the media houses during the election period.

Marxists see the mass media as tools for creating a false reality so as to disguise a reality of oppression and exploitation. The research sought to investigate whether the media played its role to deliver the political good of participatory democracy thus aiding the government in governance issues, and the nation at making informed decisions on the authority to vote for. Participation by both men and women either directly or through legitimate representatives, is a cornerstone of good governance. Participation needs to be informed and organized, including freedom of expression and assiduous concern for the interests of society in general⁵. Therefore, the research interrogates the extent to which newspapers strive to shape the political process of the holding of elections in a democratic environment. Democracy cannot thrive without open and free public spaces where all issues concerning people's lives can be aired and debated and which gives them room and an opportunity to participate in decision-making (Chiumbu et al, 2009).

In order to fulfill their role the print media needed to maintain high levels of professionalism, accuracy and impartiality in their publication of letters to the editor, opinion and analysis views from citizens if they were to deliver the goods of democratic participation of citizens during the 2013 Harmonized election period. Regulatory frameworks can help ensure high standards of democracy as the rule of law will be

⁵ www.governancepro.com. February 2014

observed. Laws and regulations should guarantee fundamental freedoms essential to democracy including freedom of information, expression as well as participation⁶.

Elections

The researchers working definition was that it was a period that concerned the process of choosing a leader by voting by the citizens. This period involved the pre-election period where preparations of informing one another was done, the election date where the citizens went to the polls to cast their votes and the post election period where the citizens commented, mapped the way forward and their expectations from the authorities voted for to deliver their promises.

The media acts as a watchdog to democratic elections, safeguarding the transparency of the process though there was an electoral system. A democratic election with no media freedom or with stifled media freedom runs counter to the ideals of democracy, this in turn, inflames hatred and promotes violence (Allen & Stremlau, 2005). In turn, democratic elections are impossible without media as elections are fundamentally participatory processes. Voters need to engage in public debates and require adequate information about parties, policies, candidates and the election process itself. The researcher thus sought to evaluate the role the print media played and continues to play in promoting or dismantling participatory democratic platforms for citizens to air their

⁶ The ACE Encyclopedia 2013

views and make informed decisions during the 2013 Harmonized election period in Zimbabwe.

1.11 Conclusion

The chapter looked at the background of Zimbabwe's press environment which was inherited from the Smith regime. From 1980 the 'new' Zimbabwe enjoyed press monopoly until 1999 when *The Daily News* was launched and went through criticism. The purpose of the study was to raise awareness that the print media should be a platform for participatory democracy during election periods. The statement of the problem was to show if print media was framing or stifling participatory democracy. The assumption of the study was that there was a relationship in media framing democracy.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This study took the research from a different angle of that of print media and looked at print media acting as a public sphere as it will cut across a wider spectrum of the Zimbabwean citizenry as the ‘new media’ might not be accessed by many. The print media has a wider circulation possibility and comments can be passed in many public forums. Debate can be fuelled by reading a newspaper and comments are either entertained or turned down in the letters to the editor, opinion and analysis columns thus fostering or hindering the framing of participatory democracy. This research also looked at the traditional mode of news transmission that is the print media as this mode will best suit the third world and also taking into account the fact that 67% of Zimbabwe’s population resides in the rural areas and there is need to provide a platform for debate that is accessed country wide.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is informed by Antonio Gramsci’s (1891-1937) theory on hegemony. Jones (2006) quotes Gramsci saying that:

Gramsci argues that culture, politics and the economy are organized in a relationship network of influence, and to this process he gives the name hegemony (which differs from domination) as it is a dynamic process.

This means that the analysis of hegemony can be viewed in a manner which encompasses governance issues in that it will not act in a vacuum but is influenced by culture which is society, politics which is the leadership and the economic which entails sustainability. This being a strength it assisted the research in that governance issues do not act in a vacuum as this study went further into taking into account the importance and the recognition that is given to citizens. This entails their freedoms and the role of the editor in not nipping issues in the bud in order to please a particular sponsor of the political party that the media house pays allegiance to.

The theory of Hegemony by Gramsci is juxtaposed with the theory proposed by Jurgen Habermas in the Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (1962). Deane (2003) points out that the Public Sphere can be best described as a network of communicating information and points of view. Kellner (2011) summarises Habermas' (1962) Public Sphere as presupposed freedoms of speech and assembly, a freedom of press and the right to freely participate in political debate and decision making. This study therefore sought to find out if this was a practical theory and is seen to being utilized in Zimbabwe.

2.2 Print Media and Democracy

James Carey (1987) states that:

Citizens will reawaken when they are addressed as a conversational partner and are encouraged [by the media] to join the talk rather than sit passively as spectators before a discussion conducted by journalists and political experts.

Freedom of expression is an essential basic human right and is an important right that has an indispensable condition for a free and democratic society. Without the freedom to express and communicate new ideas and advance critical opinions about public affairs or the functioning of public institutions, a democracy cannot survive. Feltoe (2002) states that:

In the Zimbabwean Constitution 2 (61) lays down that everyone has the right to enjoy freedom of expression, that is to say, freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference. There is no explicit provision on freedom of the press. However, the general provision on freedom of expression encompasses freedom of expression by the press.

The political (which is the ruling party) entity has to liberalize policies of licensing to create such an atmosphere. The study used *The Herald* and *The Daily News* to find out if ZANU-Pf has liberated the print media atmosphere so that the citizens can freely air their views to a newspaper of their choice.

Therefore for media to be said to be operating in a democracy there should be no influence from the state or the owners but rather it should serve the interests of the citizens meaning that there should be editorial independence and the newspapers should be apolitical. Mukasa (2003) quotes Emmerson Munangagwa's (Former minister of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services in Zimbabwe) comment on the laws and policies that govern press freedoms saying that "Unrestricted [press] freedom would lead

to disorder and anarchy and would harm social and national interests”. Protection of reputations is also a relevant area for “policing” as Wasserman (2011) says that:

It is also in recognition of the fact that the public officials hold their positions in the public trust therefore must be held accountable. Where the official accountability mechanisms are not functioning well, sometimes the popular media move in to provide an alternative accountability mechanism.

The researcher delved into the aspect to show that print media was practicing democracy through the letters to the editor, opinion and analysis columns as a public sphere or the theory of hegemony is in play and the editorial freedom from the influence of “owners”.

2.3 Print Media and Government

Gramsci’s theory which points out that the rulers have the mandate to conform to the needs of those that they rule. Jones (2006) says that:

“Dominant” groups govern with a good degree of consent from the people they rule and the maintenance of that consent is dependent upon an incessant repositioning of the relationships between the rulers and the ruled.

The ones in authority need to maintain their power over the ruled so they have to be flexible in terms of policy and responses to new adaptations of the wishes of those that they rule.

Newspapers often reflect on the ownership (economics), the readership (culture) and the role of government in licensing the press (politics). This inter-play created the media as a platform for framing or stifling democracy by the freedoms that are given to and by

each influential entity. The study used newspapers as they are the popular mode of discerning news in the third world. It was of paramount importance to find out the relationships of sponsorship, readership and licensing as significant in the flourishing of the democratic platform. The research highlighted the availability of this platform as having interferences from one of these three pillars. For example if the sponsorship is politically affiliated to ZANU-Pf to the MDC supporters cannot participate, or the citizens are not interested in reading and participate in that particular newspapers' platform because they have a stereotypical notion of wanting to be apolitical.

Political theorist Benjamin Barber is quoted by (Alger, 1996) as saying that "strong democracy" working as intended requires institutions that will involve individuals at both the neighborhood and the national level in common talk, common decision making and political judgment. Therefore Zimbabwe as a democracy should be seen opening up the press to give citizens platforms to air their views and also give ideas to governance issues. Dutta (2011) quoted (McQuil, 2005) saying that:

The normative view of the press argues that the conduct of the media has to take into account public interests... to include freedom of publication, plurality in media ownership, and diversity in information, culture and opinion, support for the democratic political system.

This shows that a totalitarian government will not achieve the criterion stated because it is characterized by control over all forums and public space at the same time stifling citizens' voices. Moyo (2009) reiterates that:

There is clear evidence that the government of President Mugabe is critically aware of the power of the media in the struggle over the shaping of minds of its citizens as well as influencing public opinion abroad. This is evidenced by its

penchant for attempting to control this space through legal and extralegal measures.

2.4 Print Media and Opposition Parties in Zimbabwe

Ansah (1988) states that:

It is legitimate for the press to fulfil the role of the opposition in the sense of presenting other points of view where necessary: that is to say criticizing government decisions which are not in the best interest of the people.

Bates (1975) defined hegemony as ruling by ideas. Therefore print media from the opposition is to counter these ideas and make the citizens view these ideas from an oppressive point of view. Gramsci's first writing was an article that appeared in the *Il Grido* in April 1917 where he noted that the mainstream presses were characterizing the revolution in Italy as a bourgeois one. This was a domination that made him to embark upon the creation of a new journal entitled *L'Ordine Nuovo* (The New Order). Jones (2006) quotes Fiori (1970) who says that the task of this project was to discover the Soviet-type of Italian working class and to lay bare the real revolutionary vein in our history.

Centre for democracy and governance (1999) states that:

Access to information is essential to the health of democracy for at least two reasons. First, it ensures that citizens make responsible, informed choices rather than acting out of ignorance or misinformation. Second, information serves a "checking function" by ensuring that elected representatives uphold their oaths of office and carry out wishes of those who elected them.

Under Jonathan Moyo as Information, Media and Broadcasting Services minister, legal documents meant to protect and guide media freedom and plurality were enacted. These are The Constitution of Zimbabwe, Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), 2002, Public Order and Security Act (POSA). Mukasa (2003) comments that:

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and assembly as well as a multi-party democracy, both AIPPA (which ironically spells the word for “bad” in the Shona language) and POSA has become the legal smokescreen for undermining both freedoms of expression and opposition politics in Zimbabwe.

Feltoe (2002) reiterates that there are a number of legislative restrictions on the freedom of the press in current Zimbabwean law that are not to be reasonably justifiable in a democratic society.

AIPPA is a legal instrument created in order to control the private press in general, as suggested by its misleading name (in Shona), (not) to provide access to information held by public authorities as reiterated by (Moyo, 2005). September, 2003 goes down in the annals of history as a sad day for democracy and press freedom in Zimbabwe, as *The Daily News* was said to be operating illegally as of the requirements of AIPPA laws of registration of a newspaper operation in Zimbabwe. The papers challenge was turned down by the Supreme Court as it was to register with the Media Information Committee (MIC) first. The MIC in turn refused to register *The Daily News*, citing among other things the expiry of the deadline to register and that the paper had been operating illegally for eight months (Moyo, 2005).

In this research Gramsci's hegemony theory assisted the researcher to analyze the two newspapers and how those in authority in Zimbabwe used legislation and media policies to maintain their statuesque of ruler-ship. Therefore Gramsci's theory of hegemony represented the publicly owned press which was *The Herald*, representative of the ruling party ZANU PF therefore even the rhetoric has been able to reach into the minds and lives of the subordinates. Though ZANU PF maintains its authority the research sought to investigate if they are creating platforms for the citizens to exercise their freedoms. Therefore as put across by (Jones, 2006) power is an ongoing process. The ongoing process means that now and again there should be elections held so that those in authority measure their levels of authority. Stoddart (2007) comments that a lived hegemony is a process. This process is that the authorities have to realize the changing pressures of the citizens, which can be assessed in the letters to the editor, opinion and analysis columns.

2.5 Print Media and the Editorial Policy

Editors do not "bite the hand that feeds them" and therefore published letters that are pro-their party in fear of losing their jobs. An example is that *The Herald* editor will not be in a position to publish a citizen's letter if the citizen writes something that is anti-ZANU-Pf and on the other hand *The Daily News* will not publish letters that are anti MDC.

Feltoe (2002) comments that:

Letters to the Editor often contain factual allegations of a defamatory nature. People who write such letters often wish to criticize in a scathing fashion or to condemn in vitriolic terms or to make highly defamatory allegations which are not supported by concrete facts.

Therefore it was important for the researcher to find out what criterion the editors used to discredit letters or to chose letters that are to be publishes as policy will be saying that citizens have the freedom to express their views. Editorial policy is governed by the owners of a particular news-paper therefore the trend of publishing's are partisan in nature.

The Public Order and Security Act (2002) (POSA) previously criminalized publishing inaccurate information, information prejudicial to the State, and insulting the President. According to the Public Order and Security Amendment Act (2007), these provisions have been repealed since the offenses are included in the **Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act (effective July 2006) Article. 31: Publishing or Communicating False Statements Prejudicial to the State: This article imposes liability on anyone, inside or outside Zimbabwe, who publishes or communicates a wholly or materially false statement (McCracken, 2010).**

Gramscian analysis directs one away from the preoccupation of the text alone towards an understanding that texts are bound up with the agencies involved in production while others can act in competition (Jones, 2006). This aspect assisted the researcher in

comparing the two newspapers that were used as *The Herald* is public owned and *The Daily News* is privately owned. Participatory democracy provides the space for alternative ideas to debate and arrive at conclusions for the betterment of society comments (Dutta, 2011). Mailing to the press is described as a customary phenomenon and that it is a formula involving three elements: raising an alarm, identifying the perpetrator at fault for the perceived problem and the offering means of action....columns tend to be more reactive, responding to events, than consistently intellectual in nature (McPherson: 2008).

Jones (2006) argued that values will be shared amongst program makers, the participants and the audience not the least heterogeneous opinion itself has to be applauded as media provides a neutral forum. This notion supports Habermas's (1989) concept of rational public sphere which looks into the relationship between media and democracy as Jones (2006) reiterates that participatory media are "open access"; their apparent variety and diversity have certain values that will be shared amongst program makers, the participants and the audience.

This theory shed light in the research in the aspect that the state owned media had to comply with the needs of the citizens and make print media a platform for participative democracy. The privately owned newspapers that had emerged in recent years played a primary role in the process of democratization helping to foster a discursive public

realm, in which issues of national or local concern are ventilated in an open and free fashion (Hyden, Leslie & Ogundimu, 2002). The research sought to investigate whether this platform was being utilized by the citizens of Zimbabwe during election periods.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter sought to bring to the fore the literature that has been put forward to the issue of print media being a platform for participatory democracy. It looked at the theoretical framework that influenced the research area. The laws and policy governing print media enabled the researcher to understand the functionality of print media in Zimbabwe. The chapter also looked into the relationships between print media and government, print media and democracy together with print media and opposition parties.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Research methodology is the strategy of action that links methods to outcomes (Creswell, 2003). Rajasekars (2013) calls research methodology a systematic way to solve a problem. Creswell (2003) goes on to mention that methods are the techniques and procedures that are done in a research. Rajasekars (2013) supports this view reiterating that methodologies are procedures and schemes that the researcher proposes to use in their research. This chapter addresses how the researcher used in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis to collect data in the research methodology. This chapter also discusses the population, sampling and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection, presentation and analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Design

Rajaserkars (2013) says that research design indicates the various approaches to be used in solving the research problem, sources and the information related to the problem and time frame and the cost. In this research, a qualitative research methodology was employed. Creswell (2003) says that:

Qualitative research is based on constructive perspectives (that is multiple meanings of individuals experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed with intent of developing a theory or a pattern) or

advocacy/participatory perspectives (that is political, issue oriented, collaborative or change oriented or both).

This method was more people oriented in order to get personal perspectives from the participants. The method also aimed to produce factual descriptions based on face to face knowledge of individuals and social groups. The researcher went on to use purposive sampling from the huge population that was involved in the media in Zimbabwe, this is so because it gave the researcher a choice to select appropriate ‘rich’ informants.

3.2 Data Collection Plan

3.2.1 Population

Mugo (2002) says that a population is a group of individual persons, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurements. Yount (2006) reiterates that a population consists of all the subjects you want to study. The population for this research was Zimbabwe citizens involved in the newspapers indirectly or directly and these may probably exceed 10 000 people as they included the readership, commentators, media houses, policy makers, journalists, editors, media students and their professor. However, within the time available for the research (3 months) and also observing that the research was self-funded it was impossible to look at all the informants who would probably

number over 10 000. Another factor was that these informants were scattered country wide and were not readily available therefore the researcher resorted to sampling.

3.2.2 Sampling and Sample Procedure

Mugo (2002) states that:

Sampling is the act, process or techniques of selecting a suitable, or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population.

This statement is supported by Yount (2006) who sees sampling as the process of selecting a group of subjects for a study in such a way that the individuals represent a larger group from which they are selected. The researcher engaged purposive sampling which refers to a selection of units based on personal judgment rather than randomization as put across by (Elder, 2009).

Mugo (2002) quotes Webster (1985) saying that:

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole when dealing with people. It can be defined as a set of respondents (people) selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey.

The sample came from the population and this was a portion of the whole that was intended to be studied by the researcher. Barreiro et al (2001) state that qualitative researchers recognize that some informants are 'richer' than others and that these people are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher.

Purposive sampling selects rich cases for in depth study and there are sixteen different types that are propounded by scholars. The sample was chosen by the criteria of 8 voter age group students; these means individuals above 18 years old (according to the Zimbabwean constitution) and are studying media there was the use of 1 focus group, 1 lecturer in the media field as the time limitations did not allow to interview all of the lecturers, 1 representative from the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services that represents the media policy implementers, 1 representative from Zimbabwe Media Commission, 2 political commentators that have articles written in the press one from each newspaper that is *The Herald* and *The Daily News*, 2 journalists from each newspaper that is *The Herald* and *The Daily News* and the 2 editors of *The Herald* and *The Daily News*. Therefore the total number of informants was 17.

Boeijie & Hodkinson (2009) comment that:

One form of purposive sampling is suitable for qualitative research, which is informed a priori by an existing body of social theory on which the research questions are based.

The purposeful sample is when the researcher actively selects the most productive sample to answer the research questions. This can involve developing a framework of the variables that might influence an individual's contribution and will be based on the researcher's practical knowledge of the research area, the available literature and evidence from the study itself. Barreiro & Albandoz (2001) comments that the sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research questions.

3.3 Research Instruments

According to Wilkinson & Birmingham (2003) research instruments are the measurement devices that the researcher uses to gather data. They cite 6 types of instruments which are questionnaires; interviews, content analysis, focus group discussions, observation and researching the things people say and do. The researcher used the in-depth interviews, the focus group discussion and document analysis.

3.3.1 In-depth interviews

Interviews are often important instruments in qualitative research, and they can be done in both structured and unstructured ways. The researcher used the structured interviews. These encompassed a set of questions that the researcher had formulated beforehand and were used in the in-depth interviews

Boyce & Neale (2006) say:

An in-depth interview is an intensive individual interview with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives and expectations on a particular idea, program or situation.

For this study the in-depth interview was particularly useful because the question of media freedom in relation to democracy tended to be sensitive furthermore there was a general fear to speak out entailing that certain issues need deeper probing.

A sample of participants in positions of leadership and responsibility within the media profession were chosen. The sample included the chairperson from the Zimbabwe Media

Commission 2 editors 1 from *The Herald* and 1 from *The Daily News*, a representative from the Zimbabwe Media Commission, a lecturer from Zimbabwe Open University from the Media institute, 2 journalists 1 from *The Herald* and 1 from *The Daily News*, 2 political commentators 1 from *The Herald* and 1 from *The Daily News*.

The participants provided detailed information in a more relaxed atmosphere as reiterated by (Boyce & Neale, 2006). These interviews were carried out in the participants' regular work places therefore the researcher had to make appointments and visit them for these appointments.

The use of a conversational approach gave the interview a semi-structured approach as questions were framed from responses of questions that would have been asked before in the interview. The questions answered built up the conversation as the researcher probed and asked for clarity. Boyce et al (2006) state that the in-depth interview is a conversational interview, with questions following from previous responses when possible. The emerging of questions as the interview was being carried out gave the researcher more insight into the subject matter and the participant was in a position to address questions in a professional and more practical manner. This is because the responses were not crammed to suit a particular topic but responses were built from the conversation at hand. Legard (2003) says that the in-depth interview brings out the

participants feelings, opinions and beliefs furnishing the explanatory evidence that is an important element of qualitative research.

Procedure

The researcher booked appointments with the informants from the Zimbabwe Media Commission, The Herald and The Daily News editors, two journalists of the afore mentioned two newspapers and two newspaper commentators, 1 Media and Journalism lecturer from the Zimbabwe Open University in Mutare, and 2 political commentators. The appointments were made through formal letters that the researcher wrote to set an appropriate date and time for the interview. The appointment letter was accompanied by a clearance letter from the Institute of Peace and Governance confirming that the researcher is indeed a student working on her masters' dissertation.

On the day of the interview the researcher arrived at the venue at the set time. Legard, Keegan & Ward (2003) reiterate that upon arrival the researcher has to establish relationship, the researcher is the guest till the participant is comfortable. This entailed conversation that has no connection with the topic to be discussed. This created an environment that was conducive for the participant to be prepared.

The next step was to get to the introduction of the research topic by explaining the purpose of the research. Issues of confidentiality, consent for researcher to record the interview were explained and ironed out first hand.

The interview was guided by key themes from the research topic. The use of open-ended questions aided the participant in not giving “yes” or “no” questions. As the interview was on course the researcher sought understanding and interpretation through probing. Legard et al (2003) say that probes achieve in-depth answers in terms of penetration and exploration. Open ended questions are opinion seeking giving the participant room for airing their personal opinions and also giving depth and more insight to the research. The researcher also took into consideration non-verbal signals, hesitation and facial expressions.

3.3.2 Focus group discussions

Kruger (2002) says that a Focus Group Discussion is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive non-threatening environment. This instrument was appropriate for this research as the topic under discussion was rather sensitive and would need the group to be more open and free to air their views. Focus groups are used to collect the different levels of data produced by personal interaction with the chosen sample. Barbour (2007) states that:

Qualitative research approaches the world “out there” to understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomenon “from the inside” by analyzing experiences of individuals or groups, as it allows participants to tell their individual stories.

This was a helpful instrument as researcher wanted to get more than one person's ideas at one time, or to see the interaction amongst members of the group. The focus group of

8 students was used as a sample of media students at Zimbabwe Open University who had done courses in governance and democracy together with the roles of media. The researcher had one session of the focus group discussion.

3.3.3 Document Analysis

The document analysis involved the analyzing of the July and August 2013 *The Herald* and *The Daily News* copies which were the daily copies of these newspapers which totaled 62. This was a systematic examination of written records in the newspapers and it entails a sampling of content and not people in a bid to investigate, as put across by Duigen (2008), in this research the role that media plays in framing democracy and in this research during the 2013 Harmonized elections in Zimbabwe.

Existing records often provide insights into a setting and or for a group of people that cannot be observed or noted in any other way. In this research it was difficult to randomly ask citizens if they had ever written letters to the newspapers pertaining to the 2013 Harmonized elections. Therefore the researcher sampled the content in the media by dwelling on the letters to the editor, opinion and analysis columns that gave comments on the election period. Therefore, newspapers were used as external records that assisted in gathering information about the larger community and relevant trends as propounded by (Duigan, 2008).

The newspaper analysis assisted in comparing citizen participation in the Zimbabwean newspapers, *The Herald* and *The Daily News* pertaining to the 2013 Harmonized election period as there citizens from the MDC and others from ZANU PF. The researcher analyzed *The Herald* and *The Daily News*, 62 copies from July 2013 to August 2013. The 1st of July 2013 to the 30th of July 2013 were representative of the pre-election period, the 31st of July being the Election Day and the 1st of August 2013 to the 31st of August 2013 represented the post election period. The researcher purchased copies of these newspapers from The National Archives of Zimbabwe and The Herald House in Harare.

The content used in the writing of the letters gave insight into issues of polarity especially the length of the letters published in the columns would show the importance of an issue under discussion. To strengthen the content analysis the researcher looked into the themes that were presented in the letters, opinion and analysis columns. Therefore the content in the letters to the editor and political columns that carried political themes that were recurrent in the 2013 Harmonized election period in guiding the citizens to make informed decisions when casting their votes were analyzed.

Procedure

The first point of call for the researcher was to buy copies of *The Herald* and *The Daily News* from The National Archives of Zimbabwe and The Herald House in Harare.

The researcher bought copies of *The Daily News* and *The Herald* from July to August 2013. Lynch & Peer (2002) state that when selecting copies they have to be representative of typical issues. In this research the typical issue that the researcher was interested in was the role of print media in framing democracy during the 2013 Zimbabwe Harmonized elections. July 2013 was the period representing the pre-election period and August 2013 represented the post election period.

Thematic letters to the editor, opinions and analysis columns were in the selected sample of newspapers written on the election period of July 2013 harmonized elections were identified. Duigen (2008) says themes are helpful in better understanding the nature of participants in the wider Zimbabwean community sharing their views and sentiments on the election period of 2013. In order for the researcher to take into account the relevance of participants in the newspaper contributions the researcher looked into features like signing off, topical words, political figure mentioning and the area or location that the writer came from which Duigen (2008) calls features of specialized information. These features were from the separate newspapers, the researcher had to maintain cross references and document links and polarity.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

3.4.1 Respect for the rights and dignity of participants

Markham & Buchanan (2012) stated that principles of research ethics...include the fundamental rights of human dignity, autonomy, protection, safety. The researcher sought the informed consent of the entire sample that was to be involved in the research. Those involved were allowed to make a decision based upon a full appreciation of what the research was about and what was expected of them. The researcher ensured that information about the research was communicated in a way meaningful to the individuals concerned and that, where possible and appropriate, written as well as verbal consent was gained from the informants.

The researcher wrote formal letters and set up formal interviews through the Institute of Peace Leadership and Governance at Africa University to the following:-Zimbabwe Media Commission representative, The Herald and The Daily News editors, and a Zimbabwe Open University lecturer in the Media department and 8 students who are studying media at the institution. The letter from the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance was used by the researcher to provide confidentiality and authenticity of researcher's identification thus making respondents aware the research, its aims and background. This instilled confidence while allaying any fears in informants.

The researcher ensured the participants that they were free to decline and should not in any way, feel either pressurized or obliged to participate so no form of threat or coercion

will be used. Consent to record interviews and group discussions was sought as issues of confidentiality were crucial to the extent that in some instances respondents would not want to be involved in giving out information. After the study the recorded data was securely kept by the researcher for a period prior to be destroyed.

3.4.2 Researcher's personal behavior

Connolly (2003) points out the fact that:

Research ethics involve a consideration of the conduct of researchers in relation to their own personal behavior as well as how they relate to and treat others during their research. They are about identifying certain norms and standards of behavior that researchers are expected to follow.

As this research involved interviews and interactions with highly ranked officials the researcher was dressed formally at all times. The official language, which is English, was used through-out the research process for recording purposes but the researcher is flexible for respondents to use vernacular for further articulation of points. Connolly (2003) comments that:

Researchers should be mindful of the significance of the relationships that may have developed between themselves and the research participants during the course of the study and should develop a clear strategy for concluding those relationships when the research has been completed.

The researcher's letter from the institute had an expiry date and the participants were made aware that there would be no further communications as far as the research period would have lapsed.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

3.5.1 Journaling

These are short notes that one writes to oneself as one proceeds through the analysis of a corpus of data from the field. During the focus group discussion short notes were written, in the in-depth interviews and also when going over news paper articles in *The Daily News* and *The Herald*. Kaplan & Maxwell (2003) reiterate that

It can range from a brief marginal comment on a transcript, or a theoretical idea incorporated into field notes, to a full-fledged analytical essay. All of these are ways of getting ideas down on paper, and of using writing as a way to facilitate reflection and analytical insight.

From these notes the researcher made graphs, tables and pie charts that helped in analyzing the data that was collected. Manual thematic data analysis was used.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the researcher used in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis to collect data in the research methodology. This chapter also discusses the population, sampling and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection, presentation and analysis procedures.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the collected data. The data was collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussion and content analysis of letters to the editor in *The Daily News* and *The Herald* copies of July 2013 and August 2013. The data was presented according to the general theme of media's role in framing democracy during the 2013 Harmonized election period in Zimbabwe and arranged into sub-themes that arose during the collection of data.

4.2 Data Presentation

4.2.1 In-depth Interviews

Nine media experts were interviewed in the in-depth interviews that were carried out. Of the nine respondents eight were male and one was female. The composition of the interview respondents is shown in the pie chart below.

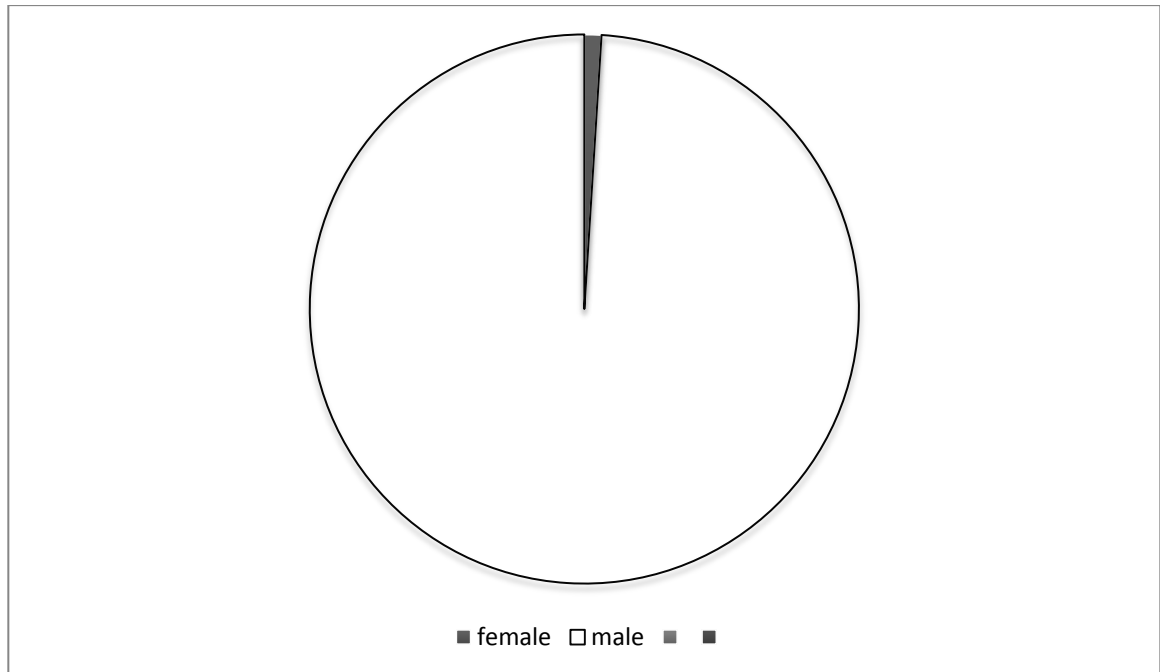


Figure 1 Composition of Respondents by Gender

This gives insight to the notion of the patriarchal society that men are more involved and dominant in political issues than women. Cletus Mushanawani a news editor at *The Manica Post* commented that “*Women do not have a reading culture. 95% of the letters that we receive come from the male counterpart. Women believe they have a passive role in politics.*” The issue of the violent nature of elections held in 2008 was a contributing factor that women did not want to associate themselves with election issues. Females do not associate themselves with debate activities therefore the notion proposed by Habermas of the Public Sphere is challenged in that not every-one is a participant of this sphere of debate. The insight that was interestingly noted was that women tend to be participants in the voting exercise, the question arises then what do they vote for the person or the ideas?

It was established that of the respondents the people varied in their positions in the media field. The data is shown in the figure below.

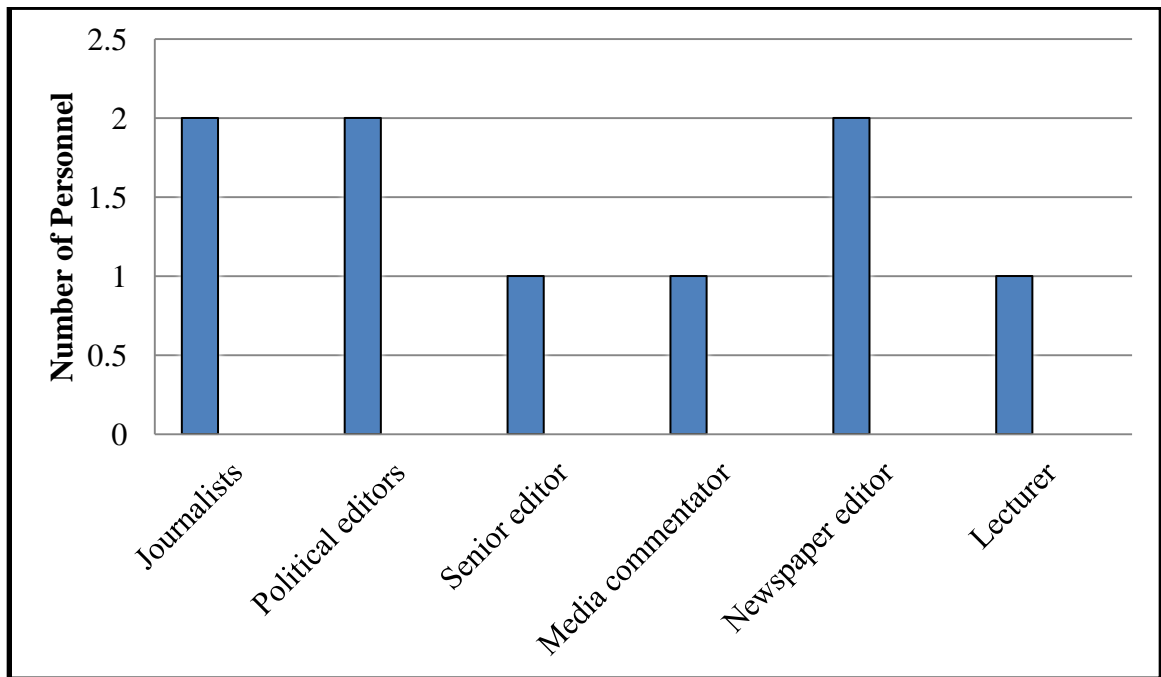


Figure 2 Personnel in the Media Field

The varying of respondent positions in the media field assisted the researcher to get insights from political, non-aligned and academic view-points which assisted in the analyzing of the importance of print media in framing democracy during election periods in Zimbabwe. It was noted with great interest that though the researcher used different personnel the participants were in one way or another politically affiliated to either ZANU-Pf or MDC. Therefore it was difficult for the participants to talk without getting emotional about their party. This gives support to the Hegemony Theory propounded by Gramsci.

Of the nine interviewed in the in-depth interviews only one indicated that they were a senior newspaper editor and the rest were junior editors, journalists and a lecturer. The data is shown in the pie chart below.

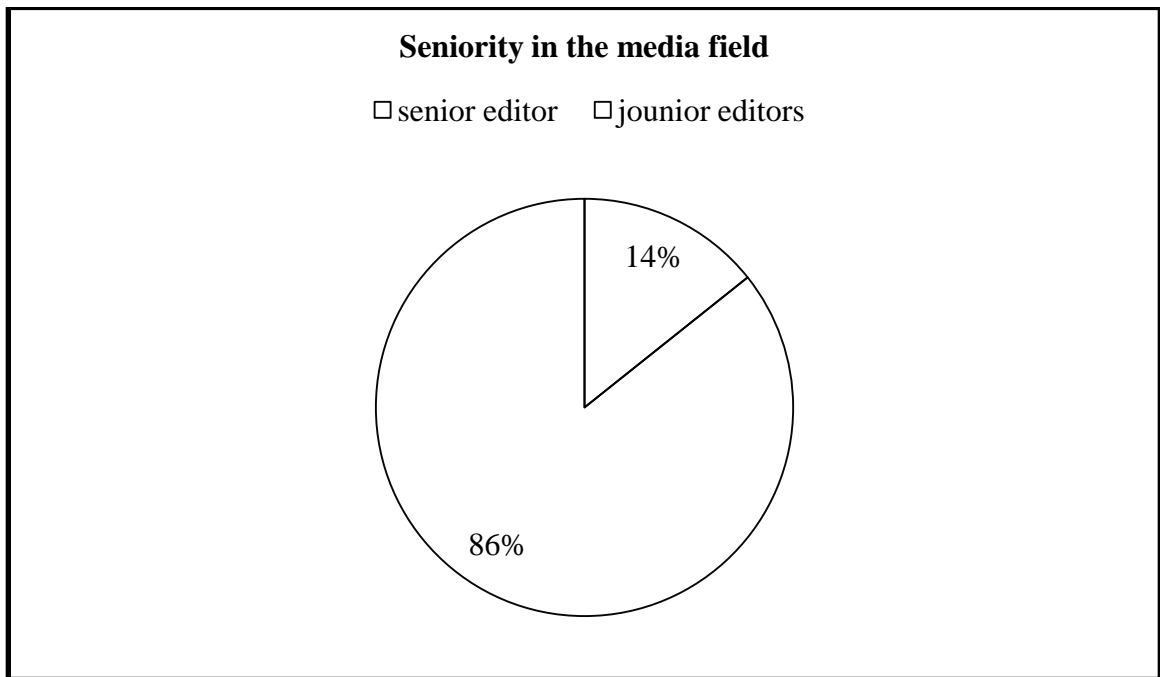


Figure 3 Seniority in the Media Field

It was an advantage to have a very senior respondent in that they had more experience in the media field and their responses were not hesitant compared to the other junior respondents. The senior respondent was free to point out the fact that *“The media has realized the power of the letters to the editor to an extent that they (letters to the editor) are generated in news-rooms to change people’s views. A lonely letter in any newspaper has been seen to generate opposition, and to influence people.”* The aspect of seniority was helpful in that the editorial notch takes up maturity in the sense that when the letters

are selected for publishing an editor does not become so dogmatic in their selection. This is reflective of the aspect of binding policies put in place to govern print media and do not give allowance to the airing of important issues. Editors need to be more open minded in their selection of letters to publish.

It was worth noting that the respondents in this study were from different media houses or non- aligned personnel in the media field. These ranged from personnel in publicly owned media house to privately owned media houses, free lance journalists and educationists as shown in the figure below.

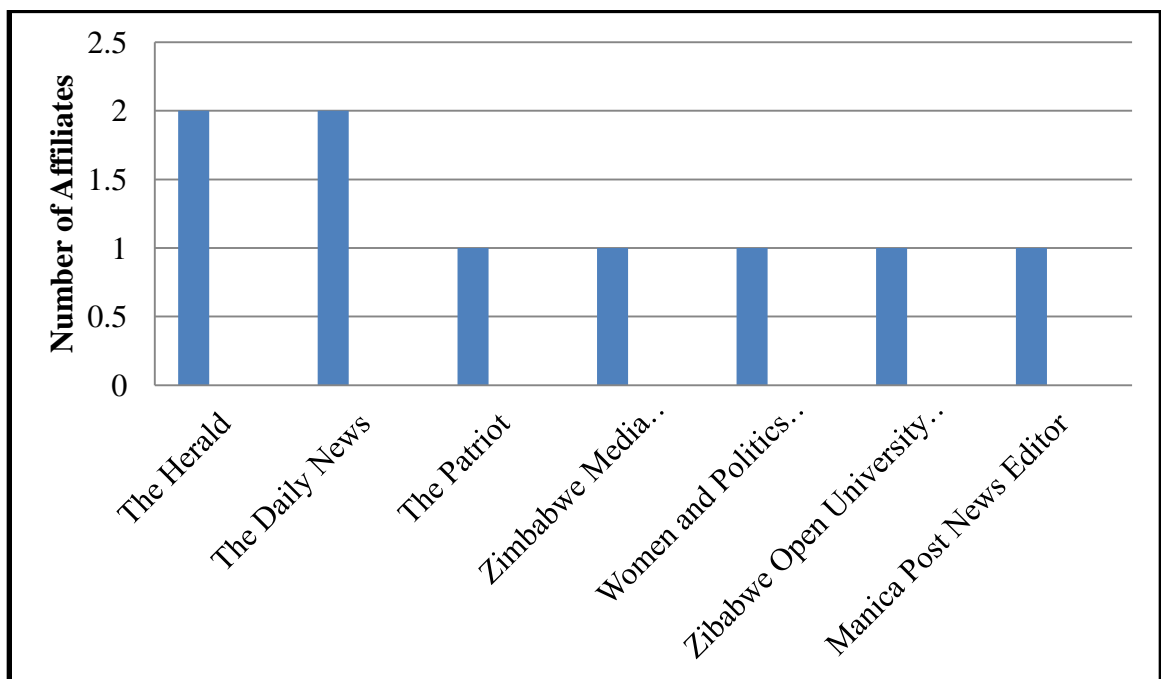


Figure 4 Media Affiliation of Respondents

The engagement of respondents from different media houses helped the researcher to get different opinions from the respondents be they apolitical or politically orientated. As one respondent said that “*Media is a mirror of society*” so the researcher managed to get different views and opinions from the respondents. This finding was in support of Habermas’ theory of the Public Sphere as there were views from the MDC and ZANU-Pf parties and they all had their views on what they thought the role of media was. The ruling party (ZANU-Pf) affiliates said that “*The Herald was the paper of the record which supports the government of the day*” where-as those from the MDC said that *The Daily News* was for “*Telling it like it is, without fear, without favor*”

Availability of respondents

The respondents were in most cases available by appointment. Four out of nine of the respondents were ready for an interview off the cuff. Five of the respondents indicated that that they needed time to go over the topic before they could engage themselves in the interviews. This showed that people are still skeptical about political issues, they are not free to hold discussions with someone that “they do not know” lest they are misquoted. The media personnel still need time to freely utilize their freedoms as “voices of the people”. An example is the recent World Media Day commemoration march that was banned by the police on the 3rd of May 2014 which shows that the government of the day needs to have policies that are practical for citizens to gain confidence in holding public debates.

4.2.1.0 Dominant Themes

4.2.1.1 Agenda setting

The agenda that was set by the media was the tone and mood for the election period. The informants pointed out that the citizens set the agenda among themselves on the platforms put across by the editorial platforms. Six out of the nine respondents agreed that the newspapers set the agenda of the day by presenting the key themes of the election period. *The Herald* set the “agenda for a resounding victory for ZANU-Pf” and *The Daily News* set an agenda for “seeking transparency of the election process.” It was surprising that these two newspapers displayed polarity but faced with one activity, that of elections. In a way it could pose an explanation of the loss of the MDC to ZANU-Pf in the elections in that their paper did not do much to give the citizens a voice for a way forward but rather a platform to play the blame game. Interesting to note a senior editor of *The Patriot*, Mr. Alexio Kanengoni went further to point out that in this bid to set an agenda “*The danger is that they (letters to the editor) are so powerful such that they are generated in newsrooms to change people’s views and that lonely letter can generate opposition*”.

Another dimension raised was the agenda a particular newspaper had the mandate to fulfill or set the agenda of the owners. Dr Tafataona Mahoso pointed out that “*Newspapers are a business... letters to the editor are selected by the editor to market that particular newspaper*” he went on to exemplify that “*Independent newspapers misled people during the election period and are currently going bankrupt because people felt let down*”. This notion was supported by Lloyd Gumbo who stated that

“Advertisers give you money and if you attack their political party you may lose revenue”. Kudzai Bare shared that *“Patterns of ownership and control affect the democracy”.* This is exemplified by the fact that *The Herald* is pro-ZANU Pf and *The Daily News* is pro-MDC. Mr. Webster Muonwa from Zimbabwe Open University reiterated this notion by saying that *“The media must get deeper to create a platform for the evaluation of the policies so presented. This is done by way of letters to the editor, opinion columns, feature articles, expert analysis to create continuous debate both in the platform of the media as well as down-stream in the various facets of society that is in offices, beer-halls, churches etc. Because we say the media does not tell us what to think but it tells us the topics (suggests) thinking about.”* This finding filled the gap in that print media is still a valuable asset in the third world compared to electronic media. The issues read by citizens form the debate that goes on in various facets of society and other citizens are encouraged to put it to pen and paper and give comments on editorial platforms in the newspapers for the interest of sparking debate.

4.2.1.2 Public debate

Six of the respondents spoke of newspapers being a Public Sphere of debate as propounded by Jurgen Habermas. The newspapers of the election period of 2013 held public debates of *“wise voting”* and *“the need for peace”*. This all emanated from the experiences of the previous election of the 2008 Harmonized election which was wrought with violence. This shows that the citizens were peace loving and there was need to vote wisely in order to maintain that peace. Lloyd Gumbo pointed out that *“Media does not operate in a vacuum thus it is a Public Sphere”* which is called

“Citizen journalism” by Farai Musaka as he further goes on to say *“ Newspapers do not have money to send journalists to the outskirts of Zimbabwe so they need those voices, to contribute and share their opinions in the letters to the editor thus adding to reportage”* Zindoga calls it *“A traditional mechanism or practice of the newspaper that if people read something they want to write something...interchange of views”*. This view is supported by Kanengoni who says that *“Letters to the editor are important as they reflect unedited public opinion, their letters reflect what they believe in, they are not solicited, and it’s out of a conviction about an issue and reflects the truth.”* This finding proved the theory of The Public Sphere by Habermas whereby citizens engage in the interchange of ideas on the same platform.

4.2.2.3 Opinion Building

Four of the nine respondents agree that letters to the editor in the newspapers help citizens in opinion building meaning that they help people decide on their casting of votes. Farai Musaka comments that *“letters to the editor tell which side the paper leans on, as they are a deliberate choice by the editor the notion of democracy becomes questionable as the editor may be fired if he or she publishes letter which sates otherwise”* He goes on to exemplify that *“The editorial policies include the maintenance of values that they believe in for example Herald is pro-ZANU PF and the Daily News is anti-ZANU PF”*. Maxwell Sibanda supports this by saying that *“People also choose which newspaper to send their letters to in relation to the interest of their political*

party”. Zindoga reiterates that *“People pronounce choices which influence other people and those with differing views”* He went to exemplify that *“During the 2013 Harmonized Elections various people contributed on agendas for example ZANU PF Manifesto on Indigenization and empowerment, the Herald was the paper of the record which supports the government of the day and pan-Africanism. The editorial bore holes in the opposition and sort to void the acceptability of efficacy; people of Zimbabwe want to continue with the historicity.”* The building of opinions through what citizens wrote revealed that these platforms in the print media helped citizens to have a culture to which they adhere to. In the 2013 Harmonized elections the newspapers highlighted the citizen opinion the importance of having a culture. The ZANU-Pf affiliates had the opinion rooted in the liberation struggle where-as the MDC affiliates in *The Daily News* also mentioned this opinion of historicity being a drawback to development and democracy but unfortunately the letters did not have an alternative which may also point to the fact that citizens then were left with no option but to be enticed by the opinion builders.

4.2.1.4 Peace versus violence

Two respondents out of the nine respondents talked on the issue of peace versus violence pertaining to the letters to the editor and columns in the newspapers. Dr Tafataona Mahoso asked *“Why do writers sometimes write in anonymous and said that it was for purposes of maintaining their safety and ensuring peace.”* Mr. Webster

Muonwa pointed out that *“Electoral law tends to be deliberately crafted (in many Sub-Saharan countries) to give a head-start to the party in power, which becomes the source of many conflicts for example Zimbabwe, Kenya, Sudan and Equatorial Guinea. The roles of media help us to measure reality in Africa. Politics in Africa is disabled by a culture of violence for example there are already killings in South Africa before the 7th of May 2014 elections.”* The editorial columns showed that they fulfilled their duty in making the citizens aware of the need for peace and the period was one that was peaceful compared to the 2008 election period in Zimbabwe. This finding fills the gap that print media is viewed as one that fosters violence. In the case of the 2013 Harmonized election period citizens encouraged each other and their voices in unison stood and a peaceful environment prevailed.

4.2.1.5 Gate-keeping

Three respondents out of the nine people interviewed raised their concern on gate-keeping on reader morality and the aspect of safe-guarding and promoting the dominant ideology of the newspaper. Farai Musaka says that *“Not all opinions make it, who decides? Newspapers are not as democratic as owners want, people are free to write but publishing becomes not so democratic, the editors have their own opinions and views”*. Maxwell Sibanda supports this view as he points to the fact that *“Someone can sue the newspaper so it is up to the editor to censor the letters.”* Cletus Mushanawani comments that *“Editors should be vigilant as some of the English written doesn’t make sense,*

atrocities are not published. Hate speech is what caused the Rwandan Genocide.” The editorial policy is very strict in this issue and it is evident in the letters that are published that there are no incidents of hate speech thus maintaining peace, law and order. Reflecting on Andrew Chatora’s dissertation which was majorly on new media, it can be deduced that new media is dangerous in inciting violence as there is a lot of hate speech. The gap in his research is that new media is uncensored like the print media and therefore anyone can post whatever they feel like posting and this can cause commotion.

4.2.2 Letters to the editor

Ninety three newspaper editions from July to August 2013 were analyzed. Of these forty one were from *The Herald* and fifty two were from *The Daily News*. The discrepancy was that some of the issues of the newspapers studied did not have letters that suited the criteria of thematic issues of the election period. It was noted with interest that the August period of 2013 *The Herald* focused more on council and other non-election issues (thus less copies studied) and *The Daily News* letters were still debating on issues of the MDC loss and ZANU-Pf rigging (thus more copies studied). The composition of the newspapers analyzed is shown on the pie chart below.

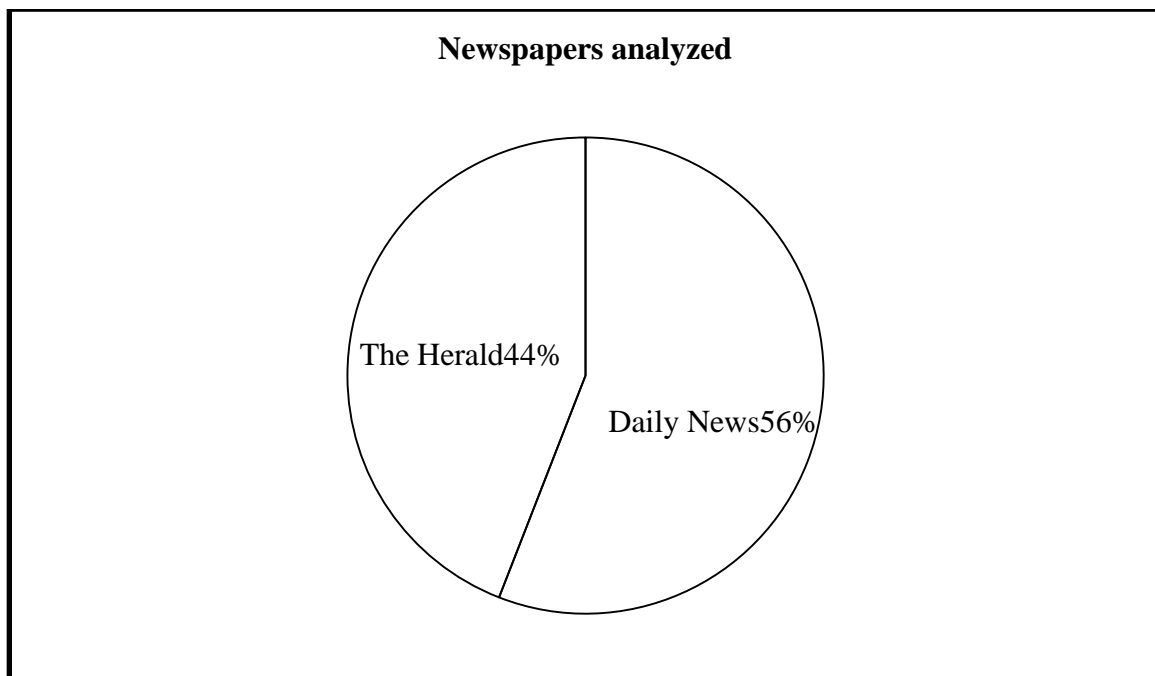


Figure 5 Composition of Newspapers Analyzed

The above showed that the period studied that is July and August 2013 was one that *The Herald* had their cards in check and they spoke of matters of the day. It was deduced that after the ZANU-Pf victory the citizens wrote less on the election showing that the editorial had the skill of quickly divert in the minds of its readership. This was different with *The Daily News* that had its readership mourning defeat even up to early September 2013 in their letters. This depicted an issue of polarity in the citizenry of Zimbabwe. The citizens do not have one voice and are still to learn that they have to move on and strategize for the next election period by reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses.

Sixty of the letters were sent in through e-mail thus depicting a new era of New Media as put forward in Andrew Chatora's dissertation. The gap is that though there is this new

media the editor still has the role of selecting and the mandate to censor hate speech letters which makes a country prone to violence. The rest of the letters from the data gathered was established that these letters to the editor were sparsely distributed nationwide in both *The Herald* and *The Daily News* editions as shown on the pie charts below.

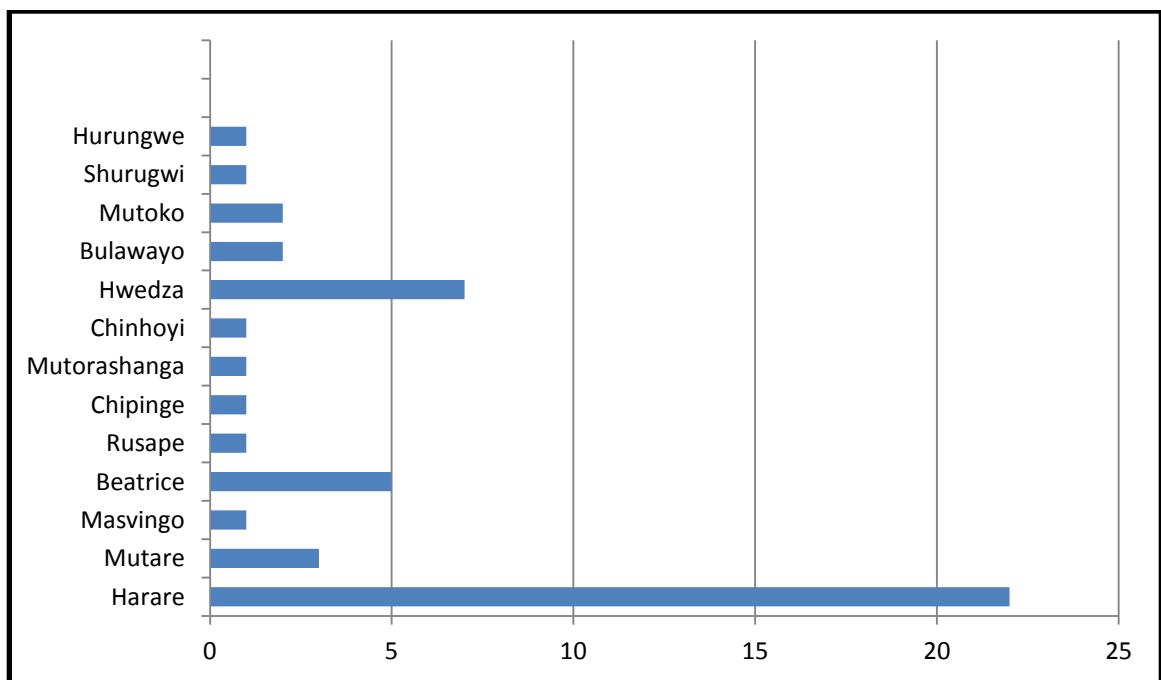


Figure 6 Distribution of Letters to The Herald

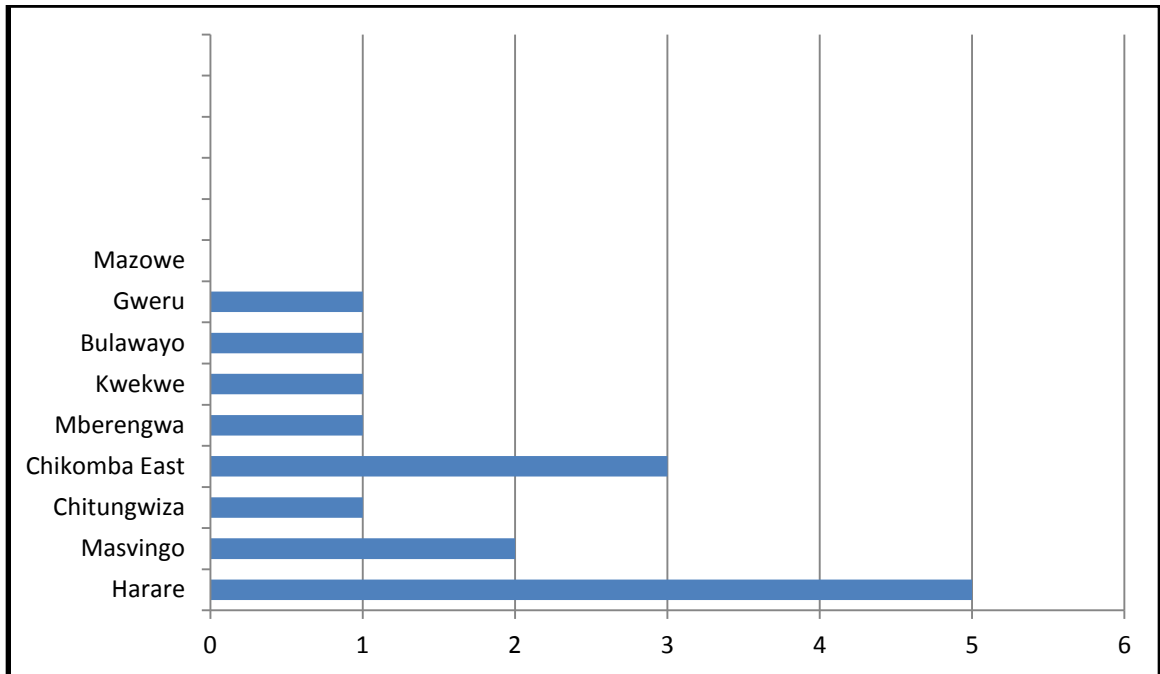


Figure 7 Distribution of letters to The Daily News

It is worth noting that 67% of the Zimbabwean population resides in the rural areas which constitute the bulk of voters. It is interesting to note that the study finds a significantly small portion in terms of the letters to the editor from the rural areas assessed in the study. This is an interesting finding suggesting the people who are voting are not the people who are debating. This raises the question of “Do people vote for a person or the person’s ideas?” This is theoretical disjuncture with what Habermas’s idea of the Public Sphere struggled to achieve of the discussion platform influencing the mindset of citizens.

It was worth noting that of the one hundred and ten letters which showed the names of the writers thus denoting the gender of the writer, seven were females, from both *The Herald* and *The Daily News*. This notion of a low female percentage coincides with the

females who participated in the in-depth interviewing process thus pointing to the same notions of female stereotyping of being apolitical, not having a reading culture and their fear of violence. The percentage is shown on the pie chart below.

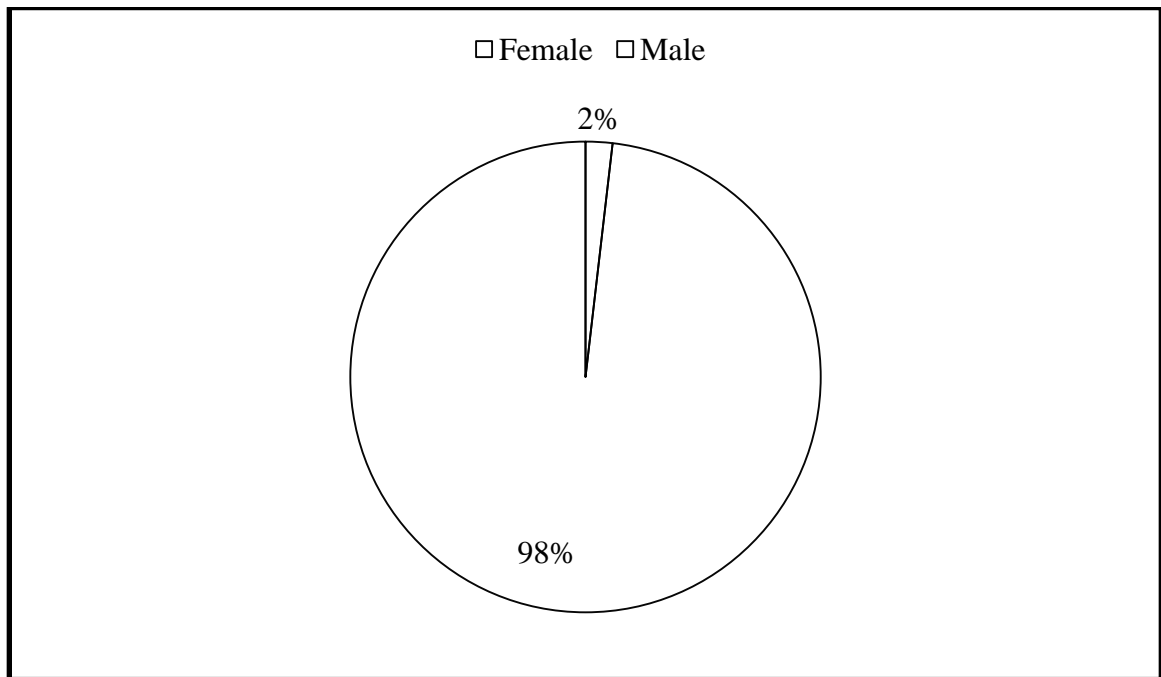


Figure 8 Gender distribution of contributors to the letters to the editor

Interesting it maybe that one hundred and ten wrote their names and it was also deduced from the data that eighteen of the writers used pseudonymous names and two used anonymity as shown in the bar graph below.

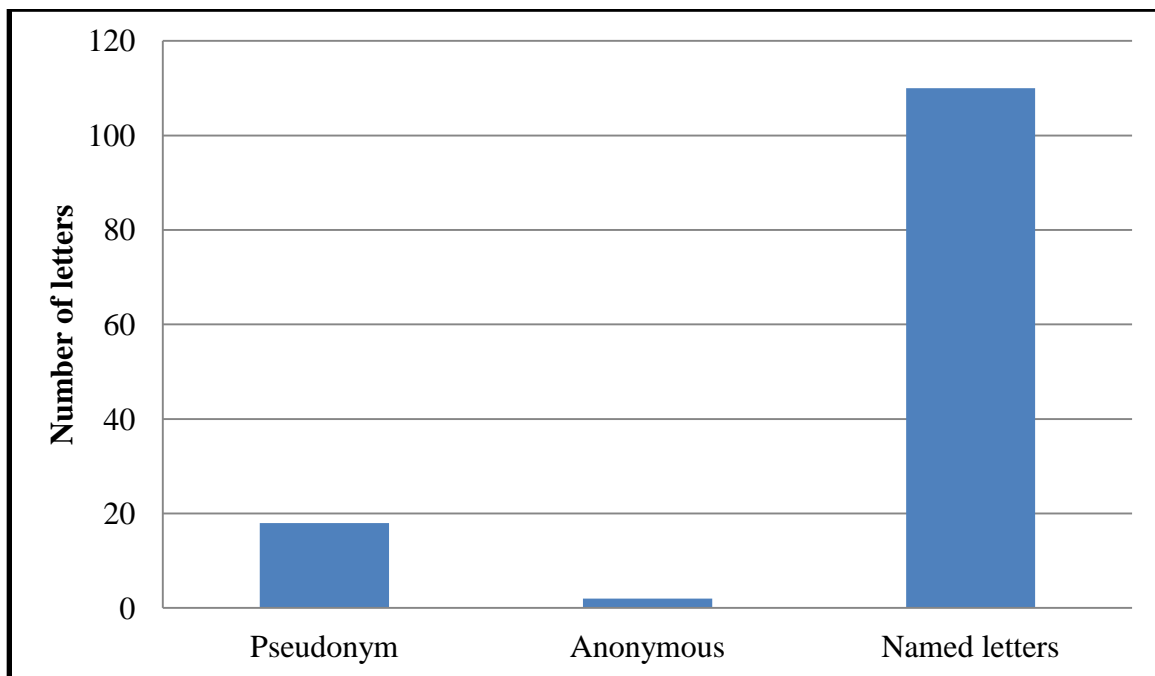


Figure 9 Identification on the letters to the editor

This finding cleared the assumption that not naming ones letter was a sign of protecting oneself from victimization. The research showed that citizens are now free to air their views without hiding their identity. This is in support of Jurgen Habermas' theory of the Public Sphere where citizens are engaged in debate that deals with the welfare of the country and have the freedom to air their views without prejudice or fears of victimization.

From the above it was noted that of the one hundred and ten that wrote their names in their letters to the editor and the eighteen that used pseudonyms, eight of them are frequent contributors to the letters to the section of both The Herald and The Daily News editions as shown in the bar graph below.

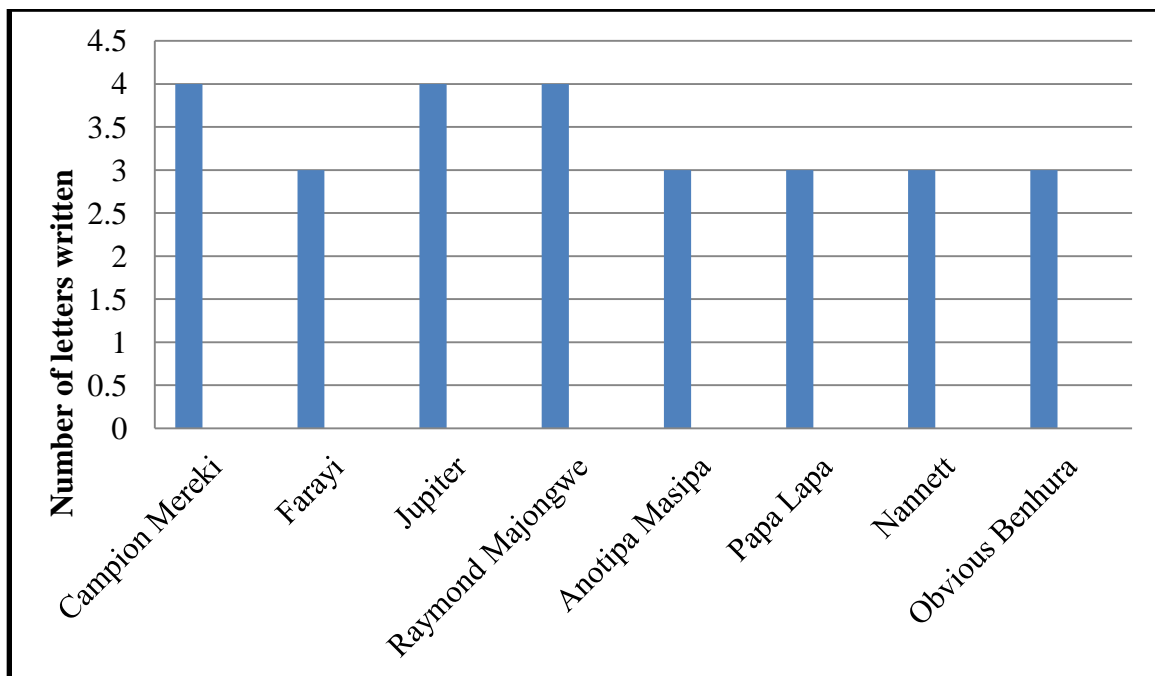


Figure 10 Frequent Writers

The frequency of writing letters is a positive sign in that citizens show that they have faith in the publishing of their letters. This entails participants in the platform to continue writing and informing fellow citizens of the environment that they are living. The encouragement of citizen journalism is also evident. This also gives insight in that the editorial team is encouraging sensible and organized writing. It entails that the frequent writers meet the expectations of that particular newspaper, in particular speaking positively about the political party that particular newspaper affiliates to.

Who writes letters to the editor?

Ordinary citizens and experts from the citizen body are legible contributors to the editorial desk. This is proving Habermas' theory of the Public Sphere. From the data collected it was interesting to note that fewer women wrote letters to the editor compared to men, see Pie chart 8.

Experts also wrote to the editorial desk. The experts came from different walks of life ranging from workers unions, the political sector, Non-Governmental organizations and the clergy. The aspect of expertise is very important in that it sheds light to the different experiences that the experts have. Due to these experiences experts also give advice and guidance to the citizens through these platforms. The percentage is shown in the pie chart below.

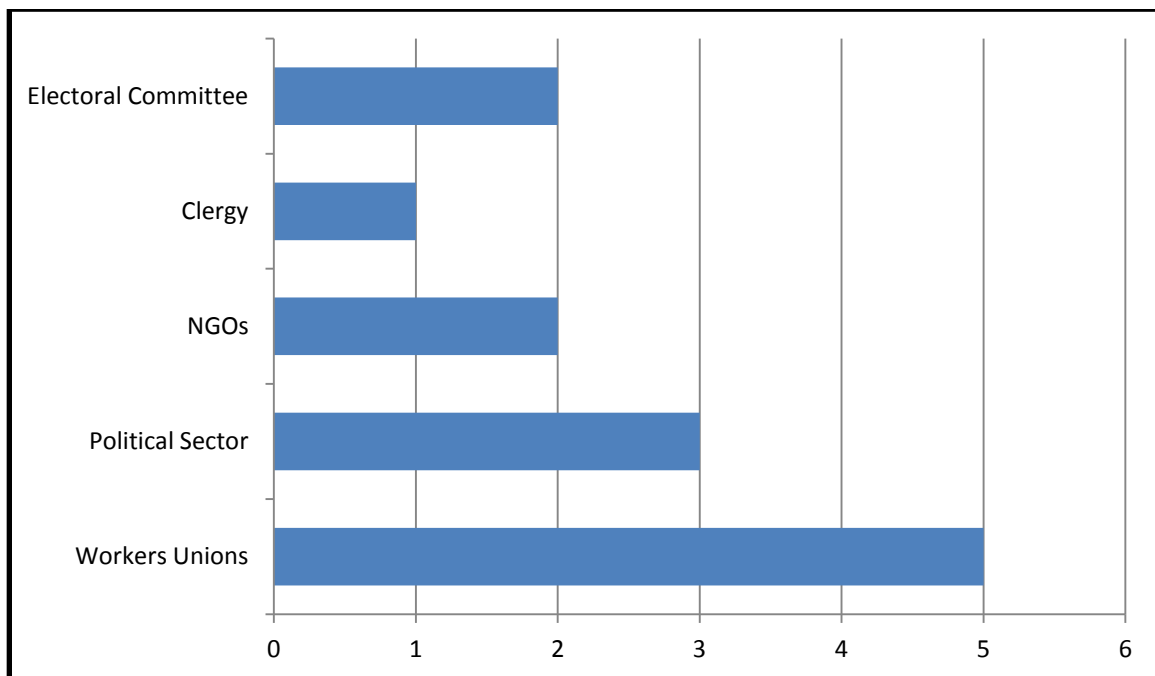


Figure 11 Percentages of Experts who Wrote Letters to Editor

4.2.2.0 Dominant Themes

4.2.2.1 Peace

Ten letters to the editor's desk showed that there was call for peace during the election period. Anotipa Masimba wrote to *The Daily News* on the 2nd of July 2013 headed his letter "*We want a peaceful election*" which was supported by Lovemore Kashawo of Kuwadzana 1 Harare wrote on the 4th of July 2013 to *The Daily News* with the letter entitled "*Harmonized elections: Peace begins with us*" and he goes on to comment that "*Zimbabweans let us have peaceful polls*". It was interesting to note that Lovemore Kashawo also submitted this same article to *The Herald* on the 4th of July 2013. The 1st of August 2013 had Observer writing that "*I hope this peace will continue to prevail*

even after the results and beyond because peace and love are the most important aspects for any nation to prosper. Thank you, Zimbabwe.” This raised an insight that that participatory democracy is a powerful tool if used properly it yields positive results. The finding was that the citizen’s voices were adhered to and the election period during 2013 was a peaceful one.

4.2.2.2 Unity

Unity among the citizens was another theme that was prominent in the letters to the editor. The citizens were successful in their lobbying for peace as it can be proved that the Zimbabwe Harmonized Election period of 2013 was characterized with peace compared to the 2008 Harmonized Election period in Zimbabwe. Sundu wrote to the editor of *The Herald* on the 4th of July 2013 stating that *“Let us unite, achieve one goal”* and comments further that *“Let us forgive each other and fight because we cannot afford a divided movement. Unite Makoni Central, unite. We can only win when united”* Papa Lapa also wrote to *The Daily News* on the 30th of July saying that *“We are one nation regardless of political affiliation...the different tribes and races we belong to. If we revisit our history, we will find that we are all related because of our Bantu languages and the color of our skin”*. This encouraged other citizens regardless of their political affiliation that unity was an essential tool in achieving a peaceful election period. In the same edition Nomakhosi Mfakazi writes that *“It is my prayer that our nation, be protected and every son and daughter of the soil be strengthened this season and beyond, as we unite for a common good”*. Leonard Koni had his letter published on

the 21st of August 2013 in *The Daily News* and it was titled “*Time to bury our differences.*” He further states that “*Zimbabweans, let us all bury our political differences, elections come and elections go but we shall remain Zimbabweans. Let those who have fallen in deep political quagmire rise again*”. The gap of gate-keeping was addressed in this theme as it was noted that the letters that were published did not have hate speech thus having this platform as one that fosters peace and at the same time the right to reply encouraging participatory democracy.

4.2.2.3 Wise voting

Vari Mhunngura Vari Chitondo of Masvingo wrote to *The Daily News* on the 2nd of July 2013 comments that “*...there is need to vote wisely and ensure we are careful with our future as well as our children’s*”. Farai N of Harare wrote to *The Herald* on the 15th of July 2013 saying that “*Zimbabwe be warned, should you vote for MDC-T, don’t be surprised to wake up as a colony again. Vote wisely*”. Tinevimbo J Mhlanga in his letter of the 24th of July 2014 also supports the notion of wise voting in *The Daily News* by as he goes on to say that, “*Let us vote wisely and show ZANU PF the door. Let’s vote for better schools not for hot-seating classes where children write on the ground. People must vote for better roads, for better power supply, clean water, for better hospitals and clinics, people vote for total freedom. I urge you all to vote wisely and liberate yourself from ZANU PF bondage*”. *The Daily News* carried another letter written by S Kakono of Kwekwe on the 27th of July 2013 who also said “*I want to remind Zimbabweans that*

they should not forget what happened before the elections of 2008 when they go to vote during the harmonized election...ZANU PF was responsible for shortages of food, fuel and the devaluation and ultimately the scraping of the Zimbabwean dollar. Zimbabweans let us wake up from the slumber and vote for a better nation this election". Backward never Brian Mateyo had his letter published on the 29th of July 2013 in *The Herald* as he urges Zimbabweans that *"If we vote for the MDCs we are allowing the West to decolonize us and I do not think we will be able to free ourselves again"*. Reverend Oliver Chitamba Lynoberg Munashe Stationers of Harare also supported this notion in his letter published on the 30th of July 2013 in *The Herald* as he says that *"Cde Mugabe is our Hero. Tomorrow let us vote him resoundingly back into office and shame our detractors, he is a democratic leader who tolerates criticism and adjusts accordingly"*. It was interesting to note that though citizens spoke of peace and unity there was an air of polarity on which party to vote for. The gap that is closed is that the citizens are free to write what they think is best for their country but at the same time causing polarity. Therefore the Public Sphere is seen as one that can also be characterized with disagreements and therefore disapproves of Habermas' theory that discussions and matters are solved amicably on the platform. This is seen in the issue that even though *The Daily News* had an out- cry of a rigged election the ruling party was in control and the regional bodies endorsed the elections "free and fair" the power of Hegemony took its toll.

4.2.2.4 MDC plans

Mtwana kaSithole wrote on the 1st of July 2013 to *The Daily News* that “*The MDC stands for inclusive politics, smart leadership and a clean and lean government for policy*”. The issue of *The Daily News* of 17 July 2013 had a letter from the MDC Information Department spelling out that “*Tsvangirai’s MDC has great plans for health*” and the article is concluded that “*The MDC has a plan that will ensure a healthy future for our children. For a sustainable health service in a new Zimbabwe, Vote MDC on July, 2013.*” A letter from MDC written on the 29th of July 2013 to *The Daily News* says that “*MDC govt to usher in more opportunities*” and he further outlines that “*...the party wants one man one farm...revive the agriculture sector...create employment.*” This being the case with MDC they lost the election and the ruling party ZANU-Pf had an upper hand and this proved the theory proposed by Gramsci that hegemony is an ongoing process.

4.2.2.5 Voter’s roll

The voters roll was a cause of concern to the Zimbabwean citizens as there were issues of the lack of transparency. The citizens tried as much as they could to have their voices heard and there be transparency to no avail till elections were held and results announced. This shows that the theory of Hegemony as proposed by Gramsci was at play. The ruling party controlled this aspect of elections to the extent that even citizens’

voices were not heard. Concerned Zimbabwean wrote to *The Herald* on the 12th of July 2013 stating that “*Zimbabwe Electoral Commission chairperson Justice Rita Makarau should be careful of this man (Biti) who has the audacity to announce election results before the officials... Biti’s actions could lead to serious clashes between peace-loving Zimbabweans*”. The Election Resource Centre wrote on the 19th of July 2013 to *The Daily News*, that “*Zec’s inability to roll out processes that will lead to a free and fair election is in itself a violation of its constitutional mandate, which requires Zec to conduct free and fair elections*”. Nannette went on to comment in *The Daily New* on the 22nd of July 2013 that “Update voters’ roll before elections” as she goes on to say that “*Zec be reconstituted with trustworthy, non political and patriotic people.*” *The Daily News* of the 25th of July 2013 carried a letter from the Election Resource Centre yet again saying that “*...Zec needs to develop procedures and instructions governing the complicated task of correctly and timely capturing the results from the Presidential and the 210 distinct National Assembly election*” as they further say that “*We are therefore concerned that election results operations at the national command centre can be compromised by lack of funding*” Simon wrote “*Zec we need answers*” to *The Daily News* on the 16th of August 2013 as he says that “*I believe the Tsvangirai-led MDC won the election and I can write a book on that*”. Surprising all these pleas came to naught because of the hegemonic nature of the ruling party.

4.2.2.6 Unfairness of elections

The theme of unfairness was aired out but it was unfortunate that the ruling party at this stage had control of the situation and that the monitors, SADC and AU had declared the elections free and fair there was no turning back on ZANU-Pf victory. The unfairness emanated from the lack of transparency of the voters roll but the powers concerned turned a deaf ear on the pleas of the citizens. CCDZ wrote on the 2nd of August to *The Daily News* pointing out that “*Assisted voters...confusion over ward-based voting...intimidation of voters.-Zanu Pf bases to coordinate voting process*”. *The Daily News* of the 3rd of August 2013 had a letter from We Have Been Robbed who said that “*It is disheartening to see the AU and Sadc turn a blind eye to the situation in Zimbabwe.*” Mbanje wrote in *The Daily News* of the 10th August 2013 that “*The elections were heavily tilted in favor of one political party and I will not hesitate to say that Sadc and AU observer missions who have “endorsed” the charade that intelligent Zimbabweans have been made to accept as an election suffer from a paralysis of analysis.*” He goes on to call the election “*Nikuved*”. Obvious Benhura wrote a letter to the editor on the 13th of August 2013 in *The Daily News* as he has “*Sadc to blame (for) the flawed Zimbabwean elections. They saw flaws but all they did was comment on them but did not do anything about it.*”

4.2.2.7 MDC Defeat Eminent

It was evident that ZANU-Pf supporters wrote more letters in their paper telling of the powerless nature of the MDC. *The Herald* of the 1st of July 2013 contained a letter from

Matimba in Harare as he pointed out that *“Tsvangirai scared of elections”*. A letter in *The Daily News* dated 8th August 2013 comments that *“MDC should have seen it coming”* by Fannuel Mabhugu of Mazowe who further states that *“...I still feel duty bound to inform the nation that had the mainstream MDC taken the necessary precautions, we would not be in this state of affairs...the leadership became arrogant, inaccessible and impervious to advice and constructive criticism, which became the party’s pitfall.”* *The Herald* of the 9th of July 2013 published a letter by Campion Mereki entitled *“Coalition or no coalition, MDC-T is staring imminent defeat”*. The 24th of July saw the publication of Tapfumaneyi K Manzira of We Hwedza’s letter entitled *“Daily News unwittingly predicted Tsvangirai’s defeat”* he says *“The screaming headline of July 23 2013 in one of the MDC-T papers, Daily News “What if Tsvangirai Wins?” was most revealing if not a sell-out headline.”* *The Herald* of the 31st of July 2013 carried A Zhanje’s letter titled *“Writing is on the wall: Zanu PF victory is certain”* and this was alluded to *“...election preparedness...election manifesto...star rallies...Zanu PF’s manifesto...and campaign strategy has reinvigorated all party structures and party cadres are now irrevocably rallying behind the party’s clarion call-“Bhora Mugedhi/Ibhola Egedhini”* Happy Zanu-PF member wrote to *The Herald* on the 7th of August that *“Tsvangirai messed up his political career by spending his precious time on trivial and thought the Courts and the media would campaign for him...Tsvangirai must do the honorable and accept the results”*. *The Herald* edition of the 13th of August 2013 had a letter written by C Simboti of Matare who said that *“Tsvangirai’s political career finished”*, Simboti goes further to say that *“Tsvangirai was the biggest beneficiary of the*

inclusive government in that he can now write on his CV that he once worked with President Mugabe...”It was surprising to note that from the letters that spoke of Tsvangirai’s defeat *The Daily News* published such a letter. The deduction that is there is that there is transparency in this newspaper and the citizens are free to criticize anyone without fear or favor, thus displaying a democratic nature.

4.2.2.8 Vote ZANU PF

This theme was much noted in *The Herald* and this shows that the editorial of this newspaper is more interested in issues that are pro-ZANU-Pf. Gift Manuwa wrote to *The Herald* on the 10th of July 2013 saying “*Let’s vote ZANU PF in all positions and shame the West*” and further goes on to say that “*Zimbabweans should wake up and stop dreaming of any developmental changes from the MDC-T. Let us go in our numbers and vote ZANU PF. They claim ZANU-PF is a devil, but the devil you know is better than this Western serpent.*” The 12th of July saw Jonhera Jonhera’s letter being published in *The Herald* as he claims that “*Zanu-PF destined for resounding victory*”. The 16th of July 2013, *The Herald* edition, also had Mhlaba George of Mutorashanga writing “*Let’s vote Zanu-PF to retain our sovereignty*” and further comments that “*Zimbabweans will revert to being office boys and the only businesses they will be allowed to run will be bottle stores and rural transport. This will be the sad story if MDC takes over government.*” Mwasanga Mwengu Trelawney in his letter published in *The Herald* of the 18th of July 2013 says that “*We’re wiser now, we know who deserves our vote*” as he reiterates that “*Zanu-PF has been warning Zimbabweans against corrupt MDC officials*

who were lying to the electorate that they will protect them in every way possible...it is good that President Mugabe, being the father figure he is, has promised to protect all those who fell prey to the MDC housing scam and is prepared to be there for them.” The Herald of 26 July 2013 published Nhlanhla Hugh Manzini’s letter which said “Only Zanu-PF will deliver” he reiterates that “Zanu-PF, the Peoples Party, owes it to us to deliver on their manifesto, after 33 years in power and I truly believe that they will deliver on their promises as they do not owe any puppet masters money spent on them like opposition parties.” The 31st of July article of The Herald carried a letter from Farayi who said that “Your vote is crucial to our sovereignty” and goes on to say that “As you go to exercise your right to choose, understand that you are probably the first, second or maybe third generation in your family to exercise that right.” Petros Terry Masakara of Guruve had his letter published on the 15th of August 2013 in The Herald as he wrote “Thank you Zim for rejecting Western rule by proxy”. It was interesting to note that the theory of hegemony is being echoed in the letters that are calling for the support of the ruling party ZANU-Pf.

4.2.2.9 Rigging claims mere rhetoric

This theme is interesting in that it denotes the notion that the ZANU-Pf supporters knew that their victory was inevitable, therefore they shoot down on those citizens that are calling for transparency and citing that they suspected foul play from ZANU-Pf. According to Gramsci ZANU-Pf is holding onto power even if it is no longer wanted

saying that it is only common sense to have them in power because of the revolution struggle that the party gained Zimbabwe from, proving the theory of hegemony as one that is practical. Campion Mereki wrote a letter to the editor of *The Herald* on the 15th of July 2013 as he says that *“A party which panics on the eve of elections and calls for a coalition is not sure of victory...Zanu-PF is the future and it is going to win as expected the losers are going to cry “rigging””*. He also wrote another letter to the same newspaper on the 22nd of July 2013 saying that *“Tsvangirai is desperate”* and further comments that *“A Zanu-PF victory is now guaranteed and there is nothing the MDC-T can do other than to continue crying wolf”*. Campion wrote yet another letter which was published on the 1st of August 2013 in *The Herald* as he says that *“It’s clear to Morgan Tsvangirai and his MDC-T party that their fate was sealed yesterday”*. Mwana Wevhu from Harare also wrote to the editor of *The Herald* on the 1st of August 2013 that *“We are tired of cry babies...like the MDC have already started making noise, saying the election is not free and fair because of minor technical hitches in some constituencies”*. The 5th of August 2013 saw Jupiter writing to *The Herald* saying that *“...the MDC tried to steal special ballots and mark them for their candidates. In other words this is irrefutable evidence that the MDC tried to rig”*. Kuziva Ngonidzashe wrote on the 12th of August 2013 to *The Herald* that *“Your (Morgan Tsvangirai) claim that Zanu-PF has rigged, of which you claim you knew in advance but you were not even bothered because of the massive turnout at your rallies which you thought would overwhelm the Zanu-PF rigging machinery. Everyone knows that there was no rigging even yourself.”*

4.2.3 Newspaper Columns

Twenty eight columnists were analyzed. Of the twenty eight six were females and twenty two were male. This again points to the aspect that females are more interested in “soft” issues thus they are seen writing more columns on beauty, health, society shunning away from political issues. The composition of columnists is shown in the pie chart below.

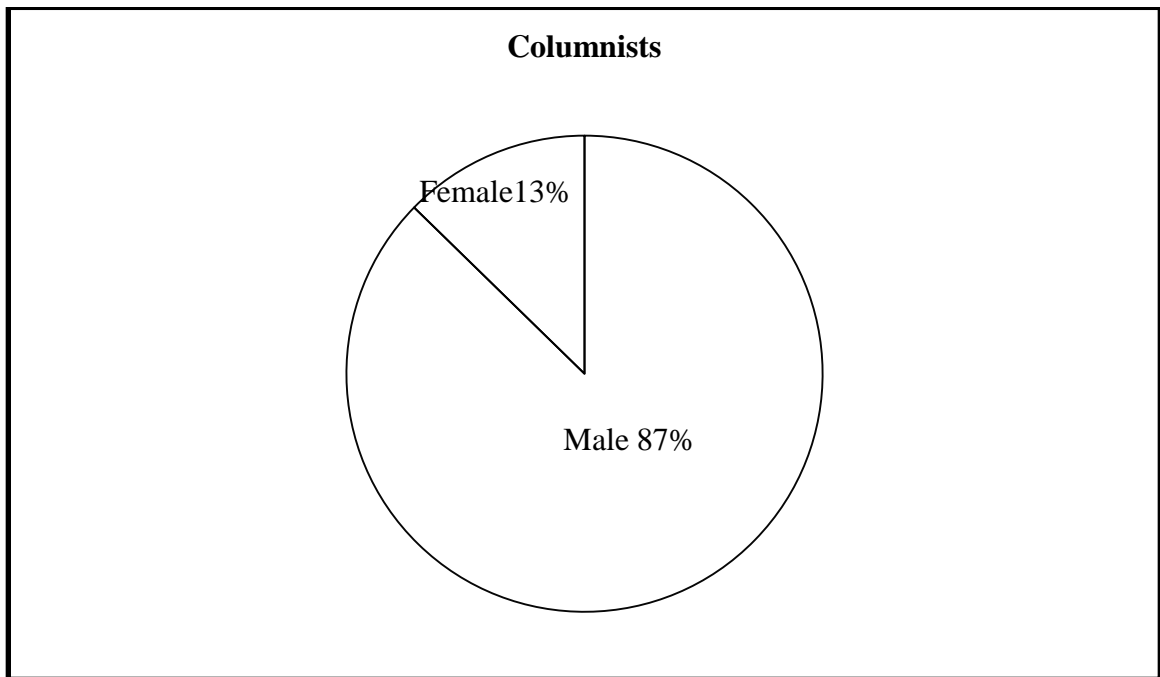


Figure 12 Columnists by Gender

It was established from the data gathered that of the twenty eight columnists the majority of twenty four are locally based and four are foreign based. It is an advantage to have locally based columnists as they speak of what they see on the ground. On the flipside of the coin foreign based columnists may write from a misinformed point of view or their

views will largely be theoretical and not be feasible and cannot be put into practice. The data is shown in the figure below.

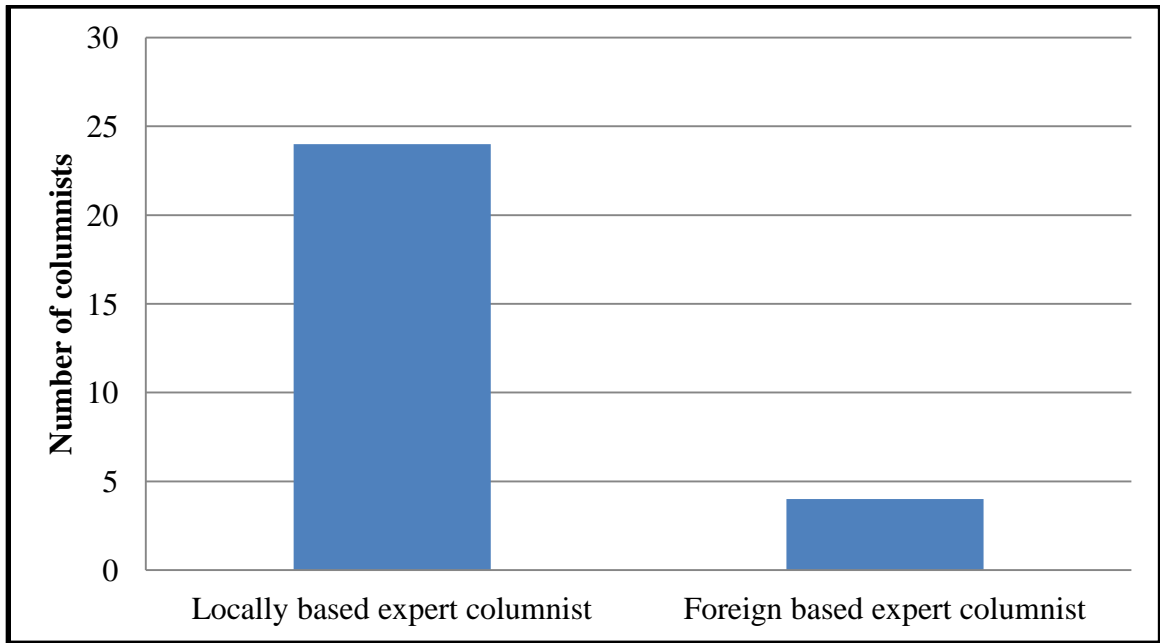


Figure 13 Composition of Columnists Bases

Of the twenty eight columnists that were analyzed seventeen of them had their areas of expertise indicated and eleven of them were mum. Areas of expertise will also help columnists write and or give relevant advice about a particular situation. For example there are academics, church leaders, psychologists who give advice on how to react or what to expect from the election period depending on the data that they have or the revelations that they have pertaining to the subject. The data is shown on the pie chart below.

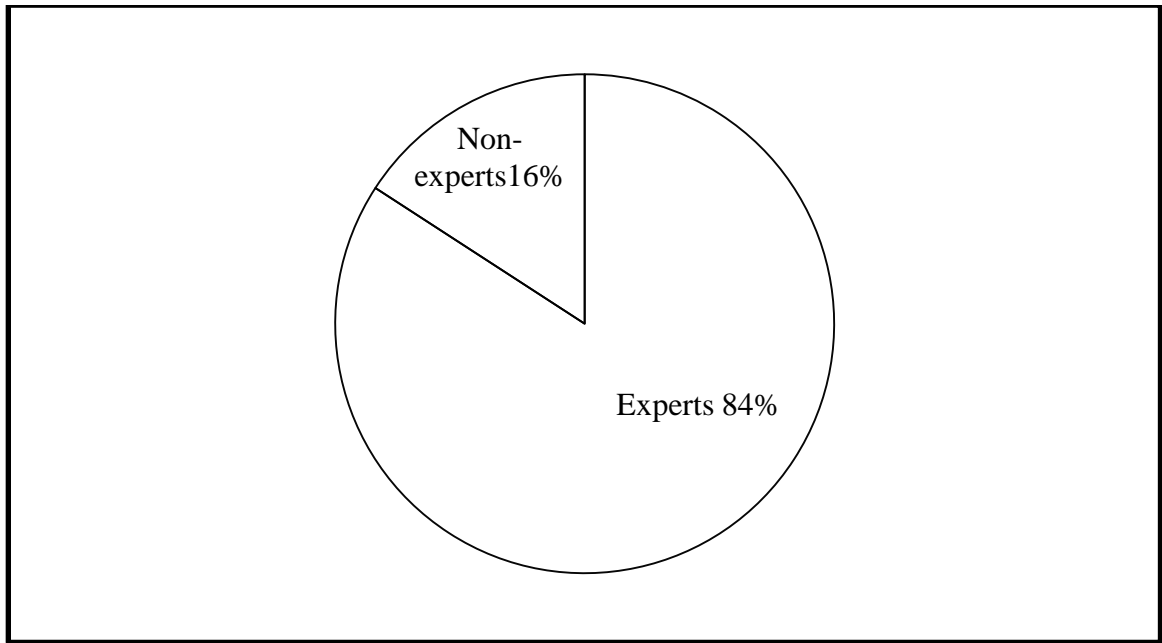


Figure 14 Expert of Status of Columnists

4.2.3.0 Dominant Themes

4.2.3.1 Peace versus violence

Daniel Moleke wrote in the opinion column of *The Daily News* of 25th August 2013 saying that “*Everyday life across Zimbabwe remained normal as if nothing had happened.*” The 30th of August 2013 saw the publishing of Ruth Butaumocho’s “*End of reign of terror*” in the analysis and opinion column of *The Herald* as she reiterates that “*The July 31 harmonized elections were peaceful, with no major incidents of violence reported country wide.*” The columnists strengthened the notion that the newspapers are a platform for raising awareness in citizens as there was a peaceful atmosphere that prevailed during the 2013 Harmonized election period.

4.2.3.2 MDC to assess its performance

Political commentators gave advice to MDC for future elections. This expertise is essential to a democratic country as elections are an ongoing process which is practiced after every five years. Reason Wafawarova a political writer based in Sydney, Australia wrote to the Analysis and Opinion of *The Herald* of the 8th August 2013 stating that *“Clearly Morgan Tsvangirai and his inexperienced colleagues took support for granted, foolishly counting on the 2008 protest vote as a political plan to form the next government. Tsvangirai was possessed by this grand illusion that Zimbabweans would never desert him regardless of whatever he did or did not do, no matter how many sins he committed or how badly he behaved...There was no point doing outreach programmes to the people during the lifespan of the inclusive Government because the people of Zimbabwe now permanently belonged to the MDC-T and its leader Tsvangirai-so the thinking went on”*. Conrad Nyamutata wrote to the opinion column of *The Daily News* on the 27th of August 2013 saying that, *“It cannot be denied that in the face of gross irregularities, the participation of the MDC in the last election, the party’s failed attempt to dislodge President Mugabe, was ill-advised. It is a flimsy excuse to say we responded to pressure from people to take part...people need leadership, they entrust leaders with appropriate judgments.”* The columnists have shown their expertise in their articles. The articles lack advice that they should give to a leader that has lost an election but rather they tend to dwell on his flaws and indirectly mock the offended leader. The issue is that the editorial should have the mandate to publish articles that are constructive rather than doing more harm.

4.2.3.3 Zanu-PF's win

Lectures as experts took it upon themselves to explain to the nation the power of elections. This becomes an advantage as people would read and become prepared to participate in the upcoming elections. This is also important as it sends a message to the candidates, therefore aspiring candidates start preparing themselves for the 2018 election to be held in Zimbabwe. N Mahuku and Bowden B.C. Mbanje both lecturers in international relations and peace and governance with Bindura University of Science Education wrote to *The Herald* on the 9th of August 2013 commenting that “*People elect leaders whom they trust. Power is in the hands of the electorate who elect the leader they want to take charge of the highest office. It is the electorate who has the mandate through their votes to elect or not elect someone in office*”. Daniel Moleke contributed to the opinion column of *The Daily News* on the 25th August 2013 saying that “*...everyone was shocked by the so-called landslide. Neither the supporters of Tsvangirai's MDC, nor Zanu-PF, knew how to react. Everyone on the street was that Mugabe's prolonged stay in power was not good for the political, socio-economic prospects of the country. On the other hand he will continue to close any form of open democratic space against all his political rivals and the civil society voices*”. Tendai Hildergerde in the analysis and opinion column of *The Herald* of 29th August 2013 quoted Luke Tamborinyoka, MDC-T leader's spokesperson “*also claims that the alleged rigging led to the resignation of two ZEC commissioners...If MDC-T claims that his resignation was in protest to their alleged rigging saga, then it is quite unfortunate*”.

that the learned professor only did so after all the results had been announced, and when he had also announced results of some of the constituencies.”

4.2.3 Focus Group Discussion

Eight students from Zimbabwe Open University who were working on their projects to the completion of their degrees participated in the focus group discussion. The table below shows the composition of respondents by nature of their gender.

Female	Male
2	6

Table 1Gender Distribution of Focus Group

The table shows that the majority of the focus group participants were males. This once again coincides with the gender distribution from the rest of the study that the stereotyping of females and the patriarchal culture that men are the ones who should get involved in politics is prevailing.

4.2.3.0 Main Themes

4.2.3.1 The absence of democracy in newspapers

Washington Mandikutse pointed out that *“Democracy is very hard to define as it is situational.”* Laiza Tizora agreed to this notion adding that *“Democracy has ideological leanings from the editors and the owners of these particular newspapers”*. Washington Mandikupe goes on to strengthen this point by saying that *“The ownership metric influences what newspapers write, for example The Herald will never write an article depicting ZANU PF as corrupt.”* Ewart Mapara tended to have a different opinion as he said that *“Democracy depends on the people articulating the term. The aristocrats see it differently from the poor. It articulates the desires of those with power.”*

Laiza Tizora stated that *“Print media has failed the communities as they mostly operate in urban areas, the amount of information disseminated in vernacular is minimal, and for example the ZANU-PF promise came in the form of Zimaset which was a top down phenomenon.”* Manfred Bhiri states that *“There is a lot of name-calling hindering the platform for democracy.”* Abigail Magugu supported this view and added that *“With the private media some issues are sensationalized for example the glaring headline in The Daily News Blood Bath when ZANU-PF wins but elections came and went the nation did not experience such.”*

Ewart Mapara was of the opinion that democracy is absent in the print media in that *“Print media is not accessible to the four corners of Zimbabwe; vernaculars are not widely used as the newspapers are written in English. The aspect of self censorship that is the fear of writing anything against the ruling party. Journalists have no culture for research in order to inform correctly and give confidence to the people.”* Washington Mandikutse cited the *“1980’s when the Moto was distributed for free to give access to those that were economically challenged.”* This finding supports the theory of Hegemony that was propounded by Gramsci in that those in power be in political or economical have the control. Therefore newspaper platforms for democratic participation are viewed by the students as stifled by their owners.

4.2.3.2 Agenda setting

The election was the agenda set by the print media during the election period in the July 2013 Harmonized election. Trevor Muranda stressed that *“The editors have a big role in the issue of gate-keeping, in that citizens’ letters have to be given space in order for their views and opinions to be heard.”* *“This means that the media space is subjected to certain editorial policies”* went on to add Washington Mandikutse. He goes on to point out that *“Editorial policies that run and govern public media are pro-state. For example the issue of ‘Gay Rights’ in The Herald was presented from religious and traditional view points by ZANU-PF and was used to demonize the MDC as they were pro-west(morally bankrupt) making ZANU-PF win the 2013 Harmonized election with a*

resounding response from the rural populace who did not understand the notion.”

Ewart Mapara supported this view by saying that *“The Herald has its thrust on politicking little is on the well being of the people whilst The Daily News’ thrust is on the importance of informing people.”* Manfred Bhiri reiterated that *“This has resulted in polarization; print media has influence on how people view politics.”* Washington Mandikutse has it that *“Journalists are not researchers such that their stories have a lot of gaps. The regular columnists like Chris Mutsvangwa, Dr Manyeruke, George Charamba and Tafataona Mahoso are experts who know everything and they are used by the public media to channel out propaganda. The real experts are to given the space.”*

4.3 Conclusion

The data analysis showed that there is a platform that the print media has put in place for democratic participation to citizens in Zimbabwe. It was disheartening to note that though this platform is available the citizens in Zimbabwe are not fully utilizing this platform. There are a number of factors that were brought to the fore which include, problems in the accessibility of newspapers and the absence of a reading culture in the citizens especially the female counterparts being the reasons for the under utilization of the platform.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will look into the summary of the research. The researcher will also include conclusions that would have been made in the research and the recommendations that would be of assistance to policy and policy making in the media field.

5.2 Summary and Conclusions

The context of the research was that of the democratic nature of the print media in the form of *The Herald* and *The Daily News* newspapers. Thus the research used democracy as “a government chosen by the people through elections and this government should then fulfill the needs of the people according to their voices which are offered as a public platform in the newspapers”. The Constitution of Zimbabwe 61 (2) points out that “...everyone has the right to freedom of speech and expression.” Citizens are therefore stakeholders in governance issues. Thus participatory democracy is seen in the citizens’ voices in the newspapers’ letters to the editor and columnist presentations in the analysis and opinion sections in print media. This part of the research addressed the question of the forms of democratic platforms that are provided by the newspapers. The research also delved into exploring the issues that drive citizens to writing to the letters to the editor or sending in contributions to the opinion and analysis column. The

researcher spoke to Farayi Musaka who calls this “Citizen journalism, as people’s voices add to reportage.” Zindoga from The Herald says “It gives a chance to the readers to give feedback.”

The research had a disjoint to this notion of democracy as one respondent in the in-depth interviews, Mr. Webster Muonwa a lecturer from Zimbabwe Open University, pointed out that “The culture of Africans in their choice of leadership is that we do not change leaders (king or sabhuku), traditionally speaking, we have traditional sources of power, Traditional Authority according to Marx Weber, it is system which cannot be changed. In the African sense ordinary people cannot rule but ruling runs in royal blood. Democracy is an ongoing process because it is alien to Africa. Leadership would only change in the family lineage. Which explains why people go to elections, to fulfill the instructions of their traditional leadership comparing to why people vote in the United States of America and in Mutoko in Zimbabwe?” Thus the relevance of print media in framing democracy in African context is still challenged and a lot of awareness needs to be done to conscientize the citizens.

The research has shown that the Political history of Zimbabwe has an impact on the media landscape in the country. The pre 1980 Smith regime was monopolistic colonization with the media fulfilling the needs of the whites. The natives of this era saw the invent of The Bantu Press and Moto which catered for the voice of the native black

Zimbabwean. The period 1980 to 1990 was the era of the newly independent Zimbabwe. This period the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust was formed to monitor the independency of newspapers from governmental influence. But this was not the case as Zindoga a political editor for The Herald said that “The Herald is the paper of the record which supports the government of the day and pan-Africanism.” Antonio Gramsci’s theory of Hegemony is brought to the fore. This notion was supported by the news editor of *The Manica Post*, Cletus Mushanawani who pointed out that “ Issues of ownership are crucial, they are Zimpapers 1980 limited, majority share of 51% is owned by the government of the day therefore the letters to the editor that are published have a got a slant to the government of the day.” With this environment 1990 to present had the Zimbabwe media landscape experiencing a transition with the society becoming more vocal and the formation of *The Daily News* newspaper which was a challenge to the Monopolistic *The Herald*. This era saw the print media having the role as watching the government of the day, exposing corruption and human rights violations. Mr. Cletus Mushanawani supported this view and also answered the purpose of the study which was to look at the criterion used for the publishing of letters, in saying that, “In selecting the letters that are to be published in the letters to the editor, the opinion and analysis columns, editors are weary of hate speech, anything attacking a person is thrown away as this is what sparked the Rwandan Genocide.”

The ethical considerations were carried out as planned. The nature of my study being the media recording of interviews was encouraged by three quarters of the respondents. Farayi Musaka said that “Recording makes an interview swifter and there are minimal chances of misquoting a respondent.” The invitation letters used were not effective as the respondents were of the notion of a brief overview before the actual interview.

The statement of the problem was that there are problems in issues of democracy if citizens do not write their names but this was not the as only two letters analyzed were written “Anonymous” eighteen had “Pseudonymous” and one hundred and ten had name written on them . This showed that citizens are no-longer hesitant to be known of who they are and even their locations and even nature of expertise with the spaces for opinion and analysis that is offered. This shows an aspect of democracy with citizens being in a position of exercising their rights of freedom of expression according to the Zimbabwean Constitution. Jürgen Habermas’s theory of the Public Sphere is supported by this aspect that anyone from all walks of life can participate in public debate through the platforms offered in the newspapers.

There were limitations to the research but the researcher had options to carry out a meaningful research. The office of the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services was not accessible so in the end it became a wish-list, but *The Herald’s* senior editor referred the researcher to Lloyd Gumbo who was very helpful and fulfilled and

referred me to other relevant informants. *The Daily News* did not have a library so I resorted to visiting the National Archives in order to get copies of *The Daily News* for July and August 2013. The researcher missed an appointment with the focus groups at Zimbabwe Open University as she had to travel to Harare to gather other data so only one focus group was conducted. There were two members of the focus group who said they just wanted to sit and listen to the proceeding and did not want to be known, therefore they did not speak as the discussion was being recorded with their consent and the rest of the group.

Overall print media is seen to be having the potential to play a role in framing democracy but there are shortcomings to the full utilization of this platform. The main reason is that the media environment is stifled and the government of the day has more say through policies and laws pertaining to media, thus hindering the potential that the private media has. The other reason was the indifferent attitude that is displayed by the citizens when it comes to talking about political issues and elections. It was disheartening to note that the percentage of female participants is next to naught showing their minimal participation in matters that have to do with politics and or elections. Lastly the problem of the accessibility of print media to the four corners of Zimbabwe. The study showed that the rural areas are not seen being active in these platforms. These could be infrastructural problems, that the roads are bad and media houses cannot send their newspapers to the remote areas of Zimbabwe.

5.3 Recommendations

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission should work together with the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services in educating the citizens of Zimbabwe on the role and the value of elections. This is because the citizens expectations are not met when election results are announced and they start a blame game. Citizens should be made aware of their role in pre-election periods. Therefore workshops can be held and this can be an on-going process and not wait for the election period and start the exercises in panic mode that is when citizens will view the whole process as a gimmick and politicize the matter.

Women are encouraged to step outside the box and develop a reading culture and also get involved in public debate by becoming writers in the letters to the editor or opinion and analysis columns. This can be done through women's organizations like the Women and Politics Support Unit, who can hold workshops and train women to engage themselves in the media and having them see media not as a political field but a platform for exercising their democratic rights.

It is also recommended that further research should be undertaken to establish on how best print media can be accessible to all Zimbabwean citizens, especially those in the peripherals, to become participants in the platforms provided in the newspapers. There

are issues of vernacular and affordability that should be addressed when publishing newspapers as this will cater for the populace that is in the rural areas as they constitute 67% of the population and are majority voters so they need to be included in the public debate forums.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Institute Clearance Letter



INSTITUTE OF PEACE LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

PO BOX 100, Maseru, Botswana. TEL: +266-22-3366666/3366667 FAX: +266-22-3366666 E-MAIL: info@peaceinstitute.org

18 March 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: Permission to Undertake Research for Dissertation at Africa University

Mwery Mafema student registration number 0002210 is a student at Africa University. She is enrolled in a degree program in Peace, Leadership and Governance and is currently conducting research for her project, which is required for completion of the program in June 2013. The research topic is "The Role of Print Media in Framing Democracy in Zimbabwe: An Analysis of the 2013 Harmonised Election Period". Mwery is expected to complete this research during the period January- April 2014 before the dissertation can be submitted to the Faculty in May 2014.

The student will share with you the results of this research after its approval by the Institute.

We thank you for your support and cooperation regarding this research.

Yours sincerely



Prof. E. Machobane
Director

Appendix B Consent Form

The aim of the consent form is to authenticate your participation in this research study.

THE ROLE OF PRINT MEDIA IN FRAMING DEMOCRACY IN ZIMBABWE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE 2013 HARMONISED ELECTION PERIOD.

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Mercy Mukono (960210). The purpose of this study is to fulfill the requirements of final year students in the Master of Peace and Governance who are expected to conduct a research and submit a dissertation prior graduation.

Your participation will involve being part of a focus group discussion

Risks

There are no risks associated with this research as it has no political agenda or political affiliation attached to it

Benefits

There are no known benefits to you that will result from your participation in this research as it is solely for academic purposes and not for profit making.

Confidentiality

Records and recordings will be held in confidence. Your identity will not be revealed in any publication resulting from this study.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time during the interview. You will not

Appendix C Appointment Letter

Request and consent to participate in an interview

My name is Mercy Mukono (960210) and I am a final year Masters in Peace and Governance student at Africa University. Students in the Master of Peace and Governance studies are expected to conduct a research and submit a dissertation as part of the graduation requirements. Therefore I am conducting a research on **THE ROLE OF PRINT MEDIA IN FRAMING DEMOCRACY IN ZIMBABWE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE 2013 HARMONISED ELECTION PERIOD.**

You are being kindly asked to participate in the research on.....of March 2014 ato'clock. You were selected as a possible participant because as the Minister of Information and Publicity you might have insight of the citizen participation in the issues that are published in the newspapers.

This interview is voluntary and you have the right not to answer any question at the same time stopping the interview for any reason that the researcher should not be informed on.

I would like to record the interview so that I can use it for reference while proceeding with this study. I will not record the interview without your permission. If you do grant the permission for a recording, you have the right to revoke recording permission at any given time during the interview.

Please give your response and consent using the following contact details:

Name of researcher Mercy Mukono

Email mercymukono@gmail.com

Telephone number 0772 430 038

Appendix D Interview Question Guide

QUESTIONS

- How would you describe the democratic nature of newspapers? (Opening question)
- Please describe the services offered by the letters to the editor and political columns.
- What was the nature of the letters to the editors' and political columns during the 2013 Harmonized election period?
- What do you think of the trend of these letters and columns with the view that Zimbabwe was in an election period during July and August 2013.
- In your views what did the Herald and the Daily News do to encourage citizens to write letters to the editor and be political columnists airing their views on the election period in 2013?
- What plans, programs and operations are there to have The Herald and The Daily News to utilizing the editors' column and political columns as platforms for framing democracy?
- What are your expectations of the letter's to the editor and political columns?

Appendix E Request Letter to hold FGDs

Re: Request and consent to participate in a focus group discussion.

My name is Mercy Mukono (960210) and I am a final year Masters in Peace and Governance student at Africa University. Students in the Master of Peace and Governance studies are expected to conduct a research and submit a dissertation as part of the graduation requirements. Therefore I am conducting a research on **THE ROLE OF PRINT MEDIA IN FRAMING DEMOCRACY IN ZIMBABWE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE 2013 HARMONISED ELECTION PERIOD.**

You are being kindly asked to participate in the research on.....of March 2014 ato'clock. You were selected as possible participants because as students who have studied the different roles of media and governance as courses in their program, you might have insight of the citizen participation in the issues that are published in the newspapers pertaining to election periods.

This interview is voluntary and you have the right not to answer any question at the same time stopping the interview for any reason that the researcher should not be informed on.

I would like to record the interview so that I can use it for reference while proceeding with this study. I will not record the interview without your permission. If you do grant the permission for a recording, you have the right to revoke recording permission at any given time during the interview.

Please give your response and consent using the following contact details:

Name of researcher Mercy Mukono

Email mercymukono@gmail.com

Telephone number 0772 430 038

Appendix F Interview Guide for FGDs

- What is democracy? and What is print media? (Opening questions)
- What are your views on the relationship between the press and democracy?
- How have you viewed writing a letter to the editor and writing as in the political column in the Herald?
- How have you viewed writing a letter to the editor and writing in the political column in the Daily News?
- If you were encouraging a friend to write a letter to the editor or writing an article in the political column to the Herald or the Daily News, what would you tell them?
- What were your feelings when you wrote a letter to the editor or wrote an article in the political column in the Herald or the Daily News?
- Lets brain storm how you think the editors' column and the political column can be improved to make it a frame for democracy during elections in Zimbabwe. (Use of the board or flip chart).
- Of all the things we have listed, what is the most important to you?